

Empowered Nurses Can Use Complementary Therapies to Improve Quality of Life

Background

- The WHO recognizes traditional and complementary medicine as a valuable, often underused resource for prevention and chronic disease management (22)
- 49% of 5,000 nurses surveyed report high or very high job stress (16)

CT Practice For Nurses & Patients

- Empowered nurses who use CT as part of their self care have less stress and fatigue, better emotional well-being, greater resilience, and improved quality of life; similar benefits apply to patients receiving CT
- Can use online apps to guide mindfulness, breathing exercises and relaxation
- Nurses are well positioned to use CT for both themselves and their patients
- Healthier nurses provide better patient care (3,5,10,14,19)

RNAO- CTNIG

Complementary Therapies
Nurses' Interest Group



References



What are Complementary Therapies (CT)?

Modalities that can be used alone or alongside conventional medicine within a holistic framework to support health and wellbeing. (11) Four different areas:

1. **Bodywork** - Touching or manipulating the body

Examples: Massage • Reflexology • Chiropractic • Osteopathy

- Can reduce occupational stress, physical fatigue, and pain
- Can lower blood pressure and heart rate
- Can improve mental health and clinical performance

(1,15,18)

2. **Energy Therapies** - Balancing of energy flow in the body

Examples: Reiki • Therapeutic Touch • Emotional Freedom Techniques Tapping

- Can support physical, emotional, and spiritual healing
- Nurses can use for both self-care and patient care
- Can promote relaxation, reduces stress, improve emotional well-being & resilience

(8,13,17)

3. **Mind–Body Practices** - Techniques to enhance the mind's interaction with the body

Examples: Meditation • Yoga • Mindfulness • Nature Bathing • Qigong

- Can reduce stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion
- Can improve resilience, well-being, and mental health
- Helps manage workplace stress and enhance emotional regulation

(4,9,12)

4. **Natural Products** - Substances or compounds found in nature

Examples: Aromatherapy • Herbs • Vitamins • Food

- Can reduce stress and anxiety
- Can promote relaxation, improve mood, and emotional well-being

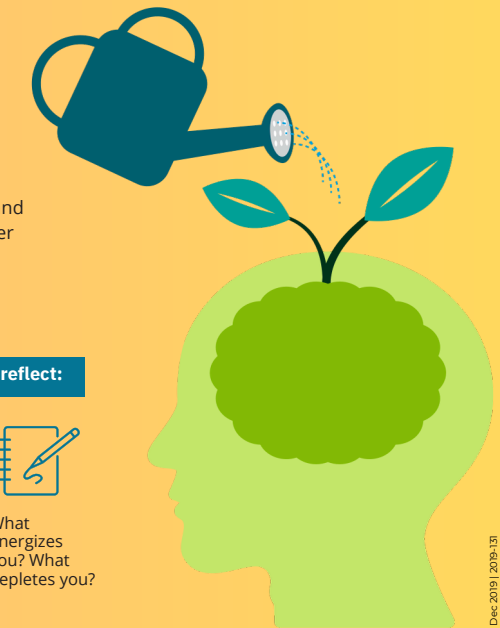
(2,20,21)

Developing CT as a Nursing Practice:

- Consider if it is appropriate for the client
- Include as part of the care plan
- Consult with the broader health care team
- Review or advocate for organizational policies
- Have the authority to perform
- Be competent to provide safely and effectively
- Understand, and manage the possible outcomes (6)

Your health can affect the care you provide to your patients.

Research shows that physical and emotional fatigue can reduce brain function and affect decision-making, memory and attention. Our personal and professional lives will have ups and downs. Take a step back and reflect on whether you feel your physical or mental health is impacting the care you are providing. If it is, it might be time to self-care or to seek help.



Here are some guiding questions to help you reflect:



What are the current stressors in my life?



What strategies can I implement to help cope with these stressors?



Am I taking care of myself physically, mentally, and emotionally?



What energizes you? What depletes you?

Strategies to manage stress:



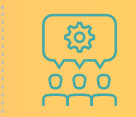
Practicing mindfulness. You can access a variety of information, including free online apps to guide mindfulness, breathing exercises and meditation.



Building stronger links with your colleagues so you can better support and rely on one another.



Building your social supports.



Signing up for workshops such as a stress management workshop.



Making changes to improve work/life balance.



Making changes to your diet and physical activity to help cope with stress.



Self-care benefits nurses with increased job and life satisfaction, relaxation and better physical health. Visit www.cno.org for more information.



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