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Reiki

The Gentle Healing Art





Dr. Mikao Usui

Introduction

Reiki is a healing practice that originated in Japan. Reiki practitioners place their hands lightly on or just above the person receiving treatment, with the goal of facilitating the person's own healing response. In the United States, Reiki is part of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). This fact sheet provides a general overview of Reiki and suggests sources for additional information.

Key Points

- People use Reiki to promote overall health and well-being. Reiki is also used by people who are seeking relief from disease-related symptoms and the side effects of conventional medical treatments.
- Reiki has historically been practiced as a form of self-care. Increasingly, it is also provided by health care professionals in a variety of clinical settings.
- People do not need a special background to learn how to perform Reiki.
- Scientific research is under way to learn more about how Reiki may work, its possible effects on health, and diseases and conditions for which it may be helpful.
- Tell your health care providers about any complementary and alternative practices you use. Give them a full picture of what you do to manage your health. This will help ensure coordinated and safe care.

History

The word "Reiki" is derived from two Japanese words: *rei*, or universal, and *ki*, or life energy. Current Reiki practice can be traced to the spiritual teachings of Mikao Usui in Japan during the early 20th century. Usui's teachings included meditative techniques and healing practices. One of Usui's students, Chujiro Hayashi, further developed the healing practices, placing less emphasis on the meditative techniques. An American named Hawayo Takata learned Reiki from Hayashi in Japan and introduced it to Western cultures in the late 1930s. The type of Reiki practiced and taught by Hayashi and Takata may be considered traditional Reiki.

Practice

Reiki is based on the idea that there is a universal (or source) energy that supports the body's innate healing abilities. Practitioners seek to access this energy, allowing it to flow to the body and facilitate healing.

Although generally practiced as a form of self-care, Reiki can be received from someone else and may be offered in a variety of health care settings, including medical offices, hospitals, and clinics. It can be practiced on its own or along with other CAM therapies or conventional medical treatments.

In a Reiki session, the client lies down or sits comfortably, fully clothed. The practitioner's hands are placed lightly on or just above the client's body, palms down, using a series of 12 to 15 different hand positions. Each position is held for about 2 to 5 minutes, or until the practitioner feels that the flow of energy—experienced as sensations such as heat or tingling in the hands—has slowed or stopped. The number of sessions depends on the health needs of the client. Typically, the practitioner delivers at least four sessions of 30 to 90 minutes each. The duration of Reiki sessions may be shorter in certain health care settings (for example, during surgery).

Practitioners with appropriate training may perform Reiki from a distance, that is, on clients who are not physically present in the office or clinic.

Uses

According to the 2007 National Health Interview Survey, which included a comprehensive survey of CAM use by Americans, more than 1.2 million adults had used an energy healing therapy, such as Reiki, in the previous year. The survey also found that approximately 161,000 children had used an energy healing therapy in the previous year.

People use Reiki for relaxation, stress reduction, and symptom relief, in efforts to improve overall health and well-being. Reiki has been used by people with anxiety, chronic pain, HIV/AIDS, and other health conditions, as well as by people recovering from surgery or experiencing side effects from cancer treatments. Reiki has also been given to people who are dying (and to their families and caregivers) to help impart a sense of peace.

The Reiki Principles

- Just for today I will give thanks for my many blessings.
- Just for today I will not worry.
- Just for today I will not be angry.
- Just for today I will do my work honestly.
- Just for today I will be kind to my neighbor and every living thing.

