



Healing Beyond Borders

Educating and Certifying the Healing Touch ®

Caring for Those Who Care for Others: A Healing Touch Resource for Nurses

Healing Touch is a relaxing, nurturing, heart-centered energy therapy that uses gentle, intentional touch to assist in balancing physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. Classified by the National Institutes of Health as a biofield therapy and nursing intervention,¹ Healing Touch works in the energy of the biofield to bring about a return to balance for greater health and self-healing.



Relaxation, decreased anxiety and stress, and improved mood are the most common hallmarks of biofield therapies like Healing Touch. These effects have frequently been reported in various study populations such as cardiac care for adults, cancer care for children, and stress levels in graduate and undergraduate students.³⁻⁷ Another population frequently studied are nurses who receive education in Healing Touch. Nurse leaders completing the first course in the Healing Touch course of study reported improvements in their levels of stress, depression, anxiety, relaxation, well-being, and sleep.⁸ Heart rate variability changes in these nurses suggested improved autonomic function consistent with greater well-being. In another study, nurses cited having an advantage in having learned Healing Touch; they perceived using holistic concepts during bedside care as more effortless and used Healing Touch for self-care as a coping skill to reduce “job-related stress” and promote self-relaxation.^{9,10}

Information for this fact sheet comes from the *Research Brief*.¹¹ The *Research Brief* provides a complete synthesis and review of Healing Touch research and is available on our website:

www.healingbeyondborders.org.

Healing Touch and Well-Being

- ✓ Healing Touch has a significant, positive impact on measures of well-being and quality of life.
- ✓ Healing Touch improves levels of mood, quality of life, and anxiety.
- ✓ Healing Touch elicits a significant relaxation response that leads to improvements in aspects of well-being and health, including mind, body, and spirit.

Healing Beyond Borders is a non-profit organization with a mission of dedicated service to the public trust. A membership organization, we provide education and credentialing in Healing Touch. The organization educates and certifies Healing Touch Practitioners and Instructors, coordinates Healing Touch research, assists integration of Healing Touch into healthcare settings, and promotes the work of Healing Touch throughout the world.

Studies on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) have largely been conducted in military populations in which PTSD has and continues to be a significant issue. PTSD often comes with depressive features. Jain and colleagues conducted a randomized controlled trial that demonstrated a significant reduction in symptoms related to PTSD using Healing Touch with guided imagery in active-duty members of the military. For example, depression and cynicism decreased and mental health improved.

Community mental health practice is important in caring for persons living with PTSD long-term. Healing Touch integrated as a mind-body complement to mental health services has been shown to have significant reductions in the symptoms of PTSD.¹³⁻¹⁵ Clients within community mental health clinics report high levels of satisfaction and improved levels of perceived change in all dimensions of trauma recovery with mind-body modalities that include Healing Touch.¹⁴ Further, nurses self-reported using energy-based caring modalities such as Healing Touch to help with the anxiety that presents with PTSD.¹⁶

A recent integrative review by Mangione and colleagues¹⁷ detailed the beneficial effects of biofield therapies, including Healing Touch, on mental health and well-being. Biofield therapies like Healing Touch were found to improve and increase dimensions of what it means to be well.



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