



Reiki for Generalized Anxiety Disorder

Generalized anxiety disorder is a potentially debilitating condition that affects millions of people all across the globe. In fact, according to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, generalized anxiety disorder currently affects 3.1 percent of the U.S. population. Treatments for generalized anxiety disorder vary but often include medication and psychotherapy. Some people struggling with this condition have also added Reiki to their treatment plan in hopes of improving symptoms further.

Facts about Generalized Anxiety Disorder

People with generalized anxiety disorder deal with excessive and unrealistic worry about everyday issues, including their family, health or financial situation. This worry is persistent and difficult to control. In many cases, people with this condition feel a sense of impending doom even when there is no reason to believe that something bad will happen. For most people, this disorder appears gradually over time. It is more common in women than in men and tends to peak after childhood. While many people are able to manage their symptoms and lead a relatively normal life, severe anxiety can sometimes make it difficult to carry out everyday responsibilities or function in social situations.

An individual is diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder after he or she has spent at least six months dealing with symptoms on a regular basis.

Some of the specific symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder may include:

- Trouble sleeping
- Tense muscles
- Irritability
- Tiring easily
- Feeling restless or on edge
- Trouble concentrating

Once an individual has been diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder, their physician may prescribe various medications to control symptoms, including tricyclic antidepressants, benzodiazepines, serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors and selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors. Physicians may also recommend different types of therapy, including interpersonal therapy, exposure therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy and acceptance and commitment therapy.

Benefits of Reiki for People with GAD

Studies have shown that Reiki offers several potential benefits for people with generalized anxiety disorder. Some of these benefits include:

1. **Lower stress levels**

People with generalized anxiety disorder have higher stress levels than the normal population. Both research studies and anecdotal reports indicate that Reiki may assist to alleviate some of this stress.

2. **Relaxation**

Having generalized anxiety disorder makes it difficult to relax even when no significant stressor is present. Many people who participate in Reiki sessions report feeling relaxed both during the session and after it is complete, which may be beneficial to someone who struggles with anxiety.

3. **Improved mood**

Not every person who has been diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder will experience depression. However, for many people, these two issues go hand-in-hand. Research indicates that people who participate in Reiki sessions on a regular basis feel less depressed than they did prior to therapy.

4. **Better sleep**

People with generalized anxiety disorder may find that they have trouble falling asleep, are unable to stay asleep or don't feel rested even after sleeping all night. Reiki sessions may alleviate some of these issues and improve the quality of sleep.

Reiki is noninvasive and doesn't pose any risk to the client. It also causes no side effects. Thus, Reiki can be used in conjunction with virtually any other treatment prescribed by a physician, including medication and other types of therapy.

Relevant Research

Multiple research studies have been conducted to explore the relationship between Reiki and anxiety disorders. Some of these studies are detailed below.

1. **Reiki reduces anxiety among women**

In 2006, researchers published a study that sought to determine whether Reiki could reduce anxiety among women undergoing hysterectomies. The researchers found that women in the treatment group experienced less anxiety than those in the control group. Although this study was conducted only on women undergoing surgery, the results may apply to other individuals as well.

2. **Reiki helps with anxiety and fatigue in cancer patients**

Another study conducted in Turkey focused on the ability of Reiki treatment to reduce anxiety, pain and fatigue among cancer patients. The researchers found that all of these variables improved among subjects in the group treated with Reiki. Because both anxiety and fatigue are symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder, it stands to reason that Reiki could potentially be helpful for people with this condition as well.

3. **Reiki reduces depression and anxiety among older adults**

During this study, researchers sought to determine whether treating older adults with Reiki would improve depression, anxiety and other issues. The researchers found that individuals in the treatment group experienced less anxiety and depression than those in the control group. Participants in the study also reported feelings of relaxation following Reiki sessions.

These are just a few of the research studies that demonstrate the ability of Reiki to benefit individuals who are struggling with anxiety. More research studies exploring this idea are likely to be conducted in the future.

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