

Submitted to
Energy Magazine
July, 2013

Healing Touch as part of Integrative Therapy in Outpatient Oncology

The Healing Care Program, part of an outpatient oncology department, is a complementary service that supports oncology patients and their caregiver(s) throughout treatment and the healing process. Services include group classes, such as yoga, Nia and aromatherapy, and one-on-one sessions that include Healing Touch, Guided Imagery, aromatherapy or a combination of these therapies. In addition, practitioners often integrate prayer, meditation and/or breathing exercises as part of the session. Practitioners assist individuals with physical, mental, emotional and spiritual concerns, such as anxiety, discomfort, stress, balance, energy and nausea.

All one-on-one sessions take place in an office that has been designed to promote healing and relaxation. There is a comfortable recliner chair for the patient, ambient lighting and a soothing décor. One-on-one sessions are typically 30 to 40 minutes in length, and begin with the patient identifying a goal for the session. Each session starts with a breathing exercise or general visualization to help with relaxation. Next, Healing Touch is provided with a full body technique, such as Chakra Connection, based upon the patient's goal.

The program has been helpful for many patients and caregivers dealing with the diagnosis of cancer and the cancer experience. The benefit of Healing Touch in an outpatient oncology department can best be described through patient and caregiver experiences*.

Gary's cancer required extensive surgery to his esophagus and stomach. His recovery had contained many complications and concerns, leaving him feeling angry and frustrated. Gary was referred to the Healing Care Program by his oncologist who stated he did not know what else to offer him!

Prior to his session, Gary had a very active life that included a deep spiritual practice. He and his wife came into the healing office where the session was explained. Gary identified his goal for peace and calm. The session began with a breathing and visualization exercise for relaxation. Healing Touch was done using the Chakra Connection technique. It was noted by the practitioner that there was a lot of heat at his forehead during the technique. After the session, Gary remarked that he noticed a "green light flowing from his brow during the Healing Touch." He further identified that he felt that this represented the anger he had been holding inside. At the end of the session, Gary was visibly more relaxed and calm. The positive experience led to the integration of Healing Touch and self-care practices into his daily lifestyle.

Another patient, Caroline, was recovering from a diagnosis of ovarian cancer and required continued therapy with oral chemotherapy medication. Her oral chemotherapy created anticipatory nausea for her, leading to the inability to take her medication. She was referred by her primary nurse to see if there were any services that might assist her with medication delivery.

Caroline came in for a session, and she agreed to the use of Healing Touch. To promote relaxation, the session started with a breathing exercise and a guided imagery technique that led Caroline to her special place. Healing Touch was done with focus work over her abdomen. After the session, the practitioner reviewed how she could hold her hands over her abdomen with intention and send a healing, calm light to the area. Later, Caroline shared that she was taking her oral chemotherapy without any nausea or any other problems.

