



TRIGEMINAL NEURALGIA ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
Winter 2010 Newsletter

Support Group



Eastern Ontario Support Group

Making friends, sharing the load, and being with others who truly understand is key to keeping your spirits up as you battle TN or any disorder. Support groups are an excellent way to meet people who truly understand. The Eastern Ontario Support Group has grown into a group of friends who are always open to greeting and receiving others.

If you live in Eastern Ontario, from Kingston to the Quebec border and north to Ottawa, we would love to meet with you. We are always open to and welcome new people to our group. We are meeting again on Dec. 11 and then again in the New Year.

For more information and the time place of our next meeting please contact Jane at cmusicstudio@cogeco.ca or by calling 613.936.6977

Vancouver and Lower Mainland Support Group Update

Coordinator: Ann Hopkins

Group
Meeting Time: 1.00 – 3.30 pm
G.F. Strong Rehab Centre.
Social Sciences Seminar Room
189, Main Floor,
4255 Laurel St.
(Laurel at W. 26th, one block east of Oak)

Friends, family members and supporters are very welcome.

It's a longish walk to the meeting room so if you need a wheelchair give me a call and I'll organize one. Or if you want to have a chat or have questions please make sure

you call or email me.

To get in touch: contact Ann Hopkins, email: annhopkins@dccnet.com, phone: 1 604 741 0662
4945 Laurel Ave, Sechelt, BC VON 3A2

Lethbridge Support Group

Coordinator Marion Guzik

The Lethbridge Support Group meets every second Saturday of the month at 2:00 p.m., in Rm A, Lethbridge Senior Centre, 500 11th Street, S., Lethbridge, AB.



Message from the Treasurer

Many thanks to everyone for renewing memberships for the current fiscal July 2010- June 30-2011, and a big thanks to those people who generously include TNAC on their donation

list. All donations are of course tax free.

If for any reason receipts for memberships or donations have not arrived please contact Joya Dickson either by e-mail joya@telus.net or mail to # 7-5300 Admiral Way Delta BC V4K 5G6

We love to hear current news from members who are not able to attend support group meetings, so take the opportunity when sending in membership forms to jot down a few notes outlining your progress with TN, what drugs perform best and whether or not you are planning surgery for TN in the near future.

My winter vacation starts around Dec 24 through to the end of February, if membership renewals & or donation are mailed during this period please understand receipts will not be processed until the first week in March.

Again a big thanks to everyone for your financial support and my best wishes to everyone for a happy holiday season.

Joya Dickson



Complementary and Alternative Pain Management

<http://www.managestressnow.com>

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Many people don't realize how valuable non-pharmacological methods are in the treatment of pain. Some approaches use sensation to overcome the pathways pain travels between the place of hurt and the brain. Here a couple examples of this: Use ice on a swollen ankle to cool the tissue. Rub your hurt hand after banging it. The ice and rubbing pressure over rides some of the pain messages traveling to your brain. Certainly many pain conditions give you stress, and stress can aggravate pain. Approaches that help lower stress are valuable complementary therapies. Relaxation can help pain medicines work quicker and last longer. It is possible with deep relaxation practice to release the body's natural pain medicine, **endorphins**.

A good belly laugh or exercise can also release these pain-fighting chemicals. Behavioral pain management approaches like learning to say no and not feel guilty, grief work around loss of health, and pacing activity and rest, can use one's own actions and

reactions as important tools to help ourselves control pain instead of pain controlling us. It is important to know why pain is present, it can be a warning sign of danger, such as chest pain or the pain of a broken bone. Discuss your pain problem with your health care provider. These are some examples of complementary therapies that can a valuable part of your pain treatment plan.

Abdominal breathing Let your abdomen be soft and gently rise with the inhale and fall with the exhale. If this is difficult for you to do, try blowing out all the air from the lungs and the next breath will usually be abdominal. An alternative focus: If there is pain in the abdomen, or anxiety about breathing in general, let the belly be soft but notice the air at the tip of the nose go in and out.

Activity-Rest Cycling In chronic pain and recovery from a health problem, over-activity when you start to feel better is common, but can end up triggering more pain. You've been sick, frustrated in bed, start to feel better and you push to get things done. This pushing can actually trigger a cycle of more pain. This disappointing setback slows a

person again, which leads to further frustration. A suggestion for a person in lingering pain can be to be active but then rest before you get too tired or rest before the pain gets severe. Continue active-rest cycling throughout the day.

Acupuncture Research shows that as part of a comprehensive pain treatment plan a trained, certified acupuncture practitioner can place a series of very thin needles and provide relief for postoperative dental pain; headaches; tennis elbow; menstrual cramps; carpal tunnel syndrome and addictions.

Assertive communication training Strengthen your speaking and listening skills. It OK to ask for what you want. One might not always get what they want but the chances certainly go up by asking. OK to ask questions and seek information. OK to say no and not feel guilty. Assertive communication is open, honest, direct and respectful.

Brief progressive muscle relaxation Starting from head to feet, or feet to head (in general start away from the pain); gently tensing and relaxing muscle groups. AVOID tensing muscles directly around

the pain. An alternative method is to gently relax your muscles without first tensing. "I am bringing my awareness to my right foot and letting the muscles of my right foot soften and relax. Letting them become warm and heavy." Let the bed or chair support your body.

Calming Self-Statements You can learn to replace overly negative thought patterns that contribute to mental distress and increased pain with calming self-statements. The "I can't do anything any more," becomes "I may not be able to do certain things, but there are plenty of other activities that I can enjoy." People with pain can be on the lookout for overly negative thoughts, and substitute calming self-statements Note the effect these new thoughts have on your mood and pain. This calming thinking can cut down on anxiety and depression.

Cold Packs/Heating Pads Good for lower back pain and cramps. Try alternating heat, rest and cold. See if cold or heat alone can help you. Be careful not to burn your skin.

Counseling 80% of people with chronic pain become depressed at some point.

Speaking with a professional you trust, can help in coping with the normal difficult feelings that arise with loss of health and/or the ability to do what you want to do. For example having a down day is not unusual for most people, but when the down day stretches into three or more days, that can be a time to ask for help.

Distraction Techniques There are many examples of distraction techniques people with pain have found helpful. "Focal point," concentrating on one point and blocking everything else out. Counting backwards. Art. Journeying. Music. TV. Videos or audio tapes. Hobbies. Word games. A change of scenery gets your mind off things. Pet therapy. Humor and having fun. Getting out in nature. What can you add?

Environmental change Adjusting room temperature. Organize, clear your space. Adjust lighting. Lower sound of TV, and other sounds that may be too distracting.

Exercise Chronic pain inhibits activity. Though difficult at first, exercise can improve chronic pain. Consider a physical therapy consultation for an exercise plan.

Humor, fun, enjoyment Some times when we hurt we eliminate the fun things in life, but think about when you felt good and you did fun things. You felt BETTER. Feeling better is what pain management is about.

Massage therapy from a skilled, trained practitioner can help with many types of muscular pain.

Pain education Learn the importance of pain scales and use one when communicating with your health care team. Learn the best schedules about taking pain medications. Learn about side effects of pain medicines and what YOU can do about them. Gain an understanding of information about your health problem (s). Ask questions and get information about tests and procedures. Learn about the effects of stress on pain. Looking over this website is a good example!

Relaxation Techniques

Meditation, biofeedback, guided imagery, progressive muscle relaxation, visualization, hypnosis are mind/body self-regulatory skills beneficial in pain management.

Service to others who are suffering. Being present in a

concerned way with another person who is hurting can sometimes make our problems seem less. **Shifting Positions** Take time to find a more comfortable position. Use pillows for body posture support. Too much time in bed can drain a person physically. Be careful not to push yourself too hard and overdo it.

Social support Enjoy time with family, and friends. If people want to give to you let them. Be careful not to become overtired. Some people find speaking with a close female friend can be very supportive. Medical support groups can be beneficial and people can share experience, strength and hope with one another.

Spiritual-Religious practices

"Is religion or spirituality important to you, for some it is for some it isn't, how about you?" If yes, a minister or representative from your home church/synagogue can be comforting. Many religious faiths encourage practices like attending services, prayer, spiritual study, that help with coping with pain or illness. Hospital chaplains are available. They can help a person find meaning in their current life experience.

Stress management

education This teaches about the connection between stress and physical problems. Relaxation training, stress coping and pain management strategies are taught.



What is EFT?

EFT is a powerful **new method based on the discovery that emotional trauma contributes greatly to disease.** Scientific studies have shown that EFT is able to rapidly reduce the emotional impact of memories and incidents that trigger emotional distress. Once the distress is reduced or removed, the body can often rebalance itself, and accelerate healing. Here's how you can experience this for yourself:

Try EFT yourself by

downloading our free starter package, Jumpstart Your Health With EFT. It gives you all the basics and allows you to test drive EFT on your own issues (although at a beginner's level). If you wish to dive right in you can purchase the EFT books. Caveat: For people who are emotionally or physically frail, qualified health professionals should be consulted before

using ANY health procedure, including EFT.

Peruse the many studies and experiments on our EFT Research and Science section.

Read the exhaustive list of actual cases on this website. These are written by clients, therapists and physicians and allow you to see EFT's possibilities through the eyes of those that have already been there. Note the wide variety of successes. This is why one of our sayings is, "Try it on everything."

(see the following web page for links to the above reference information:

http://test.eftuniverse.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=13&language=en)

More Benefits!

You can make **enormous strides** by introducing EFT into your emotional therapy process (whether you are a professional or a client). Instead of taking months or years using conventional "talk therapy," **EFT often does the job for you cleanly and thoroughly in one or two sessions** ... and we sometimes achieve noticeable results in a few brief rounds of EFT. We label these near-instant results as "one

minute wonders."

Once you have seen how well EFT clears out emotional debris, your next step is **to notice how physical ailments start to fade**. Headaches, back pains and other discomforts often tend to improve or vanish as emotional issues improve (this is the essence of Mind Body Medicine). Your vision may become clearer and everyday stress may take less toll on your system.

Accordingly, you can apply it to just about everything. That is one of the most astonishing things about it. You use the same basic procedure for your fear of public speaking as you do for improving your golf score. Further, people write on this site on their success with EFT for many emotional issues, including fear, trauma, depression, and grief.

Possible EFT limitations

EFT is not perfect. We don't have a 100% success rate. But it usually works well and the results are sometimes spectacular. EFT can often achieve substantial relief with little or no pain. This is not true for everyone, however. Some people's issues are so intense that the mere mention of them causes emotional or physical pain. But, given time, even

these may be resolved efficiently with EFT. If you have serious emotional or physical problems you are advised to consult your physician or licensed mental health practitioner, since EFT is not a substitute for medical or mental health treatment. You are encouraged you to share your experiences with EFT with your healthcare providers.

EFT and TN

Dear Gary,

In 1998 I was diagnosed as having trigeminal neuralgia (TN), which is said to be one of the most painful conditions known to medical science if not the most painful. For many people this is a devastating condition. In fact, just three years ago I saw a leading neurosurgeon in the UK who said he believed I suffered from a severe form of combined trigeminal neuralgia and atypical facial pain. I had always believed I could do things to help myself but at that time, I still hadn't found the answer.

Before I became experienced with EFT I was fortunate to benefit from hypnotherapy but I still felt I was trapped somehow by this terrible condition, just managing to stay out of reach

of its worst effects. However, earlier this year I was challenged again by some terrible pain.

Over the past couple of years I have used EFT to deal with any pain that has crept in and it has been very effective, something which I am very grateful for.

Â However, earlier this year I slipped back and found myself in the grip of some new pain.

Â This time it seemed as though I couldn't do anything to modify it at all, even though I tapped and tapped again I couldn't make a difference. My heart sank. However, I was determined and so I gave myself some time to truly focus on what was going on.

There had been a lot of stuff going on in my personal life and I obviously wasn't dealing with it very well.

My elder daughter had emigrated. She moved from the UK to Norway. Not such a huge distance you might say, but this was the first time she had really left home and she was going so far! Rather than a simple car drive to see her I would need to catch a couple of planes.

Two days before she left, the pain had swept into my jaw. It stayed away while I was

helping her pack and when I took her to the airport but it was there over the course of the following two days. Also, for the first time ever, this pain was determined to make its presence felt even when I was completely still and reasonably (as I thought) relaxed. It just wouldn't go. It woke me up during the night and stayed, hanging on and it was extremely unpleasant.

I became determined to tap it away. I gave myself time and I also thought about various things I tell my clients. As therapists we are very good at delivering advice but maybe not so good at following our own. And so I started tapping.

First, I tapped on my doubts of being able to make a difference for myself. I know I could work with clients but not for myself.

I also tapped on my feeling that I was unworthy of the time and effort, that I was unworthy of receiving relief and that my feelings were unimportant.

I tapped on the pain of my daughter leaving; the pain of losing my daughter and my fears for her being so far away from home.

As I was tapping on my fears I realised that my fears were reflecting my mothers fears for me and my sisters. In fact, my mothers fears of anything away from the ordinary and already experienced. Â I was feeling my mothers fears for her grand-daughter too. I realised that though I had been brought up by very good loving parents, there was a great deal of anxiety and a need to work hard and play safe.

I went on to tap on my pain and my anger at Life allowing my daughter to leave me in this way She should be near me She should be near home Why does this have to happen? My best friend is leaving.

That lead to recalling that I had to leave my best friend when I was 6 and changed schools and then again at 11 when my family moved and I hated my new home and my new school. I was very unhappy in the new town. And now my best friend is leaving me.

I kept tapping and tapping, allowed myself to make real contact with my emotions which, I realize, are usually very well hidden from me. Â I have been taught to keep them well under control and not to make a fuss or think my feelings should get in the way

of making sensible decisions.

The tapping enabled me to remove the armour and release the emotions that had been trapped underneath.

As I tapped so the tears came, and the huge emotions that were there expressed themselves and so I just kept tapping.

I felt it was indulgent of me to allow myself take time for my feelings. My feelings a voice from the past asked me: why were my feelings important? I tapped on that too!

I tapped on a huge range of factors that I realised have affected all of my life or at least, all of my life once I had learned my lessons as a Catholic child.

About an hour or more had passed by the time I had finished tapping, and guess what? Â Yes, the pain that just would not go, the pain that even extremely strong medications had failed to shift in the past, HAD GONE.

This experience not only got rid of the pain but has also done something even more important. It has given me confidence. I now know that I can deal with anything that may arise in the future. I have

believed for a long time that I could make a difference where the pain was concerned but now, I have conviction that I can do so. EFT has made that possible and I can receive the benefits of being part of that amazing creative process just in the same way that anyone else can.

Of course, as I go along and apply EFT for myself in the way of the Personal Peace Procedure as you recommend, Gary, I know I will have less and less challenges from TN and one day it will simply not be an issue in my life at all.

Oh, if anyone ever works with a client with trigeminal neuralgia, please respect their guidance about where to tap or rather, which points to avoid. Also, as talking can be very difficult this is a time to allow intuition to lead.

Oh, another result of all the tapping that I did about my daughter leaving was that, having cleared a lot of the associated emotional pain, I made room for and allowed myself to enjoy all the positive feelings: her excitement, the wonderful adventure she was embarking on, her courage and confidence in taking this huge step. Â And of course, with MSN instant messaging,

Norway is just a moment away and if ever she has a problem I can still send her positive healing energy too!

Christine Hines



Support In Group Form

Support groups are a place for people to give and receive both emotional and practical support as well as to exchange information. People with genetic health conditions, as well as their friends and families find support groups to be a valuable resource — a place where people can share medical information, get confirmation that their feelings are "normal," educate others, or just let off steam. When someone is searching for a support group, the single most important thing to remember may be: if the group doesn't feel right to you or doesn't match your needs, try a different group. There are many options available.

Why Join a Support Group

Support groups are made up of people with common interests and experiences. People who have been through, or are going through, a similar circumstance can do more than

sympathize with you — they can relate to what you are going through and keep you from feeling like you are alone.

However, many people are unaware of the additional benefits of joining a support group — support groups can be a great place to find practical tips and resources. At many support groups you can find:

- Information about medical treatments, research and strategies (through brochures, booklets, websites, telephone help lines, and person-to-person sharing in the group meetings).
- Information about public policy, legal resources, privacy laws, and protection from discrimination.
- Links to researchers.
- Information on Financial assistance.

Frequency and size of

Meetings. How frequently a group meets depends on its purpose and the needs of its members. Large groups with many chapters may have local meetings once a month and annual meetings for the whole organization. Small groups intended to address a specific

issue may meet once a week for a set number of weeks. The life span of a support group depends on its focus and the needs of its members.

Group size can also vary. One of our TN groups started with three people. Through time we grew to five ... then seven. We struggled in the beginning but kept meeting even though we were so few. Our last meeting hosted fourteen people. So size should not be 'the' factor that determines a groups' viability.

Meeting Places. Support groups can meet anywhere. Many hospitals offer support groups, but groups can also meet in individual's homes, churches or temples, libraries, or other community buildings. There are also online support groups, which may be especially helpful for people who are homebound, have limited free time to attend meetings, or don't have a group nearby that meets their needs.

TNAC has support groups in Vancouver, Lethbridge and Eastern ON. We can also link you with groups in Quebec. If you would like to join a TN support group, or if you would like assistance on starting a support group, please contact

us for information and assistance.



Contacting TNAC

For information on membership or general information:

president@tnac.org

613.936.6977

TNAC, 1602 Walton Street
Cornwall, ON, K6H 1W2

For information on support groups:

support@tnac.org

For information on advocacy:

advocacy@tnac.org

Deadlines for newsletter submissions are:

May 30th

August 30th

Nov. 30th

Feb. 28th

Please contact:

Jane (president)

613.936.6977

cmusicstudio@cogeco.ca



Wishing you all a safe, healthy and pain free Holiday Season and the happiest of New Year'!

Ann. Jane. Jaja

TNAC Board

