



## **EFFECTIVENESS OF THERAPEUTIC TECHNIQUES ON EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION**

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### **Abstract:**

*Emotional exhaustion is considered to be a very common problem as per the psychologists and experts. This syndrome occurs only when a person is unable to cope up with the daily stress including personal and professional domains. Interestingly, the factors leading to the emotional exhaustion are inter-related. It affects the mind directly making a person unable to concentrate or deal with the stress. In other words, it can be said that rapid growth of occupational pressures along with the psychological pressures may easily get translated into emotional exhaustion and may take a toll on the overall well-being of a person. Exhaustion can be described into two ways – physical and mental. It would not be wrong to state that the way a person gets exhausted physically after a lot of physical labor, similarly, a person is prone to mental exhaustion considering the organizational or industrialization scenario of the modernized society. There are theories that suggest that emotional or mental exhaustion has deeper and more effects on a person's health and wellbeing as compared to physical exhaustion. In emotional exhaustion, our immune system weakens and many serious consequences may set in. The employees may get suffocated with the long time buried emotions that do not find vent to be released timely. Therefore, it is very important to ventilate negative and depleted emotions and release the emotional exhaustion by means of interventions. This research paper focuses on a comparative analysis of effectiveness of different therapeutic techniques that ventilate negative and buried emotions. This is a step towards developing a conceptual framework for designing an optimum psychological intervention that is effective and highlight the importance of psychological intervention in ventilating buried negative emotions.*

**Key Words:** Emotional Exhaustion, Emotional Suffocation & Psychological Intervention  
**Introduction:**

Emotional exhaustion is a very serious mental health problem and is characterized by very low emotional strength and feelings. When individual are emotionally exhausted, he has probably depleted most of his emotional reserves and he have exceeded his capacity to handle emotional stress. It is almost analogous to physical exhaustion. When someone work too hard and exceed his physical strength limits, he experience exhaustion and will need to take a rest in order to replenish those energy reserves. The same applies when individual tax his emotional reserves with too much stress – he'll be no longer capable of managing it.

Numerous studies have used emotional exhaustion primarily as an outcome variable (Roy & Avdija, 2012; Griffin, Hogan, Lambert, Tucker-Gail, & Baker, 2010; Garland, 2004; Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Maslach, 1982; Lindquist & Whitehead, 1986). Few studies, however, have used emotional exhaustion as a predictor of job satisfaction or as a contributing factor that affects personal accomplishment in various occupations (Saiphon, 2010; Arabaci, 2010; Sharma, Verma, Verma, & Malhotra, 2010; Karatepe & Tekinkus, 2006; Karl & Peluchette, 2006; Mohler & Byrne, 2004). Both

emotional exhaustion and constraints of personal accomplishments have been used to measure two of the three dimensions of job burnout (Maslach, 1982). Emotional exhaustion is considered the final stage of burnout and occurs when employees feel fatigued, overwhelmed, and emotionally drained by their job (Maslach, 1981; Griffin, Hogan, Lambert, et al., 2010). Such effect is frequently manifested in the reduction of job effectiveness and productivity (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Nonetheless, emotional exhaustion is an independent construct, and as such, it can be studied independently or in conjunction with other variables. As an independent construct, emotional exhaustion can be used both as a predictor and as an outcome variable. Emotional exhaustion is one of the three dimensions of job burnout. In this context, it is noteworthy that there is a host of factors that produce work-related emotional exhaustion; namely excessive stress, demanding job expectations both physical and psychological, underemployment, inadequate pay, lack of recognition, demand for perfectionism, etc. (Hatenen, Kinnunen, Pekkonen, & Kalimo, 2007; Wilk & Moynihan, 2005; Diefendorff & Richard, 2003; Zapf, 2002; van Dierendonck, Schaufeli, & Buunk, 1998; Zohar, 1997; Maslach, 1993; Lindquist & Whitehead, 1986; Dignam, Barrera, & West, 1986). This, in turn, has a subsequent effect which is manifested with a decrease in job satisfaction. Both satisfaction and dissatisfaction are viewed as a function of perceived relationship between what an individual wants from his or her job and what that individual perceives it as offering or entailing.

We also see that emotional exhaustion also reduces the sense of reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion can be particularly difficult for an individual to continue his or her active resistance against constraints that limit his or her personal accomplishment. In this context, emotional exhaustion becomes part of a set of constraints on personal accomplishment. Overall, the review of literature shows that emotional exhaustion reduced personal accomplishment, and job satisfaction. Emotional or mental exhaustion has deeper and more effects on a person's health and wellbeing as compared to physical exhaustion. In emotional exhaustion, our immune system weakens and many serious consequences may set in.

So, this is an issue of concern to reduce the emotional exhaustion. Such studies are therefore needed, in addition to knowledge about factors predicting or being associated with such course over time. On this background of literature, a short-term intervention has been investigated in the present paper. Researches deeply examined four techniques to ventilate emotion exhaustion.

#### **Techniques Identified for Psychological Intervention:**

1. Jacobson Progressive Muscle Relaxation
2. Cognitive Restructuring
3. Guided Imagery
4. Reading Scripture

#### **Objective:**

To analyse the effectiveness of therapeutic techniques for ventilating emotional exhaustion

#### **Relative Comparison of Techniques for Ventilating Emotional Exhaustion:**

**Jacobson Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** "Once the body achieves a state of neuromuscular homeostasis, the mind will follow suit"- *Edmund Jacobson*. Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) found and perfected by **Edmund Jacobson** premise that, '*mental calmness is a natural result of physical relaxation*'. Jacobson carefully studied the relationship between muscular tension and various disorders of the body and psyche. ***Stress and anxiety is strongly associated with muscle tension.***

A study Pawlow and Jones (2005) found that patients who practiced progressive muscle relaxation showed a decreased amount of cortisol, which typically increases during the body's response to stress. In 2001 study, this therapy was found to decrease anxiety and improve quality of life for patients recovering from attacks. Another study Paula, Carvalho and Santos (2002) found that patients experienced a decreased sensation of pain after using this therapy. **Jacobson** understood that individuals need to relieve muscular tension in order to reach a state of overall deep relaxation.

A meta-analysis Luebbert, Dahme and hasenbring (2001) examined the effectiveness of relaxation training among patients undergoing acute non-surgical cancer treatment. In 14 of 15 studies reviewed, PMR, guided imagery and other modalities were lumped together and evaluated for their effects on symptom control. The review concluded that clinically significant reductions in nausea, pain, anxiety, depression, hostility and physical arousal (blood pressure and pulse) were achieved following relaxation training.

When individuals are mentally stressed, they unconsciously tense their muscles. Tension held in muscles adds physical discomfort or pain. It will commonly show up as a headache, backache, stomachache, or concentrate on face, neck and shoulders - making the mental stress even worse. Progressive muscle relaxation techniques break this recurring stressed-mind/tense-muscle cycle. The most significant element is that personality is dominated by its unconscious aspects. Individuals attempt to change it analytically or cognitively through the conscious mind. But intellectual insight alone does not help as drives, mood states, motivation, and other personality components are very difficult to handle with these procedures. Emotional immaturity, emptiness, needs for immediate gratification, escapist, manipulative and irrational attitudes, seems extremely resistant to change by intellectual means therefore relaxation is important to prepare the mind of the individual to receive any other thought.

**Cognitive Restructuring** in cognitive therapy is the process of learning to refute cognitive distortions, or fundamental "faulty thinking," with the goal of replacing one's irrational, counter-factual beliefs with more accurate and beneficial ones. CBT makes use of a range of techniques to help individuals transform their maladaptive cognitive appraisals into adaptive, evidence based appraisals (Beck & Dozois, 2011). Cognitive restructuring has durable effects on fear responding. One recent study directly investigated the cognitive mechanisms involved in traumatic writing by assigning subjects particular goals when writing about past traumas, such as finding benefits in the experience or re-experiencing the sensations involved (Guastella and Dadds, 2006). They found that of all subjects, those best able to neutralize the physical and mental distress associated with the incident were those assigned to seek new ways to alter their thinking about the incident ("devaluation condition). The results from this study highlight the benefits of restructuring specifically, and show that it is not necessarily revisiting the experience that confers benefits but the ability to relive it in a new way other types of cognitive restructuring have also been shown to be beneficial for health. Writing about stressors, has been demonstrated to confer various long-term health benefits. In a series of studies, Pennebaker has assigned subjects to write for a short time on several consecutive days about either superficial topics or about the things that were most troubling and traumatic to them. Using this and similar paradigms, **Pennebaker** and others (1992) have shown that writing about emotionally traumatic incidents can reduce frequency of physician visits (Francis and Pennebaker,1992), boost the immune system (Petrie et al., 1998), reduce self reported physical symptoms and depression (Greenberg and Stone,1992), and improve chronic conditions such as

asthma and arthritis (Smythe et al., 1999). The majority of these effects are long-term rather than acute effects, being measured months after the initial study.

*Cognitive Restructuring* is a very powerful therapy technique which has been adapted to help people cope with all manner of stressful events and conditions. Yet, one drawback of this technique is that it is difficult for people to learn it in a self-help mode (without the assistance of a therapist). If one really wants to learn how to do cognitive restructuring, it is recommended that individuals work with an experienced cognitive behavioral therapist over the course of 10 to 15 weekly sessions that will help in emotional ventilation.

**Guided Imagery: Helen Lindquist Bonny** (1921 – 2010) was a music therapist who developed "Guided Imagery and Music" often referred to as "GIM". Guided imagery engages the power of imagination to assist patients in managing the stress and anxiety that can impede progress toward functional rehabilitation goals. According to some studies Roffe, Schmidt and Ernst (2005) guided imagery may help reduce some of the side effects of standard cancer treatment. A review of 46 studies that were conducted from 1966 to 1998 suggested that guided imagery may be helpful in managing stress, anxiety, and depression and in lowering blood pressure, reducing pain, and reducing some side effects of chemotherapy.

Another review in 2002 noted that imagery was possibly helpful for anxiety, as well as anticipatory nausea and vomiting from chemotherapy. A 2006 review of clinical trials of imagery found that only 3 studies showed improvement in anxiety and comfort during chemotherapy. Two other studies showed no difference between those who used imagery and those who used other measures. In addition, a clinical trial involving women with early-stage breast cancer found guided imagery helped to ease anxiety related to radiation therapy, including fears about the equipment, surgical pain, and recurrence of cancer.

The goal of **guided imagery** is to get rid of the negative thoughts and images and replace them with a more calming, relaxing image. Individuals mind does not necessarily know the difference between "real" and "imagined" and one can therefore physically and emotionally react to an image in their mind. This often works to our disadvantage, as in a report, "Mental imagery in anxiety disorders" a study Huebscher and Shuler (2003) showed that participants with social phobia who imagined a "negative self-image" while holding a conversation with someone didn't know they felt anxious and "believed they looked more anxious." On the other hand, those who imagined themselves not being anxious rated themselves as calmer and pictured themselves not looking as anxious.

**Reading Scripture** on a daily basis will cause unexplainable joy, a peace that passes all understanding, overflowing love mountain moving faith, a knowledge of his God and perfect plan and ever rising strength, blessings that individuals neither ask for or imagine. Thus the scriptures become a road map, a set of divine directions to assist on journey through mortality and a return trip home. For example, the **Bhagvad Gita** is fast emerging as a clinical tool to treat certain psychological problems, particularly those related to anxiety, examination and interview fears, depression and a negative attitude towards life and career goals. Sustained counseling by applying different psychological methods, as Krishna did to Arjuna, has been quite helpful in clinical practice. A study by **Jeremy Weber (2012)** found that higher levels of Bible engagement were correlated to six actions:

- Confessing wrong doings to God and asking forgiveness

- Believing in Jesus Christ as the only way to heaven and the number of years one has believed this
- Making a decision to obey or follow God with awareness that choosing to do so might be costly.
- Praying for the spiritual status of people they know is not professing Christians
- Reading a book about increasing their spiritual growth.
- Having been disciple or mentored one-on-one by a more spiritually mature Christian. (47% of churchgoers say they have been disciple or mentored.)

**President Benson, in the April 1986** general conference, expressed these thoughts: "However diligent individuals may be in other areas, certain blessings are to be found only in the scriptures, only in coming to the word of the Lord and holding fast to it as we make our way through the mists of darkness to the tree of life."

#### **Discussion and Conclusion:**

This paper is a summary of a systematic review of the evidence for the effectiveness of psychological interventions in the prevention and treatment of Emotional exhaustion. It highlights the significance of Therapeutic Techniques for the reduction of emotional exhaustion. There is extensive evidence demonstrating that psychotherapy can be an efficacious and effective health care service for a wide range of commonly experienced mental health and health conditions.

Similar to earlier attempts to summarize and make sense of the many study results, this one finds benefits for all of the four psychotherapies examined, and none of them stood as being much better than some or all others. The scientific support for being beneficial was stronger for some therapies, mostly because they had been tested more often and in larger studies. Treatments with proven benefits still do not necessarily work for all individuals, and which type of psychotherapy might work best for a particular individual likely depends on that individual. So overall this analysis suggests that individual with emotional exhaustion and his therapist should consider psychotherapies and explore which of the different types might be best suited for particular individuals.

The study also points to the need for further research. Whereas emotion exhaustion affects individual at a large. In addition, large high-quality studies should further explore the potential benefits of some of therapies for which less support currently exists. Where possible, future studies should compare psychotherapies with one another, because all of them have benefits, and it would not be ethical to withhold such beneficial treatment from individuals.

It is seen that only one therapeutic technique is not very useful in ventilating negative and buried emotions. However, use of more than one technique collectively together instead of using single one is recommended.

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