Humor Therapy
by permission of the American Cancer Society

Other common name(s): laugh therapy

Scientific name(s): none

Description
Humor therapy is the use of humor for the relief of physical or emotional pain and stress. It is used as a complementary method to promote health and cope with illness.

Overview
Although available scientific evidence does not support claims that laughter can cure cancer or any other disease, it can reduce stress and enhance a person’s quality of life. Humor has physical effects because it can stimulate the circulatory system, immune system, and other systems in the body.

How is it promoted for use?
Humor therapy is generally used to improve quality of life, provide pain relief, encourage relaxation, and reduce stress. Researchers have described different types of humor. Passive humor results from seeing prepared material, such as watching a funny movie or stand-up comedy or reading an amusing book. Spontaneous or unplanned humor involves finding humor in everyday situations. Being able to find humor in life can be helpful when dealing with cancer.

What does it involve?
The physical effects of laughter on the body include increased breathing, increased oxygen use, short-term changes in hormones and certain neurotransmitters, and increased heart rate. Many hospitals and treatment centers have set up special rooms with humorous materials for the purpose of making people laugh, such as movies, audio recordings, books, games, and puzzles. Many hospitals use volunteers who visit patients for the purpose of making them laugh. Some cancer treatment centers offer humor therapy in addition to standard treatments.

What is the history behind it?
Humor has been used in medicine throughout recorded history. One of the earliest mentions of the health benefits of humor is in the book of Proverbs in the Bible. As early as the thirteenth century, some surgeons used humor to distract patients from the pain of surgery. Humor was also widely used and studied by the medical community in the early twentieth century. In more modern times, the most famous story of humor therapy involved Norman Cousins, then editor of the Saturday Review. According to the story, Mr. Cousins cured himself of an unknown illness with a self-invented regimen of laughter and vitamins.

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Karen's Kolumn

I am experiencing more joy and happiness recently. Although I do my best to remain positive and upbeat, sometimes sadness would overwhelm me. I wanted to just stay in bed all day.

Luckily, the universe provides. In my case a dear friend, Kat Cunningham, wrote a lifechanging book, Kat's 9.

Lives of Self Discovery.

I inventoried my Passion Qualities and decided to let them lead my life. As a result my values of humor/healing/service are balancing the mood swings and relieving stress.

It is so much easier to Make choices one at a time that support what is meaningful to me.

The Edge
by Jacob Wurzel

“The only reason for time is so that everything doesn't happen at once.” -Albert Einstein

Or does it? Jacob Wenzel explores in minute detail the possibilities that can occur when a time traveler introduces an intelligent cave woman to the Macroverse.

Tralalililea is banished from her cave clan for the heretical belief the world is round and that rituals to beg the Sun to return daily may be unnecessary.

William invents a way to surf time while searching for the edge of the Macroverse in his converted Winnebago guided by his computer Bob.

Wenzel creates a satirical look at conventional wisdom and customs as his protagonists discover: a world in which King Arthur has ruled for 1500 years, and intelligent dragons keep kosher, a world ruled by a tyrant parrot, a world where Feng-Shui Masters control the weather and geological events, and many others.

As I read along I found myself both chuckling and thinking. No matter your philosophical persuasion there is plenty of food for thought and laughter along the way to The Edge.

Kat is starting a virtual Camp Passionista to assist others who want to brand their personal, business and community life with their essence Passion Qualities.

Karen Lee,
Chief Cook & Bottlewasher

Subscription form to have your free Laughter Rx delivered to your inbox on the first of every month.

Our heroine was a young woman named Tralalililea Mundopote Exni-Sodge, which is roughly equivalent to 'Sally’’
Circulating nurse, regarding scrub nurse: “We call her by her Indian name, Running Commentary.”

MRI tech, while positioning a large patient (under anesthesia, luckily) in the scanner: “Get the Crisco!”

RNFA: “Should I stab the surgeon or the medical student? I choose the medical student.”

RN to patient: "Do you have any questions?" Patient: "Is there a God?"

What's the difference between a nun & a nurse? A nun only has to serve 1 God.

"Take two tons of aspirin and call me in the morning."
Humor Therapy Cont’d.

What is the evidence?
Available scientific evidence does not support humor as an effective treatment for cancer or any other disease; however, laughter has many benefits, including positive physical changes and an overall sense of well-being. One study found the use of humor led to an increase in pain tolerance. It is thought laughter causes the release of special neurotransmitter substances in the brain called endorphins that help control pain. Another study found that neuroendocrine and stress-related hormones decreased during episodes of laughter. These findings provide support for the claim that humor can relieve stress. More studies are needed to clarify the impact of laughter on health.

Are there any possible problems or complications?
Humor therapy is considered safe when used with conventional medical therapy. It can be harmful if used to avoid difficult or delicate issues that are important to you or your family. Laughter can also cause temporary pain after some types of surgery. This improves as the body heals and causes no lasting harm.

Relying on this type of treatment alone and avoiding or delaying conventional medical care for cancer may have serious health consequences.

References


Note: This information may not cover all possible claims, uses, actions, precautions, side effects or interactions. It is not intended as medical advice, and should not be relied upon as a substitute for consultation with your doctor, who is familiar with your medical situation.

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Last Revised: 11/01/2008

Summer Heat

Now we know why the price of gas is so high...the heat wave popped all the ethanol corn.
It's so hot, the birds have cancelled their winter migration.

At least the summer heat didn't ruin my NY vacation...I took the family for a swim...at the Ice Rink at Rockefeller Center.
It's so hot...my ice cubes need ice cubes.
I couldn't escape the heat indoors, I had to fit all the windows with sunscreens.
Something is wrong with this country when my car radiator is cooler than I am.
Yah, it's officially a hot summer...all the Maine lobsters come out of the sea pre boiled.

Photo by Monkey Mash Button