

## Reflexology Intervention Protocol

**Intervention:** Reflexology

**Domain:** Physical/Emotional

**Population:** All

**Goals:** To improve relaxation, decrease pain, improve health

**Number of clients:** 3 +

**Time:** 1 hour

**Supplies:** Music (cd player); reflexology chart(s); breathing exercise (or other relaxation strategies); other props to enhance reflexology/relaxation experience; reflexology pamphlet

**General Purpose:** To assist clients improve their personal coping skills for improving their well-being through teaching them the benefits and general techniques of reflexology.

**Population:** All populations who can benefit from a complementary intervention to improve wellness.

**Program Description:** Reflexology is an excellent intervention that has evidence backing its beneficial outcomes. Reflexology can be used in group setting or on a one on one basis to teach clients an intervention they can do on their own as a complementary therapy to other treatments they are receiving.

**Client Problems that may be Addressed:** Reflexology has been around for over 3000 years and has been shown to help decrease anxiety, pain, digestion problems, stress, insomnia, tension, and blood pressure issues among others.

**Contraindicated Criteria:** Some clients may have physical limitation such as paralysis or a traumatic injury that may need additional adaptation for the client to participate.

**Intervention Activity:** Depending on the population (high/low functioning) explain what reflexology is and its benefits. Demonstrate to the clients a variety of reflexology points that they can implement on their own to produce the intended benefit.

**Staff Training and Certification Requirements:** Each staff member should be certified and licensed (if applicable) as a certified therapeutic recreation specialist (CTRS) and be required to maintain his or her licensure and certification. Moreover, each staff member should be trained



and educated in reflexology; understanding the benefits and/or risks that are involved in using reflexology as an intervention.

**Risk Management Considerations:** Similar to any physical activity, injury can occur if not done properly. Staff should be familiar with any serious illness/injury that your client may be experiencing so that you can provide appropriate adaptations. Moreover, staff should not directly touch the client, but rather teach the client the techniques for them to use on themselves.

**Anticipated Outcomes:** Clients will understand the benefits of reflexology and how they can implement it on their own. With regular participation, clients will decrease stress, improve sleep, increase energy, and decrease pain.

**Program Evaluation:** Staff will ask clients about their experience with reflexology and how they felt before and after the interventions indentifying validity of the use of reflexology as an appropriate intervention for their clients.

**Description:**

- Position residents in a semi-circle
- Introduce yourself and learn everyone's name (get name tags if necessary)
- Explain what reflexology is
  - Reflexology is the practice of applying pressure to areas of the hands, feet, and ears. It is commonly relaxing and has been shown, through research, to assist in improving wellness. Reflexology has been shown to aid in improving sleep, decreasing stress, decreasing anxiety, improving digestion, and decreasing pain, among other benefits.
  - The theory behind reflexology is based on the idea that a map of the body is reflected on the hands, feet and ears; our nerves in our feet and hands are tied to different areas in the body. And, by applying alternating pressure to specific points on the hands and feet you are able to affect various organs and other parts of the body.
    - Display foot and hand chart
  - Reflexology has been shown to balance the nervous system by stimulating the nerve endings of the feet, which connect with the spinal nerves and their corresponding organs. It works with the circulatory system, breaking up congestion and deposits in the feet, which in turn help detoxify the body.
- History
  - Reflexology can be dated back to the ancient Egyptians and as long as 4000 B.C. in China; it was considered an ancient form of therapy.

- It was introduced in the United States in the early 1900's by a doctor who noticed his clients pain was diminishing when he applied pressure to his patients hands and ears.
- Developed further, by Eunice D. Ingham, in the 1940s, Ingham argued that our hands and feet are considered a particularly sensitive part of our body, and reflect different areas of the body. She developed a guide, mapping the body into a variety of zones or "reflexes." Current reflexologist's utilize Ingham's techniques in their modern day practices.
- Benefits/Research
  - Evidence based research suggests the following:
    - Increase in blood flow
      - Research shows improved blood flow to feet and hands with regular practice.
    - Improves relaxation, decrease stress and anxiety
      - 24 studies showed that reflexology decreased blood pressure, decreased tension, reduced pulse rate, and anxiety.
    - Reduces pain
      - Researchers from University of Portsmouth, found that individuals utilizing reflexology felt 40% less pain after several sessions.
    - Reduces nausea
      - Researchers showed that reflexology significantly reduced symptoms of nausea for individuals receiving chemotherapy.
    - Improves quality of life
      - A study showed reflexology improved quality of life in women with late stage cancer.
- Types of ways to implement
  - On feet, hands, and ears by applying pressure in a variety of ways.
  - Show chart of reflexology, stating that when you become comfortable you can use the chart as a guide to address other areas of your body.
- Intervention
  - Show ways to implement:
    - Using golf ball
    - Tennis ball
    - Prop
    - And hand
  - Do exercises with hands then explain benefits:
    - Digestion/Nausea
      - Interlace fingers

- Bring the “heal” of both of the palms together and begin to roll/massage the heals together for 10 seconds
- Relax and repeat 5 times to assist in improving digestion
- Stress
  - Located in the center of the hand
  - Place your thumb and index finger of your opposite hand and begin to apply pressure in that area for 30 seconds
  - Relax and repeat 5 times to assist in decreasing stress
- Pain—specifically the back
  - Located on the side of the thumb
  - Massage/walk your opposite thumb up and down the side of your thumb for a few minutes
- Boost energy and improve relaxation
  - Apply pressure between the thumb and index finger and rub upwards toward the base of the thumb
  - Rub/massage for up to 30 seconds
- Ask clients to now choose the exercise they want to implement for the next 5 minutes and while engaging in the reflexology intervention they will do a breathing exercise as well
- Breathing exercise
  - Inhale for a count of 5
  - Exhale for a count of 5
  - Continue for 5 minutes
- Following the intervention, ask clients about their experience, how they can implement this on their own, and if they feel more relaxed.
- Thank everyone for attending and hand out brochure.
- End