

Humor Therapy/Laughter Therapy/ Therapeutic Humor

Humor



***What is it?** Humor Therapy is also called Laughter Therapy and Therapeutic Humor. Humor therapy is the art of using humor and laughter to help heal with the aid of smiles and laughter. It uses humor to relieve physical and emotional issues. Chronic diseases have a negative effect on mood and attitude, which can make the disease worse. Humor therapy helps reduce the negative effects of feeling unhealthy, out of control, afraid, or helpless, which are common problems for those with cancer and chronic diseases. It appears to change brain chemistry and may boost the immune system. Humor may allow a person to feel in control of a situation and make it seem more manageable. It allows people to release fears, anger, and stress, all of which can harm the body over time. Humor improves the quality of life. Laughter makes you feel good. And this positive feeling remains with you even after the laughter subsides. Humor helps you keep a positive, optimistic outlook through difficult situations, disappointments, and loss.

Examples: clowns and superheros visiting the children's ward of a hospital to cheer up sick children. Movies, games, books, portable humor carts, and visiting volunteer groups are other common humor therapy tools used for sick patients.

***How does it help?** Humor therapy has been known to help lower stress and stress hormones in the body; aids in releasing fears, anger, and anxiety; boost the immune system; improves mood and ones outlook on life; makes a person feel more in control of their life; strengthens a connection with others; laughing releases endorphins, the body's natural painkiller; laughing also increases breathing, oxygen use, stimulates the respiratory and circulatory system; laughter triggers the release of endorphins; laughter protects the heart; laughter burns calories; laughter lightens angers heavy load, laughter may even help you to live longer; lowers stress hormones; relaxes your muscles; decreases pain; adds joy to life; strengthens resilience; strengthens relationships; helps defuse conflict; helps you stay mentally healthy.

***Resources:** <https://www.cigna.com/individuals-families/health-wellness/hw/medical-topics/humor-therapy-aa93107>; <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31488780/>; <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTHLIBRARY/docs/Healing-Benefits-of-Humor-Laughter.pdf>; **Books:** Humor Therapy : The Art of Smiling for Others, David Mann; Laughter Therapy : Discover How to Use Laughter and Humor for Healing, Stress Relief, Improved Health, Increased Emotional Wellbeing and a More Joyful and Happy Life, ACE Mccloud.

***Comments/tips:** The movie Patch Adams was inspired by the true story of Hunter "Patch" Adams, who was a medical doctor who humor with his patients. Try watching funny movies, etc. when you are feeling down to see if that helps change your mood.