

<b>COMPLAINT NUMBER</b>	17/099
<b>COMPLAINANT</b>	M Honeychurch
<b>ADVERTISER</b>	Eft-emofree
<b>ADVERTISEMENT</b>	Eft-emofree, Digital Marketing
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	26 September 2017
<b>OUTCOME</b>	Upheld

## SUMMARY

The website for Eft-emofree, [www.eft-emofree.com](http://www.eft-emofree.com), advertises a cancer retreat service using the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) to aid the body's self-healing process.

The Complainant said the advertisement made claims of a therapeutic nature which were misleading and unsubstantiated and contained testimonials which implied unrealistic outcomes, likely to unduly influence vulnerable audiences.

The Complaints Board noted the Advertiser had made changes to the website content and testimonials. The Complaints Board agreed that amendments made to the testimonials were not sufficient to settle the complaint.

The Complaints Board said the testimonials in the advertisement contained unsubstantiated claims which could be misleading and implied unrealistic outcomes. These claims breached the Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code, Principle 1, Rule 1(c) and Principle 2 and Rule 2(a).

The Complaints Board ruled the advertisement had not observed the high standard of social responsibility required of an advertisement for a service which consumers may rely on for their health and wellbeing.

The Complaints Board ruled the complaint was Upheld.

### **[Advertisement to be Amended/Removed]**

Please note this headnote does not form part of the Decision.

---

## COMPLAINTS BOARD DECISION

The Chair directed the Complaints Board to consider the complaint with reference to Principles 1 and 2 and Rules 1(c) and 2(a) of the Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code. The Complaints Board was required to consider whether the advertisement was truthful, balanced and not misleading, likely to mislead, deceive or confuse consumers, abuse their trust, exploit their lack of knowledge or without justifiable reason, play on fear, including by implication, omission, ambiguity, exaggerated or unrealistic claim or hyperbole. The Board was asked to consider whether the advertisement portrayed unrealistic outcomes or prey on or misrepresent

vulnerable audiences. The Board noted therapeutic claims should be accurate and statements and claims should be valid and able to be substantiated and the use of scientific language should be appropriate to, and readily understood by, the audience to whom it is directed. The Board noted that therapeutic and health advertisements should observe a high standard of social responsibility particularly as consumers often rely on such products, devices and services for their health and wellbeing.

### **The Complaints Board ruled the complaint was Upheld.**

#### **The Complaint**

The Complainant was concerned about misleading claims on the website about EFT and the connection to the treatment of cancer and that the advertisement was making unrealistic claims about the effectiveness and outcomes of the service on offer.

#### **The Advertiser Response**

The Advertiser said they were careful about the claims made on the website and referenced Dr Bruce Lipton on the subject of Epigenetics. The Advertiser defended the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) and maintained the testimonials reinforced the claims made.

#### **The Complaints Board Discussion**

The Chair of the Complaints Board advised that following discussion with the Secretariat the Advertiser had made changes to the website to assist with code compliance. However, concerns remained about testimonials.

The Complaints Board agreed that despite some amendments, the testimonials in the advertisement contained unsubstantiated content. It said that cancer is a serious disease and the testimonials contained strongly worded headings and some content that related to cancer and cancer outcomes. The Complaints Board was of the view that these were potentially misleading. It also noted that no evidence had been provided to authenticate the testimonials. The Complaints Board considered some of the references to cancer went beyond what was acceptable to claim in a testimonial taking into account the requirements of the Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code.

The Complaints Board said testimonials used in the advertisement implied therapeutic benefits because of the references to specific cancers and the lack of substantiation. The Complaints Board considered there was potential to mislead vulnerable audiences, who may be suffering from cancer, as to the likely outcome of taking part in the retreat.

The Complaints Board ruled the advertisement had not observed the high standard of social responsibility required of an advertisement for a service which consumers may rely on for their health and wellbeing.

The Complaints Board said there had been a breach of the Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code, Principle 1, Guideline 1(c) and Principle 2, Guideline 2(a).

Accordingly, the Complaints Board ruled to Uphold the complaint.

---

### **DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT**

The website for Eft-emofree, [www.eft-emofree.com](http://www.eft-emofree.com), advertises a cancer retreat service aimed at using the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) to aid the body's self-healing process.

## COMPLAINT FROM M HONEYCHURCH

Jasmina Kovacev offers a cancer retreat in New Zealand where it is claimed that with EFT and other alternative therapies, "the body can often reactivate self healing once the emotional blockages are removed, and coping skills are implemented". The suggestion here is that these therapies can aid in treating cancer, through removal of "blockages" that are stopping the body from healing itself.

This claim is therapeutic in nature, and appears to be in breach of the ASA's Therapeutic and Health Advertising code Rule 1(c). This advert portrays a realistic outcome that paying money to attend the retreat will increase a cancer sufferer's chance of recovering. It also breaches Rule 2(a), as this claim is not accurate.

Finally, Rule 2(f) is breached as the testimonials on this page have not been shown to be genuine:

<http://www.eft-emofree.com/HealthConditions.html>

### Pancreas Cancer

Client was send home with words: "Mainstream can not offer anything else for you. You have 6-8 months to live." She was put in touch with Hospice as a support. 18 months are gone since and she feels much better then a year ago. Hospice support was not required. "I was diagnosed with pancreas cancer in 2004 and had a surgery in December 2004. Everything was fine till February 2007. Then internal bleeding started. My hemoglobin level was very low (58, and normal range is 115-160). I was so weak; I hardly managed to move around my home. Blood transfusion was given to me 3 times and each time 3 units were given (unit is 300ml). While in hospital, the CAT scan detected that pancreas cancer was back. I went through radio therapy to stop bleeding and then was sent home with words that I have 6-8 months to live. Doctor said that my hemoglobin will be going down and it is what is expected to happen. I felt lost and did not know what to do. At that time Jasmina introduced me to the work she does that is based on Energy Psychology primarily EFT. She worked with me few hours every week. I also attended her level one and level two EFT workshops. I also started working on myself more and Jasmina was always there to help when I was not able to resolve something by myself. EFT helped me to resolve negative emotions from childhood and different traumas from my life that were stored in my body. My condition is now stabilized; hemoglobin level is for a while at level of 100. I am still using EFT on a regular basis and my 8 months are behind me." M.P. Lower Hutt

### Cancer – concern for the future

Client had a fear from what will be found during the surgery and how it will affect his life. After one session his comment was: "I can see my life in different light. If I was before where I am now, I would be 10 000 more productive." G.H.

### Fear of hospital, fear of needles, traumas, cancer

"This year, prior to working with Jasmina, I was diagnosed with cancer and have used my sessions with Jasmina to work through all the feelings that have come out of this, side effects of treatments and other traumas and beliefs that I have carried with me throughout 30 plus years. EFT has been particularly helpful for me in freeing myself of past traumas associated with many surgeries in my childhood. These hospital and surgery experiences were virtually impossible to get out of my system and affected me in all my relationships. I also was terrified to go back into hospital and have the operation that I needed. With EFT, I found that I could neutralise these experiences and I was very relaxed going into hospital for my surgery. Now, when I look back at what happened in my past, events seem just as events, and there are no feelings attached. For the first time, I have seen the possibility of a life free of past issues and

sparks of excitement of a future life full of possibilities and joy. I feel very hopeful of healing my cancer and also going on to live a life full of fun and joy." A.F.

#### Bowel cancer

Client came to me one month after the surgery with lot of pain in liver area. After surgery she was told that 9 months of chemo is required and she refused that option. "Sessions helped me a lot with pain. Even on the first session pain in liver area lessened quite a bit. I have also experienced monumental change – I am much happier and freer. The biggest thing for me was that I was able to liberate myself from the past events and beliefs that were affecting me without me being aware of that. Once in my life I was free. Related directly to cancer – I stopped being fearful. Our sessions started one month after the surgery and instruction to have chemo. I have refused chemo and in very short period of time I was told that I am clear from cancer. I can not tell how much our sessions contributed to it, but I do feel that they have played an important role."

### THERAPEUTIC AND HEALTH ADVERTISING CODE

**Principle 1:** Therapeutic and Health advertisements shall observe a high standard of social responsibility particularly as consumers often rely on such products, devices and services for their health and wellbeing.

**Rule 1(c):** Advertisements should not portray unrealistic outcomes or prey on or misrepresent vulnerable audiences (e.g. sick, elderly, pregnant women, overweight people).

**Principle 2:** Advertisements shall be truthful, balanced and not misleading. Advertisements shall not mislead or be likely to mislead, deceive or confuse consumers, abuse their trust, exploit their lack of knowledge or without justifiable reason, play on fear. This includes by implication, omission, ambiguity, exaggerated or unrealistic claim or hyperbole.

**Rule 2(a):** Advertisements shall be accurate. Statements and claims shall be valid and shall be able to be substantiated. Substantiation should exist prior to a claim being made. For medicines and medical devices, therapeutic claims must be consistent with the approved indication(s) (for medicines) or the listed intended purpose (for medical devices).

### RESPONSE FROM ADVERTISER: EFT EMOFREE

I am very careful with my claims and that makes me surprised that someone who is from Society for Science Based Healthcare would complain. Looks like whoever is writing from that society does not follow development in science, epigenetics...

Leading scientists in epigenetics, Dr Bruce Lipton number of times said "Change your perception and that will rewrite your chemistry". Looks like that Society for Science Based Healthcare have never heard of that.

There is so much research in this field proving that what DR Bruce Lipton is saying is very true and valid.

I cannot see that I am giving any therapeutic claims in the statement that "The body can often reactivate self-healing once when emotional blockages are removed and coping skills are implemented." Do you see the therapeutic claim? I would love to get your comments.

Related to testimonials I am speechless that honest testimonials from clients can not be put on the site of the service.

When I go to mechanic shop, I am not interested if his workshop is clean, how polite he is... I am interested what he will do for my car. Surely it helps if he is nice and tidy, but that is not why I am going to him.

The same writer of this complain is claiming that the testimonials on the page have not been shown to be genuine. How dares he to claim something like that with no proof?

How seriously you can take claims of the NGO with assumption like this?

How seriously you can take claims of the NGO that does not know or does not want to know what is really happening in the science?

By its nature, emotions are energy. Emotional Freedom Technique is now accepted based on the peer review (over 50) in US as evidence based results by their Association of Psychologies.

I am qualified EFT practitioner and EFT Master Trainer and I can not claim that EFT can help resolving emotions, fears, anxieties (anxiety is just another name of fears)? What I can say what it is that I do.

My clients cannot say that they resolved their issues and what was their issue?

Looks like that something is gone terribly wrong in the area of supporting other fellow humans. Looks like that those who do not have a genuine interest in supporting fellow humans are managing to put all kinds of unbelievable obstacles.

Sorry for freely expressing my dissatisfaction with this unfair treatment of my profession and anyone who is not part of mainstream and pharmaceutical industry. I still can not believe that this is happening here in New Zealand.

#### **FURTHER FROM THE ADVERTISER:**

I will make all changes suggested. It all sounds ridiculous, but looks like that at the moment I have to play that game that makes no sense.

Related testimonials being signed – there are people that do not want to have their name published. Some of them even did not tell their closest friends or family that they had it. There is still a stigma that goes with cancer – perceived among some people. They should not be forced to sign their testimonial.