

Emotions Impact Deep for Highly Sensitive Person

Harry Hong Ph.D. L.Ac.

According to Dr. Elaine Aron, the author of the national bestseller, *Highly Sensitive Person (HSP)*, about 15-20% of the population may have the trait of high sensitivity. Being an HSP your nervous system is more sensitive to your surroundings. Your brain reacts deeper to the signals sent by your sense organs. You are easily over stimulated, stressed out and overwhelmed by stresses others think nothing of. According to Dr. Elaine Aron, you are probably a HSP if you:

- Are easily overwhelmed by such things as bright lights, strong smells, coarse fabrics, or sirens nearby
- Become stressed when you have a lot to do in a short amount of time
- Need to withdraw after a busy day, into a place where you can have privacy and relief from the situation
- Notice or enjoy delicate or fine scents, tastes, sounds, or works of art
- Have a rich and complex inner life
- When you were a child, your parents or teachers see you as a sensitive or shy kid

Psychological aspect of the HSP has been well studied. However, physiological aspect of The Highly Sensitive has never been well studied. Here I introduce a new term, the Highly Sensitive Body (HSB), a model system to study physiological characteristics of this special population, their unique health concerns and the special lifestyle and dietary requirements for them to maintain a healthy and balanced life. One of the important characteristics of the HSB is the sensitivity to emotions. Emotions impact deeper to the HSB and more easily cause long-term psychological, behavioral and physiological issues.

All of the body's critical functions such as heart beat, blood pressure, hormone secretion, immune function and digestion are controlled automatically by autonomic nervous system and the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis. Our conscious mind is not able to control these functions except during stress situation. When danger comes, the conscious mind sends stress signal to the autonomic nervous system and triggers "fight and flight" response, a cascade of neural and hormonal responses that cause an increase of heart rate and blood pressure to supply blood to the brain and muscles as well as a decrease of blood flow to internal organs. After the danger passes, the stress signal stops and the body's function returns to normal.

Modern lifestyle such as busy schedule, lack of sleep, overuse of the brain function is often the source of stress to blame for developing chronic illnesses. However, emotional stress, a factor that

sometimes can be over-looked, is one of the main stress signals sent from the conscious mind. Emotion is a subjective experience or feeling of the consciousness. Emotion is not only the driving force behind motivation and decision making but also hidden factor leading to physiological consequences. A deeper impact from emotions due to the sensitive nature of the HSB may lead to a unique profile of clinical symptoms and imbalances.

Ancient Chinese medicine believes that emotion is an energetic activity within the body's energetic network called meridians. Modern energy medicine further suggests that inside our body there exists an energetic controlling system corresponding to the nervous system, circulatory system and related connective tissue. This energetic system covers every part of the body. It is reasonable to believe that emotional signal generated within the energy network interferes with the normal energetic control mechanism. This explains why positive emotions such as love, compassion and joy makes the body strong and functioning better, while the negative ones such as anger, sadness, worry and fear makes the body weak and dysfunctional.

Based on ancient philosophy, the Five-Element theory, Chinese medicine suggests that each negative emotion specifically interfere with the controlling mechanism of certain organ or system. Modern interpretation of the emotion-physiology correlation is shown in the table below:

Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
Anger/ Rage	Overjoy/ Ecstasy	Worry	Sad/ Grief	Fear/ Terror
Liver	Heart and Cir- culatory system	Diges- tive sys- tem	Lungs and Res- piratory system	Adrenal (HPA) system

According to the Five-Element theory, vibrational frequency generated from anger and rage hurts the energetic control mechanism of the liver more than other organs, while the dysfunction of the liver also results in anger and rage more than other emotions. This theory of emotion-physiology connection has been extremely helpful for traditional Chinese doctors to address psychological issues with physiological approach like acupuncture and herbs. Modern holistic practitioners have also adopted this theory by treating cor-

related organs and systems with natural therapies for specific emotional issues.

Clinically we have often seen people with anger issue are always associated with liver problem, toxin accumulation and high inflammation. Excess norepinephrine and dopamine cannot be efficiently detoxified and balanced by the liver. Anti-inflammatory therapies with detoxification and liver support are necessary for this condition. Even for the irritability issue during women's pre-menstruation, supporting liver detox function can have unexpected results.

Overly worry, anguish and distress for long period of time may result in depression and anxiety disorder. This condition is related to over production of norepinephrine but lack of serotonin and dopamine. Clinically majority people in this group have digestive issues, including indigestion, constipation and loose stool. Addressing digestive problems such as Candida and bacteria overgrowth as well as leaky gut syndrome becomes the core therapy for these patients. Reducing adrenal stress and improving sleep quality are also critical to help this condition.

People who experience extreme fear and terror often have panic attack, which is possibly caused by over production of dopamine but lack of norepinephrine and serotonin. Adrenal fatigue syndrome is the main cause for the deficiency of norepinephrine. Supporting adrenal function is the main therapy for this condition including supplementation and lifestyle changes such as reducing stress in life, introducing relaxation and efficient sleep etc. Digestive therapy is also needed to improve serotonin production.

People suffering from depression always feel sad or shame and cry easily. This condition shows overall deficiency of the neurotransmitters. According to Chinese medicine, the Lung system is the center of the Qi, the energy production. Addressing overall energy production by balancing hormones especially thyroid and adrenal hormones is the key to treat depression. Low thyroid function is the common cause for the overall reduction of the metabolism and energy production. Female and male hormone imbalance as well as liver detoxification issue also has to be checked and corrected.

Emotional blockage can also be treated with energetic approach such as Emotional Freedom Therapy (EFT) and Thought Field Therapy (TFT) as well as many of their derivatives. Energy psychological technique combines Chinese meridian stimulation with modern psychological approach and helps the body to release specific emotional holding through related meridian pathway. European Flower Essences can

also be used to reduce emotional stress to the body. Holistic medicine treats emotional diseases on both physiological and psychological levels. A synergetic combination of all of the techniques should be used the same time to reach optimal result.

Dr. Harry Hong is a licensed acupuncturist specialized in holistic healing for the Highly Sensitive. He teaches highly sensitive people to listen to their body and take charge of their own health. With his own systematic IBMT protocol that includes Chinese medicine, modern homeopathy, energetic testing and allergy desensitization, Dr. Hong helps Highly Sensitive people to gain back their immune strength and get their life back. He has offices in both South Florida and Chicago. Please visit his website at www.highlysensitivebody.com or email to harryghong@hotmail.com.