

Traditional Chinese Medicine
within
Complementary and Integrative Medicine

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HW310: Complementary and Integrative Medicine

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Complementary and integrative medicine encompasses many different alternative treatments including traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). Traditional Chinese medicine is a medical knowledge system invented by the Chinese people. It is a practice defined by the holistic concept of “harmony between man and nature;” thus, it encompasses image information, cognitive activity from the perspective of attribute and relationship, use of the natural resources inside and outside the human body, and regulation and balancing of the body health state (D. Ma et al., 2021). There are many different modalities of TCM including acupuncture, tui na, herbal therapy, nutrition therapy, heat therapy (moxibustion), cupping, and Qigong (Acupuncture & Massage College, 2017). Traditional Chinese medicine is the main alternative treatment modalities that Dr. Shanna Bayrd, NMD. Aka “Dr. Delight” works within her practice.

I had the pleasure to interview Dr. Delight, from the *Guiding Elements Medical Center*, over the phone and had later contact with her to clarify questions regarding the interview. I had asked her how she came to be named Dr. Delight. Her response was, “My true nature is delighted energy. My objective is to get patients to find their delightful energy. This was a self-title, but spiritually appointed and a birthright meaning warmth. My patients all agree that the name is fitting!” She truly is a delight as she took the time out of her busy schedule to sit through an interview with me and further review my questions and her answers, via email, for accuracy. Unfortunately, I was unable to do an in-person observation due to time constraints on both sides.

Dr. Delight has been practicing complementary & integrative medicine since 2015 before she even received her medical license and while she was in her preceptorship before her residency. She received her education from *Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine* in Tempe, Arizona for her medical schooling, which was recently renamed *Sonoran University*. In

2019 Dr. Delight, and her business partner, Dr. Christy, founded their business *Guiding Elements Medical Center*. Their practice more closely relates to traditional Chinese medicine. Dr. Delight said, “Our principles are more about the yin & yang as well as the energetic of the body through meridians & organ systems. At SCMN we were formally trained in TCM.” I asked Dr. Delight how her profession has developed over time. She stated, “It has expanded. As I develop my skills, my patients benefit. I have created Sovereignty Therapy, as a conglomerate of my studies and experience, to help people in ways that individual techniques cannot reach.”

The Sovereignty Therapy (ST) that Dr. Delight refers to is a series of therapy sessions that work on the 7 components of the whole person (ancestral, physical, mind, pain body, emotions, and spirit). She works with an individual to heal trauma wounds and help a person realize their own inner delight. She uses several tools such as holographic imagery, memory reframing, inner child work, body scanning & clearing, bio-energy work, breathwork, and many more (*Guiding Elements Medical Center, 2024*). Some of the more common therapies utilized in her treatment sessions are mind-body, holographic imagery, memory reframing, inner-child work, gemstone meridian therapy, and guided meditation. Dr. Delight stated that, “Cupping, Gua Sha massage, and acupuncture are all bodywork components that can be added in for deeper effects.”

One of Dr. Delight’s sessions can last anywhere from 45 minutes to an hour. The first part of the session is a dialogue to connect with the patient and create a safe space. The second portion of the session is a guided meditation where the work of purifying the body, through various mind-body-spirit techniques, is done by Dr. Delight. She typically treats people within the age range of 20- to 40-year-olds and generally treats patients that are going through life transitions and grief. The average cost of a session is \$220 for a 45 minute to an hour-long

session. The clinic can prescribe prescription medicine, if needed, through Dr. Bianca, PCP. They also recommend herbal medicines and will be opening an apothecary in the office this year, which will include flower essences, herbs, and gemstone elixirs.

The medical center is looking to expand their social impact by providing grants and funding to patients that may not be able to otherwise afford their services. They want to expand these grants and funding to patients who might need services from other practitioners. They are working on building this non-profit that will be up and running by 2025. They also want to create a solid referral network for services they may not provide, as well as collaborate with other small businesses on events to create an economic impact. They believe in “small businesses helping small businesses”. They are involved in health fairs, webinars, and are always looking to expand the scope of their business.

The medical center does internal research through the feedback of the patients. Their focus is primarily on the sovereign energy system and further development of this treatment.

Testimonial from Karen Fontes, Sedona, AZ: “I had the privilege of attending 6 sessions with Dr. Delight. I was having chronic bilateral hip pain that when I laid down would radiate to both legs and to the ankles. I tried most everything to alleviate the pain so I could sleep. I was taking both Tylenol, Motrin and using patchouli oil along with a tens-unit. Most of the time it would work for several hours. After talking with Dr. Delight, she suggested that I try holistic counseling with her. **After the first session** I noticed that first night after putting on the oil and taking Tylenol and Motrin that the **pain seemed much less**. So, the next few nights I decided to try to go to bed without any of my regimen. **To my surprise, the pain down my legs was almost gone**. By the second session not only did I have **no pain** radiating down my legs but **my hips stopped hurting as well**. It was wonderful. **I then had a bonus!** I had occasional

heartburn and would take an antacid at night. **It was now gone. What a joy to sleep with no pain throughout the night.** This was transformational for me. After my last session and releasing the emotions I had been storing in my body for the last 66 years **I felt lighter, happier and more confident in myself.** I will be forever grateful to Dr Delight!” (*Guiding Elements Medical Center, 2024*)

Based on Karen’s testimonial, it seems she could have been caught in a cycle of sleep deprivation from her hip pain and her sleep deprivation causing her heart burn as in the article from the *China journal of Chinese materia medica, Molecular mechanism of sleep deprivation-induced body injury and traditional Chinese medicine prevention and treatment: a review*, the article states that: “The mechanisms underlying the occurrence of multi-system and multi-organ diseases due to sleep deprivation mainly involve oxidative stress, inflammatory responses, and impaired immune function in the body. According to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), sleep deprivation falls into the category of sleepiness, and long-term sleepiness leads to Yin-Yang imbalance, resulting in the consumption of Qi and damage to the five Zang-organs. The appropriate treatment should focus on tonifying deficiency, reinforcing healthy Qi, and harmonizing Yin and Yang.” (Yang et al., 2023). This is exactly the type of TCM therapy that Dr. Delight works with her patients on. The article goes on to state that TCM drugs and prescriptions enhance the treatment and improves the bodies health.

Since I was unable to sit in on one of Dr. Delight’s therapy sessions, I asked her to share a treatment she was undergoing with one of her current patients and their symptoms. The patient was being treated for social anxiety, depression, and grief. Their symptoms were low self-esteem, no desire to get out of bed, feeling shut in, afraid of other’s opinions, numbing themselves, pain, tension, and stress. Dr. Delight used techniques from her sovereignty therapy,

which includes mindfulness therapy. An article published in *Frontiers in Psychiatry* called *Editorial: Traditional Chinese Medicine for Depression and Anxiety* back up this treatment by stating: “TCM emphasizes that excessive emotions cause disease, and regulating emotions can cure disease. Li, et al., found that conventional treatment combined with 4–12 weeks of mindfulness treatment can significantly improve the anxiety and depression symptoms of patients with insomnia. TCM mind-body exercise therapies, such as Tai Chi and Baduanjin, also positively affect anxiety and depression (13)” (Li et al., 2023). The result was the patient wanting to quit smoking and drinking after going through 6 therapy sessions.

Guiding Elements Medical Center also offers several specialty services that have a combination of complementary medicine and conventional medicine techniques such as; the homeopathic box (emits a frequency to recalibrate your body to health and vibrancy), detox laser (a red-light, soft laser that moves the lymphatic fluid and neutralized toxins, viruses, bacteria, etc.), gem-nutrient IV’s, mini IV’s, and injections (fluid infusions that boosts the immune system, strengthens the lymphatic system and relaxes and rejuvenates the nervous system) and medical marijuana (helps alleviate conditions associated with AIDS, ALS, Crohn’s Disease, HIV, Alzheimers, cancer, seizures, severe and chronic pain, Cachexia, severe nausea, and MS). (*Guiding Elements Medical Center*, 2024). These services combine complementary medicine, with the use of gemstones, natural herbs, and natural rebalancing with the use of conventional medicine through lasers, infusions, and certain aspects of cannabis.

This experience has been eye opening for me with a window into the CIM clinic world and how it is ran. I was unaware of how many people seek out complementary and integrative medicine and the modalities that treatment the various conditions of these patients. What I was able to realize is how vast the conditions are that can be treated, from mental conditions to

physical conditions, spiritual conditions, and emotional conditions. Traditional Chinese medicine has a substantial number of modalities to treat every aspect of a person as a “whole”. This experience has also been challenging, like a puzzle, trying to connect each piece to the correct next piece of the puzzle to understand the bigger picture as a whole.

I feel I was able to build a mutual respect with Dr. Delight through open communication and trying to be mindful of her time. In response, she took the time to allow me to interview her as well as look over the questions again, via email, to expand on some of the answers. I now have a greater understanding of this field and how it all works together. I now see how even the degree I am studying, Holistic Clinical Nutrition, plays a huge role in treating a person collectively with other integrative and conventional medicine. The thing that has surprised me the most through this experience has been how the practitioners are so eager to collaborate and work together to find solutions for their patients and each one plays an integral role in a patient’s health and wellness.

My ideas about CIM have changed greatly considering I didn’t even know the correct terms before I started this class. I have a greater respect for the treatments and what an impact they can make on a person’s life, health, and wellbeing. I am walking away from this experience and this class with a greater understanding, eagerness and determination to be a big part of my career field, helping people to become better versions of themselves. I want to make an impact on peoples lives and teach them how to take better care of themselves. I am hoping to be a part of a wonderful medical center such as, *Guiding Elements Medical Center*, who have such a passion for their craft and their patients that they see like family. “GEMC is a place where space will be held for you, where you as a person will be seen, heard, and fully acknowledged as the gift you truly are. We already love you.” (*Guiding Elements Medical Center*, 2024).

I have a slight sense of what it might be like to work within this field, but I also feel there is so much more to learn and know. My hope is to have a connection to my patients such as Dr. Delight has to her patients, kind, compassionate, and understanding. I would like to learn more about complimentary and integrative medicine and how I can incorporate it into my own future practice as well, although, for now, it is more important for me to work on the subject of my own degree and understand it better. In the words of Emile Hirsch, “The willingness to keep learning is, I think, the most important thing about trying to be good at anything. You never want to stop learning.” (quotefancy.com, 2017). This quote speaks to the eagerness I have to never stop learning and strive to be the best I can be in my field.

In conclusion, complementary and integrative medicine has been exciting to learn about and all the different modalities that go along with it. Traditional Chinese medicine provides a great deal of the modalities used in CIM. TCM encompasses many natural treatments inside and outside of the body to regulate and balance the body to its true state. All the practices of alternative and integrative medicine are great to combine with conventional medicine to treat the whole health of a person.

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