

## Unit Four - Safe and Sound

### Alternative and Complementary Therapies

**Assignment:** *Create a brochure for a Medical Office that compares and contrasts 6 of the listed Alternative/Complementary Therapies using the brochure rubric.*

- **Acupressure (Shiatsu)**

- Pressure is applied with fingers, palms, thumbs, or elbows to specific pressure points of the body to stimulate and regulate the flow of energy; based on the belief that Qi (life energy) flows through meridians (pathways) in the body, and illness and pain occur when the flow is blocked.
- Used to treat muscular-joint pain, depression, digestive problems, and respiratory disorders.
- Shiatsu is the Japanese form of acupressure.

- **Acupuncture**

- Ancient Chinese therapy that involves the insertion of very thin needles into specific points along the meridians (pathways) in the body to stimulate and balance the flow of energy; at times, heat or electrical stimulation is applied to the needles; based on the belief that Chi (life energy) flows through the meridians and illness and pain occur when the flow is blocked.
- Used to relieve pain, especially headache and back pain, reduce stress-related illnesses, and treat drug dependence and obesity.

- **Aromatherapy**

- Therapeutic use of selected fragrances (concentrated essences or essential oils that have been extracted from roots, bark, plants, and/or flowers) to alter mood and restore the body, mind, and spirit; fragrances may be diluted in oils for massages or placed in warm water or candles for inhalation.
- Used to relieve tense muscles and tension headaches or backaches, lower blood pressure, and cause a stimulating, uplifting, relaxing, or soothing effect.

- **Biofeedback**

- Relaxation therapy that uses monitoring devices to provide a patient with information about his/her reaction to stress by showing the effect of stress on heart rate, respirations, blood pressure, muscle tension, and skin temperature; patient is taught relaxation methods to gain “mind” or voluntary control over the physical responses.
- Used to treat hypertension, migraine headaches, and stress-related illnesses, and to enhance relaxation.

• **Healing Touch (Reiki)**

- Ancient Japanese/Tibetan healing art based on the idea that disease causes an imbalance in the body's energy field; begins with centering (inward focus of total serenity) before gentle hand pressure is applied to the body's chakras (energy centers) to harness and balance the life energy force, help clear blockages, and stimulate healing.
- Used to promote relaxation, reduce pain, and promote wound healing.

• **Herbal or Botanical Medicine**

- Uses herbal medicines that have been used in almost all cultures since primitive times; based on the belief that herbs and plant extracts, from roots, stems, seeds, flowers, and leaves, contain compounds that alter blood chemistry, remove impurities, strengthen the immune system, and protect against diseases.

• **Homeopathy**

- Uses very minute, dilute, doses of drugs made from natural substances to produce symptoms of the disease being treated; based on the belief that these substances stimulate the immune system to remove toxins and heal the body; very controversial form of treatment.

• **Hydrotherapy**

- Uses water in any form, internally and externally, for healing purposes.
- Common external examples include water aerobics and exercises, massage in or under water, soaking in hot springs or tubs, and steam vapors.
- Common internal examples include a diet that encourages drinking large amounts of water to help cleanse the body and stimulate the digestive tract.

• **Hypnotherapy**

- Technique used to induce a trance-like state so a person is more receptive to suggestion; enhances a person's ability to form images; used to encourage desired behavior changes.

• **Imagery**

- Technique of using imagination and as many senses as possible to visualize a pleasant and soothing image.
- Used to decrease tension, anxiety, and adverse effects of chemotherapy.

• **Meditation**

- Therapy that teaches breathing and muscle relaxation techniques to quiet the mind by focusing attention on obtaining a sense of oneness within oneself.
- Used to reduce stress and pain, slow heart rate, lower blood pressure, and stimulate relaxation.

• **Pet Therapy**

- Uses pets, such as dogs, cats, and birds, to enhance health and stimulate an interest in life.
- Helps individuals overcome physical limitations, decrease depression, increase self-esteem, socialize, and lower stress levels and blood pressure.

• **Play Therapy**

- Uses toys to allow children to learn about situations, share experiences, and express their emotions; important aspect of psychotherapy for children with limited language ability.

• **Positive Thought**

- Therapy that involves developing self-awareness, self-esteem, and love for oneself to allow the body to heal itself and eliminate disease; based on the belief that disease is a negative process that can be reversed by an individual's mental processes.

• **Reflexology**

- Ancient healing art based on the concept that the body is divided into ten equal zones that run from the head to the toes; illness or disease of a body part causes deposits of calcium or acids in the corresponding part of the foot; therapy involves applying pressure on specific points on the foot so energy movement is directed toward the affected body part.
- Used to promote healing and relaxation, reduce stress, improve circulation, and treat asthma, sinus infections, irritable bowel syndrome, kidney stones, and constipation.

• **Spiritual Therapies**

- Based on the belief that a state of wholeness or health depends not only on physical health, but the spiritual aspects of an individual; uses prayer, meditation, self-evaluation, and spiritual guidance to allow an individual to use the powers within to increase the sense of well-being and promote healing.

• **Tai Chi**

- Based on the ancient theory that health is harmony with nature and the universe and a balanced state of yin (cold) and yang (heat); uses a series of sequential, slow, graceful, and precise body movements combined with breathing techniques to improve energy flow (Qi) within the body.
- Improves stamina, balance, and coordination and leads to a sense of well-being; used to treat digestive disorders, stress, depression, and arthritis.

• **Therapeutic Massage**

- Uses kneeling, gliding, friction, tapping, and vibration motions by the hands to increase circulation of the blood and lymph, relieve musculoskeletal stiffness, pain, and spasm, increase range-of-motion, and induce relaxation.

• **Yoga**

- Hindu discipline that uses concentration, specific positions, and ancient ritual movements to maintain the balance and flow of life energy; encourages the use of both the body and mind to achieve a state of perfect spiritual insight and tranquility.
- Used to increase spiritual enlightenment and well-being, develop an awareness of the body to improve coordination, relieve stress and anxiety, and increase muscle tone.