

CONNECTING

Healthy Information from the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center  January / February 2003

Energetic Approaches To Psychological Healing

Throughout history, many cultures have believed in the existence of some sort of energy that permeates all living organisms including human beings. This universal life energy - called chi in China, ki in Japan, prana in India, and mana in Hawaii - is thought to circulate throughout the body and in an energy field surrounding the body. According to this model, health is the harmonious flow of life energy, while imbalances in this flow - the result of stresses, trauma, or unhealthy habits - may result in illness and disease. The earliest reference to a universal energy was in India in 5000 B.C. Since then, many cultures have developed rich philosophies and healing traditions around this concept. In 500 B.C., Pythagoras called it "vital energy." Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, spoke of a "biofield energy" that flowed from the hands. Many believe it is the essence of the Christian holy spirit. Modern physics has proven that everything in our world is made up of energy, and its descriptions of quantum and electromagnetic fields closely resemble descriptions of chi, ki, prana, and mana.

People in our industrialized nation have few terms and almost no culturally sanctioned healing approaches that conceptualize and use this energy that has been recognized by many cultures around the world and has spawned healing traditions for at least 7,000 years, including Hindu pranic healing, Chinese qi gong, Indian ayurvedic medicine, Hawaiian kahuna, and the shamanic practices of the native peoples of the Americas. Perhaps our western culture, in the quest for progress and convenience, has become disconnected from this innate part of our heritage. Enclosed in climate controlled buildings and distracted by television, radio, CD players, books, busyness, demands real and imagined, and the noise in our own heads and psyches, few of us can be still enough to sense our environment and ourselves as systems of energy that are intricately interconnected and dependent upon each other.

While these ideas may sound foreign to us, conventional medicine has long used machines that emit or record various forms of energy to diagnose or treat disease. X-ray and laser devices give off different kinds of energy, while ECGs, EEGs, and EMGs record the electrical activity of the heart, brain and muscles, respectively. CT scans and Magnetic Resonance

Imaging have brought diagnostic technologies that work with energy into realms we could not have thought possible a few short decades ago.

In addition, there is a growing interest in reconnecting with practices that have a basis in ancient healing traditions. Acupuncture is becoming an accepted therapy in the treatment of various health problems; yoga, tai chi, and qi gong classes are drawing eager new students; Healing Touch, Therapeutic Touch, and Reiki are becoming recognized healing modalities; and reflexology, acupressure and shiatsu massage are being integrated into bodywork therapies. Andrew Weil, M.D., a pioneer in the fields of holistic and integrative medicine and currently teaching at the University of Arizona Medical School, writes in his newsletter "SELF HEALING," "I expect that all of these therapies, which fall under the umbrella term 'energy medicine,' will enter the medical mainstream in the coming decades, as researchers and clinicians learn more about their benefits and how they might work."

In the field of psychotherapy there are many energy-based therapies and methods currently being used. Energy-based therapies include Healing and Therapeutic Touch, Touch for Health, Thought Field Therapy, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, Somatic Experiencing, Emotional Stress Release, and Tapas Acupressure Technique. These therapies focus on identifying the problem or energy imbalance and then applying procedures to resolve the disturbance or imbalance. Energy-based therapies utilize the energy system of the Chinese acupuncture meridian-based system or the Indian chakra system.

There are some general principals in energy work that differ from traditional psychotherapy. These include: focusing on the interrelationships of multiple factors rather than cause and effect; identifying what may be blocking energy and removing those blockages; emphasizing energetic shifts and movement of symptoms; finding resources and strengths with positive energy to counter the constricting energy of symptoms; and welcoming complexity and experimentation. Energy-based concepts allow the counselor to comprehend more deeply the profound mystery that takes place in the therapeutic process.

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Psychologist, Anodea Judith, has written extensively on the chakra system and how the chakras correspond to key areas of our lives: survival, sexuality, power, love, communication, imagination, and spirituality. The term chakra refers to an energy center, resembling a spinning vortex, within the human body and the human energy field. There are seven major chakras within us, arranged vertically from the base of the spine to the top of the head, more or less centered through the middle of the body. Through this arrangement, chakras become centers of force through which we receive, transmit and process life energies. While we cannot see them, just as we can't see the wind, the chakras are evident in the patterns of our lives, in the way we think, feel and respond to life.

An important reason for working with and understanding the chakra system is to create integration and wholeness within ourselves. It is a way of bringing the various aspects of our consciousness - from the physical to the spiritual - into harmonious relationship, recognizing that all parts of our being are necessary and work together. If we can imagine the chakra system as a psychic "floppy disk" that contains all the information we have ever learned about how to deal with and live our lives, we can then picture each chakra plugged into the hardware of our physical bodies where they interpret the energies of our bodies, emotions, thoughts, ideas, and actions as well as the energies of the environment of which we are a part.

Just as the development of family systems theory and object relations theory have offered important theoretical frameworks to our knowledge of psychology, the chakra system and energy-based theories offer new ways to address our understanding of psychological health and the treatment of mental health problems. In an attempt to educate ourselves about energetic theory and its application to physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health, the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center will be sponsoring a two-day workshop March 28-29, 2003, on "Psychology and the Chakra System" with Anodea Judith.

Kathy Reardon, Holistic Nurse, Certified Healing Touch Practitioner, Spiritual Director

Susan Ackelson, Licensed Independent Social Worker

Psychology and the Chakra System: A Two-Day Workshop

Date: March 28-29, 2003
Presenter: Anodea Judith, Ph.D., Psychologist & Transpersonal Somatic Therapist
Location: St. Augustin's Parish Hall
Fee: \$175 (on or before January 31) / \$225 (after January 31)

This two-day experiential workshop will take you on a journey through the seven levels of consciousness associated with the yogic system of energy centers known as the chakras. As a formula for wholeness and a map to the journey to consciousness, the chakra system is a template for the holistic integration of mind, body, and spirit.

Combining body movement, simple yoga postures, guided meditation, and psychological exploration, this workshop will focus on the use of this ancient system in western psychology – specifically its application for diagnosis and treatment of issues common in a western population. This work combines developmental psychology, bioenergetics, Jungian Depth Psychology, and Eastern practices under one comprehensive system for health, healing and personal growth.

This is a continuing education offering intended for health care professionals including psychologists, counselors, psychotherapists, nurses, massage therapists and other bodyworkers, chaplains, parish nurses and ministers of health.

Enrollment is limited to 50 persons. If you would like us to mail a brochure to you, please call (515) 274-4006.

C.O.O.L. Corner

C.O.O.L. Corner is written by the pediatric psychologists of the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center.

C.O.O.L. uses complementary therapies while treating the whole child. Children often come with multi-faceted needs that require such interventions as speech pathology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and nutritional consultation. C.O.O.L. currently refers children to these complementary therapists. However, our dream is to one day have a developmental clinic that employs each of these professionals so that C.O.O.L. can meet all the needs of our kids in-house.

Educational Events for the Community

February 4, 2003, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Katherine Whitmore, L.Ac., of Iowa
Acupuncture Clinic

Katherine Whitmore, licensed acupuncturist, will offer an introduction to acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine, including basic concepts of yin/yang, qi, five elements, and the twelve pathways. Katherine will leave time at the end of her presentation for your questions.

April 1, 2003, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Eileen G. May, D.O. in Family Practice at the
Indianola Mercy Medical Clinic

Dr. May will describe her holistic approach to medical care. She will emphasize the importance of evaluating each person from a mind, body, and spirit perspective, to facilitate their healing.

These Tuesday evening events will be held at Central Presbyterian Church. There is no charge, but please call the Center at (515) 274-4006 to let us know you will be attending. Both events are offered by the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center through a grant from the Community Innovation Fund at the Greater Des Moines Community Foundation.

MANifest Workshops

Male/Female Communication

Dates: Mondays, January 13 – February 3, 2003
Time: 6:30-8:00 p.m.
Location: Central Presbyterian Church
Cost: \$100 for four weeks

Communication is the key to successful relationships. Men and women often perceive the world quite differently and their styles of processing and communicating information reflect these differences. The goal of the workshop is to raise awareness of male/female communication styles and equip participants to understand and respond more clearly to the significant women in their lives.

Men and Their Fathers

Date: Saturday, March 1, 2003
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Location: Queen's Point, 2793 St. Charles Road,
6 miles west of St. Charles
Cost: \$50, includes lunch

For both Manifest workshops, group size is limited to 20 people. Reserve your place early by calling (515) 274-4006. Participants must pre-register.

For more information about Manifest, call Lowell Houts or Mike Sears at (515) 274-4006, or visit the Manifest website at www.manifest.themenscenter.com.

Success Story

Brian, age 6, came to the Center's children's department (C.O.O.L.) at the recommendation of his doctor. Brian had been mauled by a neighbor's dog while he was playing in his own back yard. Physically, Brian was able to do everything he could prior to the dog attack, but emotionally he was a different boy. He was ashamed of the disfiguring facial scars that his doctor was trying to repair through a series of reconstructive surgeries. He hated going to school, and he became angry when people looked at him in public places. Brian was also very fearful, not just of dogs but of being alone and of loud noises.

A C.O.O.L. counselor helped Brian talk about his traumatic experience and helped him cope with his fears. Brian became less focused on his appearance and more focused on the fun things he used to enjoy, like soccer and artwork. Brian was even able to play with a friend's puppy near the end of his therapy process. Brian's family would not have been able to afford the cost of his counseling without the Center's sliding fee scale, which is made possible through contributions from people in our community. Please consider a contribution to help us serve people who would otherwise not have access to counseling. Call Stephanie Kuhn for information on making a gift or send your contribution to DMPCC, 550 39th Street, Suite 100, Des Moines, IA, 50312.

Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Foundation

Many of you reading this newsletter already make generous donations to the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center. But, have you considered including us in your will so that you can continue to make a difference for generations of Iowans to come? For more information on leaving a legacy, call Stephanie Kuhn at (515) 274-4006 or visit the Leave a Legacy Iowa website www.leavealegacyiowa.org.

Connecting Available Through Email

Please let us know if you would like to receive this newsletter through email rather than having a paper copy sent to you. To be added to our newsletter email list, email skuhn@dmpcc.org and indicate in your message that you would like to receive *Connecting* by email. Make sure to include the name and street address to which we have been mailing the newsletter so that we can remove your name from our newsletter postal list.

Fifth Annual Women Helping Women Luncheon

Date: Thursday, March 13, 2003

Topic: Women and Nutrition

Speaker: Sue Roberts, Nutritionist & Founder of Sue Roberts Health Concepts, Inc.

Location: Hoyt Sherman Place

www.dmpcc.org

Visit the Center's website for information on Center counseling services, Center staff members, support and interest groups offered by the Center, special events taking place in the coming months, and classes the Center offers to mental health clinicians and clergy.

CONNECTING

is a publication of the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center, an independent, interfaith, not-for-profit organization. For nearly 30 years, the Center has been providing counseling and educational services to individuals, couples, and families for the purpose of enhancing emotional, spiritual, and relationship health. The Center has satellite offices in West Des Moines, Altoona, Ankeny, and Urbandale.

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