



Holistic Health and You

Optimal health and well-being is our natural state. Minor and major illnesses, injuries, fatigue and reduced energy are all messengers seeking to inform us of adjustments that are needed in attitude, lifestyle, diet, sleep patterns, relationships, work and/or environmental conditions. Every disease (dis-ease) presents us with an opportunity to discover how we have neglected some aspect of self-care. Once we have identified and prioritized which of these essential ingredients of wellness need attention, we are well on our way to vibrant health.

Holistic health practitioners view individuals as whole people - body/mind/spirit - and view disease as the result of blockages in the flow of life energy, disruptions in alignment, contraction of muscles and/or incorrect breathing. Psychologists and other mental health practitioners consider one's emotional state, self-talk, mistaken beliefs and thought patterns as underlying core causes of these physical signs of discomfort and disease. Substance abuse is sometimes a consequence of

the aforementioned factors as well as an attempt to escape quickly and artificially.

Within each individual resides an inner healer who knows better than any other person what is needed for healing at any given moment. The task is to access that inner healer and implement the suggestions that inner healer offers. Medical doctors and the pharmaceutical industry often seek to usurp authority and convince “patients” to accept their recommendations without questioning and without informed consent with regard to procedures that could have detrimental effects. A preferable approach, turned to by increasing numbers of health service providers, is to view oneself and one’s discipline as a catalyst to the client’s inherent healing process. It is important to discourage the public from abdicating decision-making power to experts whose proper function is to advise rather than control all who seek consultation. It is essential to recognize that all people are responsible for their own health, **that health care is self-care,**

Holistic Health and Health Science offer knowledge of how to live life in ways that prevent or reduce the incidence of illness. From this perspective, holistic health practitioners are more appropriately viewed as teachers rather than healers. Their job is to enable you to take care of your own health and wellness with their occasional assistance.

Collaborative health care includes a team of interdisciplinary experts who work co-operatively. There are many systems and techniques available to these experts. These include psychological consultations, chiropractic adjustments, massage, acupuncture, traditional Chinese medicine, cranial sacral adjustments, osteopathy, naturopathic medicine, physiotherapy, and, in certain circumstances, consultation with medical doctors. It should be up to each individual or family to determine who they wish to appoint as their **primary caregiver.**

No one system or set of techniques is effective for all problems or all people although there are certain universal principles of health science that do apply to everyone. There are, in addition to universal principles of physical self-care, many **emotional self-care principles** valuable to all. These include anger management skills, communication skills, conflict resolution skills, assertiveness and boundary

setting skills, constructive criticism skills, relaxation skills, meditation skills and the ability to express fear, sadness and other intense emotions appropriately.

The concept of wholeness extends beyond the individual to the larger community of which the individual is a part. Healthy individuals contribute to healthy cities, provinces, states and countries. The journey to wholeness-body/mind/spirit- therefore, must involve us in more than self-transformation. Ultimately, to be healthy, we must care for our environment, the air we breathe, the water we drink and the soil in which we grow the food that we eat.

Finally, healthy individuals must be effective agents of social change contributing to the responsible and creative governance of their communities to assure social justice for all community members. We live in an era of rampant bullying in schools, the workplace, neighbourhoods in which we reside. Refusing to be bystanders to discrimination and maintaining zero tolerance in the face of intimidation or bullying can assure the well-being of children, the disabled, visible minorities, our elders and, in short, the most vulnerable members of society.

When all citizens embrace the concept of **health care as self-care**, combining such self-care with care for one another and care for the environment, the costs of health care will be greatly reduced. We will all benefit from the increased availability of funding for programs that enhance the cultural programs in our various communities.

