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# A Holistic Approach to Symptom Management

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# Addressing Symptom Management through the Mind, Body, Spirit

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# Addressing the Mind, Body, and Spirit

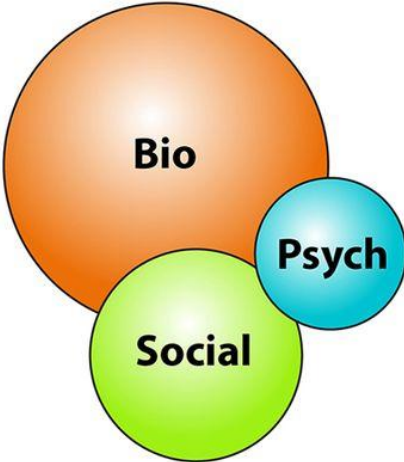
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- Chinese medicine dating back 3000 years views the mind, body, and spirit of a person as inseparable.
- Holistic Care and Symptom Management
  - Research supports the mind-body connection
  - Stress equals poor overall health
  - Enough research to support widespread studies and the development of the National Institutes of Health National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (2005).

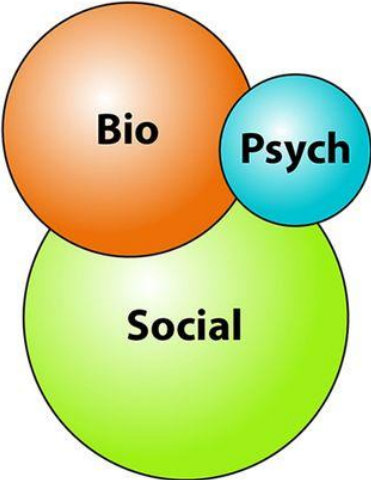


# Biopsychosocial Model of Pain

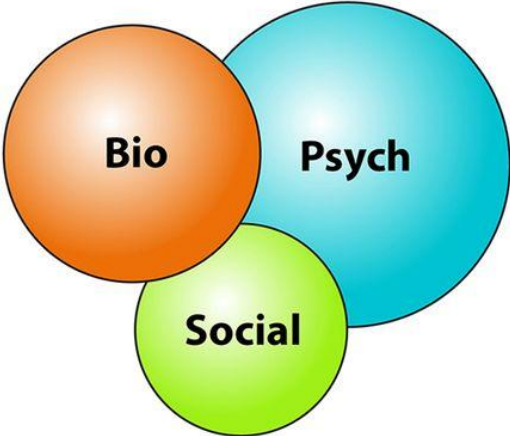
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patient 1



patient 2



patient 3



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# Basic Comfort Interventions

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# Basic Comfort Measures: Creating a Healing Environment

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- Environment
  - Tidy room
  - Peaceful, calm environment - acoustic comfort
  - Temperature
  - Access to view of outdoors, if available
  - Lighting
- Positioning and turning
- Skin
  - Bathing
  - Moisturizer
- Mouth care
- Dietary comfort



# Heat and Cold

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- Many facilities will require a physician order prior to the use of heat and/or cold.

<b>Heat</b>	<b>Cold</b>
Promotes blood flow	Reduces inflammation by decreasing blood flow
Helps muscles relax	Numbs sore tissues
Soothing	Slows down pain messages being transmitted by the brain



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# Mindfulness

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# What is Mindfulness?

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“Paying attention to something, in a particular way,  
on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally.”

Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn  
Founder of The Center  
for Mindfulness in Medicine



happify™



# Mindfulness, Cont.

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- 216 randomized controlled trials involving mindfulness from 2013 - 2015.
  - Recent research shows our brain composition can actually change! Our brains can be “rewired” when we practice mindfulness, amounting to improved response to pain.
- Benefits of Mindfulness include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sleeping better</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responding more skillfully to emotions</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Less rumination and more able to identify automatic thoughts</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Less physical pain and/or relating to it more effectively</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feeling less stress and less reactive</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better listeners and more thoughtful communication</li></ul>



# Mindfulness

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- Caregivers need to be cared for too!
- Check your own mindfulness...
  - What is your level of tension?
  - What's your energy when you walk in to care for a person?
- Apps are available:
  - Headspace, Mindfulness coach



# 1-Minute Meditation



# Mindfulness Activity Examples

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## 5 Useful Mindfulness EXERCISES

### MINDFUL HAND AWARENESS EXERCISE

Grasp your hands really tight and hold for a 5 to 10 seconds, then release and pay attention to how your hands feel. Keep your attention focused on the feeling for as long as you can.

### MENTAL FOCUS EXERCISE

Stare at any object and try to remain focused on just that object for as long as possible. Keep a mental watch on when your mind starts to wander, then just bring it back to the object. The longer you can remain focused, the more your mindfulness will increase.

### MUSICAL STIMULI EXERCISE

Listen to your favorite song and pay attention to how it makes you feel. What emotions stir? What memories come up, and how do those memories make you feel? Engage the emotions and see where they lead.

### UNDIVIDED ATTENTION EXERCISE

Do something around the house that you've never done before and do it with utter and undivided attention.

### FULL SENSORY AWARENESS EXERCISE

Wherever you are, just stop and look around when safe to do so. Become aware of everything that your senses pick up. How do you feel? Do you feel over-stimulated? Do you feel anxious? Make a mental note and keep observing without judgement.



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# Deep Slow Breathing

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# Deep Breathing

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- Also known as “abdominal breathing” or “belly breathing”
- Benefits include full oxygen exchange, relaxation, decreased heart rate
- Technique:
  - Lie on back on a flat surface (bed) with knees bent. Pillows may be used under head and knees for support but not required. Can also do this in seated position.
  - Place one hand on upper chest and one hand on stomach, under rib cage
  - Breathe in slowly through nose. Hand on abdomen should rise while hand on chest remains still.
  - Exhale slowly.
  - Six to 10 deep, slow breaths per minutes for 10 minutes per day



# Breath Focus

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- Instruct patient to think of a picture in their mind along with a word or phrase that promotes relaxation
- Technique:
  - Close eyes
  - Breathe in, imagining air is filled with peace and calm. Imagine that air flowing through whole body.
  - Breathe out, imagining the air leaving contains all your body's stress and tension
  - Next, breathe in with a word or phrase such as "I breathe in peace and calm."
  - Breathe out with a word or phrase such as "I breathe out stress and tension."
  - Continue for 10 minutes.



# Hand Traced Breathing

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- Commonly used with children, but anyone can benefit
- Technique:
  - Place dominant pointer finger at the bottom of opposite thumb
  - Draw around the perimeter of the hand, inhaling as you move up, and exhaling on the way down
  - Allows for 5 deep breaths accompanied by focus
  - If able, repeat on alternate hand



# Deep Slow Breathing trial

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- Many apps available
  - The Breathing App
  - Apple Watch Breathe App
- Things to note:
  - Do not hold breath as this may trigger fight or flight mechanism



# Massage

"Touch was never meant to be a luxury.  
It is a basic human need. It is an action  
that validates life and gives hope  
to both the receiver  
and the giver."  
- Irene Smith

Lauterstein-Conway  
Massage School and Clinic



# Massage – a Long-Standing Intervention

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- In 2024, massage therapy was a 21.6-billion-dollar industry.
- In July 2018, roughly fifty million American adults (46 percent) had discussed massage therapy with their doctors or health care providers in the previous year, consistent with past years' data.
- Massage therapy is increasingly available in hospital settings.
- We have been addressing pain with therapeutic touch since 300 BC.
- Massage therapy has been defined as soft-tissue manipulation by trained therapists for therapeutic purposes (1).
- Massage can be applied to single or multiple body parts or to the entire body.
- Types can include Swedish massage, Shiatsu, Rolfing, reflexology and craniosacral therapy. Most of the published trials on massage therapy have utilized Swedish or Swedish-type massage.



# Therapeutic Benefit

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"Technical advances are important but we need to remember the difference between treating the disease and treating a patient. Massage is an extension of the time-honored principle of laying on of hands. Massage therapy can help reduce stress, fears, and pain - all of this without side effects. Whether the mechanism of action of massage is physiologic or psychological matters not to me. The fact that it makes the patients feel better and allows them to better deal with their illness or treatment is good enough for me."

- Adapted from *"Better Living & Health"*, Portland (Maine) Press-Herald, Summer, 2006



# Therapeutic Benefit

The therapeutic benefits of massage continue to be researched and studied. Recent research has shown the effectiveness of massage for the following conditions:

## **Following Procedure/Surgery/Radiation**

- reduced anxiety in advance of surgery
- easier recovery from anesthesia
- reduced post-surgical pain
- improved mobility /range of motion
- reduced swelling
- reduced anxiety in advance of and during treatment
- reduced post-treatment fatigue
- improved appetite
- improved peripheral neuropathy

## **Emotional Benefits**

- decreased anxiety
- decreased depression
- increased feelings of well-being
- being pleasantly distracted
- improved body self-image
- restored hope
- satisfaction in participating actively in a part of the healing process





# Patient Response

- Massage involves caring, safe touch. It produces feelings of : CARE, COMFORT, CONNECTION
- When a patient receives massage, the muscles and soft tissues relax, but their entire well-being and spirit has a chance to release anxiety and just be present in the moment
- In the “relaxation response,” the heart and breathing rate slow, blood pressure goes down, production of stress hormones decreases, and muscles relax
- The relaxation response also increases the available level of serotonin, a chemical in the body that affects emotions and thoughts.
- It may also decrease the physical effects of stress and the risks that come with it, such as anxiety, hypertension, cardiac arrhythmias, insomnia, fatigue, digestive disorders and psychological issues.
- <https://www.scienceforsport.com/massage/#toggle-id-1>



# Massage Techniques

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- 3-Stroke Repeats
- Warm Hands/Hearts



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# Essential Oils

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# Essential Oils



Natural aromatic compounds found in the bark, seeds, stems, roots, flowers, and other parts of plants.

They are obtained through low-heat steam distillation or pressing of peels, petals, other parts of the plant.

# Aromatherapy Definition



Therapeutic use of plant-derived, aromatic essential oils to promote physical and psychological well-being.

It is sometimes used in combination with massage and other therapeutic techniques as part of a holistic treatment approach.

# Benefits of Essential Oils



- Complementary intervention to promote feelings of wellbeing
- Address the whole person: physical, emotional, spiritual
- Aid with symptom management
- Offers options to those who fear or are intolerant to meds
- Reduces stress

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# Care of the Spirit

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# Caring for the Spirit

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## **Spiritual well-being:**

A feeling of one's contentment that stems from their inner self and is directly related to their quality of life.

## **Spiritual distress:**

"A state of suffering related to the impaired ability to experience meaning in life through connections with self, others, the world, or a superior being."

NANDA International



# Caring for the Spirit

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## **Implications of Spiritual Distress**

- Higher scores of spiritual distress equal higher levels of pain
- Anxiety impacting clinical outcomes
- Increased risk of depression, suicide
- Increased heart rate
- Decreased satisfaction with care provided

## **Benefits of Spiritual Well-Being**

- Improved coping mechanisms
- Increased sense of trust in providers
- Decreased risk of depression, suicide
- Decreased heart rate, blood pressure
- Improved immune function
- Lowered severe medical illness
- Higher levels of patient satisfaction



# Caring for the Spirit

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- Considerations when addressing spiritual needs
  - Important to consider a person's ability to find meaning in experience, even when physical needs are present and dominant.
  - Acknowledge that spiritual care is as important as physical care. Resist redirecting person's focus back to physical symptoms only.
  - Spiritual distress has the same importance as physical distress!
  - Be aware of the resources available to you when you need support
  - Spiritual care can look as simple as active and empathetic listening and communicating compassion



# Caring for the Spirit

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“Empathy is a strange and powerful thing. There is no script. There is no right way or wrong way to do it. It’s simply listening, holding space, withholding judgment, emotionally connecting, and communicating that incredibly healing message of ‘You’re not alone.’”

Brene Brown

Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable  
Transforms the Way We live, Love Parent and Lead



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# Questions

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