

December, 2015
Published in "Valley Now"

Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture for Anxiety and Depression

Anxiety and depression are very common conditions in modern society. This time of year, with shortening days, less sunshine, and the stress of the holidays coming on, I have noticed these conditions surfacing more often in my clients.

Many people turn to medication to help them cope. This can be helpful in the short term, but doesn't address the root cause of the condition, and often has side effects.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, all diseases, mental and physical, are linked to an imbalance in one or more organ system, and can be corrected by rebalancing the body's energy. A skilled practitioner can detect where the imbalance lies, and correct it through acupuncture, lifestyle and dietary suggestions, and Chinese herbs.

Depression is often related to an imbalance in the liver system, and the wood element. Liver energy is associated with following our path in life, and moving forward with our dreams and ambitions. When there are obstructions in our path, or if we're not on the right path for us, our liver energy becomes stagnant, and we become frustrated, angry or depressed. Physical complaints that often go with this state are menstrual disorders and headaches.

Anxiety is often connected with the spleen/pancreas energetic system and the earth element. When we are not grounded, nourished, and feeling comfortable and safe in our homes and our lives, we may become worried, anxious and overwhelmed, our thoughts spinning endlessly in circles. Digestive disorders often accompany this state.

Insomnia often accompanies anxiety and depression, as our heart energy (in Chinese Medicine, the heart and mind are one) is unable to rest, and flutters about restlessly.

Acupuncture is the main tool used in Chinese Medicine for rebalancing the body's energy. By inserting fine sterile needles into specific points along the energy channels, we can remove obstructions and restore free flow. When the organ systems are functioning optimally, physical and emotional symptoms correct themselves.

The beauty of Chinese Medicine is that, unlike psychotherapy, it is not necessary to "talk things out", or delve into past experiences. When the body's energy is free-flowing and balanced, we just feel better, in body and in mind.

In my 13 years of Chinese Medicine practice, many clients have told me that they've never felt so relaxed, calm and content, and this feeling carries with them. Unhealthy habits such as overeating fall away. Relationships improve, as they simply feel better in themselves, being more present and less reactive. "I feel like myself again!" is a common comment I've heard from my clients receiving acupuncture and Chinese medicine.

What better way to prepare ourselves for a cold, dark, snowy winter than being the happiest and healthiest we can be? What better way to go into this holiday season of visiting and celebration!