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Towards A Balanced Mind: Mental Health in Traditional Chinese Medicine.

I see and deal with emotionally related issues in my practice every day and I feel the importance of taking about emotional health to all of my patients as well as to the public. So today I have again chosen this topic for discussion.

Mental health care is very definitely a part of traditional Chinese medicine. The importance of mental health and how to maintain emotional balance have been great issues in traditional Chinese medicine. Traditional Chinese medicine theory about mental health care is based upon ancient Chinese philosophy. So, in traditional Chinese medicine classic theory discussion about mental health not only focuses on the relationship between the emotions and the body but also encompasses issues of humanity, morality and sociology, etc.

### The Importance of Mental Health

Because traditional Chinese medicine sees a human as a whole interconnected universe - that spirit and body are integrated - emotions such as joy, anger, melancholy, anxiety, grief, and fear are directly related to the internal organs: heart, liver, lungs, spleen, and kidney. Physical health and emotional health affect each other. When any emotion is in excess, the corresponding internal organ will be distressed. The Yellow Emperor's Manual of Internal Medicine states that "it is known that all diseases occur due to the upset of Qi: anger pushes the Qi up, joy makes Qi slacken, grief disperses the Qi, fear brings the Qi down, terror confuses the Qi, and anxiety causes the Qi to stagnate." The manual also states that "Anger harms the liver, joy harms the heart, anxiety harms the spleen, grief harms the lungs and fear does harm to the kidney."

### The Stage of Balance; Calm and Peaceful

What is a balanced state of mental health? What is a balanced mind? Being calm and optimistic; moderating desires; remaining content; being tolerant, kind and courteous all are essential for keeping a healthy state of mind.

**Optimism:** Positive energy has a good impact on the body. In order to be optimistic one should have confidence and an open mind. Many people live to older ages. One of the reasons is related to their positive attitude. Many cancer patients survive and also live a long life partially because of their optimism.

**Moderating Desires:** When selfishness and desire become excess they disturb the peace and tranquility of the mind, and spirit. Qi will be damaged. On the other hand a less selfish outlook and freedom from desire will help maintain the balance of mind and body, leading to longevity.

Remaining Content: The Dao De Jing says "There is no sin greater than discontent, and no error greater than covetousness." In Chinese culture, you can often hear people say that happiness can be achieved only through contentment. Many anxieties and worries result from a lack of contentment. So, try to be content. Be happy.

Being Tolerant: The benefit of a calm mind and a healthy physical body can be achieved by adopting a detached attitude towards what is coming or going, and developing the ability to tackle a problem in a composed manner. "Cultivate a good temperament for the sake of the mind, tranquilize the mind for the sake of life."

### Eliminating and Avoiding Excessive Emotions

In order to maintain health and achieve longevity, taking care of mental health is as important as having physical examinations and treatment. Many of my patients have noticed how their mental state and physical condition improve together. Those who are still struggling with certain chronic conditions also feel the need for an emotional release. As excess emotions, such as grief, fear, worry, anger, build up they can become harmful, and negative energy can cause harm to the physical body. For many conditions dealing with emotional problems will guide us to better clinical results on physical issues. Likewise by improving our physical condition, we can also help release excessive emotions.

Traditional Chinese medicine will approach emotional disorder by addressing the root cause within the body. By focusing on the organ under stress, bringing it back into balance, the traditional Chinese medicine treatment helps soothe the body and smooth the flow of Qi and blood circulation, thus helping to calm the emotional disorder and restoring balance. Many herbs can be used, but unlike the more western approach to herbs with its singular herbal recommendation, traditional Chinese medicine combines a number of relevant herbs and develops a formula specific to each individual's condition.

*To exercise our minds and regulate our emotions is the way to real health.*

*A person of great morality is sure to obtain longevity.*