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Holistic healing advocates see more people seeking help

BYLINE: BARBARA LEECH Special to the Union Leader

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PORTSMOUTH -- The number of patients seeking "alternative" medicines and treatments for physical and mental ailments is growing, according to local practitioners of holistic healing.

Whether it's a session of Reiki therapy or a visit to the acupuncturist, there appears to be an increasing number of people who believe it takes a combination of treatments to heal the body, mind and spirit.

"I have certainly seen a movement, hearing from more people over the past several years who are interested in healing and pain relief," said **Ed Hubbell**, a nationally certified acupuncturist and Oriental medicine specialist in Greenland. "It's a broad range of people, too, with problems ranging from stress and anxiety to back pain or digestive issues."

Acupuncture involves the use of thin needles, placed into specific areas of the body through the skin. This, according to **Hubbell**, relieves pain and essentially unblocks the root cause of the ailment and therefore facilitates healing in the patient.

A session lasts about one hour, with needles in place for about 20 to 40 minutes. Though some areas of the body are more sensitive to the needles, **Hubbell** says most patients report either not feeling the needles at all or a slight discomfort for 10 to 30 seconds.

"The benefit that follows is patients experiencing a long period of a general feeling of well being," he said. "The ultimate benefit is healing."

Hubbell, who has been practicing acupuncture for eight years, says that in the past couple of years, his client base has grown and he has been receiving many more phone calls from prospective patients seeking more relief than traditional medicine has provided them.

"I think that what I offer is something in addition to Western medicine for the segment of the population that has become frustrated. I think the two should work together, basically Eastern and Western medicine combined can provide pain relief or healing these patients need."

Hubbell, who runs Fusion Healing Arts, located off of Route 33 in Greenland, says he has several clients who are in the medical profession, and they seem to see the positives of alternative treatments such as acupuncture.

"Health care professionals are in high-stress jobs and they see first hand that traditional medicine needs a helping hand sometimes," he said. "Our ultimate goal is the same."

Hubbell is not the only one seeing an increase in people seeking alternatives in healing. Erica Rock, a holistic health care practitioner, nutritionist consultant and Reiki master in Portsmouth, says "it just seems to be time" for people to be more open to alternatives and the idea that it takes a complete package to be healthy.

"I think this all began in the 1970s and we are just seeing an awakening in people that is culminating now," she said. "They are seeking more and they are realizing that general practice medicine is not an end-all to healing. Something in their soul is telling them there is something more."

Rock provides Reiki therapy as well as nutritional consultations at Port City Chiropractic in Portsmouth's Vaughn Mall. She also is active around the Seacoast area teaching Reiki. She says that many people enrolling in her classes to learn Reiki, which works with the body's own energy system to release stress and promote relaxation and healing, are there to either help a loved one who is ill or heal themselves.

"Reiki is not a new thing; it's just that there are more and more people who are ready and seeking something more," she said. "Reiki has been offered in hospitals for about 10 years now. Portsmouth Hospital is a great example. Health care professionals see firsthand that those who receive it generally have less pain, heal faster and are more relaxed about the entire hospital experience."

As for the increase in clients seeking help, Rock expects it to continue.

"It felt like I was on a desert island when I first started with this, but each year it gains momentum and I think it is because we offer a pretty good complete package," she said. "This office has chiropractic medicine, Reiki and nutritional consultations as well as being connected to a network of holistic practitioners. We realize that one area of practice cannot do all things, and our goal is to help the clients live better and feel better, body, mind and soul."

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