

Educating Seniors: Bring Your Health... Home

A Column by Kimberly Harmon RN,BSN

Seniors and Holistic Health: Get the Tools You Need to Live Well Today and Age Better Tomorrow

Freedom...Vitality...Celebrating Life...

Your Life, Your Health. As many of you know all too well, the aging process brings with it many physical, emotional and even spiritual challenges. When confronted with the inevitability of our mortality, many of us don't cope very well.

While that's undeniable, it's equally true that as we age, many of the problems we face aren't due to the aging process itself but rather due to the effects of a lifetime of accumulated stress and poor health habits. By proactively addressing your stress and poor health habits today, you can make a positive difference in your quality of life tomorrow.

Like I always say to my family, friends, colleagues, and clients, it's never too late to change the two most important ingredients to graceful aging—your attitude and your lifestyle.....to “Celebrate Your Life”!

Celebrating your life is precisely my philosophy of holistic healing modalities. Experience has shown me that utilizing a holistic approach goes a long way to improving the attitudes and the lifestyles of my clients.

Unlike traditional medicine, which is generally “top-down,” the holistic approach to aging is “bottom-up.” By developing a body-mind-spirit approach to achieve lifelong wellness, non-traditional holistic modalities invite you to be proactive in the pursuit of long term physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

Through the utilization of practitioners specializing in natural healing modalities like Massage Therapy, Reiki/Energy Healing, Acupuncture, Aromatherapy, Reflexology, Music Therapy, Meditation, Yoga, and Enrichment Coaching, alternative medicine complements and in many cases enhances the traditional “top-down” methods you may be using.

In fact, many studies suggest that the healing arts are more effective in reducing pain than conventional methods—without potentially adverse side effects. These traditional arts are also effective in calming and relaxing the body and uplifting the human spirit. Other studies show that when people focus on calming and relaxing themselves, they access deep reserves of previously unknown personal healing abilities.

Recent statistics from the National Center for Complimentary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), a division of the National Institutes of Health, report 38.3% of U.S. adults aged 18 years and over use some form of complimentary and alternative medicine

(CAM). When you include prayer specifically for health reasons in the definition of CAM, the number of U.S. adults using some form of CAM in the past year rose to 62%.

“These findings confirm the extent to which Americans have turned to CAM approaches with the hope that they would help treat and prevent disease and enhance quality of life,” said Stephen E. Straus, M.D., Director, National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM).

Ideally the various forms of modalities you select should work in conjunction with the care recommended by your conventional primary care physician. Continue to rely on your PCP to treat disease and diagnose a problem. For safety, use what I call the “Partnering Approach” and talk to your doctor first before incorporating holistic therapy into your regime.

Incorporating holistic health into your existing wellness program will inspire you to create possibilities, express your joy for life, and share vitality & freedom with your family and friends. It’s never too late to achieve a full and balanced life, a life of comfort, peace of mind and tranquility, a life of physical, emotional, spiritual and economic health.

Remember the essence of holistic health may lead to ease of movement, ease of pain, increased coordination, greater flexibility, and prolonged independence for seniors. A balanced approach to maintaining health may be the closest path to finding the fountain of youth!

Kimberly Harmon is the Founder & CEO of Harmon Home Health and Team Celebrate Life—a unique wellness program offering healing modalities in the environment of choice. She may be reached at kharmont@harmonhomecare.com or 508-791-5600, and welcomes any questions, comments or concerns about any specific health issues you have.