

## Green Psychotherapy, Natural Remedies to Support Your Mental Health

The practice of traditional psychotherapy has been focused exclusively on the “mind” rather than the whole body. Caught into the mind/body split of healthcare for the past century, the discipline has remained fenced into a narrow perspective. Practitioners have offered talk therapy and pharmaceutical medicines to remedy mood disorders believed to be caused primarily from brain chemical imbalances. The health of the physical body was left out of consideration, thereby missing the systemic nature of our whole body that includes our brain and overall mood. Meanwhile graduate programs, slow to change with the times, are still training their students to think with this mind/body split paradigm.

With some years of experience, however, psychotherapists begin to realize the emotions are tied to the health of the whole body, not just from the brain. In addition, there are many factors involved in determining a person’s mental and emotional health. Mood disorders, for example, can have multiple causes, some symptoms coming from different parts of the body, some from external sources, and some from poor health habits. A broader treatment model becomes necessary to help clients have a more complete and long lasting recovery.

Recently, psychiatrists and mental health providers are beginning to embrace this holistic approach. The shift is a welcome change for a client interested in benefiting from the time proven benefits of talk therapy without the fear of being told to start pharmaceutical medicines such as antidepressants and tranquilizers in order to heal one’s brain. Considered miracle medicines from the 90’s, they have indeed helped some people, however, for others the side effects have proven debilitating. The nausea, weight gain, constipation, and decreased libido, to name just a few, were at times worse than the symptoms they were supposed to treat. Additional medicines would often be prescribed to treat the side effects. For those looking for alternative health approaches, how exciting to know that psychotherapy could have a mind/body integrated approach.

What does this integrated approach look like? It would be Green Psychotherapy. Your mental health provider will spend more time looking at your diet, your supplements including vitamins and herbs, and your activity level to find natural remedies to support your recovery. One of the leaders in this new protocol is Dr.

Daniel Amen, a psychiatrist and author of Change Your Brain Change Your Body. He has now trained many providers throughout the country to follow his recommendations. With this new information, there will be more options available to help you feel better physically and mentally as the two are not viewed exclusive of one another. The treatment plan will include referrals to other alternative health practitioners as needed to improve outcomes. The client is then assured of coordinated care with holistic approaches which support mind/body wellness. For more information about this exciting new approach, call Jan Gallagher, LMHC, an Amen Clinic Affiliate, at (904) 707-2669.