

# Integrative Therapies





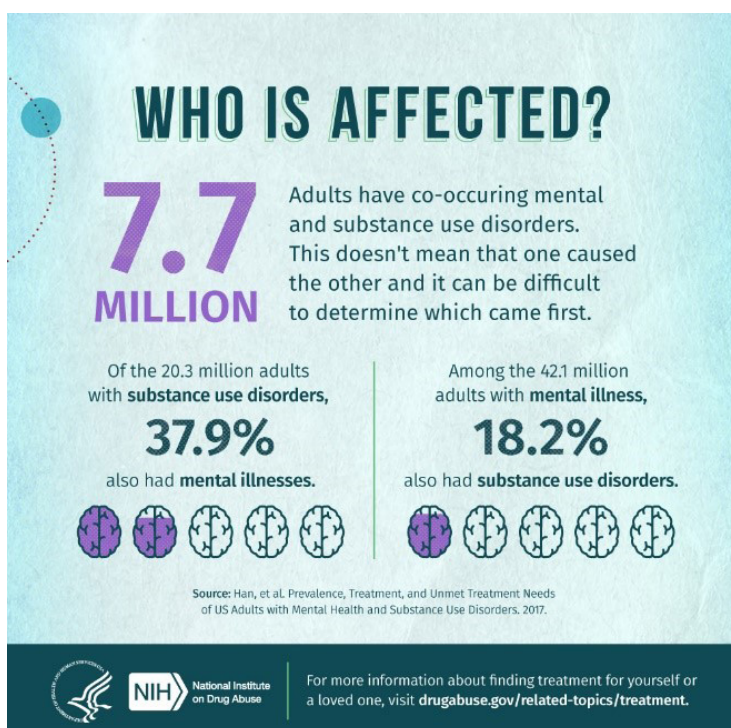
## The Role of Integrative Therapies to Achieve Long-Lasting Healing

Every aspect of life is affected by health – emotional, cognitive, physical, and spiritual. The quality of health influences our capabilities, how we think and approach problems, and how we react to others, as well as how we respond to the events of the world around us. Health is a primary component of whether we are truly thriving. Yet while there is perhaps nothing more personal than an individual's health, there is a striking commonality that holds true for nearly all human beings: when health conditions go untreated, it is likely that one problem will lead to another.

When we ignore what is troubling us, there is a sort of domino effect that for many with mental health conditions can lead to a downward spiral sequence resulting in a sense of worthlessness, hopelessness, and a feeling that one doesn't have control of his or her life. Not seeking treatment can complicate mental health issues and lead to depression, anxiety, stress, feelings of guilt and shame and in the most extreme of cases, can culminate into one devaluing his or her life. In mental health treatment, multiple conditions appearing together are known as co-occurring disorders.

Co-occurring disorders can refer to psychiatric disorders, such as anxiety and mood conditions that can happen simultaneously with conditions like alcohol use disorder, for example. It has been found that depressive disorders are the most common psychiatric disorders among people struggling with alcohol use disorder.<sup>1</sup> The co-occurrence of these disorders is associated with greater severity and worse prognosis than either disorder alone. Additionally, both together heighten the risk for suicidal behavior.<sup>2</sup>

Researchers have long wondered if depression drives individuals to drink excessively or if drinking causes depression. There is likely no one answer to this since every individual is different. While it has been stated that up to half of those with alcohol use disorder exhibit symptoms of major depression, there is wide agreement that, the mixture of alcohol and depression are even more harmful together. When treating these co-occurring conditions, it is vital to address both concerns.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>1</sup> [Alcohol Use Disorder and Depressive Disorders - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The effect of depression on return to drinking: a prospective study - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Depression and Alcoholism \(learn-about-alcoholism.com\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Frontiers | Integrative Psychotherapy Works \(frontiersin.org\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/>

## Individualized Experiences Call for Individualized Treatment

Yet while statistics can attempt to predict and understand trends, no mental health disorder will present the same for every individual. Quite simply, individuals' real-life struggles supersede data that attempt to analyze mental health experiences. The fact is that each individual is unique with his/her own past experiences, biochemical composition, emotional scars, and resilience capabilities. Understanding that is the foundation for a progressive form of psychotherapy known as integrative therapies.

Integrative therapy is a mental health treatment approach that uses therapeutic models and methods that best suit a particular person given the context of their concerns. Using integrative therapies provides a more flexible and inclusive approach to treatment than the more traditional, singular forms of therapy and considers an individual's preferences, personality traits, and where they are in life. Studies show that tailoring therapy to the individual enhances treatment effectiveness and that no one psychotherapeutic approach can be effective in all circumstances.

In addition, integrative therapies assist in keeping individuals grounded, focused, and present in their bodies - all of which are key to the recovery experience. For example, studies show that with therapeutic massage, depression scores can decrease, pain and cortisol levels can diminish, and one may experience fewer headaches, fewer sleep disturbances, reduced anxiety, and an increase in serotonin and dopamine levels.

Integrative therapy works within a holistic approach that goes beyond one's mental health. The therapies consider emotional, cognitive, physical, and spiritual health as part of treating the whole person. Integrative therapies can help uncover the source of issues along with factors that may perpetuate problems and fears. Through integrative therapies, individuals come to understand what triggers their pain, anxiety, or moodiness, helping to shake the old patterns of being. Integrative therapy also effectively targets overcoming negative or self-destructive behavior patterns.



## The Benefits of Integrative Therapies

Working toward mental wellness requires an individual to be dedicated to changing, and the understanding and acceptance that treatment can often be emotionally and mentally challenging. Addressing issues and working to alter long-held patterns of living is hard work. Integrative therapies, which have proven to support and enhance the treatment and recovery experience can help<sup>6</sup>.

There are numerous advantages to integrative therapies. An individualized, integrative approach to therapy promotes wellness in all areas of life – physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual. Through integrative therapies, individuals work on overcoming habitual, self-defeating behaviors and begin to take positive steps toward optimal health.

Integrative therapies are beneficial in mental health treatment because they are:

- **Individualized:** Each individual's story is different. How they got to where they are is a result of their own journey. Using an integrative model, therapists that approach patients in this way understand what works for one person may not work for another.
- **Flexible:** Traditional forms of therapy are often inflexible. The opposite is true with integrative therapies. Therapists using integrative therapies are in tune with their patients and understand when changes may be needed as treatment goes on and the patient evolves. Adapting to and modifying treatment is an important advantage of integrative therapies.
- **Holistic:** The beauty of integrative therapy is that it considers more than the individual's mental health. Therapists that use integrative therapies consider the entire person. Things like relationships, thoughts, diet, sleep, exercise, and other considerations provide a more holistic viewpoint that provides comprehensive benefits. In addition, the approach can help individuals view themselves in through a different lens that can help them understand that each aspect of one's self relies on the other in the healing journey.

Those who can most benefit from integrative therapy include individuals suffering with a variety of concerns including:

Anxiety  
Bereavement  
Chronic Stress  
Depression  
Low Self-Esteem  
Personality Disorders  
Substance Use Disorders  
Trauma

Additional benefits include:  
Lowering of blood pressure  
Promoting restful sleep  
Reduction in anxiety  
Stress management and reduction

The ultimate goal in the integrative therapy model is to enhance the efficacy of psychotherapy. Established in evidence-based practices, using the best available research combined with clinical expertise, therapists using this approach are trained to customize treatment modalities in the context of patient characteristics, culture, and preferences.

<sup>6</sup> [Integrative Therapy | Psychology Today](#)

## How is Integrative Therapy Different?

In 1999, the book, “Beyond Empathy: A Therapy of Contact-in Relationships” introduced the idea that integrative therapy is built on a strong therapeutic alliance, a buy-in on client expectations, and therapist empathy using inquiry, attunement, and involvement. This thought process began a move toward integrative therapies as an effective mental health treatment approach.

More flexible and inclusive, integrative therapy is not limited by the rigid boundaries of theoretical models of other psychotherapy approaches. More and more therapists are adopting the integrative model and no longer prefer being identified by just one theoretical model. A survey of over 1000 psychotherapists indicated that just 15% indicated of therapists now use just one theoretical orientation in their practice and that the median number of theoretical orientations used in practice was four.<sup>7</sup>

Creating a cohesive therapeutic experience while providing a customized, flexible approach requires therapists who have the training and expertise to select the most beneficial techniques for their patients. Therapists using integrative methods see each patient’s mental wellness differently and draw upon methods that align with the patient’s diagnosis and their particular circumstance to create a personalized program designed to be most effective and appropriate for each individual’s needs.

Integrative therapy is different because it<sup>8</sup>:

- Uses direct research evidence of effectiveness that is not anecdotal
- Considers the patient’s multiple diagnostic and nondiagnostic features
- Considers not only treatment methods, but the therapy relationship
- Systematically matches evidence-based treatment methods and healing relationships to the client across the course of therapy, not only in pre-treatment

The integrative therapy approach aligns with guidelines by the American Psychological Association on what constitutes evidence-based practice (American Psychological Association, 2006). The main focus of the integrative psychotherapy model is on both the individual characteristics of the patient and on the therapeutic relationship which are considered to be key elements of therapeutic change, as well as on client motivation<sup>9</sup>. Client motivation indicates a patient who is not passive, but instead is an active participant in the therapy. This enhances the role of a caring and empathetic therapist who adjusts his/her approach depending on the patient’s characteristics and preferences. Patients are much more open to change and involvement when there is a positive therapeutic relationship.

<sup>7</sup>[Tasca: What clinicians want: Findings from a psychotherap... - Google Scholar](#)

<sup>8</sup>[Integrative Therapy \(apa.org\)](#)

<sup>9</sup>[Psychotherapy integration: Reflections and contributions from a constructivist epistemology. - PsycNET \(apa.org\)](#)



## **Integrative Therapies & Services at Sierra Tucson**

At Sierra Tucson, integrative therapies and services are delivered by a team of specially trained clinicians, including naturopathic doctors.

Integrative therapies and services at Sierra Tucson include:

### **Naturopathic Medicine**

It is often thought that naturopathic physicians offer the “best of both worlds” in their approach to health. Their education includes attending four-year accredited naturopathic medical schools and passing board exams for licensure. With training in biochemistry, anatomy, physiology, and pharmacology, they are trained to prescribe medications as well as utilizing integrative modalities. Sierra Tucson clinicians, including the naturopathic physicians, use their training to uncover and treat the root cause of illness to support residents’ health goals and work closely with the psychiatric providers to implement a treatment plan tailored to the individual’s specific needs. Commonly addressed concerns include:

- Nutrient deficiencies.
- Hormonal imbalances
- Chronic pain.
- Digestive concerns.
- Insomnia and fatigue.
- Chronic Stress.
- Anxiety

### **CranioSacral Therapy**

CranioSacral Therapy (CST) stems from osteopathy, releasing restrictions in the cranial bones, spine, and fascia. This gentle, non-invasive approach focuses on balancing the nervous system and musculoskeletal system. CranioSacral Therapy has been shown to be effective in:

- Anxiety reduction
- Reduction and management of chronic and/or acute pain
- Relief from headaches and migraines
- Relief in symptoms of concussions and brain/head injuries
- Relief from TMJ, tinnitus, and vertigo
- Relief from chronic sinus issues
- Digestion relief for gastrointestinal problems like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), Crohn’s disease, and gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- Release of post-surgical adhesions

### **SomatoEmotional Dialoguing Therapy**

SomatoEmotional Dialogue (SED) Therapy is an advanced form of CranioSacral Therapy that uses guided imagery and creative visualization to initiate dialogue with the body and assist in the release of emotionally charged energy, including anxiety, depression, and/or the effects of trauma that are still retained deeply and stored in the memories of the body’s tissues, muscles, organs, and cells. SED can assist in bringing the emotions, mind, and physical body into balance and has been shown to be effective in:

- Trauma release, positive reframing, and positive repatterning

- Chronic and/or acute pain reduction
- Mood elevation for depression and other mood challenges
- Anxiety reduction
- Post-surgical trauma release
- Reduction of headache pain and migraines
- Quieting scattered mind and emotions

### **Acupuncture**

Acupuncture is one of the treatments used in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), a complete system of healing for over 2,000 years, and includes the use of fine needles placed on specific points of energy channels (meridians) to stimulate a person's vital energy (Qi). The purpose is to create an overall balance in the physical, mental, and emotional bodies. Acupuncture has been shown to be effective in:

- Reduction and management of chronic and/or acute pain
- Insomnia reduction – promotes sleep
- Digestion relief of gastrointestinal issues such as gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), Crohn's disease, and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Depression and anxiety reduction
- Bring equilibrium to hormonal imbalances
- Trauma release, emotional balancing, and spiritual opening
- Detoxification

### **Shiatsu**

Shiatsu is a Japanese style of bodywork that works with the energy channels (meridians) of the body. It includes rhythmic movement, assisted stretching, range of motion, traction, and compression, among other therapeutic techniques. Shiatsu has been shown to be effective in:

- Restoration of balance to mind, body, and spirit
- Anxiety reduction
- Relief from muscle tension and headaches
- Reduction of back and shoulder pain
- Digestion improvement
- Improvement of blood flow
- Support of lymphatic and endocrine systems
- Release of toxins
- Release of energy blockages

### **Therapeutic Massage**

Therapeutic massage methods can include Swedish, deep tissue, myofascial release, neuromuscular therapy, visceral massage, and medical massage, all of which are customized to meet the client's needs. Therapeutic massage has been shown to be effective in:

- Lowered cortisol levels (stress and anxiety reduction)
- Increased dopamine and serotonin levels (mood elevation)
- Chronic and/or acute pain reduction
- Reduction of back and shoulder pain
- Fewer sleep disturbances
- Improved focus

- Reduction of muscle tension
- Increased range of motion
- Release of fascial adhesions
- Improved digestion
- Improved structural alignment

### **Zero Balancing**

Zero balancing (ZB) uses skilled touch to balance mind and body, enabling a client to feel a sense of wholeness. The practitioner uses finger pressure and gentle traction on areas of tension in the skeleton, joints, and soft tissue in the body to create fulcrums, or points of balance, around which the body can relax and reorganize. Zero balancing has been shown to be effective in:

- Bring a person into the present moment; to feel more solid in his/her body, more grounded
- Quiet scattered mind and emotions
- Experience one's authentic self, beneath anxiety or trauma
- Mental clarity, improved concentration
- Calm the nervous system, anxiety, and stress reduction
- Improved quality of sleep
- Amplified vitality, more energy
- Lower depression, bring client to place of neutrality where he/she can experience inner balance
- Reduced headaches, TMJ pain, neck and back pain, and abdominal bloating
- Improved postural alignment

### **Physical Therapy**

Physical therapy is a non-invasive discipline that helps individuals develop, maintain, and restore maximum body movement and physical function. It consists of movement experts who help clients recover from an injury, relieve pain, prevent future injury or deal with a chronic condition, improve quality of life and manage pain with a detailed evaluation, prescribed exercises, hands-on care, and patient education.

It is a chance to learn about your own body and to recognize patterns of movement that are linked to your injury. Physical therapy has been shown to be effective in:

- Pain management with reduced need for opioids
- Avoid surgery
- Improved mobility and movement
- Recovery from injury or trauma
- Recovery from stroke or paralysis
- Fall prevention
- Improved balance
- Management of age-related medical problems

### **Chiropractic Care**

Chiropractic care focuses on the relationship between the body's structures, function, and how that relationship affects the preservation and restoration of health. It is well-known for the hands-on technique to adjust imbalances in the skeletal system, particularly the spine. While the main focus is on the spinal function, assessment of extra-spinal joints can also be addressed. Chiropractic care has been shown to be effective in:



- Spinal function
- Assessment of extra-spinal joints
- Impaired normal functioning
- Pain reduction
- Lower disease reduction
- Understand the relationship between your physical and emotional state
- Maintain holistic health

**Other Integrative Modalities include:**

- Adventure Therapy
- EMDR
- Equine-Assisted Therapy
- Experiential Therapy
- Grief & Spirituality Therapy
- Hatha Yoga Classes
- Life Coaching
- Psycho Education
- Qigong Therapy
- Reiki Therapy
- Somatic Experiencing® Therapy
- Therapeutic Recreational Activities

