

Healing Journal

A newsletter from Abbott Northwestern's Institute for Health and Healing

Founded by the George Family Foundation and the Ted and Roberta Mann Foundation

Winter 2007

Volume 5: Number 1

A Shared Vision, a Complementary Future

Partnering with the Samueli Institute

When the Institute for Health and Healing first connected with the Samueli Institute in 2005, it was with a specific goal to be achieved with specific partners. "Our health care paradigm has a foundation of holism that looks at physical needs as well as psychospiritual needs rather than symptoms that require treatment," said Lori Knutson, director of the Institute of Health and Healing. "To support this, we want to develop research partnerships that pair us with experts in clinical trial research or outcomes research, allowing us to measure outcomes related to our integrative approach."

The Samueli Institute had a similar objective. "We have the resources and expertise to do the kind of health services research that correlates program outcomes with patient satisfaction, quality of care, safety and cost," commented Barbara Findlay, director of the Optimal Healing Environments Program at the Samueli Institute. "What we were looking for was a 'living laboratory' to ground the science of healing in a real-world, mainstream health care experience and build a business case for the kind of services that the Institute for Health and Healing provides."

Founded in 2001, the Samueli Institute conducts and supports scientific research that includes the evaluation of patient-centered approaches, healing environments, complementary therapies and traditional medicines. "The mission of the Institute is to actually transform current health care through scientific exploration of healing," said Findlay. The Samueli Institute's point of view and mission dovetail perfectly with the Institute for Health and Healing's objectives.

Several research projects have been identified and are under way. "Two of our objectives are to build a strong business case for integrative medicine," said Knutson. "One focuses on inpatient programs; the other on outpatient. The outcomes we look at


include quality of life, reduction in need for medications where appropriate and a reduced number of readmissions for those chronic illnesses."

This approach is known as 'bench to bedside' research. Conventional research often is done for research's own sake—to simply answer a question. Bench to bedside research, on the other hand, has a direct application in the clinical world.



A small first program has already been completed, with researchers at the Samueli Institute evaluating First Touch, a program designed to enhance the relationship between Abbott Northwestern nurses and their patients. The resulting analysis will look for correlations between the program and patient satisfaction as well as other factors.

Research from all partnership projects will be used to strengthen the case for the increased use of integrative medicine. "Ideally, our research illustrates two things: one, the effectiveness of treatment interventions for patients and two, the financial viability for both the health care recipient and the health care system," said Knutson.

Findlay agrees that the ideal situation would be to leverage these sound, scientific and provable outcomes. "We understand theoretically that the compassion and empathy in therapeutic relationships translate into better patient outcomes," said Findlay. "So when hospitals such as Abbott Northwestern engage in an alternative healing initiative, we want to show there's a business advantage, ultimately creating a wider uptake of healing approaches in mainstream hospitals." 



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Members working out in Abbott Northwestern's LiveWell Fitness Center.

Take Action

Weight management programming at the LiveWell Fitness Center

Weight management is a difficult proposition for the majority of people as almost two-thirds of the population is considered overweight or obese. Abbott Northwestern's LiveWell Fitness Center has

designed a variety of services and programs to meet this ever-increasing concern. Members, as well as the public, may take advantage of individual assessments such as body composition testing, fitness assessments, nutrition consultations, metabolism testing, or they may participate in a new program called the "Take Action Weight Management Program." LiveWell Fitness Center manager Sue Masemer suggests that it is important to choose quality programs that have credentialed experts for greater assurance that your exercise and nutrition plans are safe and effective.

The LiveWell Fitness Center staff uses state-of-the-art assessment equipment as their first step in any weight management plan. "We offer Bod Pod testing, which is a very accurate, state-of-the-art method to determine body composition and establish realistic goals," said Masemer. "We also check resting metabolism and use those readings to figure out precise calorie needs. The idea is that in order to help people really manage their weight, we have to talk to them about the total picture."

According to Masemer, many people have tried traditional methods with little success. Mastering exercise or nutrition alone is not sufficient for the long haul. It requires a complete lifestyle commitment. The fitness center staff helps people understand that it is not as simple as just 'calories in and calories out' because there are many confounding factors that must be considered. For some people, it may involve identifying and correcting their diets for food intolerances or adapting an exercise program to meet special physical needs.

After the preliminary evaluation of a person's current state, the staff makes recommendations for next steps. "Once we better understand their needs, we can determine what should be included in their program and assist in establishing healthy goals," said Masemer. "The results of any assessment can then be communicated to that person's physician, exercise facility, or they can partner with a trainer here to get to the next level."

If an individual wants a more complete program, they would benefit from the Take Action Weight Management Program. The 12-week program was developed using extensive research on permanent weight loss. The program is scientifically-based and medically-sound and designed to be fun, invigorating and supportive. Participants learn the skills they need to manage their weight including a regular program of exercise, healthy nutrition and behavioral modification. Weekly classes and personal assessments are conducted by the LiveWell Fitness Center staff of exercise physiologists, nutritionists and health and wellness specialists. Contact the LiveWell Fitness Center by calling 612-863-5178 to learn more about how they may help you accomplish your health and fitness goals. 🌿



TAKE ACTION

Take Action combines nutrition, exercise and expert staff resources into a highly energizing, comprehensive 12-week program.

- a personalized exercise program developed by on-staff fitness specialists
- one-on-one nutrition consultation
- weekly seminars on nutrition, exercise and behavior modification
- Body Gem metabolism assessment, Take Action manual and log books, fitness assessment, and body composition testing included.

**Sessions begin Tuesday, Jan. 23, 4-5:30 p.m. and Thursday, Jan. 25, noon-1 p.m.
Call 612-863-5178 for additional information or to register.**

Holiday Stress



The Best and the Worst of Times

Tactics and tips for surviving the season

It's the most emotionally charged time of year, and for many, the busiest. According to Pat Vitale, manager of inpatient services at the Institute for Health and Healing, it is the time when we pay the least amount of attention

to ourselves. "The holidays, which unfortunately coincide with flu season, can be stressful in good and bad ways," said Vitale. "This stress can manifest on a physical level with more aches and pains, and a tremendous amount of fatigue."

The stress-causing factors are familiar to everyone: worries over the financial challenge of gifts and travel costs, non-stop preparations including physically taxing shopping and decorating, and the heightened emotional gatherings with family. "Even joyful reunions can cause stress simply because of all the coordinating for getting together," said Vitale.


If a family is disconnected in some way, it causes a different kind of stress, one in which individuals focus on the negative versus the positive. It is especially stressful for people who are hospitalized over the holiday. "We have to be even more mindful about the support services we provide these patients over the holidays," said Vitale. "Not only is there the loneliness of being in an acute care setting, but the busy-ness of the season makes it much more difficult for family members to visit."

For individuals at Abbott Northwestern Hospital, the complementary care comes from Institute for Health and Healing staff through guided imagery, acupuncture, massage, music therapy, relaxation techniques, meditation and reflective listening. For people out and about who are looking for smarter ways to survive holiday stress, the care comes from within. "Exercise is one of the best coping mechanisms we have at our disposal," said Vitale. "Whenever you exercise, you release endorphins. These endorphins help to offset stress, balance our moods and replenish our body." The key to truly enjoying the holidays and maintaining health is to start practicing smart coping mechanisms now and continuing throughout the year.

Gary Carlson, MD, of the Institute for Health and Healing also recommends two simple lifestyle steps: increase noontime walks while lowering holiday expectations. "People have to give themselves permission not to be the supermom or superspouse during the holidays and not be too hard on themselves if things don't meet expectations," said Carlson. "At the same time, the

lack of sunlight and vitamin D can contribute to a spiral effect, so I suggest getting out right at noontime for a 15-minute walk. It helps adjust your circadian rhythms in a Minnesota winter."

Vitale adds one more recommendation – one to two short meditation sessions a day. "Meditating once or twice a day for five to 20 minutes can give your body the experience of having slept for two to four hours," said Vitale. "Blood pressure, heart rate and breathing all drop lower than when you are sleeping, so your body and mind feel replenished and your immune system is revitalized."

Vitale says that, with better coping skills, there is less chance of suffering the adverse effects of stress during the holidays. "Even small levels of stress can be difficult to handle when someone has very few coping mechanisms," said Vitale. "A person with good coping mechanisms will move through the holidays with a more balanced mood, more energy and better health." 

SIMPLE MEDITATION FOR HOLIDAY PEACE OF MIND Mind Power for Life™ Technique

1. Begin breathing through the nose, out of the mouth, exhaling twice as long as the inhale. (A ratio of 1-to-2) Continue this breathing throughout the exercise.
2. With eyes open, focus your attention on a point in the distance, allowing your eyes to relax and your awareness to expand.
3. Begin thinking and saying to yourself "I am." If possible, link it to your breathing.
4. Visualize your outcome for the moment or day and let go of the image. While continuing the breathing, say to yourself "I am."
5. When you are ready to complete the process of the meditation, reverse steps three to one.



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From the Institute for Health and Healing

The Institute for Health and Healing is supported by the financial generosity of the community. To make a donation to the Institute, call Abbott Northwestern Hospital Foundation at 612-863-4126.

Integrative Medicine Physician Available at Institute for Health and Healing



Gary R. Carlson, MD, recently joined the Institute for Health and Healing staff to provide patients comprehensive chronic disease and chronic medical problem consults. Carlson has been a practicing physician for more than 15 years and is board certified in family medicine and holistic medicine and

certified in medical acupuncture. The goal of his consults is to develop patient centered programs of healing that integrate the best of traditional and complementary medical care.

“Most patient’s medical problems have multiple layers,” said Carlson. “I try to help people understand how their lifestyle, nutrition, belief system and learned stress response affects their ability to heal and deal with pain.”

On a physiologic level, Carlson feels he is targeting the limbic brain and the autonomic nervous system. The limbic brain controls the autonomic nervous system, which in turn regulates muscle tension, blood pressure, breathing and many other automatic body functions. “When these control centers are out of balance, our organ, hormonal and immune systems don’t function smoothly or optimally.”

Examples of the types of patients Carlson sees include the patient with cancer who has traditional surgery and radiation or chemotherapy but also wants to know what else is available from a complementary standpoint to improve their chances. Another patient, on the other hand, may have a chronic pain issue, which is not resolving with traditional modalities.

With his background as a family physician, Carlson also assists patients who may already go to a non-traditional practitioner. He acts as a go-between for the patient because of his expertise in both traditional and complementary medicine. Treatment methods include nutritional consults, mind-body therapies such as biofeedback and meditative practices, body therapies such as acupuncture and massage, exercise physiology consults, and herbal or nutritional supplements.

Carlson currently sees patients at the Institute for Health and Healing one day a week. Patients can be referred to Carlson by a physician or make an appointment directly at the Institute for Health and Healing by calling 612-863-3333. Initial consults last one hour with additional follow up as needed. 