



## Concept Article

### WHAT IS HOLISTIC HEALTH?

#### A layman's guide to the concept of holistic health.

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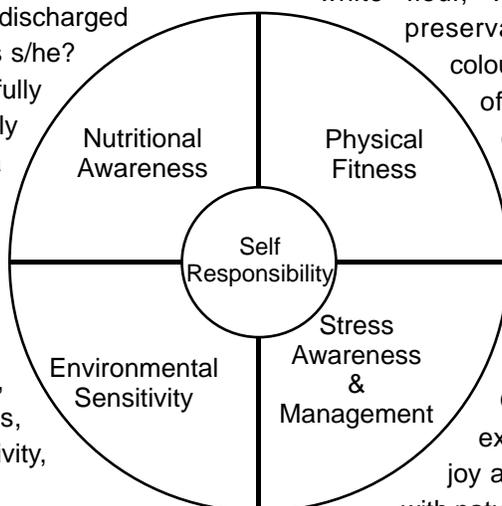
The word 'Holistic' is derived from the Greek 'Holos', meaning 'entire'. Holistic Health is a state in which an individual is integrated at all levels of being: body, mind, spirit and emotion. It is a state of well-being; not a mere 'absence of disease', but a dynamic, ever-expanding, self-motivating experience towards achieving a purposeful and vibrant lifestyle.

All modalities of treatment may be used in holistic healing: surgery, medicine, chemotherapy, radiation, nutrition, rehabilitation and yes, hypnosis, acupuncture, psychotherapy and of course, religion. The ultimate goal is to use these modalities to teach an individual to assume responsibility for oneself, to heal oneself by modifying any unhealthy attitudes, values and life-styles. The key to holistic health is to use system of medicine appropriately. Assuming responsibility for one's own health is really the ultimate goal of holistic health. It holds that the human being is fully coherent and integrated life support system, with built-in mechanisms of balance and control. The mind is regarded not just as a biological switchboard but as a centre for total management. Therefore, the mind must not be bypassed or underestimated in any healing effort.

#### Five Dimensions

When we think of a patient who is discharged from a hospital, in what condition is s/he? Can we say s/he is fully healed or fully sick? I would say they are neither fully healthy nor fully sick; they are at a neutral point. From there, they have to take responsibility to see the option, to reach a high-level of wellness. The best way they can do it is through the five dimensions of holistic health: self-responsibility, proper nutrition, physical fitness, environmental and ecological sensitivity, and stress management.

**Self-responsibility** plays the key role. You design



your lifestyle to achieve your highest potential for general well-being. When Savitri came to our Holistic Health Centre for treatment, she was clinically diagnosed as 'incurable'. But during different workshops, she realised that she had to assume responsibility for her health. She later wrote: "There was a shift in my belief from thinking that I was condemned to invalidism for life towards using the healing power within me to be well. With the help of the team in the Centre, my whole person was involved in the diagnosis, selection and implementation of the treatment regime, and then onwards it was the rediscovery of my life that I enjoyed.

Holistic Health stresses the value of nutrients in live foods foods which are as natural and as fresh as possible and seasonal in keeping with the rhythm of nature. At least a good serving of raw food with sprouts like salad at noon meal will help us to get the needed vitamins and minerals. Some of the foods recommended are: whole wheat, pre-boiled rice, honey, gur (jiggery), sprouts, fresh fruits and vegetables, garlic and high fibre foods. In Holistic Health we do not recommend the same food for all. As each person's body chemistry is different, each has to see what kind of food regime each one has to take. Refined or processed foods are to be avoided like white flour, white sugar, packed items with preservatives, artificial flavourings and colourings, soft drinks and the like. Many of these principles make sound ecological sense too.

**Physical fitness** is an important part of the holistic living. We encourage folk dancing or any exercise which promotes goodwill among the community members as well as ensures physical fitness. Our tribal dances particularly help us experience rhythm, grace, feelings of joy and companionship, and communion with nature. Yoga with a spiritual dimension in its meditative forms, probably is the most balanced