



### Tai-Nan Wang L.Ac., O.M.D.

4295 Gesner Street, Suite 1A  
San Diego, CA 92117  
619-684-1848

## **Oriental Medicine Provides Mental Health Support**

During times of stress, it is beneficial to look at our emotional lives. Emotional wellness enhances our ability to move forward effectively and includes recognizing and accepting our emotions, thinking clearly, and making decisions. Acupuncture and Oriental medicine nurtures emotional wellness and provides support for mental health disorders.



Almost a third of the population report sufficient qualifying criteria for mental health disorders at some point in their life. Mental illnesses like major depression, anxiety, panic disorder, attention-deficit/hyperactive disorder (ADHD), PTSD, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and manic disorders disrupt your thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others, and daily functioning, which results in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life.

Any major life upheaval, emotional distress or a chronic condition can trigger unexpected feelings and behaviors. These imbalances can throw off your immune system or cause symptoms of pain, sleep disturbances, abnormal digestion, headaches, and, over time, more serious illnesses can develop.

Oriental medicine does not recognize any mental disorder as one particular syndrome but addresses the specific symptoms that are unique to you using a variety of techniques including acupuncture, lifestyle/dietary recommendations and exercises to restore imbalances found in your body.

### **Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help manage:**

#### **Anxiety and Stress Disorders**

Anxiety comes in a wide range of manifestations, from mild worrying to more physical responses such as nausea, insomnia, shortness of breath and panic attacks. Acupuncture provides relief from stressors that cause anxiety along with managing the symptoms and related health issues that may develop as a result.

#### **Depressive Disorders**

Common symptoms of depressive disorders include a decreased interest in most activities, insomnia, fatigue, and feeling empty and worthless. Even when depression is sub-clinical, the body's immune system is compromised and the symptoms reduce functioning, impair work performance and social relationships. Acupuncture treatments can correct these imbalances, support the immune system, and directly affect the way your body manages stress and your mental health.

#### **Attention Deficit Disorders (ADD) and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactive Disorders (ADHD)**

ADD and ADHD disorders are conditions of the brain that makes it difficult to concentrate or control impulsive behavior. Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help enhance concentration, reduce fidgeting, augment mood management techniques, reduce hyperactivity and enhance concentration.

Mental health issues are best managed when health professionals work together to meet your unique needs. An excellent addition to any treatment plan used to manage a mental health disorder, acupuncture and Oriental medicine can relieve emotional and physical symptoms by correcting imbalances and providing immune system support.

**Call to find out more about how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help you optimize your emotional wellness and be integrated into your mental and emotional wellness plan!**

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## **Acupuncture Provides Relief from Anxiety**

Some anxiety is a healthy response to daily activity or new situations however random or excessive anxiety and can be debilitating. General anxiety, panic, social anxiety, separation anxiety and other phobias can present as mild worrying to more physical responses such as nausea, insomnia, shortness of breath and panic attacks.

A 2016 meta-study published in the medical journal *Revista Brasileira de Enfermagem* reviewed over 500 clinical trials from five international databases, including one from The Cochrane Library. The trials covered a wide variety of ages and socio-economic circumstances in which the feelings of anxiety, helplessness or apprehension remained as constant challenges in the patients' lives. Researchers noted that a chronic state of mental unrest could lead to secondary health problems such as heart disease or gastrointestinal issues.

After having acupuncture, subjects saw a reduction in anxiety levels, trauma, and an improvement in their quality of life. Researchers concluded that acupuncture, compared to just conventional pharmaceutical treatment, provides a statistically significant benefit for those suffering from anxiety.

Acupuncture provides relief from stressors that cause anxiety along with managing the symptoms and related health issues that develop as a result. The calming nature of acupuncture decreases the heart rate, lowers blood pressure and relaxes the muscles. Oriental medicine tools such as Qi Gong, Tai Chi, meditation, dietary therapy and acupressure may also be used to manage anxiety.

Anxiety disorders and mental health issues are best managed when health professionals work together. Call today to see how acupuncture can help you!

Source: Goyata, S. Avelino, C., dos Santos, S., et al. (2016). Effects from acupuncture in treating anxiety: integrative review. *Rev. Bras. Enferm.* vol. 69, no.3.

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## **Relief from Irritability and Moodiness**

Everyone suffers from irritability and moodiness from time to time, but if you find that a short temper and frustration are becoming a constant issue for you, your qi may not be flowing smoothly.

Often irritability and moodiness are the consequence of chronic stress in your life. Over time these emotions can progress into more serious emotional conditions such as anxiety and depression as well as other health conditions such as digestive problems, trouble sleeping and the tendency to get sick more frequently.

The liver meridian is responsible for the smooth flowing of qi throughout the body and for smoothing our emotions. When the liver's function of moving qi is disrupted, qi can become stuck. This is referred to as liver qi stagnation.

Liver qi stagnation can cause intense feelings of frustration, anxiety, depression, rage, and anger, as well as irritability, resentment, and jealousy. Physically, you may experience digestive problems, trouble sleeping, and a lowered immune system.

Acupuncture and Oriental medicine are excellent at relieving liver qi stagnation. Treatment for irritability and moodiness associated with liver qi stagnation focuses on moving qi and supporting the liver and spleen organ systems with acupuncture, lifestyle and dietary recommendations.

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## Move Your Qi

When your qi functions smoothly so does your emotional, mental, and physical activity. For optimum health, move your qi!

**Stretch** - Incorporate a morning stretch into your routine. According to Oriental medicine, the liver meridian stores blood during periods of rest and then releases it to the tendons in times of activity, helping to maintain tendon health and flexibility.

**Eye Exercises** - The liver meridian responsible for smoothing emotions is connected to eye function. Take breaks when looking at a monitor for extended periods of time and do eye exercises.

**Eat Green** - Eating young plants--fresh, leafy greens, sprouts, and immature cereal grasses--can improve overall function and aid in the movement of qi.

**Do More Outdoor Activities** - Outside air helps qi flow. If you have been feeling irritable, find an outdoor activity to smooth your emotions.

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## Acupressure Points for Moving Qi

### Four Gates

The four acupuncture points He Gu and Tai Chong are a popular treatment for stress, anger, irritability, sadness, and frustration. They are thought to enhance circulation of qi and have a calming analgesic effect.

**He Gu** is located on the padded area of your hand, between the thumb and index finger, between the first and second metacarpal bones. Massage this point with your thumb on both hands for about 30 seconds.

**Tai chong** is located in a hollow on the top of your foot below the gap between your big toe and the next toe, between the 1st and 2nd metatarsal bones. To stimulate this point, place your right heel in the juncture between the bones that attach to the large and second toes and gently knead the point for approximately thirty seconds. Then switch sides to stimulate the point on the other foot.

### Hundred Convergences

Located on the top of the head midway between the ears Baihui is used to clear the mind, calm the spirit, and improve focus. Stimulate this point with your index finger for 30-45 seconds.

### Hall of Impression

Stimulation of this point is known to calm the mind, enhance the ability to focus, soothe emotions, promote sleep, and relieve depression. Located midway between the eyebrows Yintang is sometimes referred to as "the third eye".

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