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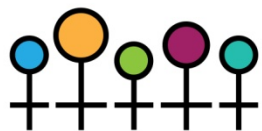
# Complementary Therapies

*Together, we can change the course of the HIV epidemic...one woman at a time.*

#onewomanatatime

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[www.thewellproject.org](http://www.thewellproject.org)

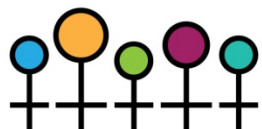


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# Complementary Therapies

*Complementary/alternative/integrative therapies:* health care treatments most often **not considered part of conventional (Western) medicine**

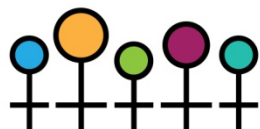




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# Complementary Therapies

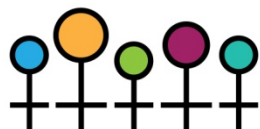
- Using complementary therapies with standard medicines can help people living with HIV live longer, healthier lives; these therapies may
  - Ease side effects of HIV drugs
  - Boost immune systems
  - Improve overall health
- Important for people living with HIV to share complementary practices with their providers to make sure they are safe with prescribed HIV drug regimen



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***What are some common  
complementary therapies?***

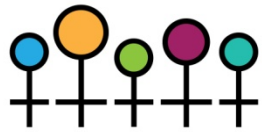


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# Acupuncture

Practice developed in China thousands of years ago

- Small thin metal needles inserted into skin at points on the body to remove blockages in the flow of **qi**, the life force or vital energy
- Studies show benefits
- Acupuncture can be helpful for pain, headache, nausea, diarrhea, menstrual cramps, menopausal symptoms
- In the U.S., many states require acupuncturists to be licensed; be sure acupuncturist uses only disposable, sterile needles

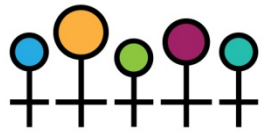


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# Aromatherapy

Use of **essential oils** to improve emotional/physical health

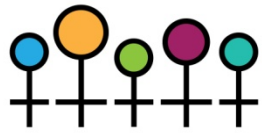
- Oils are inhaled or rubbed into skin
- Generally used to
  - Reduce pain
  - Improve mood
  - Promote relaxation
- No strong evidence to support immune-boosting effects



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# Biofeedback

- Trains people to **control some of the body's operations that usually occur without our having to think about them**, such as:
  - Breathing rate
  - Heart rate
  - Blood pressure
- Connecting to devices that measure actions and watching measurements on a monitor
- Most often used to help people with headaches and pain



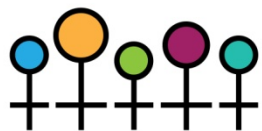
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# Homeopathy

Activates the body's own healing abilities by

- Giving small doses of diluted substances in a **tincture**
- Based on the idea that "like cures like"
  - Remedies made from small amounts of a variety of plants, minerals, and animal products – crushed, dissolved in liquid
- Results of scientific studies of homeopathy are mixed
- People most often use homeopathy to treat:
  - Allergies, asthma, ear infections, digestive disorders

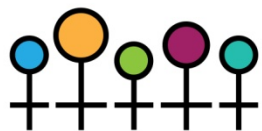




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# Hypnosis

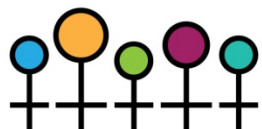
- Trained therapist uses techniques to help individuals:
  - Become deeply relaxed
  - Enter a different state of consciousness called a **trance**
  - Body relaxes; mind becomes more focused
  - Therapist makes suggestions for behavior change or symptom relief
- Hypnosis can help reduce stress, relieve anxiety, ease pain
  - Used to treat eating disorders, addictions, phobias, insomnia, digestive problems



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# Massage Therapy

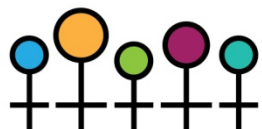
- Practiced as a healing therapy for centuries around the world
- Trained therapist uses their hands to physically handle the body's soft tissues and muscles to:
  - Relieve muscle tightness
  - Improve circulation; Clear waste products
  - Boost immune system
  - Reduce stress; Help you relax
- Massage therapists in the U.S. are certified and licensed



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# Mind-Body Techniques

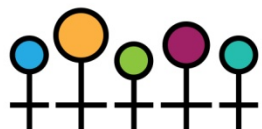
- Enhance mind's ability to affect bodily functions and symptoms
- Achieving deep relaxation can help ease stress, renew the body; techniques include:
  - Meditation, mindfulness, guided visualization, yoga, Tai Chi
- Studies suggest:
  - Mindfulness meditation may prevent CD4 cells from decreasing when a person living with HIV is under stress
  - Transcendental meditation improved quality of life of those living with HIV; longer study planned



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# Herbs and Dietary Supplements

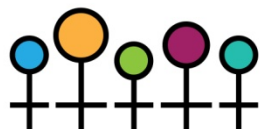
- May include herbs, Chinese herbs, foods and vitamins
- Important to discuss all herbs and supplements with provider to prevent interactions with HIV drugs
  - St. John's Wort, herbal treatment for depression, affects how PIs and NNRTIs act
  - U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommends St. John's Wort not be taken by people taking HIV drugs
- Most supplements in the U.S. are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration



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# Complementary Treatment Considerations

- Providers consider health and wellness factors including:
  - Medical history and other conditions
  - Lifestyle
  - Support systems
- Tailored program for each patient, may involve:
  - Diet change; nutritional changes
  - Vitamin and mineral supplements or herbs
  - Digestive health treatments
  - Physical activity and exercise
  - Stress reduction

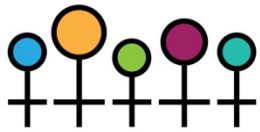


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# Conclusion

***Remember, talk to your provider about any complementary treatments before you use them!***

- Medical community is increasingly recommending complementary therapies for many types of conditions
- NIH has developed a department called The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Medicine (NCCIM) dedicated to the study of these treatments



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## Learn More!

- To learn more, please read the full fact sheet on this topic:
  - [Complementary Therapies](#)
- For more fact sheets and to connect to our community of women living with HIV, visit:
  - [www.thewellproject.org](http://www.thewellproject.org)
  - [www.facebook.com/thewellproject](https://www.facebook.com/thewellproject)
  - [www.twitter.com/thewellproject](https://www.twitter.com/thewellproject)