



Integrative Medicine: Working With Your Healthcare Team to Apply Mind-Body Practices

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Andrew Schorr:

So, Dr. Subbiah, part of this is communication. I think Raquel really explained about putting it in context and resources for people to start. But there you are in your white coat. All of us have doctors and maybe we have multidisciplinary teams. We have nurses and sometimes other kinds of therapists that we can draw on, but we've got to speak up, right? So what would you say about whether it's the patient themselves or the care partner, like Esther, to advocate so that we get these approaches brought to bear, whether we need training or medication in concert so that we get what we deserve?

Dr. Subbiah:

Sure. So the field of complementary medicine, integrative medicine, it's coming more and more to the forefront, but the reality is it's always been on the periphery for really decades. And so when you present a—when you bring up an option of a particular mind-body practice that you may want to try, the person listening to it on the other end, whether it's your nurse, your nurse navigator, whether it's your nurse practitioner, your physician or whomever it may be, they may not have been exposed to that in the course of their training and their years of experience.

And a person responds to that in different ways. Sometimes if they don't know about it they may dismiss it. Other times they may be more supportive to say, okay, let's look into it a little bit more. But if they don't have that background experience with it—and that's the way medicine has been for decades, so it's not so much a fault of their own. They just haven't been exposed to it as much.

Then ask them is it okay if I pursue it a little more, do some more research and bring some information to you to help me interpret it. And so I think we—when we—when you as the patient and the caregiver are gathering the information, just be aware that the person reading it may already be familiar with it or may not. And then based on their level of comfort with it go forward in that discussion.

If they have recommendations that's great. If they don't, we mentioned some of the resources where you can search online to find appropriately certified and trained personnel to deliver these mind-body practices. And so if you happen to be in a smaller area of the country or even in the larger area but don't have immediate access to an integrative medicine center to

at least get you started, then it's a great way to—it's a great opportunity to do some of the leg work yourself and then work with your care team to find what's right for you.

And you're right. The circumstances are that you may end up having—when you end up doing your research you may actually know more than the person sitting across from you just because of the way medicine has been but not where medicine is going, which is we're all becoming much more cognizant.

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