



Left to Right: Donna Magtibay, Marie Neher and Diane Anderson, Reiki practitioners; Dr. Kavita Prasad, Integrative Medicine physician, and Casey Langworthy, Director of Nursing.

Reiki in a Behavioral Health Clinic

Restoring Hope, One Life at a Time

BY KAVITA PRASAD, BSc, MD, FACP
AND DIANE ANDERSON, MS

ZUMBRO VALLEY HEALTH CENTER has been working for over 50 years to improve the health and wellbeing of adults, adolescents, and children in Southeast Minnesota, regardless of their ability to pay. As a community mental health center, our organization enhances the quality of life for individuals through its integrated behavioral, chemical dependency, and medical programs. Last year, approximately five thousand people received services from our staff.

We base our programs around our organization's mission of "promoting healthy minds, bodies, and communities with a person-centered, integrated approach."¹ We focus these programs on the underserved populations, to meet the growing needs of the communities and individuals we serve with low income. Medicaid and Medicare-eligible and public assistance populations form the overwhelming majority of our patient base.

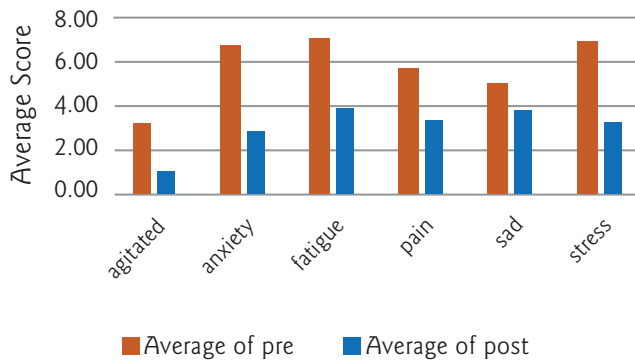
Over the past five years, we have developed a 360-degree approach for treating the growing numbers of people in

Southeast Minnesota, recognizing that the lifespan of people with severe mental illness is significantly shorter (by approximately 25 years) compared to the general population. This increased mortality is primarily due to physical illnesses, disparities in health care access, and important lifestyle choices that all contribute to poor health outcomes.²

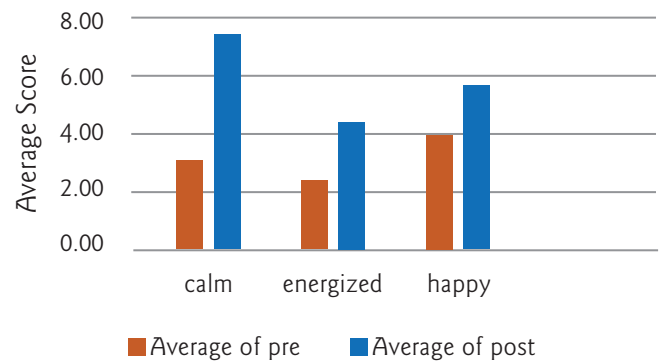
Our long-term goal is to develop a holistic approach to healthcare and focus on healing the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of each of our clients. Over the last six months, we have introduced Reiki into our facility as part of our vision to develop an Integrative Medicine program. Most of our clients have one or more mental health diagnoses, and few have heard of Reiki. Many of these clients would never have the opportunity to receive this treatment, as most struggle with basic needs such as housing, food, and overall security.

While developing the Reiki program, we initially discussed the scientific literature and benefits of Reiki with our staff, as

Average Effect of Reiki on Negative Emotions



Average Effect of Reiki on Positive Emotions



many were unaware of the therapy. Moreover, we launched the program by offering the therapy to the staff so that the experience would help them understand what Reiki entails. This experience allowed them to select suitable patients and guide them prior to a session. The participants reported a deep relaxation response and an overall sense of wellbeing.

Reiki referrals are made internally via our staff through any programs that our client may attend, including psychotherapy, or even via caseworkers who are working with clients in the community or within their homes. As long as a client is receptive to receiving Reiki, they meet with a provider to discuss their stressors, what a treatment involves, answer questions and then schedule them for therapy at our facility. Currently, we can offer Reiki sessions one day per week, and patients can reschedule for a return visit in approximately six weeks.

We administer surveys before and after Reiki sessions, asking clients to rate their symptoms on a 0-10 scale. Our Reiki practitioners are sensitive to each client's needs but do not focus on the individual's diagnosis. One-on-one time is spent helping to create a sense of trust and safety prior to the treatment. We invite patients to share any information they think may be helpful, but it does not require a discussion of their medical history. We take care to provide a calm and welcoming environment to ensure each client has a positive and relaxing experience.

Our results show the wonderful benefits of a Reiki program over the last few months, which we are excited to share. Above are preliminary results from the first twenty clients that experienced a Reiki session in 2019. Within this one-hour Reiki session, clients reported experiencing significant decreases in anxiety, pain, fatigue, sadness, and

agitation, while also reporting increasing feelings of energy, happiness, calmness, and relaxation.

Overall, we noted a tremendous benefit in our clients' wellbeing, and we are grateful to provide a therapy which offers hope and healing. We plan to extend our provision of Reiki in 2020, and beyond, as we focus on a holistic approach towards healing the mind, body, and spirit of each individual who we are privileged to serve. ✨



Dr. Kavita Prasad completed her training in Integrative Medicine at Mayo Clinic and currently serves as the Medical Director for primary care at Zumbro Valley Health Center in Rochester, Minnesota. She is also a Trustee of Full Circle Fund Therapies in the UK. Her vision is to incorporate evidence-based integrative therapies into conventional medical practice with a focus on spirituality in healthcare. You may contact her at kavita.prasad@zvhc.org.



Diane Anderson is a Reiki Master Teacher, certified Energy Medicine practitioner, holistic health coach, and shamanic healer. She teaches Reiki and Shamanic Healing in Rochester, Minnesota, and facilitates a monthly Reiki share group and drumming circle. You may contact her at theseventhray@aol.com.

Endnotes

- 1 "Zumbro Valley Health Center." Charities Review Council. <https://smartgivers.org/organizations/zumbro-valley-health-center/>.
- 2 DeHert, Marc et al. "Physical illness in patients with severe mental disorders. Prevalence, impact of medications and disparities in health care." *World Psychiatry: Official Journal of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA)* vol. 10,1 (2011): 52-77. doi:10.1002/j.2051-5545.2011.tb00014.x.