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Natural medicine offers Scottsdale options

By Edward Gately
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HOLISTIC APPROACH: Above, Dr. Meghana Thanki, a naturopathic physician, prepares at the AyurZona Wellness Center on First Avenue near Indian School and Scottsdale roads in Scottsdale. Below, Thanki demonstrates a relaxation treatment.

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Among the galleries, shops and eateries of Old Town Scottsdale lies a place where clients can benefit from therapies dating back to ancient India.

AyurZona integrated wellness center, on First Avenue near Indian School and Scottsdale roads, is slowly gaining a client base among those looking for treatment outside of mainstream medicine.

It combines the use of Eastern and Western medical treatments to provide care for the patient's "mind, body and spirit."

The treatments include psychotherapy, natural Indian medicine, massage and yoga.

The center includes two practices: Dr. Purnima Mehta's psychiatric and emotional wellness consultations, and Dr. Meghana Thanki's naturopathic consultations. Mehta and Thanki are mother and daughter.

"We want to bring about healing at all levels ... and promote healing for people with emotional and physical difficulties," Mehta said.

"We are helping them become aware of their capacity for healing." Dr. Thanki is a naturopathic physician.

Naturopathic physicians are trained in the art and science of natural health care at accredited medical colleges.

People are slowly finding their way to the center, Thanki said.

"I just received an e-mail from somebody saying 'Gosh, I don't want to be on this medication because it's making things worse, what can you do, what treatments can you offer?'" Thanki said.

"It's usually a last-resort sort of thing. People have tried everything and they're like 'Gosh, do you have another way to look at it?'"

Naturopathic medicine remains completely separate from mainstream medicine, although some physicians are incorporating holistic approaches in their care, said Chic Older, executive vice president of the Arizona Medical Association.

"Naturopathic medicine is something that is here, it's something that patients are asking about, and more and more physicians are clearly informing themselves of it," he said.

AyurZona includes various rooms where clients are guided through a process.

In the intention room, clients take a moment of silence and then are asked to state their intentions for the day.

In the "Tea-Be Room," clients are asked to write a list of what they would like to let go.

The list is then placed in a Weeping Buddha pot, and later burned.

"We have everybody go through the process," Thanki said.

"They meditate for a few minutes and then they receive the treatment they're here for. It's very important, letting go here, setting intentions ... the meditation, getting ready to receive something."

Among treatment options are:

- Shirodhara, in which a stream of warm herbalized oil is poured continuously over the forehead.

It "promotes profound relaxation and integration of mind, body and spirit by synchronizing brain waves."

- Shiro-Abhyanga-Nasya-Karna, which is a combination of deep head, neck and shoulder massage with a facial lymphatic massage followed by deep inhalation of herbal aromatic steam and gentle herbal nose drops for the sinus.

It is a "luxurious and powerful tool to relieve congestion, and alleviate head, neck and respiratory complaints."

"I like taking patients through the process," Thanki said.

"I can see the transforming and the discoveries they're making. Just watching that ... that's the part I enjoy the most."



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