

All the Little Pieces of Me



By Sharon Wilkening, MA, LMHC

Kim has spent the last six months going from specialist to specialist. Today, as she heads into yet another office, she feels exhausted, overwhelmed, and hopeless; she's spent valuable time and money trying to find the answers to her ongoing symptoms, and has been stymied at every turn. Unfortunately, the appointment today is just as fruitless as the others, and at the end, the specialist simply provides her with a referral to a psychologist. "Oh, great," Kim thinks: "They think it's all in my head!"

For too many patients, this scenario plays out daily in medical offices across the country. When clear answers can't be found to explain a patient's physical concerns, primary care physicians and medical specialists often resort to a referral to a mental health provider—if it isn't a physical issue, they may conclude, perhaps it's a behavioral one.

We at Carolina Partners in Mental HealthCare understand how demoralizing it can be, as a patient, to receive such a referral; it can feel like being told you're making your symptoms up. We also understand, however, that seeing a psychologist does not have to be an invalidation of your experiences: the simple truth is, your issue can both stem from a behavioral health issue, and still impact you in a very real, physiological way!

In fact, health problems aren't *either* physical or mental. We understand that your behavioral, physical, and emotional health

must be treated simultaneously to improve your overall health and well-being. Much like a motor vehicle, your body is a complex, synergistic machine that functions best when all components are fueled, maintained, and balanced.

THE SOLUTION IS INTEGRATIVE

Historically, the medical profession has advocated the disease model of treatment: the body has been systematically taken apart by specialists, with the expectation that when a certain malfunctioning "piece" is fixed, overall functioning will improve. However, this approach ignores consideration of the influence of all the other "pieces" of the body and mind. This medical model suggests that the treatment of physical complaints ends at the target organ, rather than expanding that purview to heal the individual person in their whole complexity.

Integrative medicine is that expanded purview. Treatment focuses on the entire body—how you function emotionally, physically, cognitively, and spiritually. This method of treatment is zoomed out, not zoomed in, under the assumption that the whole picture of you may yield information that a small part of you, viewed and treated independently, may not.

THE CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE CARE: WE TREAT PEOPLE, NOT SYMPTOMS

The Center for Integrative Care (CIC) is a uniquely diversified group of professionals, addressing all aspects of patient health. While this alone does not mean that the treatment outcomes will be better, the CIC also possesses the crucial ability to link patients, caregivers, providers, and other resources through a coordinated system of care and health coaching. Our firm belief is that this coordinated system leads to better outcomes.

In the conventional health care model, each specialist you see is focused on solving their own piece of the *Puzzle of You*, and likely, they are doing a good job. But, in this specialized system, they may not be able to put the whole puzzle together for you, providing you with a clear explanation of the treatment plan, identifying your personal barriers, and helping you implement the treatment plan in your daily life.

That's where we come in. At the CIC, one individual works directly with you, your family, and your providers, ensuring that all components are performing effectively as a cohesive unit for the best outcomes. We understand that every patient is unique, and every treatment plan is personally tailored to meet each patient's needs. Thus, through a comprehensive system of coordinated care, you can finally achieve a healthy internal balance and improved lifestyle.

OUR PROVIDERS

Dr. John Yakono, MD (Internist).

Dr. Yakono received his medical degree from State University of New York at Buffalo, and has been practicing for over 30 years.

Dr. Ivonne Draughon, DNP, NP-C (Primary care and psychiatry). Dr. Draughon received her MSN from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and her DNP from East Carolina University. She has been practicing for over 10 years.

Dr. Jackie Camp, Ph.D (Therapist).

Dr. Camp is a licensed psychologist, who earned her Doctorate of Philosophy from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and has been treating patients for 12 years.

Katie Godin, RD, LDN (Dietitian).

Katie received her BS in Nutrition. She also has her certification in Adult Weight Management from the Commission on Dietetic Registration.

Lisa Berezenak (Health Coach). Lisa has

a BA in human services, and is certified as an Integrative Health Coach, yoga instructor, and personal trainer.

Sharon Wilkening, LMHC, NCMHC (Care Coordination Program Manager).

Sharon has an MA in psychology, and has been treating patients for over 14 years. **h&h**

Sharon Wilkening, MA, LMHC, earned her MA from Marymount University in Arlington, VA, and has been treating patients for over 13 years. She treats ages 14 and up at the Carolina Partners Center for Integrative Care and specializes in therapy for PTSD, mood disorders, anxiety, and eating disorders. For more information or to schedule an initial evaluation at the Center for Integrative Care, contact: Carolina Partners in Mental Healthcare, PLLC. Telephone: (919) 354-0834. www.carolinapartners.com.