

## HEALTH MATTERS

# Complementary energy healing therapy being sought for mental health problems

Local energy healing therapist and clinical psychologist, Jonathan Matile, has said that he has observed a significant number of locals presenting to him with signs and symptoms of various types of mental health issues, primarily stress, anxiety and depression – all of which have the potential to provoke ailments in the physical parts of our bodies. This, he adds, is not only commonly seen in Seychelles, but also within the African region.



**Mr Matile beside his professional certificates at his practice in Docklands Building (Photo credit: The Creative Studio – Seychelles)**

He attributes the main reason for these types of mental health issues to rapid Westernisation, including the quick economic development that Seychelles has been undergoing for the past 15 years. In turn, many people resort to alcohol or food for comfort, and this contributes to the high and increasing rate of overweight and obesity in the country.

“The local population used to lead simple lives and now, not everyone can adapt to the rapid changes. The economic changes we have witnessed in 15 years, normally occurs over about 50 years in Europe. As a result, some people are having cultural identity crises due to the many changes in our culture. Some experience anxiety, feel troubled and are frustrated due to debts that they have incurred from buying assets like cars and houses. Drug abuse is also another cause of these mental health problems.”

Mr Matile has observed during energy therapy, that it is mainly women above the age of 40 who are presenting with these mental health problems, while men tend to complain more of physical, muscular pains. It is the same in Europe, he explains, with more women seeking natural, energy / spiritual healing as they are more open to this type of therapy, prefer less medication and with age, become more spiritual.

When using energy healing for mental health issues, Mr Matile says that together with his patients, he goes into a meditative state whereby he places his hand at their head/throat to receive information. During this time, he says that he senses disequilibrium in his hands and very often during this same time, patients feel a prickly sensation, indicating the exact location of negative energies.

Mr Matile explains that patients can also experience calming, peaceful sensations. Those who have kept negative emotions deep inside for long periods of time can sometimes cry and even if they do not understand why they are crying, it helps them to eliminate the negative energies that disrupt their lives.

Speaking about the number of therapy sessions required, Mr Matile says that he advises patients to observe the results of their first session (usually half an hour to one hour) and to then decide whether they would like to return for more sessions. Usually, his patients attend two sessions on average, depending on how they feel psychologically, physically and spiritually.

Mr Matile stresses to members of the public that it is important to understand that he holds two different licenses – one as an energy therapist, and the other as a clinical and developmental psychologist; these cannot be mixed together as they are two very different things.

If a patient is depressed, he advises them to first see a clinical psychologist (either himself or at the Seychelles Hospital) and they can also seek complementary energy healing in conjunction with their conventional treatment.

Complementary treatments can also be in the form of meditation, mindfulness, yoga, massage and sports. He notes that in Switzerland, animals such as dogs and dolphins are also used during various types of therapy for humans. Mr Matile sees that energy therapy is also part of the holistic care that is promoted by the Ministry of Health.

Beyond professional treatment, he shares some advice to help those with minor stress, anxiety and depression symptoms. Firstly, for those who feel stressed or anxious, he recommends finding some time each day to recuperate and not to wait to do this only at the weekends.

This can be in the form of physical activity, e.g. swimming or meeting up with friends for a chat, watching a movie or doing free mindfulness exercises which are easily accessible on YouTube; it is important however to avoid using abusive substances like drugs and alcohol.

For those suffering from depression, his advice depends on the extent of their problem; if it is severe, then the person must seek help from a psychiatrist at the Ministry of Health to be given medication.

If they have minor issues, it is also advisable for them to engage in physical activities, to explore nature, to take up simple activities like gardening and to socialise rather than staying alone. If spiritual, a person can also seek the help of a priest, and it is very important not to be afraid to speak up about how we are feeling.