

Integrative Approaches to Adolescent Mental Health

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Sarah is a 16-year-old high school senior. She had mood swings, migraines and PMS for three years after her parents divorced. She had been previously diagnosed with bipolar disorder and major depressive disorder and placed on the medications Depakote and Lexapro. She continued to seek help as she gained weight from her medications and felt tired and dizzy at times. She found it hard to express her feelings. Her migraines and PMS had not improved. Her psychotherapist referred her to Tao Institute for a second opinion and complementary therapies.

Sarah was evaluated both from a conventional psychiatric perspective and traditional Chinese medicine perspective. It was noted that the bipolar disorder diagnosis was questionable based on her clinical picture. Then she received a course of treatment with acupuncture and Chinese herbal remedies as she continued her psychotherapy and medications.

After three months Sarah first noticed improvement with her migraines and PMS and experienced more energy and less moodiness. She also noticed significant improvement of her sinus problem caused by allergies. As her mood continued to improve during her six months of treatment, she was first gradually taken off Depakote, then Lexapro. Her mood stabilized. Her migraines minimized and she seldom experienced any problems with PMS. She is now enjoying her life as a college student. We concluded that Sarah had Adjustment Disorder with anxiety and depression.

At the Tao Institute of Mind & Body Medicine, we pay attention to the whole person at biological, social, psychological and spiritual levels. We utilized the best of Western medicine (psychotherapy and psychotropic medication) and ancient Eastern medicine (acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine). We help patients of all age groups with mental, behavioral and physical disorders.

(Published on Camden County Women May/June 2006)