

## **Integrative Therapies in Primary Care Subspecialty Program**

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### **Abstract**

The Columbia University School of Nursing (CUSN) will offer a subspecialty that will incorporate Integrative Therapies in Primary Care within the Master of Science (MS) Nurse Practitioner programs at CUSN. A 9-credit sequence of three courses will be offered as a subspecialty in any of the ongoing MS Nurse Practitioner specialties (Adult, Geriatric, Family, Pediatric, Women's Health, Midwifery, Oncology, Psychiatric/Mental Health). The first two courses will be didactic and will provide an overview of, and theoretical grounding in, the different integrative modalities. Lecture topics will focus on various traditional systems of health care such as: Ayurveda, Homeopathic Medicine, Naturopathic Medicine, Native American, Latin American, Kampo and Traditional Oriental Medicine. Specific classes will also be devoted to the discussion of safety and regulation of integrative therapies from a primary care perspective. The third course will be clinical in focus, with each student being assigned to observe a practitioner of integrative medicine in a chosen modality. Additional clinical focus will be provided in weekly case studies where students will be challenged to appropriately incorporate integrative therapies into the treatment plan of patients with traditional Western illnesses (diagnoses) such as hypertension, cancer, etc. This course will be co-led by an integrative practitioner and a nurse practitioner. The essence of this course will be to reinforce, in practical ways, the interrelationship of two points of view. To this end, the Western allopathic approach of differential diagnosis and treatment will be held as the standard of care. However, students will be instructed on how to appropriately and safely infuse integrative therapies into their clinical practice with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of the care given to clients.

CUSN is committed to educating and training primary care nurse practitioners who specialize in health promotion and disease prevention initiatives in underserved areas. In order to advance this commitment, a subspecialty program has been designed to teach cultural traditions related to health care and the use of alternative medicine practices. This approach is an important component in preparing primary care nurse practitioners to work in ethnically diverse underserved urban communities. Culturally relevant knowledge can positively impact communication in the healthcare relationship (patient/provider), and is crucial to the provider's ability to prevent/improve health outcomes related to disease.

Through advanced knowledge of the cultural and philosophical origins of various integrative therapies, as well as safety and regulatory factors, graduates of the program will be prepared to engage this expanding area of health care in all domains of nurse practitioner practice. Additionally, graduates will be eligible to sit for the American Holistic Nurses' Association credentialing examination in Holistic Nursing.