**General Information**

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Course Meeting: TBD

Course Credit: TBD

**Course Description**

This course is an introduction to the complementary and alternative medicine modality of aromatherapy. It is a 90-minute segment of a three part series entitled “Self-care through Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) Modalities.” In this course, participants will receive an introduction to aromatherapy’s definition, history, benefits, research, professional requirements, essential, safety precautions and application.

**Course Prerequisites**

None

**Course Objectives**

1. To understand the definition and history of aromatherapy.
2. To understand the benefits, research and evidence supporting aromatherapy.
3. To understand the impact of essential oils and safety precautions associated with them.
4. To identify professional requirements and community resources available in the local area.
5. To develop the confidence to introduce aromatherapy into your self-care regime.

**Course Timeline**

Min Activity

05 Introduction to CAM/Learning Outcomes

05 Definition and History of Aroma Therapy

10 [Video](https://youtu.be/rEIPtU2hAQg) and brief discussion (5:19)

05 Benefits of Aroma Therapy

10 [Video](https://youtu.be/Lzj-Z1C1UFM) and brief discussion (2:47)

05 Research and evidence

10 Break

10 Essential Oils

10 [Video](https://youtu.be/Jz8YjnHjSe0) and brief discussion (2:00)

05 Professional Requirements and community resources

05 Safety Precautions

10 Application and discussion

05 Summary / Conclusion

**90 Total Minutes**

**Introduction:**

Hello. I’m Darlene Taylor, a wellness coach at Wellness Works, an online business created to help its clients develop personalized plans to obtain optimal holistic wellness in the physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual arenas. Our philosophy is simple, "Simple Changes Matter."

This lesson will introduce the benefits of aromatherapy and how you can make it an integral part of your daily life. Aromatherapy is a complementary, alternative, and integrative medicine modality that can be used to enhance your health. It can be an adjunct to conventional medical treatment for pain management. It can be an alternative preventive measure to control stress and anxiety. It is a great modality for most people, regardless of age (with safety precautions.)

**Definition and History of Aroma Therapy**

“Aromatherapy is the therapeutic use of plant-derived, aromatic essential oils to promote physical and psychological well-being. It is sometimes used in combination with massage and other therapeutic techniques as part of a holistic treatment approach.” (The Free Dictionary, n.d.)

It is a form of alternative medicine, also known as essential oil therapy. Aromatherapy is a natural, non-invasive modality. Without even knowing it, each of us had used aromatherapy to some extent throughout our lives. For me, the smell of cinnamon makes me feel comfortable. It reminds me of my grandmother and how she made homemade apple sauce and sprinkled cinnamon on the top of it when she heated it on the stove.

*“*Authentic Aromatherapy is a comprehensive healthcare modality that utilizes therapeutic plant extracts called “essential oils” to evoke the body’s own intrinsic healing power. Essential oils support the body in achieving what it does naturally – seeking homeostasis and balance.” *(Wickell, n.d.)*

Aromatherapy is also an ancient practice. Between 2700-3000 BCE, Shen Nung wrote the Pen Ts’ao which cataloged over 200 botanicals and their medicinal value. The traditional Indian medicine, Ayurveda, used herbs for treatment in 2500 BCE. The Egyptians used incense and oils for spiritual ceremonies as far back as 1500 BCE. Due to their trade with Egypt, the Romans began bathing with botanicals and used them in their ceremonies. By 1000 AD, Arabs mentioned them in their writings.

Fast forward to 1937, a French chemist, Rene-Maurice Gattefosse published a book on aromatherapy and introduced botanicals into Europe as a medical discipline.Today, millions of people practice aromatherapy around the world.

**(See** [**video**](https://youtu.be/rEIPtU2hAQg) **and discuss)**

**Benefits of Aroma Therapy**

There are many benefits to aromatherapy to include reduced stress and anxiety, improved mental clarity, alleviated depression, boosted energy, eliminated headaches, induced sleep, reduced pain, improved digestion, increased circulation.

According to Kathi Keville, “hospitals are experimenting with using aromatherapy to help patients relax so that other healing modalities can do their job.” (Keville, n.d.)

**(See** [**video**](https://youtu.be/Lzj-Z1C1UFM) **and discuss)**

**Research and evidence**

According to the Mayo Clinic “Aromatherapy is thought to work by stimulating smell receptors in the nose, which then send messages through the nervous system to the limbic system — the part of the brain that controls emotions.” (Brent A. Bauer, 2015)

**(Break)**

**Essential Oils**

Aromatherapy is used to treat a wide range of symptoms and conditions from gastrointestinal discomfort, skin conditions, menstrual cramps, mood disorders and more.

| **Aromatherapy Oils** (The Free Dictionary, n.d.) | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Description** | **Conditions treated** |
| **Bay laurel** | Antiseptic, diuretic, sedative, etc. | Digestive problems, bronchitis, [**common cold**](http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/common+cold), influenza, and [**scabies**](http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/scabies)and lice. CAUTION: Don't use if pregnant. |
| **Chamomile** | Sedative, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, and pain reliever | Hay [**fever**](http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/fever), burns, [**acne**](http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/acne), arthritis, digestive problems, [**sunburn**](http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/sunburn), and menstrual and menopausal symptoms. |
| **Clary sage** | Relaxant, anticonvulsive, anti- inflammatory, and antiseptic | Menstrual and menopausal symptoms, burns, eczema, and [**anxiety**](http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/anxiety). CAUTION: Don't use if pregnant. |
| **Eucalyptus** | Antiseptic, antibacterial, astringent, expectorant, and analgesic | Boils, breakouts, [**cough**](http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/cough), common cold, influenza, and [**sinusitis**](http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/sinusitis). CAUTION: Not to be taken orally. |
| **Lavender** | Analgesic, antiseptic, calming/ soothing | [**Headache**](http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/headache), depression, insomnia, stress, sprains, and nausea. |
| **Peppermint** | Pain reliever | [**Indigestion**](http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/indigestion), nausea, headache, motion sickness, and muscle pain. |
| **Rosemary** | Antiseptic, stimulant, and diuretic | Indigestion, gas, bronchitis, fluid retention, and influenza. CAUTION: Don't use if pregnant or have epilepsy or hypertension. |
| **Tarragon** | Diuretic, laxative, antispasmodic, and stimulant | Menstrual and menopausal symptoms, gas, and indigestion. CAUTION: Don't use if pregnant. |
| **Tea tree** | Antiseptic and soothing | Common cold, bronchitis, abscesses, acne, vaginitis, and burns. |
| **Thyme** | Stimulant, antiseptic, antibacterial, and antispasmodic | Cough, [**laryngitis**](http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/laryngitis), diarrhea, gas, and intestinal worms. CAUTION: Don't use if pregnant or have hypertension. |

**(See** [**video**](https://youtu.be/Jz8YjnHjSe0) **and discuss)**

**Professional Requirements and community resources**

**Menstrual Pain: In a randomized placebo-controlled trial of 67 female college students, researchers found that** topically-applied lavender, clary sage, and rose is effective in decreasing the severity of menstrual cramps. (Han, Hur, Buckle, & Choi, 2006)

**Insomnia**: In a single-blind trial of 42 female college students complaining of insomnia, researcher concluded that lavender has a beneficial effect on insomnia and depression after a four-week protocol. (Lee & Lee, 1999) Additional research favor lavender positive effect on combating insomnia. (Lewith, Goodrey, & Prescott, 2005) (Chien, Cheng, & Liu, 2012)

**Tobacco Withdrawal: In a random trial of 48 smokers, researchers found that** inhalation of vapor from black pepper extract reduces smoking withdrawal symptoms. (Rose & Behm, 1994)

**Pain Management: In a randomized trial of 20 hospice patients with terminal cancer, researcher found that aromatherapy hand massage patient perceived less pain. Other research was promising regarding the temporary relief of post-threptic neuralgia pain with topical geranium oil.**

**Stress Management: In a trial of 36 female high school students, researchers found that stress levels were significantly reduced when they received aromatherapy.** (Seo, 2009)

**Safety Precautions**

Of all the modalities I’ve discussed over the last few lectures, aromatherapy does have safety precautions.

First, keep essential oils out of the reach of children. Some of the oils to include almond, camphor, fennel, and wormseed contain toxic elements that if ingested can be life threatening. So these essential oils are not suitable for aromatherapy. Some, if exposed to the skin can be an irritant.

Other points include:

* Prevent getting it on your clothes, it could stain
* Various scents bring about different reactions in different people
* Not all essential oils can be used in aromatherapy
* Never use essential oils undiluted topically.

I would recommend that one seek a certified Aromatherapist if the intent is to take essential oils by mouth or apply it to the skin.

**Application and discussion**

Aromatherapy can be administered in four way: inhalation, topically, ingestion, and around the home. For the purpose of this course, we will only focus on inhalation and around the home.

According to the National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy (NAHA) (n.d.), there are a number of methods to apply essential oils in that manner.

Steam inhalation is a method that helps those with upper respiratory, nose or sinus problem. With this method, individual pour hot water into a bowl and add a few drops of the essential oil they’ve selected. Then, they place their face over the bowl and cover their head with a towel. This allows them to directly inhale the essential oil.

Aromatic spritzers is a combination of water and essential oils. You can be purchased at many stores as well as on-line. You can use them on the face and body, around your home or on your pillow.

Diffusion is the process of taking essential oils, evaporating them and distributing the molecules in the air. As you can see from the slide, there are many styles of diffusers. You can use battery-operated or candle-based diffusers and they can be purchased anywhere from Walmart to specialty shops.

**Summary / Conclusion**

So today we’ve talked about the history of aromatherapy, its benefits, research and evidence, essential oils and their application, professional requirements, and safety precautions. I hope that you’ve learned that aromatherapy can have a positive impact on your health and wellness.

This is the last presentation in my three-part series on self-care throughcomplementary and alternative medicine modalities. Throughout this series I’ve given you a lot to think about. My intent was to show you that self-care in the most important type. We often focus on others, but through aroma therapy, tai chi, and meditation we have the ability to attend to our own spiritual needs. We can find our own inner peace. Thank you once again for attending. And remember…."Simple Changes Matter."

# References

Brent A. Bauer, M. (2015, Feb 5). *What are the benefits of aromatherapy?* Retrieved from Mayo Clinic: http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/expert-answers/aromatherapy/faq-20058566

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Wickell, D. (n.d.). *Essential Oils, Nature’s Intelligence in a Bottle.* Retrieved from All Things Healing: http://www.allthingshealing.com/aromatherapy-health-benefits.php#.WA7hK68taUk

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**Local Resources**

Integrative Healing Institute, 7122 San Pedro Ave, Suite 106, San Antonio, TX 78216

Natural Health Improvement Center Inc, 5826 Babcock Rd, San Antonio, TX 78240

Local Aromatherapist, <http://localmarket.holisticonline.com/Aromatherapists_San_Antonio_TX-p1562476-San_Antonio_TX.html>

**Online Resources**

Techniques: Essential Oil Playlist by Deanna Souza, <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJklr0XHKFxzk_TLxZBakPTPx8QySclDX>

Certification and Training: Aromahead Institute, http://www.aromahead.com/courses/online

Research: Aromatherapy at the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/aromatherapy>

National Organization: National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy, http://naha.org/

**Recommended Reading**

Press, Althea. (2013) Essential Oils for Beginners: The Guide to Get Started with Essential Oils and Aromatherapy, Althea Press

Press, Althea. (2015) Essential Oils Natural Remedies: The Complete A-Z Reference of Essential Oils for Health and Healing, Althea Press

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