



a welcoming, comfortable and healing environment where quality time with patients is our priority



by Beth Davis

After earning a bachelor's degree in clinical psychology, Dr. Jewel Sommerville had intended to move forward and receive her PhD. However, she was starting to become discouraged with the state of healthcare. At the time, Medicare and HMOs were taking over, limiting her time with patients. Most of her patients were suffering from severe mental illness and being approved for only 15-minute sessions.

"The reason I went into psychology was my desire to help the whole person," she says. "Having such little time with patients limited my ability to help them heal."

Wanting to find something focused on the whole person instead of segregated parts, she realized Chinese medicine had so much of what she was looking for—a focus on the patient-practitioner relationship, confidentiality, trust, the importance of not judging patients, and of course, treating the whole person.

"I immediately stopped in the middle of applying for my PhD. and applied to the New England School of Acupuncture, the oldest graduate school for the study of East Asian Medicine (EAM) in the United States," Sommerville comments. She received her degree and is now licensed to practice EAM in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island. She has also earned the credential of Diplomate of Acupuncture from the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture



*Dr. Jewel Sommerville, PhD.*

and Oriental Medicine.

For 10 years, she has been combining her training in Japanese and Chinese acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine to assess, diagnose and treat a wide variety of conditions. She founded Holistic Health Rhode Island (HHRI) as a private practice eight years ago, but after a few years of referring patients out for other modalities, she had an idea—bring those modalities to her patients.

"It occurred to me how convenient it would be to have a team of people under one roof," Sommerville explains. "I began searching for a team of practitioners and service providers that would allow us to bring together a variety of complementary disciplines."

Now, in addition to East Asian Medical services, including Chinese acupuncture, Japanese acupuncture, Chinese Herbal Medicine and Nutritional Therapy, magnetic therapy, moxabustion and more; HHRI offers Reiki, massage therapy, skincare services, physical therapy and even personal chef services and in-home cooking lessons.

Having a passion for health in general, Sommerville has a deep interest in educating about the importance of health and nutrition. A personal chef on-staff gives patients the opportunity to have great tasting, healthful, affordable meals in their home without the daily grind of shopping and cooking.

Classes such as Chinese Nutritional Therapy and Whole Grain Cooking show people how to cook easy, nutritious meals.

As with many holistic practitioners, Sommerville and her team treat both the source of the problem, as well as the symptoms. "We aren't interested in just medicating or putting a Band-Aid on," she explains. "We want to find out why this is happening and help the patient learn what can be done to avoid repeating the same problem in the future." By doing so, she says they can help the body return to its natural state of health.

A common misconception is that acupuncture, for instance, is just to treat muscle pain. In fact, it treats a wide range of disorders including migraines, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, fertility problems, high blood pressure, sleep disorders and stress management, plus it helps strengthen immunity. The amount of treatments one must do depends on the person. After a certain point, Sommerville recommends coming in every four to six weeks for maintenance, or just coming in if a flare-up occurs.

Reiki is similar in that it treats some of the same symptoms as acupuncture does. Reiki is commonly used to treat stress, boost the immune system, alleviate aches and pains and emotional blockages, speed the healing process, and to help alleviate the symptoms and/or effects of cancer, arthritis, diabetes and many other ailments.

No matter what the problem, Dr. Sommerville is determined to help find a solution. Spending time with patients is a priority, as she believes quality of care and the patient-practitioner relationship are of utmost importance. And, it is her patients that offer her continued inspiration each and every day.

"I love my profession and I love what I do," she says. "I feel so lucky that I have never had a single day that I don't want to go in to work."

*Holistic Health Rhode Island is located at 5784 Post Road, Suite 5 in East Greenwich. For information, call 401-398-2933 or visit [HolisticHealthRI.com](http://HolisticHealthRI.com).*



## healthbrief

### Why People Need Germs

Parents should ease up on antibacterial soaps and wipes and perhaps allow their little ones a romp or two in the mud—or at least more of an acquaintance with everyday germs, suggests a Northwestern University long-term study.

Exposure to germs in childhood, the researchers observe, helps develop the immune system and may help prevent cardiovascular and other diseases in adulthood. Such early exposure, they note, promotes the body's own ability to regulate inflammation, a root cause associated with many diseases.

"Now, for the first time in the history of our species, our bodies are being deprived of exposure to those everyday germs because we live in such a sanitary environment," explains lead author Thomas McDade, of Northwestern. "Think about the immune system as [one] that needs information from the environment to guide its development and function; if you live in a rich microbial environment, you get exposed to lots of germs, and that helps your immune system develop."



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