INNER GARDENING:
Combined Cognitive Behavioral and Buddhist Approach to Growth and Healing

-Dr. Maria Lourdes Llaneza-Ramos
In each of us lies a garden of dreams longing for cultivation. Daring to spark seeds of new life in our entrusted paths, how do we protect and nurture the emerging buds of hope amidst rampant environmental chaos and internal pollution?
When our visions of a magnificent inner garden of peace and joy is trampled on by thick clouds of cynicism and doubt, how do we remain faithful to tending our sacred grounds?
Drawing from the art & science of psychotherapy, *inner gardening* will use experiential, multisensory approaches to help enable us to:

Reawaken our sleeping beauties
Reconceive the running theme/s of our inner garden
Reown and replant the lost dreams of our wounded hearts
Renew the vitality and immune power of our bodies
Release our minds from denial and fear to acceptance of our inner power
Realign our spirits with the divine purpose for which we were born.
Realize we are all a unique part of one thriving, never-ending inner garden.
Inner Gardening: Combined Cognitive – Behavioral and Buddhist Approach to Growth and Healing

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What is “Inner Gardening”

A way of seeing and cultivating a person’s ability to:

look within oneself,

see how one is being – alone or with others

go beyond *habitual ways of making sense of*

who one is

how others are, and

help empower more healthy and meaningful ways of being.
What is “Inner Gardening”

An experiential course that combines cognitive-behavioral and buddhist approaches to facilitate growth and healing

• To be a psychologist is to be aware of facing **MYSTERY** in the whole person of the other/s.

• We are called upon to become “**Gardeners of the Soul**”
Inner Gardening as a Qualitative Research

- **Hypothesis**: If one engages in inner gardening, one can experience growth and healing.

- **Design and Participants**: Descriptive, exploratory multiple-case study with 200 adults of both genders, aged 18-65 years old who were willing to undergo “inner gardening”
Cognitive and behavioral elements:
Perception, Cognition, Beliefs, values, schemas

Buddhist elements:
Attention, Awareness, Mindfulness, Detachment

Conceptual Framework

- self beyond ego
- growth
- healing
How do we help garden a soul?

How do we help someone learn, heal and grow?

From cognitive behavioral psychology and eastern wisdom like Buddhism

“Let our mind be like a mirror – while the images reflected are constantly changing, the mirror itself remains unchanged.”

objective and compassionate
1. AWARENESS

- Am I present in my life?
- If I added 5% more awareness into my daily activities....
- What is one of the greatest gifts you can give?
- What makes my heart sing?
- If I did not have to live up to the expectations of anyone, who would I be?
- What I choose to focus on is what I can ‘see’ and what I look at and can see becomes reality for me.
2. Self-accepting mindfulness

Can I witness to how I am being in my world?

If I were more accepting of my needs and wants….

Can I honor what I see in me and in the other/s with me?

If I no longer deny my fears…

If I could welcome my dreams more fully…
• 3. Openness
  – Attaining a realistic outlook by being
    • Grounded in our bodies
    • Feeling with our hearts
    • Understanding with our minds
    • Awakening to our spirits

• “Do you have the patience to wait until your mind settles and the water is clear? Can you remain unmoving until the action arises by itself?”
• 4. Attuning to the Bigger Picture
  – Receptiveness to the world of truth and values
  – “Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right doing there is a field. I will meet you there.”
  - Rumi
  - From ego identity/personality to essence
5. Returning to creative stillness

– Invitations from nature
– Time to uncover the genuine impulse

Rediscover the inner longing

– “There is a desire within each of us, in the deep center of ourselves. We were born with it, it is never completely satisfies, and it never dies...Our true identity, our reason for being is found in this desire.”
• 6. Following our bliss

– Can we awaken to our sleeping beauties?

– “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our Light not our darkness that frightens us….“
• 7. Garden-Hopping

- *Exploring the NonLocal Mind (NLM)*
- *Piercing through the illusion of isolation and separateness*
- *Glimpsing our unity and interconnectedness with others, the universe and God*

- *Learning to “Dance with Forever”*
• “He who knows others is wise, but he who knows himself is enlightened.”
  – Lao Tzu

“Enlightenment ..is not the creation of a new state of affairs but the recognition of what already is.”
  – Allan Watts
“Pain frequently is the result of tension, and groaning is nature’s way of relieving it.”

Can you cultivate your ability to listen to your unheard groans?

In our inner garden, you can hear, feel and see more clearly, one with the Heart of Eternity.
Results:

All participants experienced and verbalized growth and healing in varying ways:

* increased comfort and sense of restfulness with one’s self and others
* resolving inner doubt, fear, confusion
* “hearing the Music that Never Ends”
* renewed optimism, courage, & purpose
* found Peace, sense of “coming Home”
The Yin-Yang Symbol of Wholeness

Ako/Ikaw

Tayo
A Seven-Stage Path to Growth and Healing with the Growth Functions of the Seven Chakras

(7th Crown chakra) Growing and healing → Transformation and re-integration

(6th Brow chakra) Re-visioning → Openness to self re-creation

(5th Throat chakra) Expressing/voicing → Disidentification with outmoded self-definitions and interpretations

(4th Heart chakra) Accepting → Re-uniting with the lost selves

(3rd Solar Plexus chakra) Thinking → Re-acquaintance with one’s self and world

(2nd Sacral chakra) Feeling → Experiencing sacred space

(1st Root chakra) Sensing safety → Attending presence
Inner Gardening Maps of the Higher and Lower Self

The Higher self: SPIRIT

7. a Sacred Self
6. a re-visioning self
5. a truth expressing self

*** 4. a heart-filled self; a compassionate self

SOUL

The lower self: EGO

3. a thinking and understanding self
2. a sensing and feeling self; a passionate self
1. a secure self
Everyone has a Buddha nature, and a Boddhisatva’s strength and spirit.

When doing our work as psychologists, may we have the innocence of a child, the endurance of a camel, the courage of a lion, the tenderness of an evening star, And the wisdom of an awakened inner garden!
Thank YOU!