Curanderismo

THE ART OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE FOLK HEALING
Curanderismo

• It is the art of Mexican Folk Healing from the word *curar*, meaning to heal
• Uses a holistic approach to healing – mind, body, and spirit
• Who is a curandero/a?
  • A traditional healer working in the material, spiritual, and mental levels
  • Someone with a *don* (a gift)
  • An apprentice
  • Attends specialized school – Centro de Desarrollo Hacia La Comunidad (CEDEHC)
Influences of Curanderismo

1. A blend of Native American and Spanish roots
2. Judeo-Christian – gift from God and belief in God
3. Greek Humoral – Equilibrium of hot and cold
4. Arabic – Directing psychic energy
5. African – Santeria blend of Catholic saints and African orichas
6. Spiritualism and Psychic – Spiritual trances and communication with spirits
7. Scientific – Germ theory, Psychology, and Bio-Medicine
Evolution of Medicinal Herbs

- Aztec Pharmacology
  - 1,200 medicinal herbs

- Aztecs treated arthritis gastrointestinal ills, hepatitis, etc.
Fusion of Traditional and Allopathic Medicine

• Curanderismo has influenced the revival of alternative, contemporary, holistic, integrated medicine

• $21 billion in consumer spending

• Andrew Weil, MD,’s Common Sense Approach
  • “Can’t hurt, could help”
  • Less fat, animal food, stress
  • Eliminate or reduce intake of booze, cigarettes, coffee
  • Begin exercise, massage, and hypnosis therapy
  • Use herbs, olive oil, garlic, ginger, etc.
  • Keep lots of fresh flowers
Common Goals: Modern & Traditional Medicine

Andrew Weil, MD
Author

- Modern “Integrative Medicine” specialist
- Emphasizes holistic, common-sense approach to treatment and healing

Don Pedrito
Traditional Healer, Los Olmos Ranch

- Traditional 19th Century Mexican Folk Healer
- Emphasized holistic, common-sense approach to treatment and healing
Integrative/Complimentary/Alternative Medicine

• “Of the 130 U.S. accredited medical schools, 100 cover alternative/complimentary/integrative medicine” - The Association of American Medical Colleges

• In New Mexico we have:
  • UNM’s Center for Life – Dr. Arti Prasad
  • Ayurvedic Institute
  • Sanjevani Integrative Medical Center
  • Southwest Acupuncture College
UNM 2-Week Summer Class: Traditional Medicine without Borders

- 2-week, in-person, class
- Offered in the summer since 2002
- Held at the University of New Mexico – Main Campus, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Features history of curanderismo with hands-on activities with guest healers from Mexico
- Participants study herbs, rituals, folk medicines, and important figures in healing
- **Website:** curanderismo.unm.edu
- **Email:** curanderismo@unm.edu
UNM Online Classes:
Traditional Medicine of Mexico and the Southwest & Global Perspectives

**Fall Semesters:**
*Part 1: Curanderismo of Mexico & the SW*
- 16-week, 3 credit hour course, fully online
- Featured topics:
  - Laugh Therapy (*risaterapia*)
  - Intestinal Blockage (*empacho*)
  - Energetic/Spiritual Cleansings (*limpias*)
  - Fire cupping (*ventosas*)
  - Many more!

**Spring Semesters:**
*Part 2: Global Perspectives*
- 16-week, 3 credit hour course, fully online
- Featured topics:
  - African Traditional Medicine (Uganda & Gabon)
  - Afro-Cuban Healing
  - Afro-Puerto Rican Healing
  - Mayan Acupuncture & Abdominal Massage
  - Sacred Tobacco of Peru, etc.

**Bonus:** Coursera Courses, which are fully online and free. These four 5-week courses cover healing the body and spirit/energy, and cultural traditions.
Teaching Cultural Competencies to Medical Schools with Coursera

### Curanderismo: Traditional Healing using Plants

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Interviews with Traditional Healers |
| **2** | Plants of the Southwest  
Medicinal Plants for the Digestive System |
| **3** | Medicinal Plants for the Nervous System  
Tinctures and Microdosis |
| **4** | Juice Therapy  
Geotherapy |
| **5** | Healing with Herbal Oils  
Herbal Smoke for Healing |
Teaching Cultural Competencies to Medical Schools with Coursera

| **Curanderismo: Traditional Healing of the Body** |
|---|---|
| 1 | Intestinal Blockage  
Shawl Alignments |
| 2 | Fire Cupping  
Bone Setter |
| 3 | Mayan Abdominal Massage  
Body Adjustment |
| 4 | Spinal Alignment  
Hydrotherapy |
| 5 | Traditional Healing of Infants  
Traditional Healing for the Aging Community |
## Teaching Cultural Competencies to Medical Schools with Coursera

### Curanderismo: Traditional Healing of the Mind, Energy and Spirit

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# Teaching Cultural Competencies to Medical Schools with Coursera

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<th>Curanderismo: Global and Cultural Influences of Traditional Healing</th>
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African Healing through Music |
| **3** | Afro-Latino Healing through Music and Dance  
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| **4** | Afro-Puerto Rican Healing Modalities  
Sacred Tobacco of Peru/Medicinal Plants for Women |
| **5** | Native American Feather Healing  
Mayan Acupuncture |
Curanderismo of Mexico and the Southwest
Introduction to Curanderismo
Dr. Arturo Ornelas and Dr. Eliseo “Cheo” Torres

• Dr. Ornelas and Dr. Torres discuss the art of Curanderismo during the online class
Medicinal Plants of the Southwest
Dr. Tomas Enos

- Dr. Enos gives a demonstration on medicinal plants of the Southwest during the online class

- Benefits:
  - Plants can help with liver, sleeping, detox, infusion, etc.
Mexican Sweatlodge (Temazcal) Demonstrations
Rita Navarrete

- Rita demonstrates the ritual of the temazcal in the online class presentation.

- Benefits:
  - Used to purify the body in Mesoamerican ceremonies
  - Now used to cleanse the body, mind, and spirit in Mexico, South America, and the Southwest
  - Releases toxins through sweating
  - Moves lymphatic system through exfoliation
Fire Cupping (*ventosas*)
Rita Navarrete

- Rita demonstrates fire cupping, or *ventosas* during this online demonstration.

- Benefits:
  - Mobilizes blood flow to promote healing for digestive problems and pain.
Intestinal Blockage (*empacho*)
Albertana “Tana” Sanchez

- Tana demonstrates the technique of removing an intestinal blockage, or *empacho*, as part of the online class.

- Benefits:
  - Alleviates boating, diarrhea, and vomiting.
Energetic/Spiritual Cleansings (*limpias*)
Laurencio Lopez Nunez

- Laurencio gets ready to perform an energetic/spiritual cleansings, or *limpia*, on Cheo during the online class.

- Benefits:
  - Elements such as an egg, herbs, copal, incense, candle, and water/mescal can be used to absorb and sweep negative vibration.
Symbolic Hand Beliefs for Protection & *Mal de Ojo*

- *Hamsa*, from Israel Judaism
- *Khamsa*, from Egyptian Islam
- *La Mano Poderosa*, from Mexican Christianity
- All share similar amulets for protection
Laugh Therapy (*risaterapia*)
Rita Navarrete

- Rita helps the group learn about laugh therapy, or *risaterapia*, in this online class demonstration.

- Benefits:
  - Increases natural pain killer cells – endorphins
  - Suppresses stress hormones – epinephrine
  - Helps cellular immune response
  - Exercises lungs, circulatory system, and oxygen to the blood
  - Reduces stress and anxiety
Mayan Acupuncture
Sofia Salazar

- Sofia demonstrates Mayan acupuncture in this segment of the online class.

- Benefits:
  - Relieves pain, sciatica, tensions, headaches, etc.
Geotherapy – Clay Therapy (*Geoterapia*)
Antoinette “Tonita” Gonzales

- Tonita practices Geotherapy on a patient in this online demonstration.

- Benefits:
  - Clay is used for inflammation and stimulation for blood circulation, toning of skin, and absorption of toxins.
Juice Therapy (jugoterapia)
Antoinette “Tonita” Gonzales and Rita Navarrete

• Tonita and Rita demonstrate juice therapy during the online class.

• Benefits:
  • The variety of nutrients provides treatments for the body’s toxicity and deficiency.
Shawl Alignments (manteadas)
Antoinette “Tonita” Gonzales and Rita Navarrete

• Rita demonstrates the shawl alignment or “manteada” technique during the online class.

• Benefits:
  • Gentle massages for pregnancies, the elderly, and children.
Global Perspectives of Curanderismo
Mino and Bernadette demonstrate tobacco healing practices during the online class.

Benefits:
- Tobacco is used for spiritual cleansings and to treat some ailments.
Ugandan Traditional Medicine

- Ugandan healers share African traditional herbal remedies
- Promotes traditional medicine through a forest school for practitioners with a medicinal garden
- Creates a medicinal garden for medicinal and nutritional plant and a health clinic
- Processes, packages, and markets herbal medicine
- Improves midwifery services
- Uses traditional herbal medications for HIV/AIDS infections
African Healing through Music from Gabon

- Healer from Gabon, Bokaye, plays the *Mogongo* musical instrument to communicate with spirits
- Bokaye uses religious rituals through music that induces visions and promotes spiritual growth
- The vibrations from the musical instruments, songs, and chants are part of the holistic healing practices of the African *Bwiti* religion
Afro-Cuban Healing Techniques

- Pedro, from Cuba, uses cigar smoke and a coconut as part of a spiritual cleansing.
- Cuban *limpias* involve elements of nature common to the island of Cuba, such as plants, egg shells, rum, and cigar smoke.
- Cuban healing is a mixture of Christianity along with West and Central African traditions.
- Pedro is referred to as a *Babalawo, Santero, Palo Monte*, and *Curandero*.
Modern Curanderos(as)
Jewel Babb – “The Goat Woman of West Texas”
Valentine, Texas

- Was the only doctor in Valentine
- Used massage therapy and prayer
- Discovered growing power at age 56
- Kept Aloe Vera in her home
- Talked to God
- Did not charge for services
Crescencio Alvarado Nuñez - “Chenchito”
Espinazo, Nuevo Leon, Mexico

- Well-known *Fidencista*
- Has been *material*, curandero, all his life
- Channels spirit of the famous *Niño Fidencio*
- Cheo’s teacher
Rita Navarrete
Mexico City

- Has been practicing for over 28 years
- Started her practice in Mexico city
  - Continued in Cuernavaca and Jilotepec
- Known as an educator of Laugh Therapy (risaterapia) and Mexican Sweatlodge (temazcal)
- Teaches temazcal, massage, and medicinal plant classes
Antoinette Gonzales – “Tonita”
Gonzales Ranch, New Mexico

- Completed her Traditional Medicine studies at El Centro de Desarrollo Humano Hacia la Comunidad (CEDEHC) in Mexico
- Apprenticed with Rita Navarrete
- Worked in Mexico City and Jilotepec
- Has a clinic and temazcal in the North Valley of Albuquerque
Texts on Curanderismo
Curanderismo

• Is not just a healing modality, but rather choosing a lifestyle of consciousness

• “To be healthy, we need to understand that we have to be balanced physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.”

  -Tonita Gonzales