

### C. Alternative and Complementary Health Care

- Alternative and Complementary medicine are terms used to describe traditional medicine that has been adopted by other **populations** outside its **indigenous** culture.



- Often in this case, traditional medicine is used out of context without being part of a **holistic** cultural approach (ie. only parts of this system are used by patients, not a whole system).

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#### Alternative

- refers to using a non-mainstream approach **in place of** conventional (western) medicine.

#### Complementary

- generally refers to using a non-mainstream approach **together with** conventional medicine.

#### Integrative Medicine

- is the use of alternative therapies with conventional medicine in a **coordinated way**
- this array of non-mainstream health care approaches may also be considered part of complementary medicine
- Example:  
Cancer treatment centers with integrative health care programs may offer services such as acupuncture and meditation to help manage symptoms and side effects for patients who are receiving conventional cancer treatments such as chemotherapy.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42X\\_gpNwoJU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42X_gpNwoJU)

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### Characteristics of this System

- This system consists of a wide and extremely varied set of treatments that are often split into 2 broad categories: **natural products** or **mind and body practices**.



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### 1. Natural Products:

- includes a variety of products, such as **herbs** (also known as botanicals), **vitamins and minerals**, and **probiotics**.
- are widely marketed, readily available to consumers, and often sold as **dietary supplements**.
- The supplement industry is big business, worth over 61 billion dollars in the U.S. economy alone. These products were the most popular complementary health approaches among adults & children.
- While there are indications that some may be helpful, more needs to be learned about the effects of these products in the human body and about their safety and potential interactions with medicines and with other natural products.



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### 2. Mind and Body Practices

- include a large and diverse group of **procedures** or **techniques** administered or taught by a trained practitioner or teacher.
- Examples include:  
**acupuncture, massage therapy, meditation, spinal manipulation, relaxation techniques, etc**



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### Other Alternative / Complementary Health Approaches

- natural products and mind & body practice capture most complementary health approaches, however some approaches may not neatly fit into either of these groups
- Examples: the practices of traditional healers, traditional Chinese medicine, "**homeopathy**, and **naturopathy**."



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### Roles of the Practitioner and Patient

#### Practitioner:

- usually **trained** in their area of expertise, but **NOT a medical doctor**
- focuses on treating **symptoms**, not the cause of the illness (but can't prescribe medication)
- helps with **relaxation** and **emotional well-being**



#### Patient:

- both **active** and **passive**, depending on the treatment
- no prescription medicine** is taken
- willing to see their problem as connected to their **whole body**

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### Challenges

- Not many countries have national policies for **traditional medicine**.
- Scientific evidence** from tests done to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of medicine products and practices is **limited**.
- Many people believe that because medicines are herbal (natural) or traditional they are safe (**or carry no risk for harm**).



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### WHO Response

- WHO aims to **support** and **integrate** (alternative/complementary) medicine into national health systems following national policies and regulation for products, practices and providers to ensure **safety** and **quality**



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### Group Work Assignment

Alternative Therapies have grown in popularity over the last 10 years. There are many instances where the effectiveness of alternative therapies are questionable and controversial. There are also instances where some practices have been embraced by the mainstream medical community, and can have very effective results

Pick one alternative therapy:

- Describe what this therapy involves (treatment & intended results)
- What, if any, are the potential hazards of the treatment?
- Is this treatment offered in Prince Albert? Saskatchewan?
- What are the estimated costs associated with the treatment?
- Is it accepted by the mainstream medical community? If so, give an example how it is used with western medicine.
- What is your opinion on this therapy?

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### B. Mind and Body Practices

include a large and diverse group of **procedures** or **techniques** administered or taught by a trained practitioner or teacher.

#### Examples:

##### Acupuncture

is a technique in which practitioners **stimulate specific points** on the body—most often by inserting thin needles through the skin.

##### Massage Therapy

includes many different techniques in which practitioners **manually manipulate the soft tissues** of the body.

##### Meditation Techniques

involve ways in which a person learns to **focus attention** such as **Mindfulness Meditation** or **Transcendental Meditation**

##### Movement Therapies

include a broad range of Eastern and Western **movement-based approaches**; examples include **Rolfing Structural Integration** and **Pilates**

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### Relaxation Techniques

such as **breathing exercises**, **guided imagery**, and **progressive muscle relaxation**, are designed to **produce the body's natural relaxation response**.

#### Spinal Manipulation

practiced by health care professionals such as chiropractors, osteopathic physicians, naturopathic physicians, physical therapists, and some medical doctors manipulation by **using their hands or a device to apply a controlled force to a joint of the spine**

The amount of force applied depends on the form of manipulation used.

#### Tai Chi and Qi Gong

practices from traditional Chinese medicine that combine **specific movements or postures, coordinated breathing, and mental focus**.

#### Yoga

various styles used for health purposes typically combine **physical postures or movement, breathing techniques, and meditation**.

Other examples of mind and body practices include **Healing Touch**, **Hypnotherapy** and **Body Talk**

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