



Berkeley Acupuncture Project
1834 University Ave. © M.L.K., Berkeley, CA 94703

Welcome to our community!

At Berkeley Acupuncture Project, we do things a little differently. Please take a moment to read through these papers so you can get a sense of what to expect.

We are delighted that you are interested in joining our community!

What's Different About Berkeley Acupuncture Project?

- **We treat in a community setting**

Most acupuncturists in the U.S. treat patients on tables in individual rooms. This is not traditional in Asia, where acupuncture usually occurs in a community setting. Our clinic is filled with comfortable recliners clustered in groups in a large, quiet, soothing space. Treating patients in a community setting has many benefits: it's easy for friends and family members to come in for treatment together; many patients find it comforting; and a collective energetic field becomes established which actually makes individual treatments more powerful. The style of acupuncture we practice at BAP allows patients to keep their needles in as long as they want, and the "right" amount of time varies from patient to patient. Most people learn after a few treatments when they feel "done"; this can take from twenty minutes to a couple of hours!

- **We have a sliding scale**

Most U.S. acupuncturists also see only one or two patients per hour and so need to charge more per treatment to cover their expenses. Intake interviews tend to be elaborate and lengthy, too. At BAP, we have returned to the traditional approach, seeing multiple patients at a time and relying primarily on pulse diagnosis to decide how to treat you. This is exactly how acupuncture is practiced traditionally in Asia -- many patients per hour and very little talking. The great thing is, it is also very effective!

Because we have a sliding scale, we cannot bill insurance (that's the insurance companies' rule). If you have insurance that covers acupuncture, we'll be happy to give you a payment receipt, and then you can submit it.

Our Commitment to You

We want to make it possible for you to receive acupuncture regularly enough and long enough to get better and stay better. We want our community to be welcoming to all different kinds of people. We want to give you the tools to take care of your own health so that you will not need to rely on corporations like Big Insurance or Big Pharmaceuticals for costly, high-tech interventions. We will provide a safe environment with skilled practitioners.

What We Need From You

- **Responsibility**

BAP does not provide primary care medicine. Acupuncture is a wonderful complement to Western medicine, but it is not a substitute for it. If you think you might have a serious medical problem or if you want someone to go over the details of your medical history, you need to see a primary care physician (ND, MD, or DO). We can provide some excellent, affordable referrals, even if you have no insurance coverage. We *can* provide complimentary care for conditions which also require a physician's attention -- for instance, we often treat patients for the side effects of chemotherapy, Lyme disease, Hepatitis, etc. But we need you to take responsibility for your own health.

BAP does not receive grants, state or federal money, or insurance reimbursement. We exist because patients pay for their treatments -- it's a sustainable business model.

- **Flexibility**

The community setting requires some flexibility from you. For instance, many patients have a favorite recliner. When we are busy, someone may be sitting in yours. Similarly, we have a few patients who snore. Other patients who dislike snoring bring earplugs to their treatments. We are grateful for this! Some of our patients even bring favorite pillows or blankets from home with them, because they prefer theirs to ours. That's fine with us. Basically, we need you to participate in making yourself comfortable in the community room before we treat you.

If you need to be somewhere at a certain time, please let us know when you come in. We'll make sure you're out on time. In general, if you feel done, open your eyes and give us a meaningful look -- if your eyes are closed, we think you're asleep and we won't wake you up.

- **Community-Mindedness**

The soothing atmosphere in our clinic exists because all of our patients create it by relaxing together. We appreciate everyone's presence! This kind of collective stillness is a rare and precious thing in our rushed and busy society. Maintaining this reservoir of calm requires that no one talk very much in the clinic space. If you would like to speak to a practitioner one-on-one at any length, please let us know. If you want to have a substantial conversation, we will probably need to schedule that separately.

Part of our success is that our patients learn the "routine" and take on a lot of responsibility for the appointments. Please re-schedule and pay for your treatments at the front desk BEFORE your appointment so you can thoroughly relax. Please refrain from wearing perfume or strong scents. Please talk in hushed tones. Please wear loose clothing, and pull up your sleeves and pant legs when you situate yourself in a recliner. Please take all personal belongings (bags, shoes, etc.) with you back into the treatment room. And of course, please turn off your cell phone when you enter the clinic.

- **Commitment**

Acupuncture is a PROCESS. It is very rare for any acupuncturist to be able to resolve a problem with one treatment. In China, a typical treatment protocol for a chronic condition could be acupuncture every other day for three months! Most of our patients don't need that much acupuncture, but virtually every patient requires a course of treatment, rather than a single treatment, in order to get what they want from acupuncture.

One big reason that we are able to keep our prices so low is because of the extraordinary amount of marketing our patients do on our behalf -- we don't have to advertise. We cannot express how grateful we are for this. Our patients are such effective marketers because they have first-hand experience of how well acupuncture works. All of our satisfied patients have made a commitment to a course of treatment.

On your first visit, your acupuncturist will suggest a course of treatment, which can be anything from "we'd like to see you once a week for six weeks" to "we'd really like to see you every day for the next four days". This suggestion is based on our experience with treating different kinds of conditions. If you don't come in often enough or long enough, acupuncture probably won't work as well for you as it could. The purpose of our sliding scale is to help you make that commitment. If you have questions about how long it will take to see results, please ask us, or if you think you need to adjust your treatment plan, please let us know. We need you to commit to the process of treatment in order to get good results.

And, last, but not least... please enjoy the space. We do, and hope that Berkeley Acupuncture Project can be an important part of your community. Thank you,

**Michelle, Mary, Julia and the
Berkeley Acupuncture Project Staff**