“50 Shades of Blue, Natural Therapeutics for our Daily Angst and Anxiety”

Debra Swanson

*FULL TRANSCRIPT*

Hosted By Marjory Wildcraft
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Deb Swanson: Hi. The name of this talk is 50 Shades of Blue: Natural Therapeutics for our Daily Angst and Anxiety. When I was asked to do this talk, I thought that this would probably be one of the topics that I could speak to more eloquently. In my daily practice, this is probably some of the more concerned things that people come in about, sleep problems, depression, anxieties.

Just like there's 50 Shades of Blue, there are 50 shades of green. There's fabulous plant allies that we can use to help us through our daily angst. What I really hope that you'll gain from this talk is that you will have some wonderful tools in your pocket, and that you will have a wonderfully developed emotional first-aid kit that you can go to in times of stress and anxiety.

Let's look at our nervous system. It's a complex network comprised of nerves and neurons that respond to the internal world, as well as our external world. It's an electrical grid that functions according to the information that our body is receiving. And this electrical system is not a closed system, isolated from the input of the outside world. Instead, it's an energetic ... We have an energetic body that is deeply connected to the energy of our environment.

We have an electromagnetic field that extends far beyond our physical body, and being that it does, we are picking up a whole lot more than we are conscious of. We're picking up all the currents that are happening on an unconscious level. Because of that permeability, we also feel things very, very deeply. We're meant to be emotional, feeling creatures. That's the beauty of being human. But what also occurs with a very permeable electromagnetic field is that as well as feeling these great sense of elation, we can also feel these undercurrents of despair.

For some people, it might even be that the feelings that they're picking up aren't necessarily their own feelings. So there's herbs and homeopathy that we can take that actually help to create more fortification in the nervous system, and in your ethereal body. I'm
going to try not to go off track here, but I think it's worthy of mentioning that there is this interconnection between the energetic world and our emotional world.

It's no wonder that there's an epidemic of depression and insomnias and stress-related illnesses in developed countries. Here's some interesting statistics. 75% of adults, when surveyed, they say that they are moderately to severely stressed. Sadly, 35% of middle school and high school students also say that they are moderately to severely stressed. Now, that's a big wake-up call. Again, we do have these wonderful herbal allies that can help us to mediate these times. And the beautiful thing is is that many of these remedies can be quite simple and potent at the same time.

If I could just ask you for one moment to just close your eyes and to summon a feeling of peace and well-being when you were not having to rush out the door, you didn't have a long laundry list of things that needed to be accomplished, and just the time when you woke up in the morning and you felt just like things were just as they needed to be. It's always important to remember these times because we need to anchor ourselves in those good memories and in a place of tranquility as much as possible because we do have the ability, not only with herbs but with our own mind, to reboot our nervous system.

Here's something that I find so wonderful. I hope that you all have access to nature, but when you think about the green of nature, that green color is related to the heart chakra. So when you are out in nature, you are bathed in that green beautiful light of love. And when we're making herbal teas and we're taking in plant material, we're also taking in the liquid light of love because the plants are eating solar energy, and then we're taking that solar energy and bathing ourselves in it. It's a beautiful thought. So I encourage everybody to get out in nature as much as possible.

Let's get into the nitty-gritties here. Let's talk about anxiety. Anxiety is characterized by uneasy, apprehension, worry, fear. A lot of times, it's a feeling of powerlessness, and it can even be that feeling of impending doom. So we all can feel these feelings every once in a while, but it's the frequency that is disconcerting. So a person who is constantly under this kind of stress, there's big physiological effects on the body, and this can affect our cortisol levels, it can affect digestion. For a lot of people, it affects their sleep habits. We all know that a lack of sleep leads to cranky, shaky people and, often times can create a case of Chicken Little. I know that's the way it feels for me when I don't sleep. I feel like the
sky is falling in. But there are wonderful nervines that we can use to help us with anxiety. Nervines are herbs that literally help to support the nervous system.

One of my very favorite ... Well, they're all my favorites, but motherwort in particular, I have a deep affinity for. Motherwort is Leonurus cardiaca, which means lion heart. I love the way that this plant has a name that is so apt for what it's good for. The lion heart means that when we take motherwort, it gives us courage. It gives us the kind of courage that we get when we feel very well supported and embraced. So if we look at the next slide, we see that it's this beautiful, noble lion that feels like he is in his domain. Then, the other slide is this sweet picture of a cub and a mama lion. What motherwort does is she's the mama lion that takes her big, warm paws, and she wraps you up in them, and she says, "It's okay, dear. It's going to be just fine."

So motherwort can help to slow an anxiety-filled heart. It can literally help to relieve the pressure that you feel in your heart. It's great for high blood pressure that is specifically due to stress-induced anxiety. It's also a wonderful herb that we use for child birthing. So it's great for mamas who have just given birth, and it helps to tighten up the uterus, and it also gives this sense of well-being, and helps to support a woman through times of transition as well. So many women, when they're going through menopause, they can have problems with hot flashes. And when those hot flashes come on, there's this like surge of anxiety that can come along with that. This really helps to taper things down.

Dosage for motherwort is typically, I would recommend that you start with 15 to 30 drops of a tincture. You can drink it as a tea as well. It is very bitter. But that bitter taste can sometimes help to aid in digestion. And that bitter taste, they found that there's receptor sites for that in your heart. That's a kind of a cool thing, when you think that bitter actually helps to tone the heart itself. When I think about heart, I think about it as very energetic. It is. It's the center of our being. We always say, "How does your heart feel? We want to come from the heart." So this is an herb that helps you come from the heart.

This is milky oats, Avena sativa. It's a wonderful restorative herb to take over a long period of time. It's called Jatropha restorative, which means that it nourishes a particular organ system. In this case, it nourishes down to a deep fundamental level of your nervous system. Milky oats are something that when we take over a long period of time, we receive the benefits. This is particularly
helpful for folks who are highly driven, and who have a lot on their plate. That sounds like everybody. I don't know anyone who doesn't have a lot on their plate, but somebody who's an overachiever, and they've got to get everything right.

This could be, let's say, a mom who's working full time and has children at home and needs to ... wants to have the house clean, and they want to make sure that they have the right food on the table, and they've got deadlines. It's this vicious cycle. So this person might wake up in the morning exhausted, so they go for a cup of coffee and then at 5:00, they're going like, "Oh my gosh. I can't wait for that glass of wine just to wind down." So this is a vicious cycle of altering your nervous system to accommodate your highs and your lows. So oats taken over a period of time can really help to give you more sustained energy for one thing, and calm that fraid feeling, and that rushed feeling that happens when we're constantly on overdrive.

We're calling this milky oats because if you look at the grain, and you were to squeeze the grain before the kernel was completely formed, it would secrete a sweet, white substance. It's referred to as a latex. That's the part that we want to use. So this is going to be very different than eating a bowl of oatmeal, or drinking the oat's straw itself. What you're wanting to do is you're wanting to get the fresh milky oats in a tincture. This is the nutritive properties that we're looking for that are so restorative to the nervous system. The way that I would recommend that you take this is anywhere from 15 to 60 drops of the fresh plant tincture.

Our next herb is skullcap, scutellaria lateriflora. This is another nervine, so it helps to rebuild and strengthen the nerves, the nerve bundles themselves. One of my most profound introductions to this plant was when somebody had come into the herb shop and they had literally severed the tip of their finger and they had it sewn back, but they had terrible nerve pain in their finger. It was healing. It was numb on the tip. Then it was on fire around where the incision had been.

So I knew that skullcap helped to rebuild the myelin sheath. It helped to rebuild that cholesterol layer that coats the nerve bundles themselves. So I had them do a pretty hefty dose for maybe a month. I think it was three dropper-fulls twice daily, and they came back in and they said their finger was completely better. There was no pain. Complete function. No numbness. So that's kind of cool.
I like to think about that how it really helped to alleviate that kind of chronic pain. And that can be the chronic pain that happens in our nervous system as well, so we can experience it emotionally, emotional chronic pain, and we can also experience the nerve chronic pain. So this is one that is great for injuries in particular.

Now it is in the mint family, and it’s a bitter herb, so it does stimulate digestion. It’s great for stress. It’s muscle relaxing, anti-inflammatory. It has gentle sedative properties, so it can help to calm a restless person, to lull them into sleep, but great for raw nerves rooted in exhaustion. So that again is somebody who’s burning the candle at both ends.

A college student could be a great example, somebody who has just so much on their plate and they’re worrying. Along with that is a lot of worry, and their minds is not able to shut down. This is a gentle herbal remedy that, again just like the oats and the motherwort, taken over a period of time, can really help to alleviate this chronic angst.

I have a wonderful formula in the herb shop that’s called Peaceful Heart, and it is literally a combination of these three herbs. It is a tried-and-true remedy for folks in Durango to come into Dancing Willow and to get the Peaceful Heart. It does help to kind of put you back in your body, helps to relieve that nervous energy, and can calm a very restless heart.

Passion flower, passiflora. This is a really fun herb to talk about, because it’s so incredibly gorgeous and crazy-looking. To me, it’s ... I don’t know. It looks otherworldly, but it is an incredible herb to know about. It grows in more humid environments. It’s wild in Hawaii, in Florida, places like that. This herb, they’ve done some studies with, that taken over a period of time, that it actually increases your GABA activity in the brain and in the gut, so it improves those receptor sites for GABA.

GABA is one of those neurotransmitters that makes you feel good, helps you feel like you are kind of calm, and chill, and feeling your center. GABA is also a neurotransmitter that they give to people who have taken too much caffeine. So if you’ve drank too much black tea or coffee and you want to bring yourself down, passion flower is the go-to.

Great for menopausal depression. Can help with hot flashes indirectly because of the calming activity. A lot of times, hot flashes are not only hormonal, but they are also these surges in cortisol,
and your adrenals are affected. So that constant onslaught of stress creates the stress on the adrenals and then hence your hot flashes get exasperated.

They've also had great luck using passion flower with neuropathies. There is a medication called Gabapentin, which is like monster doses of GABA that helps with nerve pain. So I've use this as well for folks who have that nerve pain running down their leg, or into their feet. Specially with diabetics, this would be a great one. It's another wonderful herb to know in terms of for anxiety and restlessness. The way that I would take this herb would be either tea or tincture. If you're lucky enough to have a fresh plant tincture of that, that would be delightful. It would probably ... Probably the dosage for this would be 30 to 60 drops. I would not recommend that you do it more than three times a day. As a tea, you can maybe be a little bit more liberal with that. It would be a heaping teaspoon per cup and maybe three to four times a day, a great remedy to do at the end of the day just to kind of help to bring you down a notch.

Now, I'd like to talk about depression. It's a sad picture. Well, depression is characterized by a low mood. You're sad, anxious, feelings of apathy and emptiness. I'm really going to make you guys sad. I'm sad. Aversion to things that once brought you joy. A lot of times when you're depressed, it affects your digestion. Some people overeat. Some people lose their appetite completely. There's a lot of fatigue with depression. It's, I mean, literally depression. Everything slows down, and there's a feeling of dejection or worthlessness, hopelessness.

It's a vicious cycle because sometimes this can lead to shame. And people who get depressed, sometimes it even adds to irritability. Then with the irritability, there's guilt and shame and guilt and shame, problem focusing, but the good news is again we do have some wonderful herbs. The first herb that I'd like to introduce to you is St. John's wort, hypericum perforatum. It is one of our premier antidepressant herbs.

I love to talk about St. John's wort for a number of reasons, because just looking at the flower, you see that bright yellow color, which is symbolic of the energy of the sun. Then if we look at the leaf close up, we see these little pinholes in it. Those pinholes are the perforatums. The way I like to make this analogy is that those pinholes are allowing the rays of the sun to shine through on to you and into you and to lift your spirits.
The sun is the universal symbol of upliftment. The earth, everything revolves around the sun. It's that great solar energy. So the other symbol for this that I think about when I look at those little holes in the leaves is that it's kind of like the holes that we feel in our subtle body. Now, if you were to take the St. John's wort, the flowers, and you were to pinch them between your fingers, there would be this red pigment that was ... that comes out of it. It's this red pigment, that also symbolizes the bruising that you're feeling in your soul.

Now chemically speaking, St. John's wort is an SSRI, which is a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor. It's a lot like Prozac. What it does is you have these receptor sites in your stomach and your brain for serotonin, so it blocks some of those receptor sites so that the ones that are most pertinent to serotonin get filled with ... are able to be saturated with the serotonin. So it blocks some to allow it to flow into others.

This is an incredible herb for seasonal affect disorder, for full-blown depression. It can take, just like any other SSRI, it can take up to six weeks to really kick in, but St. John's wort is something that you can use even on the short term for helping to rebuild the nerves, and help to ... you'll feel the effects of it, really get the full dosing of it, and the first full effect of it, then you want to do it for about six weeks. The dosing is 30 drops to 60 drops. This is again the fresh plant tincture, which I prefer personally. A person would take that two to three times a day. Preferably, if you can get that third time in, that would be great, but if you can't, then two times a day.

Lemon balm. Melissa officinalis. Most of the herbs that I've talked about so far, you can grow in your garden. This is one of the beauties about these herbs that I've chosen, just about everything except for passion flower. But if you're living in one of those really humid environments, you could do passion flower as well. Lemon balm is classic mint family. It's got a square stem, and it's a wonderful, soft, aromatic, lemony sent. It's sweet, sweet aroma. That's kind of what lemon balm's about, is bringing that sweetness into your being.

It's very relaxing. It helps to calm the mind. It gives us a sense of ease. It is great for children, to take the edge off of cranky kids. It does an interesting thing. Not only does it help to calm a person, but it also helps to center them and can boost their alertness.

They've done some studies that actually helps to sharpen your memory, and it's great for problem solving. I think that one of the
reasons why it does this is because when we've got so much going on and a person is depressed, that things are so shut down that you need to have just a little bit of something that can pick you up to get that sense of alertness stimulated without caffeine. This is not at all a caffeinated feeling. It's just a great feeling of well-being that helps the mind focus.

So in particular, this would be a great herb to use for children who have ADD. They do say that it does help to just put a beautiful smile on your face when you drink lemon balm. I would say drink it as much as you want. Use it liberally. Make a tea. Make a tincture. Put it in your bath. Get a little bit of the lemon balm essential oil and put a tiny bit on your pillow at night. That would be a nice way to help with relaxation and help with sleep disorders.

We like damiana. *Turnera diffusa*. This is an herb that has an incredible reputation. It's a lovely herb. It makes a person feel very uplifted and energized. It's ... can give us a feeling of mild euphoria. Now this plant in particular, it comes from Central America, Mexico in particular. Some of you might be familiar with it. They make an aperitif out of it. It is reputed to be a wonderful aphrodisiac.

Now this is not an aphrodisiac, like you want to tear somebody's clothing off. This is an aphrodisiac that just makes you feel good and grounded. It brings lots of blood in circulation into the pelvic area. So it does affect the libido but I believe it affects the libido because it puts you in a place where you feel much more receptive. It's a heart herb, so it's mildly euphoric.

It helps to reduce anxiety. It just helps with the receptivity that you feel, when you feel just at ease with who you are. It can help to add to the ambience and the feelings of your ... connecting with your sensuality. That's what I'm trying to say. It's great for fatigue.

I like to use it when I'm studying. It just seems to get me focused, in a really nice way. I don't feel jacked up like I'm on a lot of caffeine, but I feel very centered when I drink damiana. Some people like to smoke it in an herbal cigarette. I'm not condoning smoking but some people really enjoy it that way. It's very mellowing. This would be a great tea to use for somebody who is depressed over a long period of time because it can help to just lift you up just enough. Maybe it's that kind of warm connotation that it grows in Mexico where it's warm and it's hot and it's muggy and that it helps with circulation. I'm always looking at the plants and about how where they live kind of speaks to their attributes.
Dosing with this would be tea. Typically a tea is a heaping teaspoon per cup, and three times a day, if you care to use it that way, or you can always do a tincture. It's a lovely herb.

Now, I'd like to talk about homeopathy for anxiety and depression. Homeopathy is another love of mine. It goes great with herbal remedies. Many of our homeopathics are actually from herbs but I'm going to be talking about some minerals, and some other homeopathics, one that comes from squid ink.

The way that homeopathy works is it's like causes like. So if you were to take a whole lot of any particular substance, you would have what's called an aggravation. And the symptoms that I'm going to be talking about would be present. But with homeopathy, you’re taking a ... just an energetic dose of a substance that would normally make you ill. There's literally none of the substance left in the homeopathy once you are taking it. It is just the imprint, the energetics of that substance in these little sugar pellet.

This is how you're going to want to take homeopathy. For one thing, because it is an energetic medicine, you don't want to touch the pellets. So you'll just open up the canister of it. There's a little seal. Usually it's Boiron that we find for the homeopathics. That's the company. And you're going to drop five of those little pellets into the little cup that comes with it. Then you're going to take them, and you’re just going to put them under your tongue. But with homeopathy, you want to make sure that you don't take them when you have just eaten or drank for about 20 minutes before and after taking these little pellets. A little bit of water would be fine, but the whole premise is is that they go underneath the tongue so that you absorb them in the mucous membranes.

This is the beauty of homeopathy, is that they activate your vital force, your own body's innate healing energetics. It's said that once you are having an effect, once you start feeling an ease of your symptoms, or a change of your symptoms, you know that it is starting to work. So we don't continually repeat this. We only repeat when our symptoms seem worse again. The typical dose for this is to take them one to three times daily as needed with these parameters.

Cimicifuga. This is 30C. This is the dose that I would recommend. When you get your homeopathics, you want to make sure that it says 30C on it. This is the homeopathic of black cohosh. Boy, this is a wonderful remedy to know about. This, in particular, is great for somebody who is feeling fine one minute, and then all the sudden,
it is as if a black cloud has come over them, like the lights are on one minute, and the lights are off.

It's this incredible demarcation of, I'm feeling okay one minute, and then all the sudden, there has been this profound shift and I am in the darkness. A lot of times, these folks, they don't ... it's not for any apparent reason. Maybe there's some subconscious trigger. It can be also really great for folks who are experiencing PMS. And that can happen when you're having those hormonal surges, right? Well, actually, it's a hormonal dip that happens right before you start bleeding, maybe about a day or so before where you feel this darkness that has come over you. This is a very effective herb for ... I'm sorry, homeopathic for that feeling of, "I was okay. I don't know what happened, but all the sudden, I am in the doom and gloom."

Ignatia 30C. You can see this person has been crying. This is a remedy that's very, very helpful for somebody who is highly sensitive and artistic in some way, like a creative disposition where there's this idyllic sense of the way things should be. This is one that we use for grief a lot. This would be disappointment in love, a feeling as if life just is not supposed to be this way. It's a wonderful one to use when there's been a loss, somebody has died, for deep-seated grief. It's very healing. It's also really great for this moodiness that can come with that kind of grief.

Grief takes us to some interesting places. It can take us to incredible sorrow. It can also take us to anger and irritation. So this covers the gamut. This is the one that I like to have in my emotional first-aid kit. For folks who are experiencing this kind of grief and loss, of either the loss of a loved one, or a separation, and with this very idyllic sense of how things should be.

Sepia 30C. This is an interesting picture, huh? This is a squid. This remedy is made from squid ink. It's bizarre, but it works. The indications for sepia are typically a dark complected woman, or could be man, a bit of a sallow complexion. That's kind of like a yellow, greenish overcast to the complexion. This is for a person who has apathy towards the people that they love. This could be, let's say, a man or a woman. Typically, this is a woman, and they have lost their interest in their family. They want to be left alone. They don't want to be bothered by their kids. They don't want to be bothered by their husbands. They, at one time pre-kids, had a great libido. Their libido is flat-lined. There's this just deep sense of apathy. It's typically hormonally related.
Another interesting indicator of this is that these people feel better when they dance. There is this elation that comes when they dance. These are generalities, but I'm trying to give you like the gems of homeopathy that I know of that can treat some of these very specific emotional tendencies. This, again, is great for apathetic towards your family, your loved ones, no joy anymore. You're kind of cranky. You want to be left alone. And you prefer to be left alone and let me dance, and you feel a lot better. Great for, also, menopause with these kind of symptoms as well. So menopause and PMS, I would say that this can be a go-to.

Arsenicum 30C. This is the homeopathic of arsenic. Now please remember there is no arsenic in this. It is just the vibration that has been put into this substrate. I know this sounds kind of woo-woo for some people, but believe me, homeopathy is a very common medication that's used in Europe. They understand the science behind this very well. There are some homeopathics that have been accepted into the US formulary, which is our pharmaceutical acceptance review.

Arsenicum. I love this photo. This woman, she's like "Ahh." It's really ... arsenicum is great for someone who is fastidious. You like things to be just so. You want things in order. You are a type A personality. You're going to do a ton of stuff. You're going to pile it on. You want it just to be as you imagine it to be. Life does not always give us that luxury.

So this kind of person can have problems with getting very ... being very cold and fatigued and having a hard time sleeping, because they have become so stressed out. A really great indicator can be ... I usually ask, "How do you like to keep your house? Do you like to keep it really orderly and tidy? How is your digestion?" Because sometimes, these people, the way that this lands this nervousness is with diarrhea or hemorrhoids or stomach upset.

Another indicator for this ... This is why I love homeopathy because you get all these little idiosyncrasies ... they love to drink ice cold water. They love ice. So somebody who's a perfectionist and feeling really irritable, likes to keep things really neat and tidy and in order, and life is not looking like that, and they are losing their mind, and it's keeping them up at night, this would be the remedy that I would recommend.

Aconitum 30C. This slide kind of cracks me up, but it's ... it shouldn't. It's kind of a serious slide. It's the deer in the headlights. This is for somebody who's in shock and traumatized. Literally,
shock. We use this remedy for somebody who, let's say they've been in a bad accident, and they saw their life flash before their eyes, or somebody who's had a big trauma. It can really help to release that trauma from their nervous system.

I worked years ago with a man. He came into the herb shop. He had awful insomnia. I asked him a little bit about his life, and he had gotten out of the Gulf War several years back. And since he had been in the war, he could not sleep at night. He would have night terrors. I knew that this was a great remedy for anybody who had PTSD. He had diagnosable PTSD.

I received a beautiful letter from his wife a week later saying that it literally changed his life. It helped him release so much of that trauma, and he was finally sleeping. They've kept in touch with me over the years, and he continues to do really well. So I always add this into my group of homeopathics because this is one for ... be it that it's been imminent danger, or that it's been a shock that has happened in the past, but these kind of traumas, they get lodged into our nervous system. This would be one that would really help you release this kind of trauma.

Nat Mur 30C. This is the Latin scientific name for salt. The salt is given as a remedy because it symbolizes tears. So if you look at this picture, you see that there’s this woman sitting under a tree in a dejected, sorrowful pose. This remedy comes, its signature comes from the salt of your tears. The specifics around this are, in particular, somebody who likes to keep their feelings to themselves. They're not about to talk to you about their problems. This is the kind of person who has sorrow and sadness, but they want to grieve alone. They want to lick their wounds alone. They would like to just be left alone.

One of the indicators is, do you feel better when you're comforted? In fact, this kind of person actually feels much more vulnerable when they're being comforted. So they like to kind of ... They feel vulnerable. They don't want to wear their heart on their sleeve. Sometimes, they feel really torn because they feel like they do wear their heart on their sleeve, and so they'll go off by themselves. They don't want to burden anybody. This is a great remedy for both men and women with this kind of dignity or this kind of feeling of undercurrent of vulnerability where the thought of crying in public can be very humiliating.

Now, these are the adrenals. As you can see, they sit on top of the kidneys. The adrenals are ultimately affected when we're under
continual stress. They play a huge part in terms of how we can find balance in a stressful world. The adrenals are comprised of the adrenal cortex on the outside, and that produces cortisone, and then the adrenal medulla is in the inside. That's what produces adrenaline.

So that adrenaline is ... when the adrenaline is kicked in, it's kind of like having your foot on the gas pedal continually. So what happens is that people wind up getting burnout. So we can really elegantly and efficiently treat adrenal fatigue and adrenal stress using herbs. Some classic symptoms of adrenal fatigue, and you're going to see that they kind of play into this whole depression, anxiety, stress profile as well as insomnia.

So excessive fatigue and exhaustion, not feeling rested after plenty of sleep, insomnia, the inability to lose weight, especially around the belly, difficult to bounce back from injuries or illness, stress or exercise. A lot of times, there's a craving for salty food or sweet things. That's because those tastes actually help us to pick us up a little bit. Low blood pressure. Low libido. Needing caffeine in the morning. Needing more and more caffeine in the morning, and then sometimes it's a lack of appetite, a lot of irritability, hunger.

Let's look at the next slide. What we're going to want to look at are adaptogens. These are phenomenal herbs. There's many, many, many adaptogens. That term refers to any herbs that help to strengthen a deficient organ system. So the adaptogens that we're going to use are particular to the adrenals.

This first slide on the adrenals, we ... I mean, on the adaptogens, we're looking at ashwagandha. This is a common, a classic herb that's used in Ayurveda. It's very, very restorative. It's calming. It also supports the whole endocrine system, as well as the adrenals and the thyroid.

In human studies, we've found that it stimulates thyroid support, and it also helps with the immune system, including autoimmune disease. So a lot of times, we will find folks who have, let's say Hashimoto's thyroiditis with a deficient ... with a stressed-out adrenal glands. So the adrenals usually come first and then the thyroid comes second in terms of the way that these, our organ systems and our endocrine systems start to get affected.

The next slide here, which is lovely, is we're looking at a ton of stallions. To give you a little bit more information about ashwagandha, they say that the ashwagandha will give you the
endurance of 1,000 stallions. What that's referring to is that in Ayurveda, they recommend this for men with low libido, and that they've found that it actually increases sperm count, but it's not just limited to men. It's also for women, as well. This is one that I recommend for women who have hormonal imbalance that is keeping them up at night.

Your classic dose for ashwagandha is going to be 30 to 60 drops of the tincture, and usually about three times a day, if you can do it. Then, let's say a 40 to 50 milligram capsule two times daily. Or if you want to, you can always do a tea, which would be a half a teaspoon. This is a dried root, so we're going to be ... When we talk about roots, our dosage is going to be a little different than where we're dealing with leafy green type material.

Let's say we're going to do a quarter to a half a teaspoon to a cup of water. You're going to want to simmer this because it is a root, and three times a day. That's ashwagandha.

Now let's look at holy basil. Holy basil is also another Ayurvedic herb. It's interesting. We do get some beautiful adaptogens from Ayurvedic medicine. These are the traditional medicines of India. Holy basil is also referred to as tulsi. It's ocimum tenuiflorum. I hope I pronounced that right.

This is something that we can take over a long period of time. When taken daily, it really helps to increase our energy. Again, adaptogens aren't necessarily meant to be things that speed us up. Ginseng is in the adaptogen family, which can be used as a stimulant, but this is a much more subtle mood enhancer. Part of what it does is it scavenges free radicals. So it helps to prevent cell degeneration by protecting cells in particular in the adrenals from free radical damage. It helps to protect the nerves. It's great for brain fog.

Then in this next slide, I'd also like to point out that it also helps with clearing the mind. You can see that I have a photo of Krishna. If you look at the structure of the leaves, they say that holy basil comes directly from the god, Krishna, and when taken with Gotu Kola, it feeds the pineal gland, so it makes things brighter, and more clear, and it gives us a deeper sense of spiritual connection.

The dosage for holy basil is 40 to 60 drops of tincture three times a day, or a healthy teaspoon of the herb that you're going to do a infusion of, and that you're going to want it steep for 5 to 10
minutes. I would say drink one or two cups a day, that would be great.

Our next slide is rhodiola. Rhodiola is a plant that we have in the Southwest mountains that's related to it that's called King's crown or Queen's crown. It's a sedum. It's a beautiful plant. This plant in particular comes from the high mountain regions of Siberia and Russia and China. It's revered as a plant that can help to improve your endurance. It helps with athletic recovery time. It helps to oxygenate the blood.

They've done extensive studies in Russia for endurance athletes, and they found that rhodiola improves the recovery time remarkably. It also helps to lift your spirits. What it does is it helps with the transport of tryptophan and 5-HTP to the brain, so it's very calming as well. It's invigorating in terms of helping with endurance, but it also has those nice calming beneficial properties.

So it's a great one to use when your life is super, super busy, and there’s that overwhelm. This is one that we can recommend. Any of these adaptogens are great for not only when you're stressed, but just in general for general well-being. Like I said before, this whole gamut that I'm talking about from stress, depression, anxiety and adrenal fatigue, they all kind of happen at the same time. It's this mishmash of that. So there's a ... when formulating or using different herbs, it's not just one herb. It can be a combination of many herbs. If you have the chance to go to my website, you'll see that we have many different formulas that are great for stress and anxiety and to help to rebuild the adrenal glands.

Insomnia. Can't sleep. Can't sleep. Awake. Yup. How many of you have felt like that, just like you're going to go a little crazy? This first slide that I want to talk about is lavender. We all know lavender. Lavender smells delicious. It's commonly used in aromatherapy. Sometimes with sleep, we're talking about ... this would be the one essential oil that I would really go to. In a diffuser or rubbed on the bottoms of your feet, it's a tremendous relaxant. It's a nerve relaxant. It's also great for headaches.

They've done some studies with lavender that says that it has been compared to benzodiazepine, which are sleeping pills, and that this, for some people, that it works just as effectively. Lavender is a beautiful, beautiful plant. It's so aromatic, and one that is also really tasty in a tea.
Our next slide, we're looking at hops. Hops are super bitter. That bitter taste really helps to aid digestion. So it's difficult to sleep when you have a churning, turning tummy. This is one that would really help to aid in digestion. It helps to calm spasms in the stomach. It has very aromatic properties. I find hops really intoxicating when I smell them. Of course, we use it in beer. So it's a great relaxant, great for tension and muscle tension, calms anxiety.

I just have a few of these great nervines that are good for sleep, and of course there are many that we can go over, but for time's sake, I'm just going to go over some of my favorites. I really enjoy using hops in both tea and tincture. I would probably start with maybe one dropper full of the tincture since it's so strong and bitter. This would be a nice one to be added into a sleep formula with lavender and some of these other herbs that I'll talk about.

This is California poppy. It's *eschscholzia californica*. It is such a beautiful plant. I don't know how many of you have actually grown it. It grows really well around these areas. It likes just kind of dry soil. It has those beautiful silky leaves. Although poppies have some sedative properties, this does not have true opium in it, but it does have sedative properties.

It's great for somebody who's having really bad problems with sleep, and they need a little bit more of a hammer. This is kind of more of a hammer to get you to calm down. It's a fantastic muscle relaxant. It also helps to reduce anxiety. It's great for people who are super sensitive to changes in the weather, like that barometric pressure just really creates a lot of internal angst.

The dosing for California poppy, I would say start with maybe 30 to 60 drops, or a cup of tea. This would be 20 minutes before bedtime. A lot of times when folks have insomnia, I recommend that they do things in a progressive, staggering where they maybe have 20 minutes prior to sleep, they take their first dose of sleep remedies. Then as they get in bed, maybe they dose themselves one time more. That's how I would recommend that you use these.

Our next slide is valeriana officinalis. It grows in the Rocky Mountains as well. Again, all of these plants that I'm talking about, I would imagine that you could grow in your garden. Some people refer to valerian as smelling like stinky socks. I like the way it smells. It smells very rooty and grounding. So that's a good indication of how it works in your body. It's a fantastic sedative.
Now there are some contraindications with valerian. One is that it is a depressant, so it literally depresses the nervous system. So taken over a long period of time, it can induce depression. It's less likely to do so when you're using the fresh plant tincture. They've found more so that it's the dry root that there's some alkaloids that are concentrated in it that can cause this. It can also cause what's called an antithetical reaction. That's where rather than making you sleepy, it makes you really amped. Again, that has to do with the dry plant.

At Dancing Willow, we use the fresh plant. So it's a fantastic muscle relaxant. I personally have used it when I've had that kind of bone breaking fever, where I can't settle down. This is one that will knock me out. I like it to ... Using valerian when your body is really calling for it is when it works best.

The dosing for this is going to be 30 to 60 drops. Again, do that kind of staggering that I'm talking about. Of course, if you get in bed and you want to fall asleep, no problem. No reason to do that second dose. Then, it is kind of stinky, so a cup of tea you might not like as much, but some people also prefer to use the capsules, but then you are using the dry plant.

We're going to wrap this up soon. My next plant is chamomilla, chamomile, matricaria chamomilla. This is an all time favorite. It is so gentle and so sweet. I think it's an herb that we think of as being, "Oh, it's just chamomile," but it's chamomile. It's an incredible nervine, and relaxant. For most people, a cup of chamomile tea, at least for me, it can really take the edge off. You can start feeling your eyelids getting tired. So great for the blues and great for upset children.

Lastly, we need to look at Peter Rabbit. Peter Rabbit, the story goes that Peter Rabbit got chased around farmer McGregor's garden, and he had a really hard time making his way home. When he finally made his way home, his mom was really angry at him, but she, being the compassionate, loving mom that she was, she put him to bed and gave him a cup of chamomile tea, and Peter rabbit went to sleep and woke up feeling all refreshed, ready to get in more mischief.

Thanks for listening to my slide. I'm Deb Swanson. I'm a clinical herbalist. I've been doing this since 1991. The name of my company is Dancing Willow Herbs. I'm a clinician. I hope you get a chance to check out my website. [http://www.dancingwillowerbs.com](http://www.dancingwillowerbs.com). We are offering an incredible special, your emotional well-being first-aid kit, that if you
sign up for my newsletter, you are eligible for 20% off. Then, we will also be having some of our nervines and our sleep aids and our feel-better type formulas also on a 20% discount. Okay. Have a beautiful day.

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