

# THE ROAD TO REHABILITATION

Set in serene luxury on the shore of Lake Zurich, the CALDA Clinic helps those suffering from mental health problems to live a healthy and happy life



**STRESS AND TRAUMA** are never experienced in the same ways by different people. “You cannot compare one person’s problems with another’s,” says Dr Claudia M Elsig, founder of the CALDA Clinic for the treatment of mental health problems in Switzerland. “All psychological problems, except perhaps burn-out and specific phobia, are afflicted with shame and guilt. We need to be able to talk openly about these feelings. This needs to be an encounter between humans, not between a doctor and a problem patient.”

Dr Elsig’s high-net-worth patients come to her via word of mouth, drawn not only by her reputation as a clinician with more than 20 years’ experience, but also by the assurance of total anonymity for the month or more they stay in her luxury clinic. “In fact, it’s not really a clinic,” she explains. “We have one beautiful residence that overlooks Lake Zurich and we treat one client at a time.”

A meeting in person or over the telephone enables Dr Elsig to assess whether she can help a particular client. Before any treatment can begin at the clinic, a client will attend the exclusive Bethanien Privatklinik nearby for one to three days of medical examinations.

Compassion, an exploration of the reasons behind a patient’s problems, and the evidence-based use of medicines and therapies are at the core of the CALDA Concept. “Conventional psychiatry doesn’t do anything except prescribe psychotropic medicine,” says Dr Elsig, whose studies in psychiatry and psychotherapeutics led her to specialize in treating addiction, depression, burn-out and stress. “In my opinion, chronic stress and how we react to it is the source of nearly every problem.”

In place of conventional drugs such as anti-depressants or neuroleptics, Dr Elsig advocates orthomolecular medicine, which regulate the minerals, vitamins and amino acids in a person’s body. “The

treatment has an immediate, rebalancing effect with no side effects or withdrawal symptoms. This is not a detox clinic. Detoxification can’t be separated from the psychotherapeutic part. I don’t want a client to leave thinking their body is ready to drink again. We teach people to stay healthy for the rest of their life.”

Complementing these preventative medicines is a range of therapies such as traditional Chinese medicine, personal training, voice training, art therapy and equine-assisted therapy. The first week or so of treatment consists mostly of relaxation techniques, yoga, breathing exercises and massage. “I work with a team of international specialists,” says Dr Elsig. “We have worked and grown together over the past 10 or so years. This programme is different for each client.”

CALDA Meets Africa, a venture that is unique to CALDA Clinic, launched early in 2019 to extend the CALDA Concept into an entirely new environment. For three weeks, clients can reconnect with nature, sleep in tents, become involved with charity work and experience a sense of adventure. “We wanted to offer a transfer from primary care to daily living,” says Dr Elsig. “The trips, which are accompanied by a doctor and a psychologist, are a bridge between care and going home. Africa takes people back to their roots, to something real.”

In October 2019, Calda opened a second residence, also on Lake Zurich. Like the existing residence, it comes with a private butler, chef and chauffeur, as well as a personal live-in coach. As ever, privacy is assured, as is Dr Elsig’s expertise in tailoring holistic treatment programmes with lifelong benefits. “We need to move away from shame and guilt,” she says. “We help clients understand their basic personalities and to make lasting changes in their lives.”

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