Yoga Skills for Mood Management
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www.yogafordepression.com

Yoga and Psychotherapy
Self-Study (Svadhyaya)
Compassion (Karuna)
“The highest spiritual practice is self-observation with compassion.”
~Krishnamurti

How Yoga Skills Enhance Therapy
➧ Strengthens the Therapeutic Alliance
➧ Helps Client focus
➧ Helps Client access feeling states
➧ Provides tools for mood regulation
➧ Provides tools for self-care
➧ Helps in management of Bipolar Disorder & schizophrenia (Visceglia, 2011)
➧ Increases self-efficacy
➧ Nondual Strategies for working with difficult emotions
➧ Provides tools and language to access a larger Self

“My you are more than your mood, more than your beliefs about yourself and the world.”

Yoga Practices in a clinical setting
Psychologist and LifeForce Yoga® Practitioner Dr. Deborah Lubetkin with a client, Lotus Mudra

The Safe Container
“Crying is one of the highest spiritual practices. One who knows crying knows yoga.”
~Swami Kripalu

Centering with imagery, sound & breath
✧ Soothing Image
✧ Hand gesture
✧ Inhale through the nostrils for 4 counts
✧ Hold the breath with the image for 4 counts.
✧ Exhale with the mantra “so-hum”
✧ Yogic Three-Part Breath
✧ Intention
Therapeutic Bond – Rituals & Practices

- Lighting of a candle
- A hand gesture (mudra)
- A simple yoga breath (pranayama)
- A soothing image of sanctuary or peace (bhavana)
- A soothing universal tone (mantra)
- A cleansing breath (kriya)
- Client’s intention reveals itself (sankalpa)

Therapeutic Bond

Meta-analysis of over 400 manualized treatments for depression, the greatest predictor of a beneficial outcome was not the therapeutic modality utilized, but the relationship between client and therapist. (Wampold, 2001)

Yoga and Psychotherapy

1. Safe Container
2. Permission
3. Move slowly
4. Cue to sensation
5. Grounding

Overview of Biochemical & Physiological Changes

- Decrease in cortisol levels (stress hormone)
- Increase in GABA levels (primary inhibitory neurotransmitter)
- Increase in HRV (heart rate variability)
- Increase in BDNF (neuroplasticity, genetic expression)
- Demonstrated improvement in memory, cognitive functioning, perceptual motor skills, visual perception

Yoga in Psychotherapy ~ Safe Container

Psychotherapist and LifeForce Yoga® Mentor Joe Walter, LICSW, working with a client, in “Seated Mountain with Integrity.” Inhale: “I am” through the crown; exhale: “Here,” grounding through the feet.

Overview of Biochemical & Physiological Changes

- Relaxes chronic muscle tension
- Restores natural diaphragmatic breathing
- Improves oxygen absorption and carbon dioxide elimination
- Increases alpha and theta waves
- Regulates hypothalamus at an optimum level
- Certain techniques stimulate vagal nerve activity
- Bioavailability of oxygen and glucose, building blocks for the production of neurotransmitters
- Calms sympathetic nervous system while activating parasympathetic system
LifeForce Yoga® for Mood Disturbance Study

- Between times one (before the LifeForce Yoga® program) and two (two weeks after learning it), participants reported:
  - 64% decrease in total mood disturbance (POMS)
  - 53% decrease in average depression scores (BDI)
  - At two months, overall mood disturbance continued to drop.


Yoga Outshines Walking for Mood

- In a randomized controlled MRS study, researchers at Boston University compared study participants who walked three times a week for exercise to a group assigned to three weekly Yoga classes over a period of twelve weeks.
- GABA levels were significantly elevated in the Yoga practitioners.
- More mood improvements in the Yoga group on standard psycho-social measurements.


UCLA Iyengar Depression Study

- Of the 17 completers, all diagnosed with unipolar depression in partial remission, who took 20 Iyengar yoga classes, 11 were in complete remission after the intervention. Significant reductions were shown for depression, anger, anxiety, and neurotic symptoms.
- The authors state that the overall remission rate of 65% “comparably favorably with other CAM interventions: 43% Sam-e; 20% Omega-3 fatty acids; 19% folic acid; 25% aerobic exercise.”

  Evidence-Based Complementary & Alternative Medicine, 2007

Self-Efficacy in Battered Women

- In this first controlled study to examine the effects of pranayama breathing on self-efficacy the researchers found that the greatest effect on self-efficacy for the battered women in the study was derived from the combined Testimony/Breathing condition.

  *Efficacy in Battered Women*, *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*, (16), 2006. dranzblau@uncfsu.edu

PTSD: Yoga compared to DBT

- 8, 75-minute yoga sessions were compared to 8 sessions of group Dialectical Behavior Therapy.
- Over 8 sessions of yoga with 8 subjects, HRV increased and PTSD symptoms decreased. (CAPS)
- Only Yoga group showed a decrease in frequency of intrusions and severity of hyperarousal symptoms.


Mood Improvement for Young Adults with Vinyasa Yoga

Young adults with depressive symptoms in a five-week *Vinyasa* yoga intervention showed significant improvements in both self-reported & observer-rated depressive symptoms, somatic symptoms & sleep quality.

*Alliant International University shiraoretzky@yahoo.com*
LifeForce Yoga & Mood Studies in Progress

- University of North Texas, Mandy Jordan, PhD
- University of Virginia, Patricia Kinszer, MA
- Brown University/Butler Hospital, Lisa Uebelacker, PhD (NIH)

Current yoga and mental research summaries available: http://yogafordepression.com/research-and-news/

Yoga Strategies ~ in a clinical setting

- Breathing Techniques (*Pranayama*)
- Creating Intention/Affirmation (*Sankalpa*)
- Using Visual Imagery (*Bhavana*)
- Hand Gestures (*Mudra*)
- Mantra Chanting (*Nada*)
- Community (*Satsanga*)
- Nondual Strategies to balance the opposites

Yoga in Psychotherapy

- Psychologist and LifeForce Yoga® Practitioner Dr. Deborah Lubetkin teaching an anxious client suffering from anorexia the Shambhu Mudra that accompanies Bee Breath (*Brahmari*) to calm her racing thoughts and focus her mind for the transition into therapy.

PTSD

Practices for Anxiety (Rajasic)
1. Grounding/centering breaths like Yogic Three-Part (*Dirga*)
2. Bee Breath (*Brahmari*)
3. Alternate nostril (**Nadi Shodhana**)
4. Extend Exhalation
5. LifeForce Yoga Chakra Clearing Meditation - for anxiety (mantras & mudras)

Practices for Depression (Tamasic)
1. Bellows Breath (*Bastrika* - modified version)
2. Breath of Joy
3. Mountain Breath
4. Power Hara
5. Extend Inhalation
6. LifeForce Yoga Chakra Clearing Meditation to Energize (mantras & mudras)

PTSD Practices for Anxiety (Rajasic)

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Yoga in Psychotherapy Case Study

Psychologist and LifeForce Yoga® Practitioner Laura Orth, LICSW teaching an eight-year-old client with severe anxiety, who vomited in new situations, Yogic-Three-Part Breath, after trying numerous cognitive interventions without success.

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Alternate Nostril Breathing in a clinical setting

Psychologist and LifeForce Yoga Practitioner Dr. Sue Dilsworth leading a client in Alternate Nostril Breathing

Vishnu Mudra – Hand Position for Alternate Nostril

Opening Occluded Nostrils for Alternate Nostril Breathing

Energizing Mudras
- Ganesha Mudra
- Brahma Mudra
Energizing Mudras
Shiva Lingam Mudra

Calming Mudras
Happy Buddha Mudra

Calming Mudras
Adhi Mudra

Calming Mudras
Chin Mudra

Calming Mudras
Dhyana Mudra

Bellows Breath - Inhale
Bellows Breath - Exhale

Practice II: Calming

- Bee Breath (Brahmari) – exhale only
- Root of the tongue to back of throat
- Chin slightly tucked
- Lips Closed
- Mudra: Shanmuki
- Index points to brow point
- Middle covers eyes
- Ring at edges of nostrils
- Pinky at edges of lips

Shanmukhi Mudra in a Clinical Setting

Psychologist and LifeForce Yoga® Practitioner Dr. Deborah Lubetkin teaching an anxious client suffering from anorexia the Shanmuki Mudra that accompanies Bee Breath (Brahmari) to calm her racing thoughts and focus her mind for the transition into therapy.

Shanmukhi Mudra

LifeForce Yoga Chakra Clearing Meditation - Energizing

Chakra One - Muladhara
(Base of spine)
Tone: Lam
Color: red
Hasta Mudra 1
Link the two little fingers together close to the base of the spine and pull.

LifeForce Yoga Chakra Clearing Meditation - Energizing

Chakra Two - Svadhishthana
(Low Abdomen)
Tone: Vum
Color: orange
Hasta Mudra 2
Link the two ring fingers in front of the low abdomen and pull.
LifeForce Yoga Chakra Clearing Meditation - Energizing

Chakra Three – Manipura (Solar Plexus)
Tone: Rum
Color: yellow
Hasta Mudra 3
Link the two middle fingers in front of the solar plexus and pull.

Chakra Four – Anahata (Heart)
Tone: Yum
Color: green
Kapota (Dove) Mudra
Palms together as in prayer. Keep the base of the palms and the tips of the fingers together but cup the palms.

Chakra Five – Vishuddha (Throat)
Tone: Hum
Color: blue
Padma (Lotus) Mudra
Bring the hands together as in prayer. Keep the base of the palms, the little fingers and the thumbs together. Open all the other fingers wide like petals.

Chakra Six – Ajña (Third Eye)
Tone: Om
Color: violet
Kali Mudra
Clasp your hands together with hands cupped, hovering close to forehead without touching, and with your index finger extended forward horizontally. Elbows out to the sides.

Chakra Seven – Sahasrara (Crown)
Tone: Nung
Color: white
Kali Mudra
Clasp your hands together with hands cupped, hovering close to forehead without touching, and with your index finger extended forward horizontally. Elbows out to the sides.
A client who returned said, "When I came before, you helped me understand and get where I wanted to go. Now you show me yoga practices I use to help myself understand and get where I want to go."

Sherry Rubin, LCSW, LFYP-2, Downingtown, PA

Books

- Brown, Richard; Gerbarg, Patricia; Muskin, Philip. How to Use Herbs, Nutrients & Yoga in Mental Health Care. W. W. Norton, 2008
- Gay, Richard. The Healing Breath Technique. The Art of Living Foundation, (800) 897-5913
- Hooper, Elizabeth; Brown, Richard, R.; Gerbarg, Patricia. The Art of Living Foundation, (800) 897-5913

Yoga Trainings and Classes for Mood Management

- LifeForce Yoga for Depression workshops and LifeForce Yoga Practitioner Trainings, 520 349-2644
- The Healing Breath Technique, (800) 288-YOGA (9642)
- Richard Miller’s RQest Yoga Nidra workshops, retreats, books and tapes, Richard Miller’s workshops, retreats, books and tapes
- Phoenix Rising Yoga Therapy, (800)288-YOGA (9642)
- Breath Body Mind Workshop with Dr. Richard Brown & Dr. Patricia Gerbarg
- Trauma Sensitive Yoga with David Emerson