

JOY: The Journal of Yoga

Mental Health in Yoga

Dr Balaji Deekshitulu P.V

**Guest Lecturer in Psychology & Health Psychologist and Alt. Medicine (Homeo)
Practitioner, Tirupati, India.**

Abstract

The author argues that the complete presentation is Increasing Mental Health & relaxation of Mental illness through neither for Possible of Yogic Postures (Asanas), Pranayama (Meditation) as inevitable part of physical and mental health for overall health and wellbeing.

Keywords: Mental health, Mental Illness, Yoga Postures

Introduction

Increasing interest in the use of yoga to calm the mind, and increase overall health and wellbeing. Mental health disorders are caused by biological factors, the environment, or a combination of the two. Biological factors may include genetics, chemical imbalances in the body, and trauma. Environmental factors such as exposure to violence or abuse, acute or chronic stress, and mental disorders have had disturbing life.

Yoga is an ancient Indian way of life which includes the practice of certain postures (asanas), regulated breathing (pranayamas), and meditation [3]. Yoga practice was shown to be beneficial for the physical and mental health. According to descriptions of the functioning of the body according to ancient yoga texts there are five levels of existence (The Taittiriya Upanishad). These are (i) physical, (ii) a level of subtle energy (prana or chi), (iii) the instinctual mental level, (iv) the intellectual mental level, and (v) the fifth and ideal level, a state of optimal homeostasis and balance (Telles, 2010). Ideally a yoga practice session should include physical postures (asanas), breathing techniques (certain kriyas and pranayama practices), meditation, as well as knowledge of the philosophy of yoga.

What Is Mental Health?

Mental health is a state of well-being in which a person understands his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to contribute to his or her community.

Both physical and mental health are the result of a complex interplay between many individual and environmental factors, including:

- family history of illness and disease/genetics
- lifestyle and health behaviours (e.g., smoking, exercise, substance use)
- levels of personal and workplace stress
- exposure to toxins
- exposure to trauma
- personal life circumstances and history
- access to supports (e.g., timely healthcare, social supports)

- coping skills

When the demands placed on someone exceed their resources and coping abilities, their mental health will be negatively affected. Two examples of common demands are: i) working long hours under difficult circumstances, and ii) caring for a chronically ill relative. Economic hardship, unemployment, underemployment and poverty also have the potential to harm mental health.

What is mental illness? A mental illness is a medical condition that disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning. Just as diabetes is a disorder of the pancreas, mental illnesses are medical conditions that often result in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life.

Serious mental illnesses include major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and borderline personality disorder. The good news about mental illness is that recovery is possible.

Mental illnesses can affect persons of any age, race, religion or income. Mental illnesses are not the result of personal weakness, lack of character or poor upbringing. Mental illnesses are treatable. Most people diagnosed with a serious mental illness can experience relief from their symptoms by actively participating in an individual treatment plan.

Find out more about a specific mental illness:

- Anxiety Disorders
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)
- Bipolar Disorder
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- Depression
- Dissociative Disorders
- Dual Diagnosis: Substance Abuse and Mental Illness
- Eating Disorders
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Panic Disorder
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
- Schizoaffective Disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Seasonal Affective Disorder

- Tourette's Syndrome

What is psychological safety and health? The Canadian Oxford Dictionary defines psychological as "of, relating to, affecting, or arising in the mind". The concept of "psychological safety" involves preventing injury to the mental well-being of workers. A psychologically safe and healthy workplace is one that promotes workers' mental well-being and does not harm employee mental health through negligent, reckless or intentional ways. For example, a psychologically safe workplace would be free of excessive fear or chronic anxiety.

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Over the course of your life, if you experience mental health problems, your thinking, mood, and behavior could be affected. Many factors contribute to mental health problems, including:

- Biological factors, such as genes or brain chemistry
- Life experiences, such as trauma or abuse
- Family history of mental health problems

Causes of Mental Illness

Some mental illnesses have been linked to abnormal functioning of nerve cell circuits or pathways that connect particular brain regions. Nerve cells within these brain circuits communicate through chemicals called neurotransmitters. "Tweaking" these chemicals -- through medicines, psychotherapy or other medical procedures -- can help brain circuits run more efficiently. In addition, defects in or injury to certain areas of the brain have also been linked to some mental conditions.

Biological factors that may be involved in the development of mental illness include:

Genetics (heredity): Mental illnesses sometimes run in families, suggesting that people who have a family member with a mental illness may be somewhat more likely to develop one themselves. Susceptibility is passed on in families through genes. Experts believe many mental illnesses are linked to abnormalities in many genes rather than just one or a few and that how these genes interact with the environment is unique for every person (even identical twins). That is why a person inherits a susceptibility to a mental illness and doesn't necessarily develop the illness. Mental illness itself occurs from the interaction of multiple genes and other factors -- such as stress, abuse, or a traumatic event -- which can influence, or trigger, an illness in a person who has an inherited susceptibility to it.

Infections: Certain infections have been linked to brain damage and the development of mental illness or the worsening of its symptoms. For example, a condition known as pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorder (PANDA) associated with the Streptococcus bacteria has been linked to the development of obsessive-compulsive disorder and other mental illnesses in children.

Brain defects or injury: Defects in or injury to certain areas of the brain have also been linked to some mental illnesses.

Prenatal damage: Some evidence suggests that a disruption of early fetal brain development or trauma that occurs at the time of birth -- for example, loss of oxygen to the brain -- may be a factor in the development of certain conditions, such as autism.

Substance abuse: Long-term substance abuse, in particular, has been linked to anxiety, depression, and paranoia.

Other factors: Poor nutrition and exposure to toxins, such as lead, may play a role in the development of mental illnesses.

Psychological factors that may contribute to mental illness include:

- Severe psychological trauma suffered as a child, such as emotional, physical, or sexual abuse
- An important early loss, such as the loss of a parent
- Neglect
- Poor ability to relate to others

Environmental Factors Contribute to Mental Illness include stressors can trigger an illness in a person who is susceptible to mental illness. These stressors include:

- Death or divorce
- A dysfunctional family life
- Feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, anxiety, anger, or loneliness
- Changing jobs or schools
- Social or cultural expectations (For example, a society that associates beauty with thinness can be a factor in the development of eating disorders.)
- Substance abuse by the person or the person's parents

Signs for Metal Illness

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people and usual activities
- Having low or no energy
- Feeling numb or like nothing matters
- Having unexplained aches and pains
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Smoking, drinking, or using drugs more than usual
- Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared
- Yelling or fighting with family and friends
- Experiencing severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Having persistent thoughts and memories you can't get out of your head
- Hearing voices or believing things that are not true
- Thinking of harming yourself or others
- Inability to perform daily tasks like taking care of your kids or getting to work or school

Yoga and mental health

Yoga is a mind and body practice with historical origins in ancient Indian philosophy. Like other meditative movement practices used for health purposes, various styles of yoga typically combine physical postures, breathing techniques, and *meditation* or relaxation.

Yoga in its full form combines physical postures, breathing exercises, meditation, and a distinct philosophy. There are numerous styles of yoga. Hatha yoga, commonly practiced in the United States and Europe, emphasizes postures, breathing exercises, and meditation. Hatha yoga styles include Ananda, Anusara, Ashtanga, Bikram, Iyengar, Kripalu, Kundalini, Viniyoga, and others. However, the psychiatric illness outcome with

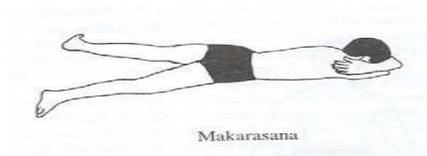
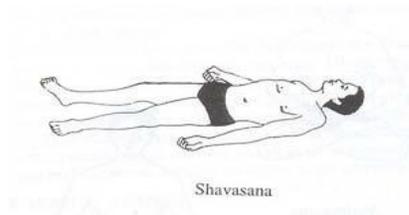
yoga as treatment modality would depend on (1) whether yoga can be effectively used as an independent or add-on treatment to pharmacology, (2) compliance to yoga and its effect in case of non-adherence – effectiveness of brief yoga practice versus continued practice, (3) establishment of community yoga groups – where the patient can get supervised and continued training. Answers to the above research questions could help propagate yoga as an effective solution to problem of accessing, affording and availing quality mental health care services and treatment in the Indian community.

Asana for Mental health

In today's hectic world it has become quite obvious for people to lose their mental health balance. This loss of balance of mental health is depicted in the form of anxiety and depression. It is a proven fact that yoga really helps to stabilize the mental health of human beings. Let us see how yoga can really help you enhance.

Hatha Yoga describes Shatkarmas (six processes) in details for Body purification and mind purification. Various asanas (Yoga Positions), six shatkarmas, mudras & bandhas (psychic knots or psycho-physiological energy release techniques) and Pranayama are described in old ancient sanskrit texts of Hatha Yoga (Hatha Yoga Pradipika and Gherandasamhita).

They work at the chitta (subtle aspect of consciousness) level that eliminates the physical and mental tensions. They are trained in supine and prone position of the body respectively. Shavasana and Vijrasana, Bhujangasana, Trikonasana, Halasana, Sarvangasana etc...important relaxative asanas (Figure 1).



Vajrasana

Vajrasana is best asana of Stress & Tension and Anxiety it makes the body exceptionally strong and healthy. Vajra means Diamond in Sanskrit. During this asana, feel the sensations in the body as you move them. Do the Movement slowly and in a relaxed manner. Inhale and exhale slowly. While drawing the abdominal region inwards and

expanding the chest, focus the attention on these body parts. The way the muscles move must be felt. Relax before, during and after the yoga posture.

1. With knees, ankles and big toes touching the ground, take a kneeling position.
2. One should sit on the heels and place palms on the knees.
3. The Spine should be erect and breath should be deep.
4. Draw the abdominal region inside and expand the chest (Figure2).



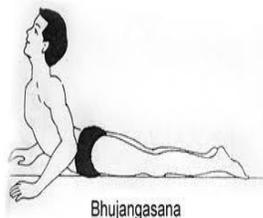
The triangle pose – Trikonasana

The legs are spread apart and the body stretches to the left, moving from the pelvis and extending over the left leg. Both arms are perpendicular to the floor, the left hand on the floor, or resting on the calf or the outer ankle of the left foot, and the right hand reaching up straight. The spine is straight, chest open, the body facing to the front (Figure 3).



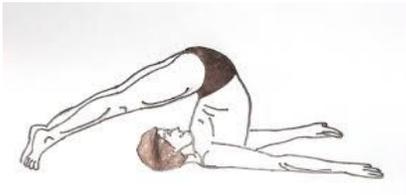
The cobra pose – Bhujangasana

The pose starts from a downward facing position with hands flat on the floor below the shoulders. The spine is lengthened and the buttocks firmed as the head and chest is slowly lifted. The elbows stay close to the body and the eyes look up. The neck is kept neutral (Figure 4).



Halasana:

1. Take supine position hands straight by the side of thighs, palm resting on the ground
2. Slowly raise your legs together without bending at knees by pressing your hands and stop at 30° angle
3. After few seconds raise your legs further up to 60° angle and maintain
4. Now slowly bring the legs at 90° angle
5. Pressing both the hands bring the legs little towards the head.
6. Continue the bending of legs till toes touch the ground and then stretch your legs backward as far as possible.
7. Now place both the palms on the head making finger lock. Bring the elbows on the ground.
8. While returning back to the original position first release the finger-lock. Stretch the hands straight and place them on the ground by the side of the body.
9. Lower the waist and raise the legs from the ground. Slowly let the waist rest on the ground and stop bringing the legs at 90° angle.
10. Slowly come back to the original position. (Figure 5)



Sarvangasana:

1. Lie on your back and lift your legs up into air.
2. Place your hands on your lower back for support, resting your elbows and lower arms on the ground.
3. Make sure your weight is on your shoulders and mid to upper back -- not your neck.
4. Breathe deeply and hold for at the posture for at least 5-10 breaths, increasing the hold over time.
5. To come down, slowly lower your legs, keeping them very straight -- a little workout

for your abdominal muscles. (Figure 6).



Bandhas and Mudras in Pranayama

Bandh is a special characteristic of Hatha Yoga. The various types of bandhas have been described in Yoga texts. However none of them defines the term "Bandh" as such. The three types of bandhas, viz Jalandhar Bandh, Uddiyana Bandh and Mul Bandh have been described in many of the ancient texts. With the help of these descriptions, an attempt may be made to define the bandhas. Bandh may be defined as a particular action involving pressure or strain on the muscles. It is expected in Yoga to retain a firm pose in bandh as it is retained in the asanas. The bandhas are to be studied mainly while studying pranayama. We will study pranayam in detail afterwards. Bandhas have been described in Hathapradeepika in the chapter relating to Mudras. In all, 10 mudras have been described in it. They are describes all the two bandhas as mudras and Pranyama.

Mudras are particular positions of the hands and the body in order to establish powerful and special energy patterns, similar to electrical circuits. Each one a symbolic representation of particular desired psychological or spiritual qualities they are...

1.Gyana Mudra : Touch the tip of the thumb to the tip of the index finger, with the other three fingers stretched out.(Figure 7).



7.Prana Mudra: Bend ring finger and little finger and touch the tip of thumb with their tips keeping the remaining two fingers stretched. (Figure 8)



Pranayama

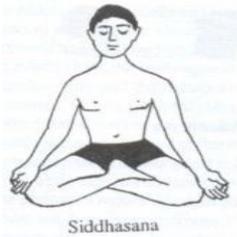
Padmasana

1. Sit on the ground by spreading the legs forward.
2. Place the right foot on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh.
3. Place the hands on the knee joints.
4. Keep the body, back and head erect.
5. Eyes should be closed.
6. One can do Pranayama in this asana (Figure 9).



Siddhasana

1. Place the left heel at the anus, the terminal opening of the alimentary canal or digestive tube.
2. Keep the right heel on the root of the generative organ.
3. It should be in a way that the knees and the heels, both lie upon the other.
4. The hands must be placed on either sole of the feet. Keep the eyes half closed (Figure 10).



Breathing exercise

Pranayama, the breathing exercise, may rejuvenate you, to carry on your work with extra energy.

1. Put your right thumb on your right nostril
2. Deeply inhale air using your left nostril
3. Close your left nostril with your right index finger and hold breath for few seconds
4. Exhale through left nostril
5. Do it similarly with left nostril closing right nostril
6. Now inhale through left nostril, hold breath and exhale through right nostril and do the other way (Figure 11).



Kamakhya Kumar (2007) suggested that the Mantras have great significance in the mental and spiritual evolution of harmony. These could also manifest tremendous results in the physical world; they could be powerful like a Patton tank or an atomic bomb. Our spiritually empowered, eminent ancestors – the rishis, knew this fact and had therefore developed a whole gamut of mantras for specific purposes and had also devised the methods of experimentation with use of these subliminal tools.

Amy Novotney (2009) suggested that yoga may help strengthen social attachments, reduce stress and relieve anxiety, depression and insomnia. Researchers are also starting to claim some success in using yoga and yoga-based treatments to help active-duty military and veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Uebelacker et al., (2010) from USA, in a qualitative study showed that practice of Vinyasa yoga over the 2-month period, exhibited significant decreases in depression

symptoms and significant increases in an aspect of mindfulness and behavior activation in patients suffering with depression.

Radhakrishna et al., (2010) in another paper described that the Integrated Yoga Therapy Approach (IAYT) is an effective tool to increase imitation, cognitive skills and social-communicative behaviors in children with Autism spectrum disorders

Jue-Ting Fan and Kuei-Min Chen(2011) suggested that Yoga exercise has positive benefits for both the physical and mental health of elders with dementia living in long-term care facilities. It is recommended that yoga be included as one of the routine activities in these long-term care facilities.

Andrea L. Forfyflow(2011) study that the research limitations and suggestions for researchers and future research. Yoga appears to be an effective clinical intervention for anxiety and depression.

Visciglia et al., (2011), in a randomized controlled study depicted that patients with schizophrenia, when provided with an 8-week therapeutic yoga program showed significant improvements in psychopathology and quality of life compared with controls (small sample size).

Vancampfort et al., (2011), in their comparative study using yoga and aerobic exercise concluded that the magnitude of the changes did not differ significantly between yoga and aerobic exercise and hence people with schizophrenia and physiotherapists could choose either yoga or aerobic exercise in reducing acute stress and anxiety taking into account the personal preference of each individual.

Behere et al., (2011) in their randomized controlled study stated that Yoga therapy can be a useful add-on treatment to improve psychopathology, facial emotional recognition deficits, and socio-occupational functioning in antipsychotic-stabilized out-patients with schizophrenia.

Khalsa SB et al. (2012) suggested that implementation of yoga is acceptable and feasible in a secondary school setting and has the potential of playing a protective or preventive role in maintaining mental health.

Arndt Büssing, et al.(2012) suggested that is relatively cost-effective, may be practiced at least in part as a self-care behavioral treatment, provides a life-long

behavioural skill, enhances self-efficacy and self-confidence and is often associated with additional positive side effects.

Hilary B. Meyer et al.(2012) indicate that additional randomized, controlled studies are needed to critically define the benefits of yoga for the treatment of both neurological and psychiatric disorders.

Here (2013) Review that there is emerging evidence from randomised trials to support beliefs about yoga for depression, sleep disorders and as an augmentation therapy.

Ingunn Hagen and Usha S. Nayar (2014) significant that children and young people cope with stress and thus, contribute positively to balance in life, well-being, and mental health. We present research literature suggesting that yoga improves children's physical and mental well-being. Similarly, yoga in schools helps students improve resilience, mood, and self-regulation skills pertaining to emotions and stress.

Kazufumi Yoshihara(2014) study that the Yoga training has the potential to reduce the somatization score and the scores related to mental health indicators, such as anxiety, depression, anger, and fatigue. The present findings suggest that yoga can improve somatization and mental health status and has implications for the prevention of psychosomatic symptoms in healthy women.

Conclusion:

Taken together, while several reviews suggest positive benefits of Yoga, can helps to improve the mental health of all of them by reducing stress and improve Prevention of physical and mental health to Quality of Life in all age groups. It is quite likely that yoga may help to improve self-efficacy, self-competence, physical fitness, and group support, and may well be effective as a supportive adjunct to mitigate mental medical conditions,

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