

When Mind-Body Practices Go Wrong – MH & Yoga Conference 2017

When Mind ~ Body Practices Go Wrong

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**Integrating Yoga into Mental Health Care
2017 National Conference**

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Agenda

- ⊕ Why it's important to meet the mood and client experience with the appropriate opening practice
- ⊕ What can go wrong?
- ⊕ What not to do without ascertaining client tolerance
- ⊕ What is safe for All?
- ⊕ What is safe for meeting Anxiety?
- ⊕ What is safe for meeting Depressed Mood?
- ⊕ What is safe for meeting Trauma history?

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Agenda

We'll learn LifeForce Yoga skills appropriate in a clinical setting including:

- ⊕ self-empowered imagery
- ⊕ Breathing Practices
- ⊕ Hand Gestures
- ⊕ Using Mantra
- ⊕ Meditative intention setting

Benefits

Practice with each other

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Meeting the Mood

- ✦ Why it's important to meet the mood and client experience with the appropriate opening practice
- ✦ What can go wrong?
 - ✦ Client unable to follow
 - ✦ Client's mood dysregulation is exacerbated.
 - ✦ Client triggered
 - ✦ Client unable to tolerate what is arising
 - ✦ Client emotionally flooded

What not to do

- ✦ What not to do without ascertaining client tolerance
 - ✦ Closing the eyes
 - ✦ Watching the breath
 - ✦ Inquiring into sensations
 - ✦ Sitting in silence
 - ✦ Yogic Three-Part Breath (*Dirga Pranayama*)

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Meeting the Mood

- ✦ Beginning by watching the breath or trying to slow it down may not be the most efficacious way of calming your client's anxiety
- ✦ Meet the anxiety, normalizing it with a slightly more rapid breath like "Stair-step."

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What to do

Breathing Practices

- ⊕ Stair-step (anxiety, depression, trauma)
- ⊕ 3-Part (anxiety, depression, only if accessible)
- ⊕ 4:4 (depression); 4:6 (anxiety); 4:4:6 (if accessible)
- ⊕ Power Hara
- ⊕ Pulling Prana
- ⊕ Breath of Joy
- ⊕ Bellows Breath
- ⊕ Bee Breath

What to do

- ⊕ Client's image (bhavana)
- ⊕ Tone (mantra)
- ⊕ Hand gesture (mudra)

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Therapeutic Bond – Rituals & Practices

- ⊕ Lighting of a candle
- ⊕ A hand gesture (*mudra*)
- ⊕ A simple yoga breath (*pranayama*)
- ⊕ A soothing image of sanctuary or peace or calm strength or whatever is sought (*bhavana*)
- ⊕ A soothing universal tone (*mantra*)
- ⊕ A cleansing breath (*kriya*)
- ⊕ Client's intention reveals itself (*sankalpa*)

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General Centering with imagery, sound & breath

- ✦ Soothing Image
- ✦ Hand gesture
- ✦ Inhale through the nostrils for 4 counts
- ✦ Sustain the breath with the image for 4 counts or as is accessible.
- ✦ Exhale with the mantra “so-ham” (I am that)
- ✦ Yogic Three-Part Breath (as is accessible)
- ✦ “Intention for our work together arises” or “gift” or “burning bush in the heart”

Stair Step Breath

(Anuloma Krama) Meets Anxiety

- ✦ Take little steps through the nostrils, as though climbing a mountain (usually 4 to 8)
- ✦ Sustain for four counts (as is accessible) at the top of the mountain. A soothing visual image may be cued here.
- ✦ Now slide down the mountain. (Trolley, escalator)
- ✦ Practice two or three times.

Stair Step Breath

(Viloma Krama) Meets Depression

- ✦ Take an elevator ride through the nostrils up the mountain.
- ✦ Sustain for four counts (as is accessible) at the top of the mountain. A visual image may be cued here.
- ✦ Take little steps down the mountain through the nostrils.
- ✦ Practice two or three times.

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Stair Step Breath Complete Practice

- ⊕ Little Steps up to capacity.
- ⊕ Sustain with visual image. (brief retention)
- ⊕ Little steps down until empty.
- ⊕ Return to Anoloma Krama, i.e. ending with a slide down the mountain.

Meeting Anxiety (Build to this for depression)

- ⊕ Breath of Joy
 - ⊕ 3 inhales as though conducting an orchestra
 - ⊕ Exhale into Chair
 - ⊕ Mantra Lum
 - ⊕ Cuing to direct sensation
- ⊕ Grounding
 - ⊕ Inhale— “I am” to the crown
 - ⊕ Exhale— “Here” to the feet

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Cue to Direct Sensation—Why?

- Why we must be specific and direct, not global
- ⊕ Many clients are living from the neck up.
 - ⊕ For them and for those who have a history of trauma, it may not be “safe” to feel the body.
 - ⊕ “Feel the sensations in your body” “Notice the sensations in your body,” can provoke anxiety, even trigger panic.
 - ⊕ Cues must be to specific body parts, particularly those parts with a lot of nerve endings or sensation evoked by the practice you’ve led.

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Cue to Sensation

- ✦ Specific and direct, not global
- ✦ Start with face, extremities
- ✦ “Sense into the face, the arms, the palms of the hands.” (Body awareness)
- ✦ Perhaps there’s a tingling, an effervescence in the palms.” (energy awareness)
- ✦ “Sense the fingers. Sense the space between the fingers.” (spacious awareness)

Centering for Anxiety

- ✦ Image for peace
- ✦ Hand gesture – Eagle Mudra
- ✦ Inhale through the nostrils for 4 counts
- ✦ Sustain the breath with the image for 4 counts or as is accessible.
- ✦ Draw mudra to heart with the mantra “Shamaya”
- ✦ Yogic Three-Part Breath (as is accessible) or Stair Step Breath – Part One
- ✦ “Intention for our work together arises” or “gift” or “burning bush in the heart”

Meeting Anxiety (Build to this for depression)

Pulling Prana

1. Through the nostrils inhale arms up;
exhale down (5 – 10x)
2. Inhale arms out in front of chest;
exhale back (5 – 10x)
3. Alternate arms, inhale out, exhale in
4. Arms out with fists, sustain breath to
comfort level as arms are pumped toward
chest.

Cue to Direct sensation

Ground

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Centering for Depression

- ✧ Image for calm strength
- ✧ Hand gesture, breath and sound
- ✧ Inhale through the nostrils for 4 counts.
- ✧ Exhale with the mantra “Mahara” to solar plexus (3x)
- ✧ Yogic Three-Part Breath (as is accessible) or Stair Step Breath – All parts
- ✧ Intention for our work together arises

Building Energy (Meets Anxiety)

- ✧ Power Hara
 - ✧ Hands on shoulders; Two inhalations while twisting
 - ✧ Arms cross the body while twisting with two exhalations
 - ✧ Mantra: Ram
 - ✧ Cuing to direct sensation
 - ✧ Grounding
 - ✧ Inhale— “I am” to the crown
 - ✧ Exhale— “Here” to the feet

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Centering for Trauma

- ✧ Inner Sanctuary
- ✧ 4:4:6 Breath
- ✧ Movement & Mudra
 - ✧ Inhale arms out in front of the heart
 - ✧ Exhale hands in Eagle Mudra to the heart
- ✧ Toning (Nada Yoga)
 - ✧ Sha-ma-ya

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Try This: Centering Practice (for depression)

- ✦ Image for calm strength
- ✦ Hand gesture, breath and sound
 - ✦ Inhale arms out in front of the solar plexus (4 counts)
 - ✦ “Sustain. See that image of..” (4 counts or as is accessible)
 - ✦ Exhale the hands to the solar plexus in Eagle Mudra with “Mahara” 3x
 - ✦ Repeat language but “draw the hands to the heart with “Mahaya” 3x
 - ✦ Give the heart a little rock, the image for calm strength on the altar of your heart.

Talking Points

- ✦ Language: Image from nature, or a time when you felt _____, or where you can imagine feeling_____.
- ✦ Delivery: Speak slowly
- ✦ Invite client to soften the eyes
- ✦ Keep your own eyes open
- ✦ Client leads the breath
- ✦ Avoid “I would like you to...”
- ✦ Use “Allow your ...” or “Invite your...”

Try This: Centering Practice (for anxiety)

- ✦ Image for peace
- ✦ Hand gesture, breath and sound
 - ✦ Inhale arms out in front of the heart (4 counts)
 - ✦ “Sustain. See that image of..” (4 or as is accessible)
 - ✦ Exhale the hands to the heart in Eagle Mudra with “Shamaya” 3x
 - ✦ Give the heart a little rock, the image for peace on the altar of your heart.
 - ✦ Perhaps there’s an intention for (your life/this session) that reveals itself.
 - ✦ As you’re ready, open your eyes.

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Chanting ‘Om’ Shown to Deactivate the Limbic System

Researchers compared 15 seconds of ‘OM’ (5 – O; 10 – m) to 15 seconds of the sound “Ssssss...” and to 15 seconds of rest. Significant deactivation in the amygdala as well as other emotional areas only during ‘OM’ chanting

Bangalore G Kalyani, et al., “Neurohemodynamic correlates of ‘OM’ chanting: A pilot functional magnetic resonance imaging study” *International Journal of Yoga*. 2011 Jan-Jun; 4(1): 3-6.

How Yoga Practices 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
- ⊕ Provides tools and language to access a larger Self

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

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)
- ⊕ Deactivation of the limbic brain through vagal nerve stimulation

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Pranayama Breathing Practice Basics

Breath count for Anxiety: extend the exhalation.
Inhale for 4; Exhale for 6.

Breath count for Depression: extend the
inhalation. Inhale for 6; Exhale for 4.

Bellows Breath – Inhale one breath per second



Bellows Breath – Exhale Good for depression; meets anxiety



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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

Alternate Nostril Breathing

Balancing Breath good for both after assessment



Vishnu Mudra Hand Position for Alternate Nostril



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Opening Occluded Nostrils for Alternate Nostril Breathing



Mudras

- ✦ Nerve endings in fingers speak directly to the brain
- ✦ We're programmed for effort-driven rewards, using our hands. "Did we lose something vital to our mental health when we began pushing buttons and stopped plowing fields?" Kelly Lambert, PhD, *Lifting Depression: A Neuroscientist's Hands-On Approach to Activating Your Brain's Healing Power*

✦ Experiment

Energizing Mudra Ganesha Mudra



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*Energizing Mudra
Brahma Mudra*



*Calming Mudra
Adhi Mudra*



*Calming Mudras
Dhyana Mudra*



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Shanmukhi Mudra – 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.

Bee Breath: Calming

✦ Bee Breath (Brahmari) – exhale only

- ✦ Chin slightly tucked
- ✦ Lips Closed
- ✦ Root of the tongue to back of throat

Mudra: Shanmuki

- ✦ Index points to brow point
- ✦ Middle covers eyes
- ✦ Ring at edges of nostrils
- ✦ Pinky at edges of lips



LifeForce Yoga® Resources

- ✦ *Yoga for Depression* (Broadway Books)
- ✦ *Yoga Skills for Therapists* (W.W. Norton)
- ✦ Newsletter - research & news on yoga & mental health
- ✦ Trainings & Retreats
- ✦ Award-winning Yoga practice DVDs and CDs
- ✦ Professional training for mental health professionals - CEU's


