

HOLISTIC MENTAL HEALTH BY YOGA, MEDITATION AND NATUROPATHY

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1. Mental Health

1.1 A state of well-being

Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. The positive dimension of mental health is stressed in WHO's definition of health as contained in its constitution: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

Mental health is an integral part of health; indeed, there is no health without mental health. Mental health is more than the absence of mental disorders. Mental health is determined by socioeconomic, biological and environmental factors. Cost-effective public health and intersectoral strategies and interventions exist to promote, protect and restore mental health. Mental health is an integral and essential component of health. Mental health is more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities. Mental health and well-being are fundamental to our collective and individual ability as humans to think, emote, interact with each other, earn a living and enjoy life. On this basis, the promotion, protection and restoration of mental health can be regarded as a vital concern of individuals, communities and societies throughout the world.

1.2 Determinants of mental health

Multiple social, psychological, and biological factors determine the level of mental health of a person at any point of time. For example, persistent socio-economic pressures are recognized risks to mental health for individuals and communities. The clearest evidence is associated with indicators of poverty, including low levels of education.

Poor mental health is also associated with rapid social change, stressful work conditions, gender discrimination, social exclusion, unhealthy lifestyle, risks of violence, physical ill-health and human rights violations.

There are also specific psychological and personality factors that make people vulnerable to mental disorders. Lastly, there are some biological causes of mental disorders including genetic factors which contribute to imbalances in chemicals in the brain.

1.3 Mental health care and treatment

In the context of national efforts to develop and implement mental health policy, it is vital to not only protect and promote the mental well-being of its citizens, but also address the needs of persons with defined mental disorders. Knowledge of what to do about the escalating burden of mental disorders has improved substantially over the past decade. There is a growing body of evidence demonstrating both the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of key interventions for priority mental disorders in countries at different levels of economic development.

Examples of interventions that are cost-effective, feasible, and affordable include:

- Treatment of epilepsy with antiepileptic drugs;

- Treatment of depression with (generically produced) antidepressant drugs and brief psychotherapy;
- Treatment of psychosis with older antipsychotic drugs plus psychosocial support;
- Taxation of alcoholic beverages and restriction of their availability and marketing.

A range of effective measures also exists for the prevention of suicide, prevention and treatment of mental disorders in children, prevention and treatment of dementia, and treatment of substance-use disorders. The Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) has produced evidence based guidelines for non-specialists to enable them in identification and management of mental health priority conditions.

Mental health refers to a broad array of activities directly or indirectly related to the mental well-being component included in the WHO's definition of health: "A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease". It is related to the promotion of well-being, the prevention of mental disorders, and the treatment and rehabilitation of people affected by mental disorders.

Depression is a common mental disorder, characterized by sadness, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, feelings of tiredness, and poor concentration. Depression can be long-lasting or recurrent, substantially impairing an individual's ability to function at work or school or cope with daily life. At its most severe, depression can lead to suicide. When mild, people can be treated without medicines but when depression is moderate or severe they may need medication and professional talking treatments. Depression is a disorder that can be reliably diagnosed and treated by non-specialists as part of primary health care. Specialist care is needed for a small proportion of individuals with complicated depression or those who do not respond to first-line treatments.

1.4 Mental health promotion and protection

Mental health promotion involves actions to create living conditions and environments that support mental health and allow people to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles. These include a range of actions to increase the chances of more people experiencing better mental health. A climate that respects and protects basic civil, political, socio-economic and cultural rights is fundamental to mental health promotion. Without the security and freedom provided by these rights, it is very difficult to maintain a high level of mental health. National mental health policies should not be solely concerned with mental disorders, but should also recognize and address the broader issues which promote mental health. These include mainstreaming mental health promotion into policies and programmes in governmental and nongovernmental sectors. In addition to the health sector, it is essential to involve the education, labour, justice, transport, environment, housing, and welfare sectors as well.

Promoting mental health depends largely on intersectoral strategies. Specific ways to promote mental health include:

- Early childhood interventions (e.g. home visits for pregnant women, pre-school psychosocial activities, combined nutritional and psycho-social help for disadvantaged populations);
- Support to children (e.g. skills building programmes, child and youth development programmes);
- Socio-economic empowerment of women (e.g. improving access to education and microcredit schemes);
- Social support for elderly populations (e.g. befriending initiatives, community and day centres for the aged);

- Programmes targeted at vulnerable groups, including minorities, indigenous people, migrants and people affected by conflicts and disasters (e.g. psycho-social interventions after disasters);
- Mental health promotional activities in schools (e.g. programmes supporting ecological changes in schools and child-friendly schools);
- Mental health interventions at work (e.g. stress prevention programmes);
- Housing policies (e.g. housing improvement);
- Violence prevention programmes (e.g. reducing availability of alcohol and access to arms);
- Community development programmes (e.g. integrated rural development);
- Poverty reduction and social protection for the poor;
- Anti-discrimination laws and campaigns;
- Promotion of the rights, opportunities and care of individuals with mental disorders.

1.5 Maternal and child mental health

Maternal mental health worldwide about 10% of pregnant women and 13% of women who have just given birth experience a mental disorder, primarily depression. In developing countries this is even higher, i.e. 15.6% during pregnancy and 19.8% after child birth. In severe cases mothers' suffering might be so severe that they may even commit suicide. In addition, the affected mothers cannot function properly. As a result, the children's growth and development may be negatively affected as well. Maternal mental disorders are treatable. Effective interventions can be delivered even by well-trained non-specialist health providers. Worldwide 10-20% of children and adolescents experience mental disorders. Neuropsychiatric conditions are the leading cause of disability in young people in all regions. If untreated, these conditions severely influence children's development, their educational attainments and their potential to live fulfilling and productive lives.

(2) Yoga

Yoga is a mind-body therapy that connects the body, breath, and mind to energize and balance the whole person. It uses physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation to improve overall well-being. Descriptions of yoga, the word means "union" in Sanskrit, appear more than 2,000 years ago, and yoga was practiced thousands of years before that. Today, millions of Americans of all ages and fitness levels practice yoga regularly. Although yoga is a spiritual practice for many, most Westerners do yoga for exercise or to reduce stress.

2.1 History of Yoga

In its traditional form, yoga is considered a complete lifestyle that provides a path to spiritual enlightenment. The dimensions of yoga are sometimes depicted as a tree with eight limbs:

- Pranayama (breathing)
- Asana (postures)
- Yama (restraint)
- Niyama (healthy observances)
- Pratyahara (sensory withdrawal)
- Dharana (concentration)
- Dhyana (meditation)
- Samadhi (higher consciousness)

The practice of yoga came to the United States in the 1890s with the teachings of a guru named Swami Vivekananda. Yoga became popular in the 1960s because of growing interest in mind-body therapies. Today, yoga is often done as exercise, separated from its traditional spiritual roots. In this form, yoga is taught at local YMCAs, health clubs, and yoga

centers. It is often suggested by doctors to reduce stress in people with high blood pressure and heart disease, and to improve flexibility in people with arthritis.

2.2 Types of Yoga

Different branches or paths of yoga have developed, including:

- (i) **Bhakti yoga:** This form of yoga aims to take all of the love in one's heart and direct it toward the divine. By seeing God in all of creation, the person has respect for all life and is encouraged to treat others generously.
- (ii) **Hatha yoga:** This is the most common form of yoga in the United States. It emphasizes physical postures or exercises, known as asanas, with the goal of balancing the opposites in one's life. During the exercises, flexing is followed by extension, a rounded back is followed by an arched back, and physical exercises are followed by meditations.
- (iii) **Jnana yoga:** This form of yoga emphasizes deep contemplation. Practitioners seek Jnana, or "wisdom," through meditation. The goal is to be one with God.
- (iv) **Karma yoga:** This form of yoga is based on the philosophy that "yesterday's actions determine today's circumstances." Practitioners of Karma yoga make a conscious decision to perform selfless acts of kindness. By making today's actions positive, they hope to improve tomorrow's circumstances for both themselves and others.
- (v) **Raja yoga:** Known in India as "the royal (raj) road to reintegration," Raja yoga blends the four layers of self: the body, the individual consciousness, the individual subconsciousness, and the universal and infinite consciousness. Raja yoga is most concerned with the mind and spirit and emphasizes meditation.
- (vi) **Tantra yoga:** Like Hatha yoga, practitioners of Tantra yoga seek to balance the opposites in their lives. They also try to break free of the "six enemies", which are physical longing, anger, greed, vanity, obsession, and jealousy; and the "eight fetters", which are hatred, apprehension, fear, shyness, hypocrisy, pride of ancestry, vanity of culture, and egotism, by using discipline, training, and rituals. Hatha yoga is often a general term that is used for many different types or styles of yoga. If a class is called "Hatha yoga," it includes both breathing and physical exercises or postures. Other styles of yoga can be more intense. Among the more popular styles of yoga are:
 - (vii) **Ashtanga or Power yoga:** A more demanding workout where you constantly move from one posture to another ("flow").
 - (viii) **Bikram or Hot yoga:** A series of 26 asanas (postures) done in a room that is 95 to 100 degrees. The goal is to warm and stretch the muscles, ligaments, and tendons, and to purify the body through sweat.
 - (ix) **Integral yoga :** A gentle type of yoga that may include breathing exercises, chanting, and meditation.
 - (x) **Iyengar yoga :** Emphasizes great attention to detail and precise alignment of the body, and holding poses for long periods of time.
 - (xi) **Kundalini yoga:** Emphasizes the effects of breath on the postures, in order to free energy in the lower body to move upwards.
 - (xii) **Viniyoga:** adapts postures to each person's needs and abilities, and synchronizes breath and postures. Breath leads the body into each posture.

(3) Naturopathy

3.1 Five Elements

Human body is composed of the five natural elements. Man can live without food and water for some days, but life is not possible without Space (Akash) and Air (Pranic energy) for

more than few minutes. God has therefore made air universally available. One should sleep in open space whenever the atmosphere is comfortable. The place should be clean. Activities of mind are dependent upon Space and positive pranic energy. For rational thinking Space between thoughts and expression is needed. Space is of utmost importance for the existence of other four elements as well as for the life on the earth.

Out of other three elements of the "Sunlight", the source of energy for animals and plants is essential. This is the energy of conversion which is used for conversion of food into body constituents, is possible by metabolic processes (Enzymes-Fire (Agni). Growth of plants and subsequently animals is dependent on energy of Sun, which gives variety of colours to food grains, vegetables and fruits, which make them attractive and more assimilable. The fourth element "water" came into existence during the process of evolution. Water is essential for internal and external purification of the body. Hydrotherapy is used widely for treatment of chronic ailments.

3.2 Harmony with mother nature

A harmony of these elements translates into health and wellbeing. Disease occurs when there's a congestion or depletion of one or more elements. Naturopathy addresses the equilibrium of these elements and restores the ill body to health. Every element has a specific remedy and the degree of imbalance requires a combination of treatments.

Naturopathy can, thus, be broadly defined as a system wherein human beings live in harmony with the principles of nature. These constructive principles are applicable on the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual planes of living. Naturopathy has great health promotive, disease preventive, curative and restorative potential. Get in sync with Mother Nature through naturopathy by knowing what naturopathy treatment is all about. The concept of naturopathy finds its roots in ancient Indian wisdom where it speaks of the five great elements. These elements are present in the world in the form of earth, water, air, fire and ether.

3.3 Rejuvenation of the body by Naturopathy

This siphoning of negative energy or emptying process is greatly enabled through naturopathy and yoga therapy. Time spent at a retreat in the arms of mother nature greatly purifies and rejuvenates the body, mind and spirit. A retreat which offers the same is like taking a dive into the swimming pool of tranquility and solace within yourself. In the end, you are bound to be left with a rejuvenated self, charged spirit and an alert body ready to take on the world.

(4) Holistic Mental Health by Yoga, Meditation and Naturopathy

4.1 Mental health by yoga

Scientists do not know exactly how yoga works for good health. Some say it reduces stress like other mind-body therapies, and others believe that yoga causes the release of endorphins, natural painkillers and "feel good" chemicals in the brain. Studies show yoga can lower heart rate and blood pressure, increase muscle relaxation, and increase breathing capacity. All branches of yoga mentioned above use three major techniques: breathing, exercise (asana or postures), and meditation. These three techniques improve health in many ways:

- (i) **Breathing:** In yoga, breathwork is known as pranayama. Pranayama increases blood flow and reduces oxygen consumption. That brings more oxygen to your brain, and improves

the way your body uses oxygen. Breathing exercises can also increase how much air you draw into your lungs. Getting lots of air into your lungs helps you feel alert and focused.

- (ii) **Asanas (postures):** Provide a gentle-to-intense workout that boosts strength, flexibility, and balance.
- (iii) **Meditation:** Quiets the mind and causes both physical and emotional relaxation, which helps reduce blood pressure, chronic pain, anxiety, and cholesterol levels.

Most people learn yoga by taking a group class with an experienced instructor, but one-on-one sessions are also available. These private or semi-private sessions cost more. Classes usually last from 45 to 90 minutes and start with warm-up exercises, move to a guided series of yoga postures designed to stretch and tone all areas of the body, and end with deep relaxation or meditation. Throughout the class, the teacher helps you with breath control and proper body alignment. Our instructor will encourage you to practice at home to get the most from yoga.

4.1.1 The benefits of yoga

Yoga improves fitness, lowers blood pressure, promotes relaxation and self confidence, and reduces stress and anxiety. People who practice yoga tend to have good coordination, posture, flexibility, range of motion, concentration, sleep habits, and digestion. Yoga is a complementary therapy that has been used with conventional medicine to help treat a wide range of health problems, but it does not cure any disease. Studies show that yoga may help the following conditions:

- Anxiety and stress
- Arthritis, both osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis
- Asthma
- Cancer, as an additional therapy to reduce stress and strengthen the immune system. One study of 68 people with breast cancer found that those who practiced yoga had less anxiety and depression compared to those who did not. Even the DNA damage from radiotherapy was slightly less in the yoga group compared to the control group.
- Long-lasting back pain
- Depression
- Diabetes
- Addiction
- Parkinson disease
- Epilepsy
- Heart disease, by lowering cholesterol levels, lowering blood pressure, lessening stress, and reducing how often people had chest pain and how severe it was (when combined with a healthy diet)
- High blood pressure
- Hormonal problems
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Lung diseases
- Pregnancy
- Migraine headaches
- Sleep problems among the elderly

In addition, yoga postures that stretch and strengthen joints in the upper body may improve grip strength and reduce pain in people with carpal tunnel syndrome.

4.1.2 Yoga practices

- (a) **Bring your awareness to your breath:** Bringing your attention to your breath causes you to take better control of activities in and around your circle of influence. As you get to balance the rhythm in your breathings, you are better empowered to take charge of your actions and are more calm, composed and equipoised.
- (b) **Understand that we have more than just a physical body:** In addition to our physical bodies, there is also the energy body or bioplasmic body . While the aura energy is invisible to the naked eye, however, it can be seen with Kirlian photography. Besides, there were eleven chakras in our bodies. The proper functioning of each was very important for the healthy and correct functioning of the corresponding body parts.
- (c) **Take up yoga and stay fit:** Yoga is a discipline to develop one's inherent powers in a balanced manner. Studies reveal that yoga is an excellent promoter and sustainer of good health. It increases flexibility, endurance, improves digestion, reduces stress, helps combat insomnia, weight problems and more.
- (d) **Practice yoga regularly:** Yogas are exercises that basically harmonize and synchronize the body rhythm, breath and spirit of the person. Thus, restoring peace and serenity of the natural balance is important. Practicing Surya Namaskar, Asanas, Pranayams, Mudras, Bandhas, Dyana or Kriya, meditation or Dhyana in a disciplined manner can do you wonders.
- (e) **Drink lots of water throughout the day:** Water is the purest way of flushing out toxins from your body and revitalizing it. Drinking lots of it already takes care of most of the problems.

4.1.3 Yoga for anxiety and depression

Available reviews of a wide range of yoga practices suggest they can reduce the impact of exaggerated stress responses and may be helpful for both anxiety and depression. In this respect, yoga functions like other self-soothing techniques, such as meditation, relaxation, exercise, or even socializing with friends. By reducing perceived stress and anxiety, yoga appears to modulate stress response systems. This, in turn, decreases physiological arousal — for example, reducing the heart rate, lowering blood pressure, and easing respiration. There is also evidence that yoga practices help increase heart rate variability, an indicator of the body's ability to respond to stress more flexibly.

4.1.4 Precautions for yoga practices

Some people may feel stiff as their bodies get used to different postures. As with any physical activity, yoga can cause injury if not done correctly. It is important to practice yoga with a trained teacher. Be sure to check with your doctor before trying yoga if you have high blood pressure, heart disease, arthritis, or a recent back injury, as you would with any exercise program. Choose one of the gentler forms of yoga. Pregnant women may need to avoid some postures. Special classes are available for expecting mothers. Be sure to call your doctor if any exercises cause headaches, muscle cramps, dizziness, or severe pain in your back, legs, or joints. Remember that yoga instructors are not doctors. Only you and your doctor can decide if a certain yoga posture is too hard or might injure you depending on your condition. If you feel like a posture might cause injury, DO NOT do it or ask your instructor to modify it for you.

4.2 Mental Health by meditation

4.2.1 Management of mental stress by meditation

How can mental stress cause physical illness? Evolutionary science teaches us that our brain isn't one undifferentiated mass. There are many distinct parts of it, linked in a complex network. The older parts of the brain, known as the limbic system, are the emotional, reactive parts that evolved long ago. The parts of our brain that evolved more recently, such as the frontal cortex, are the seat of rational, conscious thought. The various parts of the brain communicate not only with each other, but also with the body.

Meditation is a state of absolute peace and bliss. It is a state of being in the pure, divine existence of ultimate reality (cosmic consciousness / God / truth). To attain this state various techniques are developed which are also termed as meditation. The word meditation comes from the Latin word 'meditatio', which originally indicated every type of physical or intellectual exercise, then later evolved into the more specific meaning 'contemplation'.

Concentration meditation is used in most religions and spiritual practices. Whereas in mindfulness meditation there is an open focus, in concentration meditation the meditator holds attention on a particular object (e.g., a repetitive prayer) while minimizing distractions; bringing the mind back to concentrate on the chosen object. In some traditions, such as Vipassana, mindfulness and concentration are combined.

Meditation may be objective, or on qualities or purely subjective. In objective meditation the Sadhaka meditates upon an idol or picture of his deity (may be Lord Shiva, Rama, Krishna, Christ, Buddha, Mahavira or any other god or goddess). For him, the idol is something alive, vibrating with supreme energy. He may meditate upon the beauty, the qualities, and the activities of his deity. In subjective meditation, he may meditate upon the all-pervading pulsating supreme energy which is within him and without, permeating everywhere. He may also meditate on his breath while inhaling and exhaling. All these techniques lead to the state of meditation. But to attain this state continuous focus is essential. To attain the flow of continuous focus, concentration is required. Fixing the mind on an external object or an internal point continuously without interruption for twelve seconds is concentration. Concentration transforms into meditation. When the mind is fixed on any object or subject for 144 seconds continuously without break is meditation.

Meditation is a state of absolute peacefulness and blissfulness. It brings divine felicity. "Meditation is the gate that opens that infinite joy to us. Prayers, ceremonies and all the other forms of worship are simply kindergartens of meditation. You pray, you offer something. A certain theory existed that everything raised one's spiritual power. The use of certain words, flowers, images, temples, ceremonies like the waving of lights brings the mind to that attitude, but that attitude is always in the human soul, nowhere else. People are all doing it, but what they do without knowing it, do knowingly. That is the power of meditation."

Meditation is not for some ascetics but is essential for all human beings. The individual self of a person unites with the higher self (source of existence) during deep sleep daily. This unknown union recharges the cells of a human being. Hence, when he gets up from his sleep in the morning there is a feeling of freshness, relaxation and full strength. This is a natural process for every human being. But if an individual could not sleep properly, he feels uneasy and is in a kind of fatigue.

Meditation concepts and practices have attracted the attention of the modern world for decades; however, only in recent years has it become evident that meditation practices might have a role in enhancing health and the quality of everyday life. A number of clinical research studies indicate a potential wide array of physiological benefits of contemplative practices. Part of the reason for these new discoveries is that many more young generation is now being trained in the meditative techniques. A more powerful driving forces are the technological advancements that enable scientists to measure the changes taking place in our bodies, including the brain, during the various meditation practices..

4.2.2 . Mental health by gene therapy

I would like to say we can prevent all mental illness, but unfortunately genetics have a lot of responsibility here. Saying that, we can make many changes that will determine whether our genes are "switched on" or not. Welcome to the theory of epigenetics. What this fascinating branch of genetics suggests is that not only does it matter if you have a family history of a mental illness, it also matters what your parents and grandparents have done with their health as well as what you do to your own body. Epigenetic changes are like beacons on our DNA. They can switch our genes on or off without changing the genetic code of a person. A number of factors, including nutrition, stress, environment and various infections, have the ability to switch on a gene that codes for a mental illness. For example, a marked deficiency in B vitamins has been linked with all mental illnesses, including anxiety; lead exposure has strong links with depression; and marijuana is linked to schizophrenia. Mental illness is fundamentally a group of diseases that affects a system of the body. We are not only what we eat, but what we are exposed to. Prevention of mental illness is about taking responsibility for your health and the health of your children.

4.3 Drugless treatment by Naturopathy

Naturopathy and yoga treatment are processes of blending in harmony with nature as you feel your body rhythm harmonizing with that of the environment's. Naturopathy is a drugless system of treatment which recognizes the existence of vital curative forces within the body. It believes in treating the human body as a whole and removing the root cause of the diseases rather than treating individual parts or offering symptomatic remedies. If you find yourself stressed, just follow some proven practical steps, which are very effective when practiced in a regular and disciplined manner. Mother earth supports all vegetations and animal life. Use of clay or mud is effective in chronic skin diseases, digestive disorders, Hypertension. It has a cooling and detoxifying effect.

Gandhiji wrote about importance of five natural elements for maintaining health and in disease conditions. The concepts of eastern naturopathy differ from concepts of western naturopathy. Gandhiji has given importance to all five elements where as western naturopaths take in to consideration only 4 elements. Scarcely the importance is given to psychological, moral and spiritual well being of individual and society. Only Dr. Lindlhar has given thought to psychological aspect of the health.

Gandhiji was not exclusively preacher of Naturopathy, but he practiced naturopathy and treated his family members. His son Manilal was suffering from high fever. He treated him with fasting, juices and wet sheet packs. His wife Kasturba suffered from severe bleeding problems, he treated her with same measures and vegetarian diet, even when doctors advised to give her mutton soup. Convinced with Gandhiji's experiments she followed his advice and recovered from debilitating illness. During his stay at Uruli Kanchan Ashram Gandhiji treated many patients with dietary advice, mud poultice and water therapy.. Gandhiji was of the opinion that, the treatment should be very simple. Natural elements like Sun, Air, Earth; water and food available locally, physical labour (Shram) should be used for treatment of acute and chronic diseases. It should be affordable to poor as well as available to all others.

Without any mechanisation the large numbers of patients coming from different states and abroad get a very good response for various psychosomatic problems. Their main emphasis is aimed at purification at the physical as well as spiritual level. The treatment consist of, advice regarding the proper eliminative diet and various supportive treatments. In that Nature Care Centre nearly 70% beds were available for the middle-income group. People belonging to lower economic status got subsidised or free treatment.

The main objective of the nature cure and Gandhiji was also of the opinion that, a natural hygienist's role is to educate the community. In this direction daily discourses on naturopathy, dietetics, yoga and moral values were being conducted. To reach the remote rural areas they conducted training programmes for the traditional healers, women's groups, school children, teachers and outdoor camps for the organized groups.

Pamper your tired body: Steam bath, infrared sauna, Vibro massages, reflexology, ultrasound and tractions improve blood circulation throughout the the muscles and tissues

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