Just For Fun: Clown Medicine

When I want to restore myself, get in touch with what I need if I want to keep giving, I fill my cup by going away on clown trips with my friend Patch Adams, MD. Patch is probably the world's most recognized humanitarian clown, and he travels with an international community of clowns (who are doctors, nurses, therapists, lawyers, business people, and students).

Patch reminds me that love can be an act of revolution. Clowning anywhere in the world without a common spoken language means finding a way to communicate with an open heart. If you reach out to others from that open-hearted, undefensive place, people resonate with your soul and also reach out to you. When I dance with clowns in community, it always restores my balance.

My clown persona is sometimes a ballerina in pink tights and tutu with a flamingo headdress, clicking castanets and dancing flamenco. The sight of this 6'6" ballerina is just an invitation to laughter . . . at the very least a stifled giggle . . . but sometimes there is frank hysteria.

The clown/jester/fool character appears in every human culture. Clowns can say and do things that don't often get expressed publicly. The archetypal clown helps us laugh at our human frailties, and in so doing, reduces tensions in the community.

Laughter heals because no matter what our condition, it provides a moment’s respite reminding us we are still human.

Resources:

If you like laughing, watch the flamingo dance on the walls of a mental hospital in the Peruvian jungle, see Blog/Column - (Welcome The Clowns, 8/30/10; and related Schlagbytes Frowns, Clowns and Castanets, 9/15/08, and clowning with victims after Hurricane Katrina in, 3 Generation Clowning, 9/18/05)

Patch Adams – To learn more about Patch’s mission and the clowning and learning opportunities he offers, visit his website.

Clown therapy is community psychiatry in disguise

Publish date: October 14, 2016
By: Carl A. Hammerschlag, MD
Frontline Medical News
Ever had a patient who not only got better but used the insights she gained from talking with you to help others in distress? I have just such a patient in the Peruvian Amazon. I’ve previously written about an annual clown trip to Peru that I make with my friend Patch Adams, MD, and 100 other humanitarian clowns from all over the world. We have been going there for a decade
to spread cheer, and revitalize the impoverished community of Belén, which is situated in the Amazon floodplain in the city of Iquitos. We conduct workshops, perform street theater, create community art installations, visit hospitals, and work with local grass-roots organizations. For the last 5 years, we also have been conducting mental health clinics in the streets.

To provide a brief overview … we go to a neighborhood, set up our space, and walk the streets with a bull horn. We announce our presence – “we are mental health professionals, and we’re meeting over at” … and we talk with anybody, young and old, who wants to discuss health problems, family issues, or other concerns.

We sit in a public place and speak to individuals/couples/families for 20 minutes, while around us, support clowns entertain the kids. We neither make diagnoses nor give drugs; we come with a clown nose and an open heart, and we listen actively without judgment and focus on solutions. We help people identify their strengths and resilience, and give them practical advice. This is community psychiatry disguised as “clown therapy,” which is just another phrase for solution-oriented therapy/ positive psychology/reality therapy/resilience-based therapy, logotherapy, existential psychotherapy, or kitchen table wisdom. These street clinics have had a profound impact on patients and clinicians.

Three years ago, I met a middle-aged woman who was suicidally depressed, and together we negotiated a successful intervention. In summary, she emerged from a church that happened to be across the street from where we were setting up our clinic. A clown saw her weeping and approached her, and after talking with her assured her that there was somebody here right now – a mental health professional – who would talk with her.

Maria sat down and told an unbelievably painful story that was happening within her family. On that day, after 8 months of prayer and receiving no sign from God, she had decided to kill herself. After listening to her, I actually believed she could do it.

There are no treatment centers or emergency shelters for the poor in Belén, so at our closure, I made her promise that she would not try to kill herself until I could see her again at our next clinic 2 days away, and close by. I gave her an amulet that was blessed and told her it was a reminder of her promise, and that my smiling face would be with her until she saw me again. She returned with her daughters to the next clinic, and together, they found a way to take a step forward.

Last year, I made my first home visit, and met with Maria, her daughters, and new grandson in their “new” home where they were happily sustaining themselves. When I left, the love and appreciation was so overwhelming that I told them as long as I returned I would come visit every year.

I just got back from this year’s annual visit, and was again greeted with passionate tears of joy. We sat and talked, and Maria told me her story. It seems that people in the community were now coming to her as a resource when they were deeply depressed. People know that she had walked a similar path and moved beyond it.
Dr. Carl A. Hammerschlag receives assistance in announcing that the clowns are back in Belen, Peru, for their annual mental health clinics.

She is a warm, good listener, and tells them a story about walking out of church and deciding she wanted to kill herself, and meeting with a tall gringo, a clown/doctor who miraculously saved her life. She gives them simple, practical advice, tells them how important it is to stay connected to their children, speak your truth with them openly; to pray for miracles and recognize them when they occur. She tells them to reach out for help, and people will reach out to them. She is a credible, inspiring friend who gives hope.

For those who remember when community psychiatry was actually a subspecialty, this is my vision of community mental health: People talking to credible witnesses/healers/resources in their community, whom they respect, who will listen without judgment, and maybe even say something that inspires a light in the darkness. It’s at least as effective as psychotropic drugs, and all its benefits come without side effects.

Once a year we come together, listen to each other’s stories, and continue our healing work together. Maria tells me her friends want to meet me. “They want to steal you away,” she says, “but I tell them I am not afraid.”

Maria, a lay therapist of sorts, is the community mental health consultant. Once a year, she consults with her gringo, the clown/doctor, to compare notes. We laugh and love, hug and cry, and give each other hope. No matter how divisive and polarizing the times, it is possible to come together in community and promote healing.

*Dr. Hammerschlag is chief of community mental health of the Gesundheit! Institute and a faculty member at the University of Arizona, Phoenix. He is the author of several books on healing and spirituality, including “Kindling Spirit: Healing from Within” (New York: Turtle Island Press, 2010) and “The Dancing Healers: A Doctor’s Journey of Healing With Native Americans” (San Francisco: Harper, 1988). Dr. Hammerschlag’s website is [healingdoc.com](http://healingdoc.com).*
According to the Joint Commission on January 1, 2015, both pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic strategies such as acupuncture therapy have a role in the management of pain.

**Acupuncture: A Key Solution for Treating America's Painkiller Epidemic**

**The U.S. Pain Epidemic**

- **4x**: Sales of Prescription Opioids Have Quadrupled Since 1999
- **17,000**: Prescription Opioid Deaths Annually
- **80,000**: NSAID and Acetaminophen Related ER Visits Annually
- **$635 Billion**: Annual Economic Cost of Chronic Pain*

*Additional Health Care Costs and Lost Productivity

**Try Acupuncture before Pills**

**Reduce Costs**

1. Lower Cost to Insurance Companies
2. Reduced Average Out-of-Pocket Expenses

**Improve Outcomes**

3. Patients Avoid Expensive / Risky Procedures
4. Fewer Inpatient Expenses

**Non-Addictive**

Acupuncture is a useful adjunctive therapy in the treatment of opiate and other addictions, but itself is non-addictive.

**Happier Patients**

Acupuncture is patient-centered, safe, effective, and well received in the clinic.

**Low Cost**

Insurance policies that cover acupuncture only cost an extra $0.37-0.76 per person each month.

**Evidence Based**

Research shows patients who receive acupuncture have more relief from pain than those who did not receive acupuncture.

Acupuncture is Safe, Proven, Effective & Non-Addictive.
Works Cited:


Ayurvedic Medicine/Ancient Indian Medicine for Mind, Body, and Spirit

History and Textbooks of Ayurveda

Ayurveda contains a tradition of written textbooks (in Sanskrit) generally in the form of verses that would be memorized. These textbooks are still in use in the present-day along with modern interpretations and investigations into the principles and practices. The texts are available in Sanskrit as well as in translation into modern languages. They are an active area of study for scholars and practitioners. Beginning in the Charaka Samhita and continuing throughout the other writings and teacher-student transmitted tradition, preventative medicine and lifestyle practices are a cornerstone of the Ayurvedic teachings.

Some of the other topics addressed include (but are not limited to) diagnostic and observational tools, information about diet related to health, disease processes treatment protocols, detoxification and elimination practices (such as pancha karma), discussion of energetics and the subtle body (prana).

While there are a number of source texts that span centuries of practice, it is generally agreed that there are three primary Ayurvedic texts. These are:

1. Charaka Samhita
   Common date 400-200 BCE
   Focus on Kayachitkitsa (internal medicine) with particular focus on digestion and on the nature of consciousness and awareness. Interestingly for our discussion, Charaka describes four important components to medical practice that are essential to health: patient, physician, nurse, medicine. These all working in harmony is essential to health. There is a code of ethics and conduct for healers identified in the text.

2. Shusruta Samhita
   Common date 1,000 BCE
   Introduction of surgical procedures.

3. Vagbhata’s Ashtanga Hridayam Samhita and Ashtanga Sangraha
   Common date 400 CE.
   These texts include more development and discussion of various aspects of Kayachkitkta including herbal medicine.

Study and Professionalism

For centuries of practice, the primary means of study was through small groups or apprenticeship programs (the gurukula). Today, there are Ayurvedic Medical Schools in India as well as a growing number of schools in the US and other countries around the world that combine an understanding of the classical practice with the ability to integrate with other medical professionals in the modern world. Organizations like the National Ayurvedic Medical Association are leading this effort to set and increase standards for education and practice.

Integration with Modern Biomedicine

There are a number of factors that support the integration of Ayurveda with modern biomedicine. The teachings of Ayurveda suggest that it is possible to use anything available for therapeutic benefit if one takes into account the energetics of the substance or practice. This does not rule out modern pharmaceuticals, for example. In addition, since the Shusruta Samhita is a text that includes some surgical practices, surgery is seen in Ayurveda as an appropriate intervention based on the circumstances. Ayurveda also offers practices that help to support the preparation of the body before surgery and the rejuvenation of the body after surgery. There is also an understanding of the team approach to healthcare and wellness, i.e. in the discussion mentioned earlier of the roles of the physician, nurse, patient, and the medicine or remedy.

Definitions of Health According to Ayurveda

Ayurveda is often described as a body-mind-spirit medical practice. The teachings describe an integration of what we would describe as energy or the subtle body with the physical body with which we are familiar. The definitions of
health identified in the Ayurvedic texts and tradition take this into account and are utilized in conjunction with lifestyle medicine practices to enhance and support greater vitality. Here are three definitions of health described in the three source texts.

1. This definition of health comes from the Charaka Samhita: Sama dosha sama agni sama dhatu mala kriyaha The word “sama” in Sanskrit means to be balanced. So this verse refers to the balance of the doshas (vata, pitta, and kapha), the balance of agni (the digestive fire), the balance of the dhatus (tissues), and the action of the release of wastes in a healthy manner.

2. The Sushruta Samhita adds to this definition that in order to be healthy, one must also have a happy mind, a relationship with the atma, or eternal self and senses that are functioning properly.

3. The definition of health according to the classical Ayurvedic text, Vagbhat’s Ashtanga Hridhaya Samhita: The person who eats wholesome food, maintains a regular lifestyle, through practice remains unattached to the objects of the senses, gives and forgives, loves truth, and serves others, is without disease.

While these definitions of health may seem out of reach for many of us, they are aspirational and take into account a full systems approach to health that includes body, mind, emotions, and spirit.

Ayurvedic Protocols and Herbal Medicine

While Ayurveda often uses a systems-based approach to health and wellness and remedies are tailored to the individual more than to the diagnosis, research studies investigating Ayurvedic protocols is on the rise. Written in the texts and used in contemporary practice, there are protocols, including medicinal herbs and combinations of herbs, that are suggested for use in various conditions. This is one area of study.

Selected Bibliography

Ayurvedic Medicine Anti-inflammation and Rejuvenation


Triphala


For more information: Felicia Tomasko, RN ftomasko@blissnetwork.com
COMPASSION PRACTICE

Studies show: decreases in anxiety, depression, PTSD symptoms, increases in worthiness


Recommended Reading:


Links to other self-compassion websites:

The Center for Mindful Self-Compassion: www.CenterforMSC.org

Mindful Self-Compassion for Teens: www.mindfulselfcompassionforteens.com

General Sites on Mindfulness and Compassion:

- Mindful website: www.mindful.org
- The Mindfulness Institute: www.mindfulnessinstitute.ca
- The Compassion Institute: www.compassioninstitute.com
- Mindfulness Research Guide: www.goamra.org
- Mindfulness Exercises www.mindfulnessexercises.com
- Compassionate Living: www.compassionateliving.info
Clinical Applications:

- Compassion Focused Therapy: www.compassionfocusedtherapy.com
- Internal Family Systems Therapy: www.selfleadership.org
- Befriending Ourselves Resource Page: www.befriendingourselves.com
- Compassion Power (for anger management): www.compassionpower.com
- Acceptance and commitment therapy: www.contextualpsychology.org/act
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy: http://blogs.uw.edu/brtc/
- Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy: www.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk/Research/cognitionemotion/researchtopics/mindfulness.shtml

Education and Parenting:

- Mindfulness in Schools Project: http://mindfulnessinschools.org
- The Dalai Lama Center for Peace and Education: www.dalailamacenter.org

Practices:

*GRATITUDE*

*TONGLEN*

*LOVING KINDNESS/COMPASSION PRACTICE*

*someone you love, an acquaintance, yourself, someone you has done harm, a group of people, all beings

“May you be free from suffering, may you be safe from harm, may you know you are worthy, may you know you are loved, may you have great peace and joy”…”May I…”, May we all…”
Breakout Session: Guided Imagery: The Gift of the Soul
M. Weigensberg

What is Guided Imagery?
1. The generation of mental images leading to a specific health or behavioral outcome

Over the past 40 years, the effectiveness of guided imagery has been increasingly established by research findings that demonstrate its positive impact on health, creativity and performance. We now know that in many instances even 10 minutes of imagery can reduce blood pressure, lower cholesterol and glucose levels in the blood, and heighten short-term immune cell activity. It can reduce blood loss during surgery and morphine use after it. It lessens headaches and pain. It can increase skill at skiing, skating, tennis, writing, acting and singing; it accelerates weight loss and reduces anxiety; and it has been shown, again and again, to reduce the aversive effects of chemotherapy and radiation therapy, especially nausea, depression, soreness and fatigue.

Because of the brain structures involved when guided imagery techniques are deployed, it will often heighten emotion, laughter, sensitivity to music, openness to spirituality, intuition, abstract thinking and empathy. And because it mobilizes unconscious and pre-conscious processes to assist with conscious goals, it can bring to bear much more of a person's strength and motivation to accomplish a desired end.

Selected Bibliography:
6. MH Lee, DH Kim, HS Yu ; The Effect of Guided Imagery on Stress and Fatigue in Patients with Thyroid Cancer Undergoing Radioactive Iodine Therapy; Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Volume 2013 (2013), Article ID 130324.


Energy Work Handout

- Practitioners of energy work use their hands to provide healing exchanges within subtle human energy fields. Reiki, Therapeutic Touch, Chakra Balancing, and Polarity Therapy are various forms of energy work.

- The Body’s Energy Field
  - Western Medicine - “Glycolysis” and the creation of ATP

- REIKI
  - REI- “Higher Power” and KI- “Life force Energy”
  - A Japanese born technique to promote stress reduction and enhanced relaxation. Offered through “laying of hands” based on the transfer of life force energy.
  - According to the American Hospital Association, in 2007, 15% or over 800 American hospitals offered Reiki as part of services.

- Healing Touch
  - Developed by an RN in 1989, as a way to assist the body’s natural healing process by redirecting and rebalancing its energy centers.
  - Uses gentle, heart-centered touch to assist in balancing physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual energies.

- Chakras
  - Sanskrit word meaning “spinning wheel of energy”
  - 7 Energy Centers interface with the body and influence a persons’ well-being. Each Chakra has a specific color, vibration, and task


Herbal Medicine: The Healing Power of Plants and Ancient Traditions

The following aphorism is a core part of the teaching of Ayurveda: Let food be your medicine and medicine your food. This speaks to the connection between food and medicine and the use of substances that fall under the category of foods. While there is an important continuum between herbs that are more food-like (and can be eaten in meals or used in larger quantities) and herbs that are stronger and only be used in smaller quantities. The intersection between food and medicine is intertwined in Ayurveda. Everything we take in is significant and that our daily diet and the medicines we take have synergistic effects.

Ayurveda is not the only system to place such a strong emphasis on not only what we eat for our health and well-being but for the use of medicinal herbs and plants for their wide-ranging effects. Throughout recorded history, people have used plants for their medicinal properties and in every culture world-wide, ancient and traditional systems of healing recognize the beneficial effects of local plants.

History of Medicinal Plant Use

Some ancient examples are documented. One is 5,000-year-old Sumerian clay tablets from Nagpur listings 12 recipes for drugs that reference 250 plants such as mandrake, poppy, and henbane. In China, the text Pen T’Sao from 2500 BCE lists 365 drugs from medicinal herbs such as ginseng, jimson weed, yellow gentian, and cinnamon. In India, the Ayurvedic texts reference numerous herbs; predating those texts, the Vedas mention uses of culinary herbs familiar to us such as pepper, clove, and nutmeg. The Bible, The Ebers Papyrus, the Talmud, The Iliad and Odysseys, Dioscorides’ De Materia Medica, and numerous other documented works describe used of medicinal plants.

To this day, many modern pharmaceuticals are derived from plants while others are synthetic but based on some level on plants or other natural substances. While the investigation of new drugs from plants has declined in part, the search for new pharmacologically-active agents from plants is still an active area of research.

Synergistic Effects of Phytochemicals

One of the distinguishing facts about medicinal plants is that they contain a variety of phytochemicals. Sometimes when individual constituents are isolated, they have a profound pharmacological or therapeutic effect. Other times, the whole plant is what has the effect. For this reason, traditional uses of medical herbs usually include the whole herb.

Synergestic Preparations of Herbs

Sometimes this means the herb is eaten in powder form or combined with other substances (such as honey), as is the case in traditional Ayurveda. For example, in Chinese medicine, herbs are often boiled for an extended time to extract the medicinal components. Tinctures are used in traditions around the world to potentiate the medicinal properties, to preserve medical substances, and to extract active constituents. Herbs may also be cooked with oils, butter, or ghee, made into pastes or poultices to use externally, or drunk as tea.
Many traditions also understand of the power of combining herbs. This can be for the purpose of addressing a variety of symptoms, to enhance the medicinal properties of the each of the plants, or to reduce potential imbalances from one herb being given alone.

**Herbal Actions and Categories of Herbs**

Herbal Medicines are generally placed into different categories based on their effect or action. This is by no means a comprehensive list of categories or herbs.

**Astringents**

These drying herbs tone mucus membranes and reduce excess. Examples include: witch hazel, willow, raspberry leaf, rose hip, hibiscus flower, and green and black tea.

**Aromatics**

The volatile essential oils in these herbs have a variety of effects from being disinfectant to stimulating digestion and improving respiration: peppermint, cardamom, fennel, rosemary.

**Alteratives**

These are the immune system supporters: echinacea, Oregon grape, dandelion, red clover.

**Adaptogens**

Generally regarded as nutritive and tonifying that strengthen the endocrine system: tulsi (holy basil), ashwagandha, maca, schisandra berries, rhodolia

**Bitters**

Appetite stimulants, these also have alkaloids that have liver tonifying qualities: dandelion, skullcap, mugwort, turmeric.

**Calming/Nervine**

These tension relievers support the nervous system: camomile, valerian, lemon balm, oat.

**Carminitives**

These aromatics reduce bloating and release gas: peppermint, fennel, caraway, coriander.

**Demulcents**

Soothing to the mucus membranes: chia seed, mullein, slippery elm, flax, fenugreek.

**Diaphoretics**

Increase sweating: ginger, cayenne, yarrow, garlic, elder.

**Diuretics**

Increase elimination through the kidneys through urination: uva ursi, green tea, juniper, licorice.

**Emollients**

Calming to the skin: comfrey, marshmallow root, plantain, aloe vera, violet.

**Expectorants**

Encourage coughing by breaking up mucus: mullein, lobelia, horehound, elecampane.

**Tonics**

Overall nutritive: oat straw, nettle leaf, dandelion, skullcap

**Suggested Bibliography**


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 (asanas), stretching, breathing (pranayama) techniques, and meditation or relaxation. These create harmony between your mind, body and spirit and help clear and calm your mind.

Yoga Therapy is the practice of utilizing yogic techniques as mentioned above, but will tailor the practice in ways that’s unique to the individual or group of individuals and their health or medical needs.

Key considerations:

1. Yoga is generally considered to be safe in healthy people when practiced appropriately. However, people with high blood pressure, glaucoma, or sciatica, and women who are pregnant should modify or avoid some yoga poses.
2. Practice safely and mindfully. Everyone’s body is different, and yoga postures should be modified based on individual abilities.
3. Talk to your health care providers about any health practices you use, including yoga. Discuss with your MD or physical therapist about any medical issues you have to determine if yoga is an appropriate form of exercise. Consider seeking a yoga therapist should you be experiencing medical conditions and have special needs or limitations that may not be addressed in general group yoga classes. Give them a full picture of what you do to manage your health. This will help ensure coordinated and safe care.


Current research suggests that a carefully adapted set of yoga poses may reduce low-back pain and improve function. Other studies also suggest that practicing yoga might improve quality of life; reduce stress; lower heart rate and blood pressure; help relieve anxiety, depression, and insomnia; and improve overall physical fitness, strength, and flexibility. But some research suggests yoga may not improve asthma, and studies looking at yoga and arthritis have had mixed results.

Yoga and Cancer

Research into yoga in cancer care (http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)

There is no scientific evidence to prove that yoga can cure or prevent any type of cancer. But there are some studies to suggest that it might help people with cancer to sleep better and cope with anxiety.

In March 2010 a review of studies into yoga for patients with cancer was published. It included 10 trials. It found that yoga could help to reduce anxiety, depression, fatigue and stress and it improved
the quality of sleep, mood and spiritual well-being for some people. The authors of the study stated that overall yoga may be associated with some positive effects on psychological well-being for people with cancer. But the review results have to be used with caution because there were some weaknesses and differences in the research studies included. Read the review of yoga for people with cancer on the Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects (DARE) website.

In 2012 researchers performed a review of studies that looked at the physical and psychosocial benefits of yoga for people with cancer. 13 trials were included. In patients with breast cancer the reviewers said that they found that yoga helped to reduce distress, anxiety, depression and tiredness (fatigue). It also helped to improve quality of life, emotional wellbeing and social wellbeing.

A small individual study in the USA in 2012 found that yoga reduced tiredness (fatigue) in women with breast cancer. Some studies seem to show that yoga may be able to reduce hot flushes in women with breast cancer. 1 small trial showed that people with lymphoma had fewer sleep disturbances, fell asleep more quickly, and slept for longer after a 7 week yoga program. But we larger studies are needed to confirm these findings.

References

Stress / Anxiety - Prevalence

Anxiety Among American Children Ages 13-18 - Lifetime Prevalence: 25.1% of 13 to 18 year olds  
Anxiety Among American Adults - 12-month Prevalence: 18.1% of U.S. adult population (36.9% of those with disorder are receiving treatment)  
Average Age-of-Onset: 11 years old

Resources:  

Yoga as a Complementary Treatment

Yoga has been described as a promising interventional approach in treating mental disorders (1–3). One of its advantages lies in the fact that it is an easily accessible therapeutic approach that has become widely accepted (e1). Furthermore, numerous additional benefits are being discussed for yoga in the treatment of mental disorders. In addition to the relatively low costs associated with yoga as a group activity, yoga is associated with hardly any risks or side effects compared with pharmacological treatment (4). Yoga exercises can be easily integrated into everyday life (5) and therefore possibly contribute to preventing relapses (6). The effects of yoga on the endocrine system, the nervous system, and physical health are well documented. Lower cortisol concentrations and raised concentrations of serotonin and melatonin after regular yoga have been shown empirically, as has a reduction in pro-inflammatory cytokines (7). Increased satisfaction, self-confidence, and improved self-control after yoga are associated with a lower degree of perceived stress and a higher degree of wellbeing (7).

Some of the fundamental ideas and elements underlying yoga are now also applied in the concept of mind-body medicine in treating physical illness (e6) or in the context of psychotherapy. Approaches such as mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) or acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) have been developed accordingly (e7).

Several systematic reviews and meta-analyses analyzed the efficacy of yoga in treating mental disorders (1, 8–12), the results are summarized in eTable 1. The meta-analyses reported promising findings and mostly concluded that yoga is effective in treating different mental disorders in regard to diverse disorder-specific outcome measures. Only a meta-analysis of data from schizophrenia patients (10) found no significant effects on symptom-related endpoints, only on quality of life.

Additional Resources:

Effect of Hatha Yoga on Anxiety: A Meta-Analysis  

Meta Analysis: Effectiveness of Yoga Therapy as a Complementary Treatment for Major Psychiatric Disorders: A Meta-Analysis  
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3219516/
Yoga to Ease Anxiety and Stress

Activating the Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS - “Rest and Digest”)

**MOVE** - Yoga Postures *(sample restorative postures below)*

- **BREATHE** - Diaphragmatic breathing and long exhalations stimulates vagal nerve to stimulate PNS.
- **MEDITATE** - Types to consider: mindfulness meditation, guided imagery, yoga nidra (“yogic sleep”), walking meditations, sound/chanting meditations.

*Please note that while these gentle postures are generally safe for most practitioners, those with injuries and pain should seek proper guidance by a yoga therapist or physician.*
A "\textit{mantra}" (/\textipa{ˈmæntra}, ˈmæn-, ˈmæn-/ (Sanskrit: \textit{mantra});\textsuperscript{[2]}) is a sacred utterance, a \textit{numinous} sound, a syllable, word or phonemes, or group of words in Sanskrit believed by practitioners to have psychological and spiritual powers.\textsuperscript{[3]} Mantra \textit{meditation} helps to induce an \textit{altered state of consciousness}.\textsuperscript{[4]} It literally \textit{means a sound tool}.

The earliest mantras were composed in Vedic Sanskrit by Hindus in India, and are at least 3000 years old.\textsuperscript{[5]} Mantras now exist in various schools of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism.\textsuperscript{[6]} In Japanese Shingon tradition, the word \textit{Shingon} means mantra.\textsuperscript{[7]} Similar hymns, chants, compositions, and concepts are found in Zoroastrianism,\textsuperscript{[9]} Taoism, Christianity, Hebrew, and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{[10]}

The use, structure, function, importance, and types of mantras vary according to the school and philosophy of Hinduism and Buddhism. Mantras serve a central role in \textit{tantra}.\textsuperscript{[7][11]}

At its simplest, the word \textit{(Aum, Om)} serves as a mantra. In more sophisticated forms, mantras are melodic phrases with spiritual interpretations such as a human longing for truth, reality, light, immortality, peace, love, knowledge, and action.\textsuperscript{[3][12]} Some mantras have no literal meaning, yet are musically uplifting and spiritually meaningful.\textsuperscript{[7]}

The Sanskrit word \textit{mantra-} (m.; also n. \textit{mantram}) consists of the root \textit{man-} "to think" (also in \textit{manas} "mind") and the suffix \textit{-tra}, designating tools or \textit{r} instruments, hence a literal translation would be "instrument of thought".\textsuperscript{[3][14]}

Very often mantra practice is combined with breathing meditation so that one recites a mantra simultaneously with in-breath and out-breath to help develop tranquility and concentration. Mantra meditation is especially popular among the lay people. Like other basic concentration exercises, it can be used simply to calm the mind, or it can be the basis for an insight practice where the mantra becomes the focus of observation of how life unfolds, or an aid in surrendering and letting go.

\textit{Om tare tuttare ture svaha}, liberation from discontent

\textit{Om mani padme hum}, sending compassion to the world


Tibetan, prototypical Egyptian and ancient Hebrew evolved as complex systems of onomatopoeia, where the sounds evoke movements of energy. This evocation is qualitative and subjective and is linked with interoception (inner body sensations) and emotional sense of self, both \textit{predominantly represented in the right hemisphere} of the brain. Conversely, the narrative strand of sounds in which we give them meaning is done \textit{predominantly through the left hemisphere}. What is fascinating about mantras is that from a physics standpoint, the sounds themselves, before they are assigned meaning, will resonate in
different parts of the body and mind, creating actual interactions or events. Mantras are information, in
the literal sense of in-forming: the creation of form, or interactions. The Sanskrit language is an
information sequencing system that mimics the process of nature's repeating patterns. As the Sanksrit
scholar Dr. Douglas Brooks has said, "Sanskrit tells us what Nature shows us.

Mantras can be done vocally, sub-vocally (whispering) or silently in the mind. It is recommended to start
aloud, and then proceed with the more silent variations. Silent repetition does have an effect; when the
frequency of any sound is high enough, it extends beyond the human range of hearing and eventually
achieves stillness, which is beyond sound itself. It has been demonstrated in a double-blind study that
ultrasound probes applied to the skull can improve subjective mood, and it has been evidenced that
even imagining performing musical exercises rewrites and strengthens nerve connections. Both of these
studies speak to the capacity of mental recitation of mantra to activate and affect the physical nervous
system. Moreover, group chanting or recitation of mantra can synchronize the brainwaves between the
participants, achieving yet another level of collective effect, as has been shown between musicians,
which can help to understand the functional basis for group chanting in many of the world's wisdom
traditions. ([https://health.usnews.com/health-news/blogs/eat-run/2013/10/02/your-brain-on-om-the-
science-of-mantra](https://health.usnews.com/health-news/blogs/eat-run/2013/10/02/your-brain-on-om-the-
science-of-mantra))

OM – AH OOOO MMMMMM, UNIVERSAL SOUND
SHANTI – MEANS PEACE
LOVE
IN/OUT – WITH THE BREATH
MA – MMMMMMMM AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH
Breakout Session: Narrative Medicine: Soul connection through stories
Kate Crowley, OTD, OTR/L

Stories have always been a part of the human experience, found in music, dance, art, literature, and cultural traditions. Stories are considered an essential component of social action, as narratives are created within a culture, reflecting our experience of illness, healing, and suffering. The Narrative Medicine movement aims to train health care providers to become competent in the practice of listening, understanding, and analyzing illness and disabilities narratives. Some of these narratives challenge accepted standard medical procedures and behaviors while confronting attitudes that may be interpreted as too narrow. Through the use of media and patient stories, we will examine narrative practice and explore our own competencies as we co-create narratives from the material presented in this session.

Recommended Readings and Selected Bibliography:


   journalofhumanitiesinresearch.org, 04 Jan 2015.


   DOI:10.1080/110381200443571


   University of CA Press: Berkeley, CA.


   35-153.

Music as Medicine: Mindfulness with Ancient Tibetan Singing Bowls

Music and sound as healing tools have long been known to support wellness and wellbeing. Tibetan singing bowls, also known as Himalayan singing bowls, are musical instruments that have been used in healing and spiritual rituals for thousands of years. When multiple bowls are played together, the vibrations blend to produce rich overtones and harmonics that help to calm the nervous system, relieve anxiety and lessen body tension. In present day, more and more alternative medicine practitioners (including music therapists, massage therapists, and yoga therapists) are using Tibetan singing bowls to help support their clients’ health.

Studies supporting music and sound healing are plentiful. Sound and music therapies have been shown to reduce chronic pain, balance brain function and even help destroy certain cancer cells. Other studies have shown that specific sound frequencies can increase bone density. According to a paper in the Journal of Advanced Nursing, listening to music can reduce chronic pain by up to 21 per cent. It also can help people feel more in control of their pain and less disabled by their condition.
Studies specifically involving the health effects of Tibetan singing bowls on wellbeing are still limited; however, the results are promising! One such study examined the effects of Tibetan singing bowl meditation on mood, anxiety, pain, and spiritual well-being. As compared with pre-meditation, it was found that participants following the sound meditation, reported significantly less tension, anger, fatigue, depressed mood, and had an increase in spiritual well-being. Additionally, participants who were previously naïve to this type of sound meditation experienced a significantly greater reduction in tension compared with participants more experienced in this type of meditation. This observational study found significant beneficial effects of Tibetan singing bowl meditations on a number of markers related to well-being!

References:

Tamara L. Goldsby, PhD, Michael E. Goldsby, PhD, Mary McWalters, BA, Paul J. Mills, PhD. “Effects of Singing Bowl Sound Meditation on Mood, Tension, and Well-being: An Observational Study” http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2156587216668109


Fabian Maman
https://tama-do.com/roothtmls/cell-research.html

The Science of Sound Healing
http://www.soundhealingcenter.com/science.html


Lili Naghdi, MD CCFP, Heidi Ahonen, PhD MTA, Pasqualino Macario, DC, Lee Bartel PhD “The effect of low-frequency sound stimulation on patients with fibromyalgia: A clinical study” https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4325896/
Drumming is a long-established conduit for change. Found in most cultures throughout the world, drumming has been used in community gatherings for healing, music making, and ceremony. Drumming has been scientifically proven to: reduce stress, increase serotonin production, elevate mood, strengthen the immune system, and increase the cells that destroy cancer and virally infected cells. Such positive physiological changes reduce psychological resistance and prepare participants to do the important work of personal excavation, and speed up the process of reaching enlightenment – a space free of judgment and full of profound insights. Rhythm-based events are an opportunity for everyone – no matter their level of music training – to create community, enjoy positive health benefits, and contribute their voice to an in-the-moment music making experience in which every voice is equally valued. RhythmQuest provides a sonic platform upon which people can safely explore and transform their relationship to self in a safe and supported environment.

Youth References

Corrections
Drug Misuse


Group Drumming


Compiled by:
Giavanni Washington, PhD, MPH
giavanni@rhythmquest.us
310.902.8506