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Opinion

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Yoga Therapy and the Affects on the Being

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Opinion

Trauma is both expressed internally in the spirit and in the mind, as well as externally in the physical body. Trauma can be integrated into ones being and body through yoga therapy or physical therapy so that the individual can live a fuller life, instead of being trapped in their habitual thinking patterns. Yoga forces us to be present, to slow down, to breath, to get out of our conditioned mental cycle. Many of diseases can come from stress and not being able to regulate one's nervous system under distress and or negative thought patterns. It is through the physical body that we can learn to be present and not become so attached to anything and break our unhealthy mental habits.

My name is Jill, I'm an authorized level 2 ashtanga yoga teacher. I've been practicing yoga daily for over 8 years. As someone that has ADHD, PTSD, anxiety and depression, maintaining a daily yoga practice has transformed my life. I projected my traumas on all of my relationships, as i didn't know better. It was through yoga that i really got to know my pain, had to face it, integrate it into my life so i would stop these negative mental health patterns. I had to retrain my entire being, from eating habits, to sleeping habits. I adjusted to an early morning wake up routine to maintain my yoga practice. I found my spiritual path, and i am by no means enlightened. This is all from my personal experience and what I've learned over the course of 8 years. This is my manuscript on the basics of why yoga therapy is beneficial to mental health. We tend to hold so much in the body; our fears, our emotions; our pains; both positive and negative thoughts, almost everything we do is habitual based on who we are and what we've been through and held in the body. Yoga therapy is a fantastic tool to help integrate new ways to work through what one has been through and create new healthy habits

to address both physical and mental health issues. Yoga, the term by itself has become very complex; although the meaning itself is simple- to unite one's body and soul. Yoga has become a more of a physical exercise in the west, which works for some; yoga therapy itself is a different practice. It's a holistic approach to addressing physical and mental ailments through physical asana practice. Instead of using talk therapy, we use yoga postures to understand ourselves and thought patterns better. Therapeutic yoga is defined as the application of yoga postures and practices and teachings to prevent or reduce or alleviate structural, psychological, emotional pain, suffering or limitations. Yoga is one of the oldest holistic health practices that works towards improving one's overall well-being; wherever that being is at mentally and physically. It is through the breath that the physical postures reach new parts in our physical body, expanding our mind, helping overcome whatever we might be going through by facing the thoughts we have through different physical challenges. Sitting with the breath and the thoughts is powerful tool, a lot more powerful than one thinks. It gives you such a space to potentially change your thoughts and not attach, to simply watch your own thoughts. On top of mentally processing trauma, it is also a fantastic physical stretch and strengthener, to aid in physical therapy. By approaching adjusting our mind through yoga postures, we can discover parts of our thoughts and mind and physical being we didn't know existed, and potentially move and change that. It's a process and a way to process pain, and life in general. Think about how thinking you couldn't do a posture and then working towards that posture and finally achieving it can affect one's spirit. Think about how a sustained yoga practice could potentially change ones entire being. It can build a feeling of accomplishment. You have a chance to show yourself what you're



made of; how strong you can be if you devote yourself to it. Maybe eventually step away from the good and bad's of life and simply accept life for what it is. We can become more resilient over time taking the time to invest in ourself. Most people aren't taught how to actually breathe properly, either. By learning to breathe in and out of your nose, your Breath can help regulate the nervous system. Many people mouth breathe, which can lead to cardiovascular and lung issues. Teaching people to breath with diaphragmatic breath can help reduce stress and anxiety/ depression, as well as help with physical illness. The nasal cavity is designed to keep bacteria out of the body. Whereas the mouth doesn't have the filtering system we need to take a nice clear deep slow breath. Adjusting our breath has just about a profound affect on every system in the body. Learning to Regulate the breath helps regulate you. Through the course of our life we go through so much, so differently, on all different levels. We trap and project ourselves in our narrative, our ego. We victimize ourselves, and we tend to always be the hero in our own story. We see truth through our own lens. We make up our own stories of what we are and aren't capable of. We process everything positive and negative plane. In my personal experience, yoga therapy has been a significant tool in helping integrate the thoughts into the body, as well as experiences, and to get one present. To help accept one's thoughts and experiences into what they are, vs considering them bad or good. Recognizing that things simply are. Yoga can then become a metaphor for your life. You can relate to your life more through your yoga practice. Evidence has suggested

that stress itself contributes to the etiology of heart disease, cancer, strokes and other diseases and conditions. Due to the fact that stress is implicated in many diseases, it is a priority to include stress management and reduction of negative emotional states to reduce the burden of disease. In my personal experience, someone that has both PTSD and anxiety and depression, having a sustained yoga practice has changed my life. Although i will never consider myself a perfect human, i am committed to looking at myself daily through yoga. Many tears have been released on my yoga mat, lots of emotions have been released. I've gotten to know the real me, vs this person filled with trauma I've identified with my whole life. I think the biggest problem with the mental health system, is the lack of encouragement to seek a form physical therapy for mental health. There's a missing link; A person must get into their own body to feel their true thoughts, to find truth in their life they have created, especially if the mind is unhealthy. It's hard to break that life-long way of thinking, especially if an extreme trauma has disrupted one's health. By adjusting a person's physical body along with the breath, will change the mind.

Acknowledgment

None.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.