

Mindfulness-Based Yoga Therapy

Its Role in the Integrated Treatment of Eating Disorders

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Learning Objectives

- Describe the elements of Mindfulness-Based Yoga Therapy and how it can be integrated into the treatment of eating disorders.
- Discuss the benefits of mindfulness-based yoga for an individual who struggles with an eating disorder.
- Describe how mindfulness-based yoga can be integrated into the treatment of eating disorders

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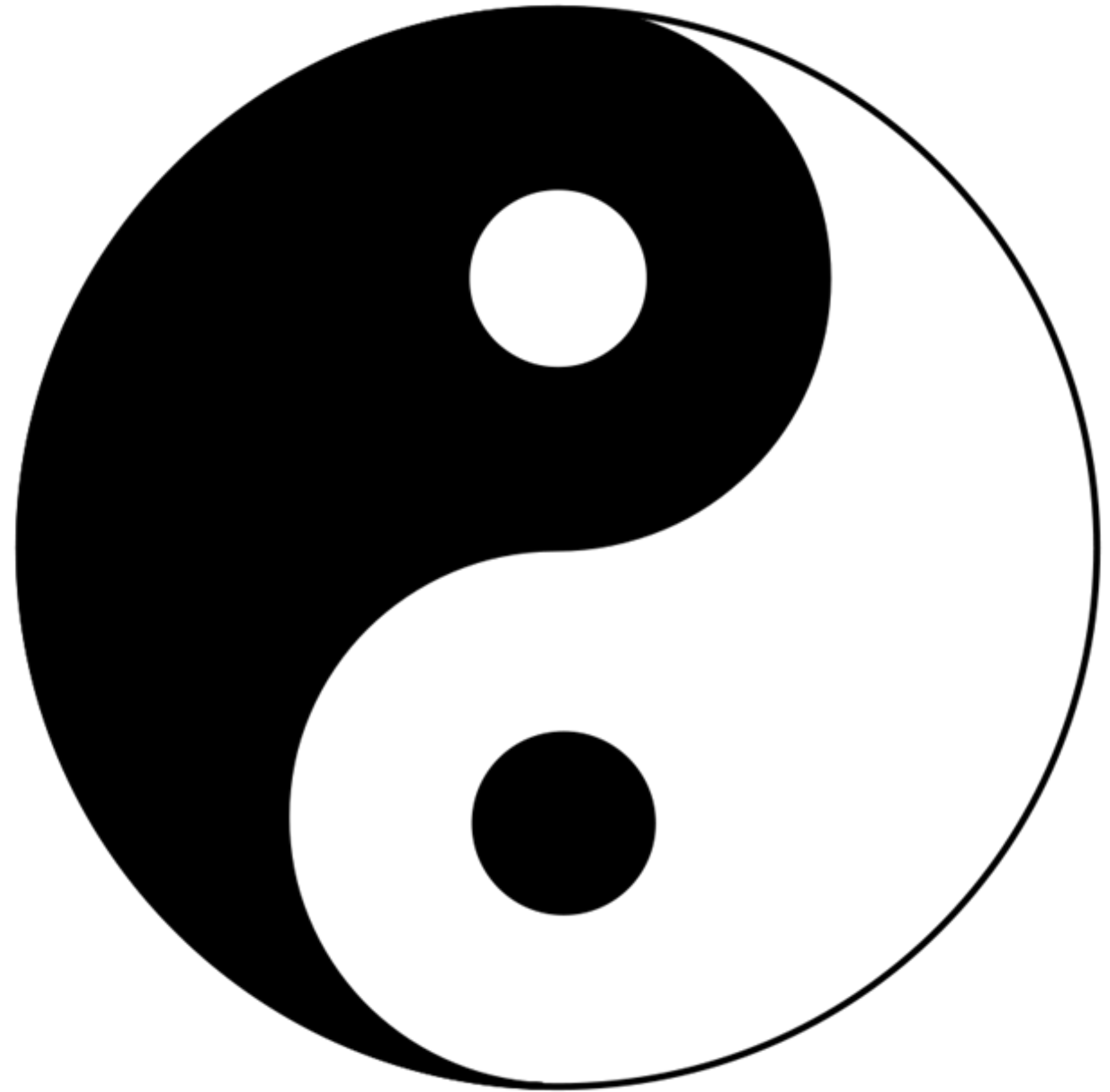
Beverly Price is a certified eating disorder specialist, International Association of Eating Disorder Professionals Foundation (iaedp) Approved Supervisor and International Association of Yoga Therapists (IAYT) Certified Yoga Therapist recognized for her mindfulness Yoga-based eating disorder recovery programs, along with Yoga training programs in eating disorders for professionals.

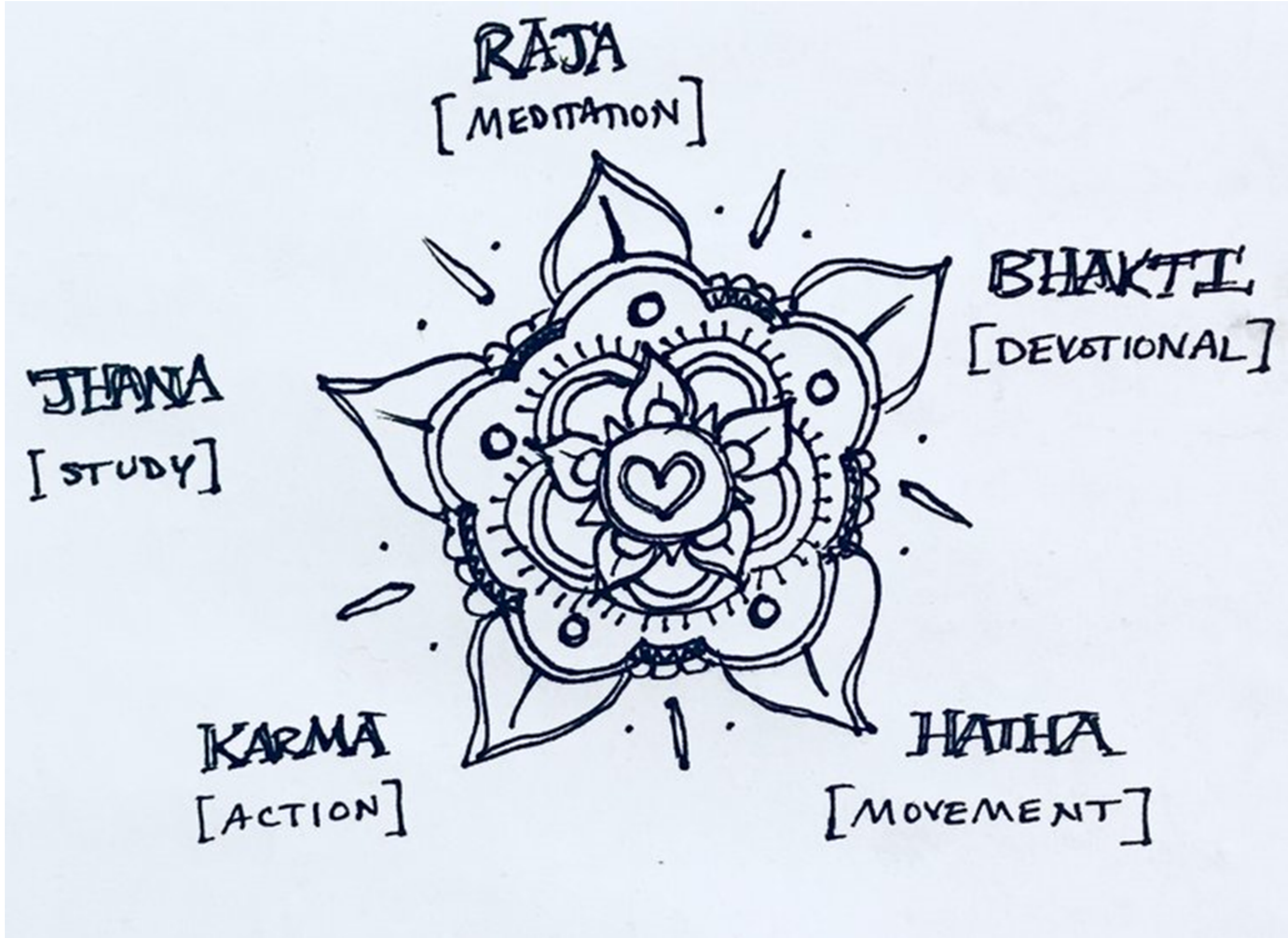
Beverly has created, cultivated and sold various healthcare businesses. In her career, she has also consulted with healthcare entities who wish to maximize their bottom line.

My Journey...



What Is Yoga?





Patanjali's Yoga Sutras

- The first book to systematize the practice of Yoga
- The Yoga Sutras are ethical blueprints for living for a moral life and incorporating the science of Yoga into one's life
- The heart of Patanjali's teachings is the eightfold path of Yoga which is a foundation in Yoga and eating disorder recovery.



Premise of Yoga

*Conversation is a barrier to intimacy...
You can talk your way out of feeling...*

Goals of Yoga Therapy

Eliminate, reduce, or manage symptoms

Improve function

Prevent the occurrence or reoccurrence of underlying causes of illness

Improved health and wellbeing

Help clients change their relationship to and identification with their condition

Yoga Therapy Assessment and Treatment Plan

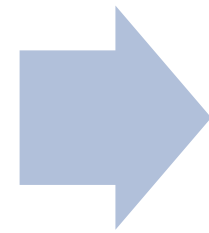
Assessment is like that of any other treatment team member's assessment

Collection of information to develop a client-centered, integrated treatment plan

Includes physical, emotional and spiritual assessment

The Chakras

Energy centers in the body



The chakras are aligned in an ascending column from the base of the spine to the top of the head

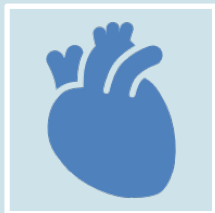


Each chakra is associated with multiple physiological, emotional and spiritual functions

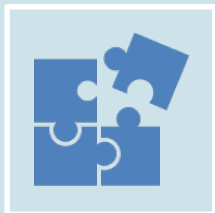
The Chakras



The body's chakras parallel two chains of nerve bundles located on each side of the spinal cord.



Activating these chakras, through yoga, releases emotional pain imprisoned in the body as physical pain around the spinal cord.



An interesting parallel may be created with the chakras to incorporate discussion on a physical, emotional and spiritual level as it relates to eating disorder behaviors.

Yoga Philosophy Integrated

- Chakra 1: Physical
 - Chakra 2: Connections
 - Chakra 3: Purpose
 - Chakra 4: Emotional
 - Chakra 5: Expression
 - Chakra 6: Future/hope
 - Chakra 7: Unity
- Physical
 - Social
 - Occupational
 - Emotional
 - Environmental
 - Intellectual
 - Spiritual

Eating Disorders Therapeutic Modalities

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: Distortions, self-image
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy: Emotional regulation skills, behavior chain analysis, distress tolerance
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: Values/Acceptance of Thoughts
- Mindfulness: Observing, Present
- Yoga Therapy: Increases awareness of body-mind emotions, mindfulness, and spirituality

Anorexia Nervosa

Bulimia Nervosa Medically Compromised

Gentle hatha

Yin Yoga

May bring up extreme agitation for the client as their work is to be still

Emotions tend to be elicited in these postures, where the client is unable to avoid feeling these emotions

Binge Eating Disorder Medical Needs

Vigorous or slower paced preferences

Identifying risk factors, based on a thorough assessment – hypertension, type II diabetes, metabolic syndrome

If not monitored and managed, this can be a concern with intense yoga and certain postures (i.e. standing forward folds in uncontrolled hypertension)

For the yoga therapist who practices in a private setting, client self-monitoring of blood pressure and/or blood glucose is crucial with results available in order to guide the respective day's yoga postures

Binge Eating Disorder Surgical Needs

- Gastric implications – including gastric balloons
 - Slow Hatha with modifications
 - Yin Yoga
 - Chair Yoga

Eating Disorders Medically Stable

- Flow on their own:
 - Add or delete poses of their choice
 - Clients move at their own pace, tap into their breath and feel the movement of their bodies on a much deeper level
 - Results in the feeling of empowerment and breaking free from the rigidity that often mirrors the history of the “diet” mentality

Trauma Informed Yoga

Trauma informed Yoga is a specialty on its own where adjustments, placement of legs in postures and open vs closed eyes, along with the integration of the multidisciplinary treatment team are extremely important considerations.

Processing of emotions of an individual with a trauma history by a mental health professional, following a yoga therapy session, is necessary.

Lighting

- Dim
- Close all curtains

Temperature

- Moderate (75-80 degrees)
- No Mirrors!

Yoga Adjustments

Physical

Non-physical

Non-verbal cues/body language

Yoga Therapy in a Group





Yoga Physiology and Benefits



Yoga Physiology

- Decreased activity of sympathetic nervous system
 - Decreased heart rate
 - Decreased blood pressure

Herbert Benson, Harvard, Relaxation Response, Research Patient Data Registry, BHI Relaxation Response Resiliency Program (3RP) from 2006 to 2014

- Decreased cortisol
 - Increased bone formation and calcium absorption
 - Insulin/glucagon

Manikappa, Subhash, Chimkode, Sendil D. Kumaran, V.V., Shivanna, .Kanhere, and Ragunatha. Effect of Yoga on Blood Glucose Levels in Patients with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus. J Clin Diagn Res. 2015 Apr; 9(4): CC01–CC03.

- Parasympathetic -homeostasis of digestive tract

Kavuri, Vijaya, Raghuram, Nagarathna, Malamud, Ariel Malamud, and Selvan. Irritable Bowel Syndrome: Yoga as Remedial Therapy.

Evid Based Complement Alternat Med. 2015; 2015: 398156.

Yoga Physiology

Yoga can increase the levels of Gamma aminobutyric acid (GABA) in the brain by more than 20 percent.



Low GABA activity in the body can result in:

Anxiety

Chronic stress

Depression

Difficulty concentrating and memory problems.



Individuals with Eating Disorders have low levels of GABA.



If Yoga can increase these levels, then those struggling with Eating Disorders can more conscientiously focus on their recovery.



Streeter, CC., Gerbarg, PL., Saper, RB., Ciraulo, DA., Brown, RP. Effects of yoga on the autonomic nervous system, gamma-aminobutyric-acid, and allostasis in epilepsy, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Medical Hypothesis. 2012, 78(5): 571-579.

Yoga Physiology

Mindful Yoga and meditation can affect the cerebral cortex, improving focus and awareness.

The cerebral cortex is the center of the brain that is responsible for impulses, irrational thoughts and behaviors.

Activating the cerebral cortex can diminish the impulsivity along with irrational thoughts and behaviors involved in eating disorders and related addictions.

Malcolm Gladwell. Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking. 2005

Polyvagal Theory

- Porges, Stephen (2011) The Polyvagal Theory: Neurophysiological Foundations of Emotions, Attachment, Communication and Self Regulation.
- **Detects Safety**, allows for spontaneous social engagement with others using eye contact, facial expression, vocalizations and gestures to support co-regulation of autonomic nervous system. The “gazing effect” or face-heart connection takes place when safety is present (no fear) using parasympathetic pathway (**ventral vagal**).
- **Detects Danger**, ignites defensive strategies using the **sympathetic** nervous system to activate fight/flight into mobilization.
- **Detects Life Threat**, ignites defensive strategies that feign death, into complete shutdown and immobilization through the parasympathetic pathway (**dorsal vagal**)

Yoga Benefits

Delaying of impulses

Learning to stay with postures that are difficult and awkward transfers to staying with difficult/awkward emotions and situations in life

Observe vs. react to discomfort by breathing and listening carefully to the mind

The ability to control irrational thoughts and the increased ability to shift attention at will

The ability to use mindfulness and positive self affirmations leading to the reduction of unrealistic pessimism often associated with depression and anxiety disorders

Eastman-Mueller, H., Wilson, T., Jung, AK., Kimura A., and Tarrant, J. iRest yoga nidra in the college campus: changes in stress, depression, worry and mindfulness. Int J Yoga Therap. 2013, (23): 15-24.

Yoga Benefits

Individuals begin to enjoy their body for the first time.

They start to define their body in terms of “what it can do” versus “what it is.”

They learn that they are not mere extensions of their body but possess beautiful internal qualities.

In this way, yoga can improve body image concerns and self-esteem.

Daubenmier, Jennifer J. The relationship of yoga, body awareness and body responsiveness to self-objectification and disordered eating. Psychology of Women Quarterly banner. 2005: May 13.

Yoga Benefits

Weight homeostasis by tuning in to the body's signals of hunger and satiety

Awareness of physical sensations

Eating when hungry/stopping when full

Trusting body messages vs chronic dieting

Yoga Benefits

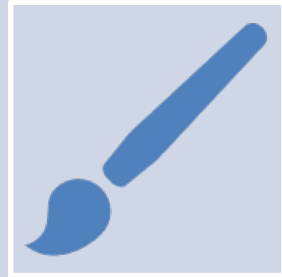
Yoga also emphasizes mindfulness

Learning to experience the taste, texture, and other sensual qualities of food

Thoughtful vs impulsive choices related to eating behaviors and daily life decisions

Mindful awareness also comes into play for patients who are repulsed by food

Yoga Benefits



Staying present - drawing attention back to the breath



Although many poses are uncomfortable, others are also meant to be enjoyable, which can transfer to the client being able to engage into life and “let go” of whatever they are holding on to that is hindering them from untangling the hold of their addiction

Yoga Benefits

Looking inward and focusing on inner qualities versus the body's outward appearance

Letting go of competition with themselves and others

Self-acceptance

Yoga Benefits

The physical
edge

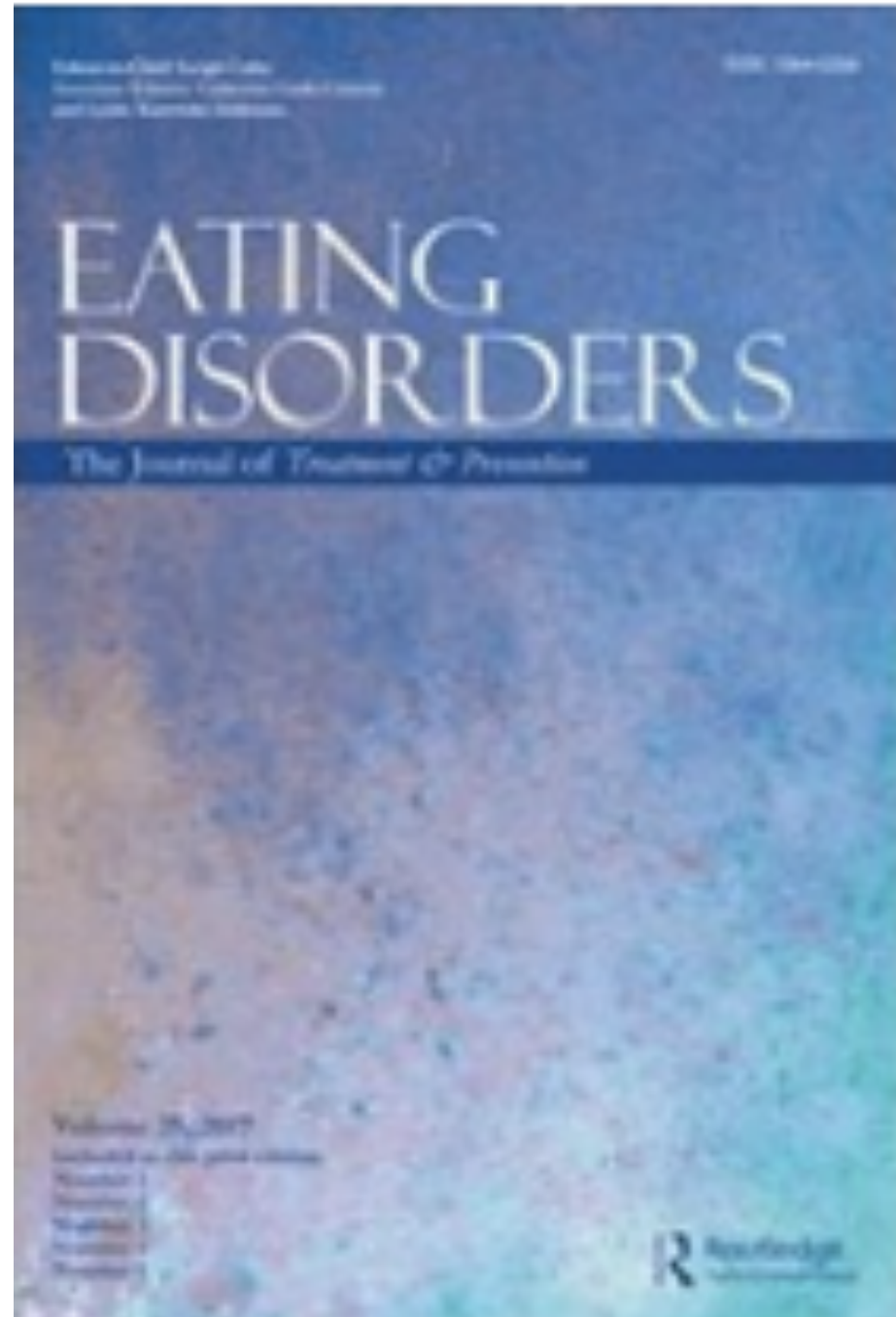
Challenge, yet
taking balanced
risks

Yoga Benefits

Taking Yoga off the
mat

Physical edge
followed by peeling
away layers to tap into
emotional and spiritual
edge

Yoga and Behaviors

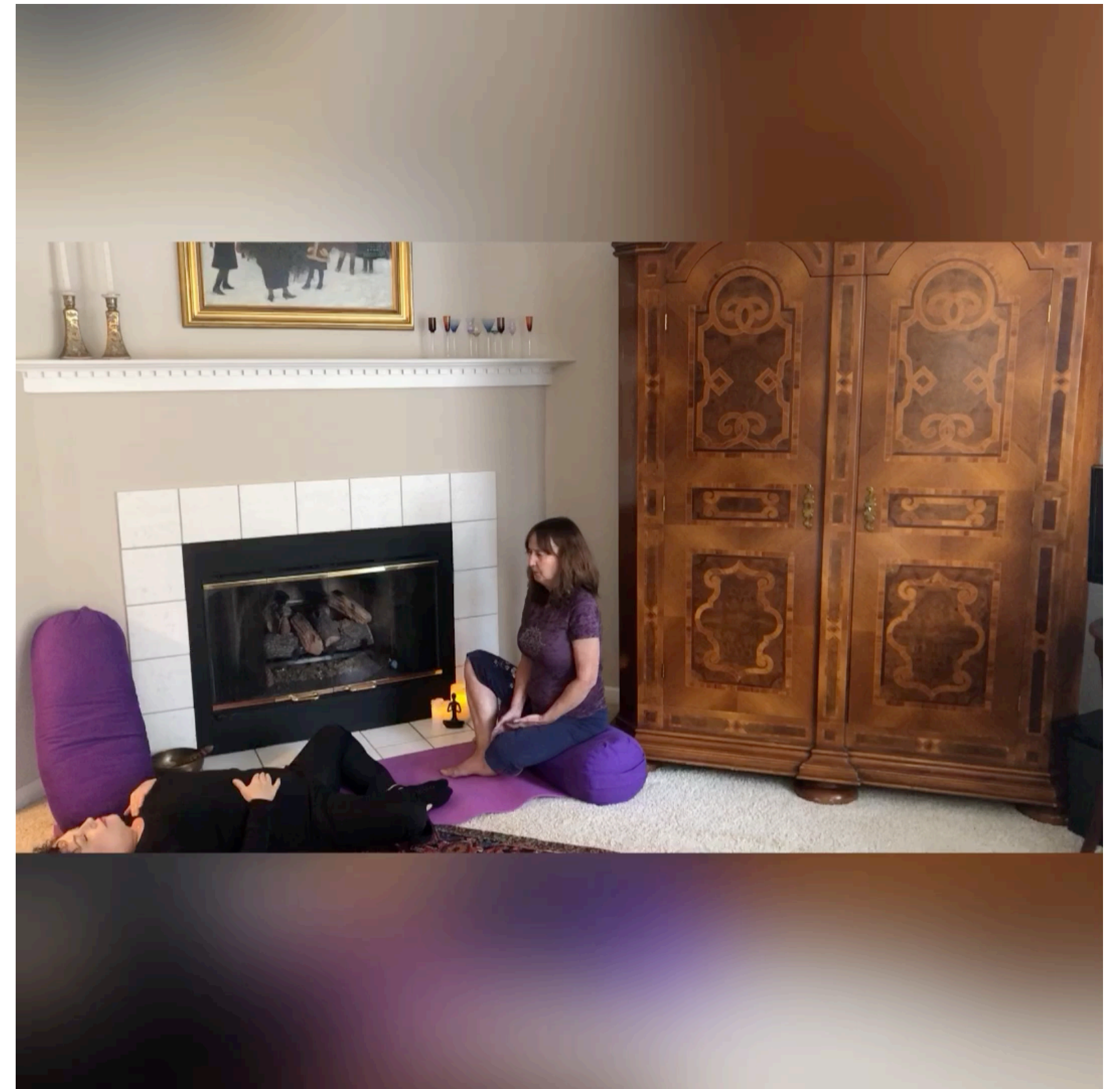


Yoga in the treatment of eating disorders within a residential program: A randomized controlled trial

(2017). Yoga in the treatment of eating disorders within a residential program: A randomized controlled trial. *Eating Disorders*: Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 37-51. doi: 10.1080/10640266.2016.1237810

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Individual Yoga Therapy Session



*Our clients' relationship with
food parallels every other
relationship in their lives, as well
as their relationship with their
Yoga mat.*

Thank You!

Contact Information

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