

Article:

# The Importance of Mindfulness, Self-Compassion, and Yoga in Healing Trauma

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Abstract:

Mindfulness meditation is a conscious and deliberate way of paying attention in a particular way, moment to moment. It is intentional cultivation of nonjudgmental moment-to-moment awareness. There are two parts to mindfulness, one is self-regulating attention in order to identify emotions while increasing endurance to be with the experience, and second is developing curiosity, openness, and acceptance towards experiences in the present moment. When healing trauma one has to become aware of how difficult emotions are experienced, and develop the curiosity of how current and past events and emotions affect one's life schema. Experiencing a traumatic event can cause numerous consequences on one's nervous system, emotions, reactions, physical and emotional well-being, and behaviors, often leading to anxiety, depression, addictions, inability to regulate emotions, poor impulse controls, risky behaviors, unhealthy life choices, and suicide. Often trauma survivors do not have clear diagnosis, which could be due to lack of memory, or awareness that they had experienced traumatic event(s), or that this event or cumulative traumatic events influence many aspects of individual's life. These individuals may also lack the awareness that they need help, or what kind of help they need. When a trauma survivor becomes aware that life has become unmanageable, he or she can choose right actions, become compassionate towards self and others, and become empowered to make different choices, and feel safe to be with his or her experience. Through practice of mindfulness and yoga, trauma survivors can learn how to befriend their body. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how awareness, self compassion and yoga practice can heal numerous trauma symptoms, and create a balanced life, emotionally and socially.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the most important information to impart is that trauma is a very individual experience and it is affecting every culture. Trauma effects will depend on variations of predisposing factors, such as resilience, support, intimate connection between family members, society, and environment. Trauma effects and its presentation will depend on duration of the traumatic event experienced, intensity of trauma, physical, emotional, and psychological nature, or combination of all aspects, culture, historical and political condition of that time, and very much it will be dependent on the age and gender of the person experiencing trauma. The healing will also be dependent on immediacy and availability of support, openness and trust of sharing the experience and the quality and the duration of support.

The stigma of experiencing fear, or associated "weakness", sadness, and the paralysis of the fright, have to come to light and the surface of this world, so that those who were frightened once don't have to experience fear of sharing the terror that they experienced, and once again be perceived as weak or unable to handle what had happened to them. Trauma also has to be released through the body through various forms of Yoga, meditation, awareness, sensory-motor and somatic experiencing. Therapists have

to be open minded and encouraging, and provide a safe and non-judgmental environment for those who experienced trauma, so that trauma survivors are able to share, learn, and heal from what happened. Trauma survivors can restore their health and functioning, feel safe again while aware and vigilant in a healthy way, in order to not get exposed to situations where they could possibly get re-traumatized or their safety could be compromised. At the same time the hope is that those people could have lives worth living with ability of trusting others again. Definitely more research needs to be done on different aspects and continuum of trauma and trauma effects in order to be able to better understand and treat Trauma- and stressor-related disorders.

Finally, controlling breath, and breathing in a more relaxed focused manner, we have the only chance at controlling our autonomic nervous system, which normally works without our conscious input or control. By consciously slowing down our breath we can activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for relaxation and the shift from the sympathetic nervous system response, which is responsible for arousal and stress response. If we can manage our activation of relaxation by slowing down the breath consciously, all we need is the awareness to know when we need to do it, otherwise breathing is an affordable and inexpensive technique that we can work with to start. Activation of parasympathetic nervous system causes the heart rate to slow down, which causes blood pressure to slow down, activating hormones responsible for relaxation, producing feeling of safety and wellbeing. Prolonged practice or various modalities that promote relaxation, feelings of safety, connectedness, and wellbeing, will have long lasting and therapeutic effects on healing trauma in the body and in the mind.