PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE: AN EXERCISE AND MOVEMENT MODALITY EXPERIENCE FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

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- Dr. Pierce-Talsma is a Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT-200).
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Objectives

- Observe and palpate for postural alterations and somatic dysfunction including mechanical and emotional influences
- Participate in a yoga movement session for facilitating mood changes and observe emotional and postural responses
- Experience a Gyrokinesis concepts session for body awareness and core engagement and observe emotional and postural responses
- Identify movement as a way to change posture and somatic organization in order to effect emotions
- Discuss various types of movement practices and resources
Consider the ‘BODYMIND’

The formation of the human body-mind connection is through:

**Heredity**
- Genetics

**Physical activity and exposure**
- Physical actions
- Ergonomics/work
- Reflected by development of bones, muscles and neuromuscular coordination
- Trauma - changes the way we move and activate

**Emotional and psychological activity and exposure**
- Tension
- ? Ungrounding, ? Unresolved emotions ? Holding on too tightly to feelings?
- Your body shapes itself around emotions

**Nutrition**
- Fuel

**Environment**
- Physical, social, psychological structures
- Initially born into, but we can change them
“In reality, every cell in your body is both structurally and functionally related to every other cell in your body. Similarly, all your thoughts, beliefs, fears, and dreams are dynamically connected within the structure and function of your psyche.”

Ken Dychtwald, “Bodymind”

“Anatomy is a complex morphology which manifests a particular life awareness or consciousness of sensation. A person’s shape bears a direct relationship to his dimensions of living. And the forming of a shape is, in fact, a destiny and a life.

Stanley Keleman “Patterns of Distress Emotional Insults and Human Form”
Observe the ‘BODYMIND’

- **Right/Left Split**
  - Right side/Masculine, Left side/Feminine
  - Left and right brain activity
  - Left brain analytic, logical, verbal, math
  - Right brain spatial orientation, artistic, body images

- **Top/Bottom Split**
  - Bottom- stabilizing, moving, balancing, supporting, rooting, groundedness
    - Privacy, introspection, emotional stability
  - Top- seeing, hearing, speaking, thinking, expressing, communicating
    - Socializing, extroversion, interpersonal communication
  - Weight distribution, awareness, gracefulness, vs rigidity or non-integration and injuries
Observe the ‘BODYMIND’

- **Front/Back Split**
  - Front - social self, conscious self
  - Back - unconscious, private

- **Head/Body Split**
  - Head - social aspects, contact, communication, mind, intellect, reason
  - Body - private - less conscious of it

- **Torso/Limbs Split**
  - Torso - “Core”, self serving, self-reflecting, self-understanding, self-protecting
  - Limbs - “doing” extending from our center, moving, contact, manipulating, probes to expand past limits
Observe

- **Feet**
  - Grounded, flat feet, clutching feet
  - Tiptoers, heel digging, lead feet

- **Legs**
  - Weak/underdeveloped, Massive/overmuscled
  - Fat/undeveloped, Thin/tight

- **Pelvis**
  - Tipped upward (posterior pelvic tilt)
  - Tipped downward (anterior pelvic tilt)
  - Pinched buttocks

- **Low Back**
  - Most vulnerable unprotected part of BodyMind

- **Diaphragm**
  - Breathing potential

- **Chest**
  - Chest-contracted
  - Chest-expansive
Observe

- **Shoulders**
  - Bowed/rounded, raised, square
  - Forward/hunched, retracted
- **Arms**
  - Weak/underdeveloped, Massive/overmuscled
  - Thin/tight, Fat/underdeveloped
- **Neck**
  - Forward, lean to one side
  - Long/graceful, stout/bull
- **Throat, Chin, Jaw**
  - Receding jaw, protruding jaw, clenched jaw
- **Face and Head**
  - Eyes: large/round, bulging, deep set, wide/’baby’
  - Nearsighted, farsighted
  - Brow: high brow, low brow, tight-knitted brow
Palpate

- Consider the Startle Continuum
  - Attention
  - Fear/Attack
  - Turning away
  - Helplessness, submission
  - Hopelessness, apathy
  - Collapse

- What is their Stress Pattern?
- What does their tissue health tell you about what is going on emotionally?
- Have they created an “Armor” anywhere?
Four morphology structures express personal experiences and conflicts and the effect on muscles, pumps, tubes, layers and direction of body forces:

- **Rigid (fixated muscular expansion)**
  - Stiff, braced, pulled back, elongated
  - Assertive stance, appears explosive

- **Dense (fixated muscular contraction)**
  - Compacted, pulled in, shortened (not deflated)
  - Stubborn, defiance, fear, distance

- **Swollen (fixated pouch expansion)**
  - Blows up, gets bigger, intimidates, erupts
  - Arrogance, resists boundaries, swells with anger

- **Collapsed (fixated pouch contraction)**
  - Yields, shrinks, cries, gives in
  - Retreat, detachment as response to stress
MOBEMENT FOR MOOD
Yoga for Mood

- How have we developed compensatory behaviors?
- How do these behaviors further affect compensatory postures?
- Can emotional stress solidify and become part of our own identification?
- How often do we take the time to notice what is driving our emotions?
- If we move through postures can we notice what is tight, what is weak, where we need space?
- How does that translate off the mat?
Yoga for Mood

5 Vayus – energy channels that bring prana or life force into all of the body areas

- **Udana Vayu**
  - Centered in the Throat and Head- circular in a clockwise pattern
  - Governs communication, senses and the nervous system
  - If diminished thought to have problems with cognition and communication

- **Prana Vayu**
  - Centered in the heart, chest and lungs- upward motion
  - Responsible for circulation and respiration
  - If diminished thought to have heart and lung problems and lethargy

- **Samana Vayu**
  - Centered in the abdomen- expands on inhalation, relaxes on exhalation
  - If diminished problems with digestion

- **Apana Vayu**
  - Centered below the navel- moves downward on exhalation
  - Responsible for downward movement of energy such as elimination or childbirth
  - If diminished thought to lead to menstrual problems, sexual dysfunction, constipation, hemorrhoids

- **Vyana Vayu**
  - From the core of the body out to the extremities
  - Associated with the peripheral nervous system, circulation and distribution of breath and energy
  - If diminished thought to lead to poor peripheral circulation or numbness

Instead of fighting the energy, move it in a direction!

https://spiritofayogi.wordpress.com/tag/visualization/
Yoga for Mood

A few notes about breathwork

- **Is it dangerous?**
  - Don’t create stress or strain
  - Caution with blood pressure or heart issues or lung issues
  - Caution with mood disorders- anxiety or panic
  - Caution with pregnancy
  - Moving energy before removing obstruction

- **Physical discomfort**
  - Increased tensions
  - Headaches
  - Dizzy
  - Back ache

- **Emotional discomfort**
  - Confusion, anxiety, irritable, difficulty concentrating, spacey, ungrounded

- **Gradual slow practice is recommended**
  - Treat it like medicine
  - Closed room without windows
  - Unhurried mind
  - Decrease external noise
  - Proper sitting posture
  - Don’t overdo/force it
  - Don’t obsess or fixate
  - Positive mindset
  - Plan for unhurried activities afterward
  - Proper type of breath for your needs and abilities

- **Pranayama**
  - Is not just deep breathing
  - Is advised to begin breath work training with a skilled teacher
Yoga for Anxiety

“You are the sky.
Everything else….It’s just the weather.”
-Pema Chodrun
Cat and Child’s Pose

- Begin on all fours- knees under hips, hands under shoulders
- Inhale in this position
- Exhale
- Push back rounding the spine, letting the head fall forward
- Continue moving through this posture as you slowly and gently lengthen your exhale
- If it is comfortable you can begin to add a pause at the end of your exhalation
- Bring your breathing back to normal before moving to the next position
- Apana vayu
Mountain Pose (Tadasana)

- Find your stable base- feet parallel hip width apart
- Lift your toes, ground through the four corners of your feet- release the toes but maintain activation
- Lift your patella by contracting your quadriceps
- Tip your pelvis up (lift pubic bone up and pull your coccyx down) which engages your abdominal muscles
- Pull your navel to your spine
- Draw the ribcage up
- Draw your scapula up, down and back
- Widen the shoulders and create space across the front and the back of the body
- Activate the arms and point gently towards the earth
- Add a slight chin tuck
- Lengthen and expand

- Prana and Apana vayu
Warrior One with Breath

• Begin by stepping the right leg forward, knee bent moving to 90 degrees (knees should track with toes but not over toes)
• Back foot turns to 45-69 degrees - leg is straight
• Hips should both face forward
• Draw the sacrum down to the earth (avoid overarching the low back)
• Exhale and push arms out - protracting the scapula, rounding the spine and dropping the head
  • Palms out pushing out
• Inhale and pull back in slightly rising back up
  • Fists pull in
• Continue to repeat this, lengthening your exhalation
• If comfortable you may add a pause at the end of exhalation
• Perform 5-10 times
• Switch sides
• Bring your breathing back to normal before moving to the next position
• Udana and Vyana vayu
Pratyahara

• Withdrawal of the senses
• Rub palms together to warm them
• Place palms over the eyes
• Continue with breathing, lengthening exhalation as comfortable
• Bring your breathing back to normal before ending the practice
Yoga for Depression

“Yoga does not just change the way we see things, it transforms the person who sees.”

-B.K.S Iyengar
Energy Building

- Begin Supine arms at side
- Inhale arms rise overhead
  - Creates a very small upper thoracic backbend which is excitatory
- Exhale arms return to your side
- Each time lengthening the inhalation as comfortable
- If able you may add a pause after the inhalation
  - Do not force your breath or the pauses
  - If it becomes uncomfortable return to your normal breath
- The goal is to create bright and alert energy
  - Not agitation
- Bring your breathing back to normal before moving to the next position
Cat and Child’s Pose

• Begin on all fours- knees under hips, hands under shoulders
• As you inhale, head rises, heart rises, chest pushes forward
• Exhale
• As you push back keep your head and your heart lifted
• Continue moving through this posture as you slowly and gently lengthen your inhalation
• If it is comfortable you can begin to add a pause at the end of your inhalation
• Bring your breathing back to normal before moving to the next position
• Apana vayu
Cobra

• Begin Prone
• Exhale- a cheek rests on the floor
• Inhale head and chest rise
• Lift to a comfortable height using just your upper back muscles
• Lengthen as you lift
  • Relax your shoulders away from your ears
  • Pubic bone pushes into the floor- this helps to prevent overarching of the low back
  • Elbows tuck into the sides
  • Push through the fingers as though you are going to pull your chest/heart forward
  • If you want to go a little further you can press slightly into your hands to lift up a little higher
• Exhale and release- let your cheek rest on the opposite side
• Begin to lengthen your inhalation as you are comfortable
• Bring your breathing back to normal before moving to the next position
• Prana and Samana vayu
Warrior One with Breath

- Begin by stepping the right leg forward, knees bent (knees should track with toes but not over toes)
- Back foot turns to 45 degrees- leg is straight
- Hips should both face forward- draw sacrum down to avoid overarching the lower back
- Exhale and push out- keep head and chest up
  - Palms out pushing out
- Inhale and abduct shoulders to 90 degrees
  - Palms wide
  - Extending the thoracic spine
  - Pushing the heart and chest forward
  - Cervical spine in extension
  - Maintain a slight chin tuck to support and protect the cervical spine (don’t do too much extension!)
- Continue to repeat this, lengthening your exhalation
- If comfortable you may add a pause at the end of exhalation
- Perform 5-10 times
- Switch sides
- Bring your breathing back to normal before moving to the next position
- **Udana and Vyana vayu**
MOVEMENT FOR MOOD
Movement for Mood

- How have we developed compensatory behaviors?
- How do these behaviors further affect compensatory postures?
- Can emotional stress solidify and become part of our own identification?
- How often do we take the time to notice what is driving our emotions?
- If we move through postures can we notice what is tight, what is weak, where we need space?
- How does that translate outside of movement practice?
Gyrokinesis Concepts

- Founded by Juliu Horvath
- Essentials of Body Kinetics
  - Spine Flexion/Extension
  - Spine Sidebending R/L
  - Spine Twist/Rotation R/L
  - Spine Circular Motion
- Motion
  - Fluidity is key
  - Undulating, rhythmic
Gyrokinetics Concepts

- **Primary Respiration**
  - Fluctuation of CSF (potency of the Tide)
  - Motility of the CNS, neural tube, spinal cord
  - Mobility of the RTM
  - Articular mobility of the cranial bones
  - Involuntary mobility of the sacrum between the ilia

- **Motion**
  - Inhalation: Midline bones flex, paired bones externally rotate; shorten, flatten, swelling; RTM anterior/superior
  - Exhalation: Midline bones extend, paired bones internally rotate; lengthen, narrow, receding; RTM posterior/inferior
Gyrokinesis Concepts

- Embryology


Hamilton, op. cit., figs. 56-58, and Allan, Frank D., Essentials of Human Embryology, figs. 22-23.
Awaken the Senses

Self massage
Temples

Self massage
Jaw Line

Self massage
Neck/Shoulder
Awaken the Senses

Shoulder roll

Chest stimulation
Awaken the Senses

1. Draw flesh away from sit bones and sit on inner front edges
2. Establish grounding through 4 points on each foot – press gently but firmly into floor, activating legs
3. Position knees over ankles
4. Imagine the tail bone and pubic arch moving down, allowing the spine to lengthen up
5. Gently lift and open chest, as the shoulder blades slide down and into the back
6. Head and neck float up, as the shoulder girdle releases down
7. Keep eyes open, soft and receptive

Hip/Leg Self Massage

Setting Up
Engage the Spine/Core

Flexion/Extension
Engage the Spine/Core

Flexion/Extension
Engage the Spine/Core

Flexion/Extension
Engage the Spine/Core

Flexion/Extension
Engage the Spine/Core

Sidebending
Engage the Spine/Core

Sidebending
Engage the Spine/Core

Sidebending
Engage the Spine/Core
Sidebending
Engage the Spine/Core

Twisting/Rotation
Engage the Spine/Core

Twisting/Rotation
Engage the Spine/Core

Twisting/Rotation
Engage the Spine/Core

Circular Motion
Engage the Spine/Core
Circular Motion
References

Thank You