



Reiki and Yoga as Spiritual Care

— Utilizing Reiki and Yoga as forms of Spiritual Care within CPE and/or Clinical Spiritual Care departments.

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Problem

Reiki and Yoga are underutilized if not at all within CPE and/or Clinical Spiritual Care departments, and so the innovative benefits of these wholistic body-mind-spirit practices are lost.

Definitions

Reiki (pronounced “ray-key”) is Japanese for “Universal” (Rei) “Life Force Energy” (ki). It is a subtle yet effective energy healing technique for stress reduction and relaxation that supports the body’s own natural healing abilities.

Pranayama is Sanskrit for the “Extension of Breath.” (Prana) “breath/vital force” and (Ayama) “extension/control”

Goals

1. To use the \$2,000 Wisdom Grant to implement a highly innovative program where chaplains are educated in the methods of Reiki and Yoga-based breathing exercises.
2. To implement this skill-based knowledge as a form of self-care for chaplains and as a form of Spiritual Care for patients.

Specifications

As a Reiki Master and Yoga instructor I am qualified to instruct individuals into becoming Reiki Practitioners, as well as communicate and assess proficiency in Yogi-breathing, or Pranayama, techniques that will be introduced to patients, contributing to their relaxation, centeredness, and a greater sense of well-being.

Resources

1. *Trained and skilled Reiki Masters* who can instruct members of Spiritual Care teams in the language, symbolism, and practice of Reiki.
2. *Experienced Yoga practitioners* who can instruct the same teams in the methods of Yogic-breathing (Pranayama)
3. *Religiously educated individuals* who can “code-switch” to increase patient comfortability with Eastern spiritual practices: E.g. Prana, Ruach, Pneuma, and Spiritus are virtually identical terms; the interior silence achieved by Pranayama is arguably identical to “Centering Prayer.”

Addressing the Issue

1. As a Certified Yoga instructor and as a Reiki Master, I can teach Spiritual Care team members and chaplains the methods.
2. This an “edgy” and innovative program that is just beginning to be implemented in hospitals, where skill-based knowledge can be shared to further equip chaplains, ministers, and care providers in their departments.
3. As a Reiki Master I will provide a Level I Reiki Course, which officially certifies the individual as a Reiki Practitioner.

Expected Impacts

1. Chaplains and care providers will be equipped with a positive form of self-care as they accompany individuals in their trauma.
2. Patients will experience a greater sense of well-being afforded by the methods they are taught and the enhanced Spiritual Care they receive.

Pranayama

Pranayama works with the autonomic nervous system, which in turn controls the sympathetic nervous system responsible for triggering the “fight or flight” emergency response, and the parasympathetic nervous system responsible for calming that response.

Benefits of Pranayama

1. Pranayama techniques are beneficial in treating a range of stress related disorder, including depression, PTSD, and extended-bereavement.
2. Pranayama improves the autonomic functions.
3. It reduces the signs of oxidative stress in the body.
4. Regular Pranayama can extend life and enhance one's perception of life.
5. Breathing exercises have been demonstrated to give victims of stress-induced trauma a sense of control, comfort, and safety.

[\(http://conscioushealth.net/pranayam-breathing-exercise-conscious-health-nahid-ameen/\)](http://conscioushealth.net/pranayam-breathing-exercise-conscious-health-nahid-ameen/)

The Bessel A. van der Kolk, MD, and a team from the Trauma Center at the Justice Resource Institute Experimented with the Effects of Yoga on Trauma-survivors.

1. From 2008 to 2011, they randomly assigned 64 women who were suffering from trauma-induced PTSD, half to a weekly women's health support class (the control group), and half to a weekly trauma-informed yoga class.
2. Each treatment condition lasted 10 weeks. Patients were assessed at *pretreatment, midtreatment and posttreatment* using the **Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS)** and the **Davidson Trauma Scale (DTS)**. The researchers were looking for any differences in the resolution of trauma symptoms between the two groups.
3. The patients who attended the weekly yoga group, with its guided meditation and breathing exercises, were much *better able to focus on the present moment and control their impulses*, and ***their PTSD symptoms plummeted***.
4. When they did the final CAPS assessment, 16 of 31 participants in the yoga group ***no longer met criteria for PTSD***, compared to 6 of 29 in the control group.
5. in the DTS assessment, both the yoga and the control groups showed identically significant improvements right up until the midway mark of the study. ***But the yoga group maintained their gains to the finish, while the control group relapsed.***

[\(https://www.nicabm.com/trauma-could-yoga-hold-the-key-to-healing-a-patients-trauma/\)](https://www.nicabm.com/trauma-could-yoga-hold-the-key-to-healing-a-patients-trauma/)

How Could This Be?

1. Yoga addresses mind-body-soul with three principle components: breathing exercises (pranayama), postures (asanas), and mindfulness meditation...it is built upon the concept of body awareness and opening yourself to the transitory nature of one's momentary experience.
2. Practitioners focus on internal sensory experiences, which isolates emotions and physiological reactions to triggers such as fear.
3. What this means is that, instead of avoiding unpleasant memories, the women in the yoga study group were better able to isolate their memories and address them in a non-threatening way.

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Summary

- Reiki and Yoga as Spiritual Care is an innovative proposal that will use the Wisdom Grant to train Spiritual Care Providers in Reiki provision and Yoga practices for the extended benefit of their patients.
- Reiki and Pranayama can bring relief to survivors of trauma-induced PTSD by harmonizing the Autonomic Nervous System as well as reducing stress-inducing hormones such as Cortisol.
- These forms of Spiritual Care benefit the Care Provider as much as the patient with long-lasting and broadly-impacting wholistic results, which continue long beyond in-patient treatment.
- There is no special equipment needed to provide these forms of Spiritual Care, meaning only the minimal cost of educating Care Providers is necessary to implement the program.
- By internalizing the skill-set within the care team, discretionary spending for hiring an on-call practitioner is eliminated.
- A new more hopeful vision of healing is opens up within the field of Spiritual Care Provision.