

# A Yoga Model for Recovery

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# Objectives

- Discuss how yogic philosophy can help promote grounding and purpose during the recovery process
- Demonstrate why movement, breathing, and meditation are essential to success in helping people reconnect with their body and feel less disconnected from the world.
- Explain why body awareness, self soothing, and reconnection support lasting recovery from substance and behavioral addictions.

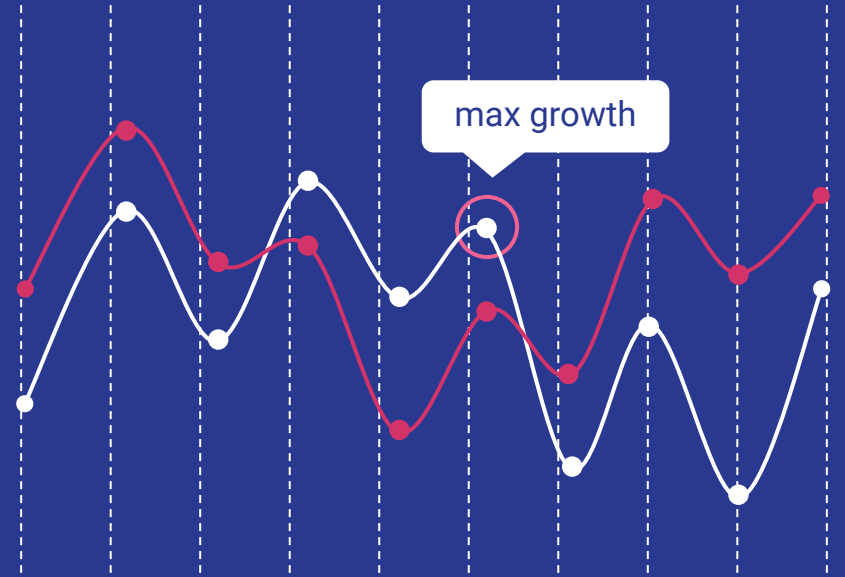




# Mindful Moment

# Poll Question

Do you see yoga as a religious practice?



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# Key Concepts in the 12 Steps

1. Am powerless over alcohol
2. Greater Power can restore us
3. Surrender to God
4. Self inventory
5. Admit wrongdoings
6. God will remove defects of character
7. Will also remove shortcomings
8. Willingness to make amends
9. Make direct amends
10. Continue personal inventory/exploration
11. Prayer & meditation to contact w God
12. Resulting spiritual awakening



# What this presentation is NOT

\*Recruitment to the World of  
Woo

\*An indictment on AA or other 12  
step programs



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# Important concepts to clarify

- Asana
- Meditation
- Pranayama
- Mindfulness
- Ayurveda
- Yoga therapist
- Yoga philosophy
- Complementary therapy



# Ayurveda model: 3 components

Body constitution

## 3 main types

Vatta

Kapha

Pitta

Interconnectedness

## Inner/outer worlds-->layers

Layers of the body connect us to our inner and outer spiritual worlds

Gets to the root cause of disease and how we respond differently to same triggers

Cleansing/Purification

## Daily practices

Tongue scraping

Oil pulling

Self massage



# The categories of yoga interventions

## Movement

Hatha yoga

Iyengar yoga

Vinyasa yoga

Yin Yoga

Subtle Yoga™

## Meditation

Yoga Nidra

Mindfulness meditation

Chanting

Mantra

## Disease mgmt: Ayurveda

Ayurveda consultation

Yoga therapist



Practice Break:  
'Find your shoulders' :)

# Review of the literature

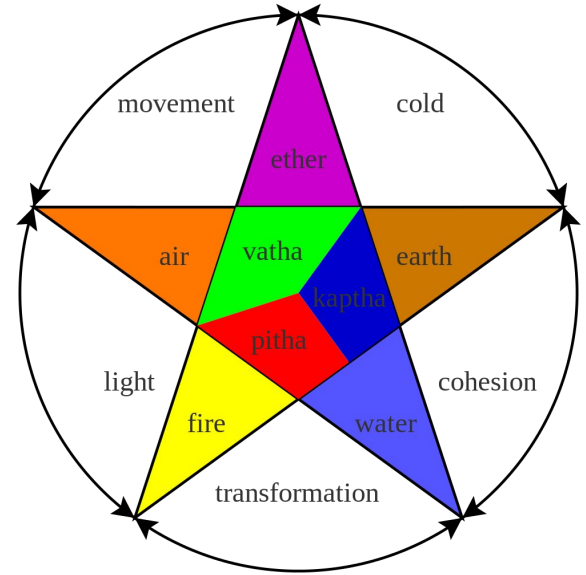
# Yoga and Ayurveda

Why 15.8 million adults seek yoga

- Increased strength and flexibility
- Promotes health
- Prevents disease

How Ayurveda fits in

- Postures (asana)~Breathing exercises (pranayama)~Meditation
- Body cleansing
- Lifestyle modification
- Support for disease processes




# Yoga Interventions

in the literature

Multiple approaches  
successfully executed in  
addiction field

1. Asana intervention
  2. Asana + Meditation
  3. Asana + CBT
  4. Pranayama intervention
  5. 3 fold yoga approach
-

# Yoga intervention study results

- ❖ Nidra + SKY in alcoholics improved mood and cortisol levels
  - ❖ Vinyasa + group CBT vs wellness program aided tobacco cessation
  - ❖ Hatha (cardio) vs non-activity helped tobacco cravings
  - ❖ Yoga series for male drug addicts reduced depression and anxiety
  - ❖ Hatha+Pranayama+Nidra reduced alcohol dependence
  - ❖ Yoga for alcoholics with chronic pancreatitis improved quality of life
  - ❖ Pranayama alone reduced tobacco cravings
  - ❖ Hatha in drug addicts in methadone program vs psychodynamic treatment had NO DIFFERENCE in outcomes
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# Self Regulation

Via the self soothing effects of  
yoga



# Mindfulness Meditation intervention

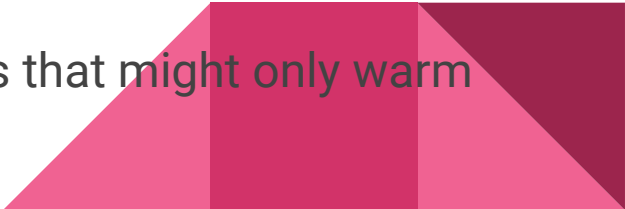
## Background

- Noted an inhibition of self soothing capacity in addictive patients
- Defn: capacity for thermostatic self regulation of both positive and negative affects

## Intervention

- Teach mindful awareness of experiences as impermanent, not requiring action
- Learn to create an atmosphere of comfort, structure, repetition
- Yoga teachers teach this awareness, structure, and repeated reminders

“Yoga warms you up inside in contrast to alcohol or drugs that might only warm you up [from the] outside.”





# Residential treatment model

Intensive treatment approach




# Residential Kundalini Yoga Lifestyle Pilot Program

**WHO:** Ten 18+ year old males

**WHERE:** state run psychiatric hospital wing in India

**WHAT:** 90 day comprehensive residential treatment program

**HOW:**

- Three yoga classes per day
  - Vegetarian lifestyle + herbs, vitamins, spices to cleanse the body
  - recreational/music/dance therapies
  - Spiritual studies
  - Acupuncture and energy medicine
  - Massage therapy
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# Important considerations for this program

- Spiritual studies were culturally considerate to the setting
- The students became teachers themselves
- Individual and group counseling were also included
- Family visits and counseling started by month 2
- There was an initial 3 day trial period to eliminate those not a good fit
- Final number was ~7
  - One loss due to injury
  - One lacked leave time from his job
  - One loss due to noncompliance



# Practice break!

## Gatha meditation

IN

OUT

CALMING

SMILING

Present Moment

Precious Moment

# Solution?

Comprehensive lifestyle  
overhaul

Addresses body, mind, and spirit

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Let's talk Implementation

# PROS and CONS of Yoga for Recovery

## PROS

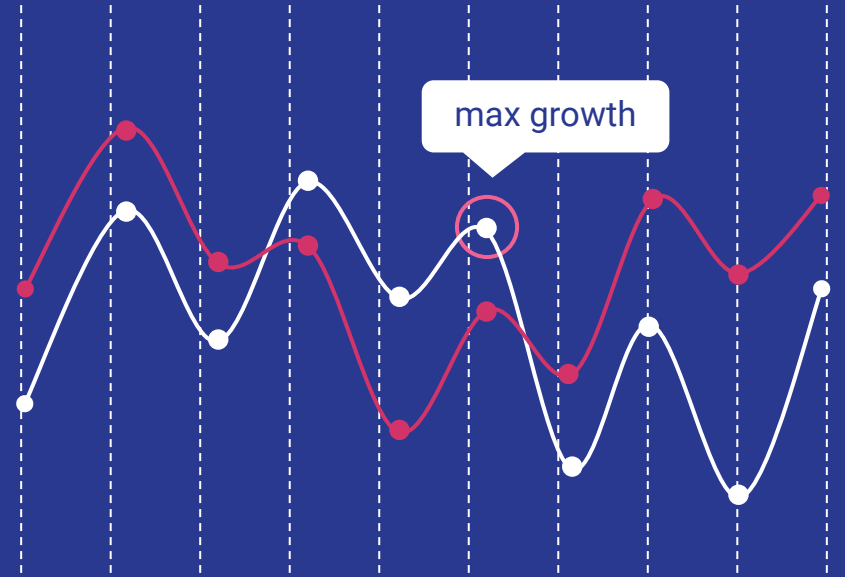
- Integrative approach
- Behavior changes regardless of addiction
- Addresses underlying causes of disease

## CONS

- Relatively unknown
- Harder to access
- Yoga as 'religion' may be a turnoff
- Yoga for bendy folks only mindset

# Poll Question

Are you currently teaching mindfulness and/or breathing techniques in your practice?





The top right corner of the slide features a decorative arrangement of overlapping triangles in various shades of pink and magenta, creating a modern, abstract geometric pattern.

# Incorporating Yoga as support in addiction recovery

# Mindfulness

Care for the MIND

Mindful awareness of bodily sensations

Accept that they are impermanent and require no action

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# YOGA + Mindfulness

MIND and BODY

Walking meditation

Dance

Zen tangle art (doodling)



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# Meditation

MIND + SPIRIT

Guided meditation available online:

- Apps (Calm, Insight Timer...)
- Youtube (guided meditations)

In person options (after quarantine)

- Yoga studios
  - Library
  - Some churches
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# YOGA asana

Self Soothing for the BODY

Honorable mentions for the less flexible:

- Yin yoga
  - Slow flow yoga
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# Resources to explore

- Y12SR: <https://y12sr.com/>
- Yoga of Recovery: <https://yogaofrecovery.com/>
- Yoga Nidra recordings: <https://www.yoganidranetwork.org/downloads>
- Pranayama (breathwork) techniques to try:  
<https://www.yogajournal.com/practice/importance-breath-yoga>
- International Association of Yoga Therapists: <https://www.iayt.org/page/ContemporaryDefiniti>
- SKY Breathing from Art of Living Institute: <https://www.artofliving.org/us-en/research-sudarshan-kriya>



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