

Therapeutic Measures for Individuals with Conditions (and Not the Other Way Around)

As we begin to turn our attention to working with specific issues and concerns on the various koshic levels it's important to keep in mind that we are YOGA therapists. And yoga in its true sense (not in some ripped-off, westernized, market-driven abbreviated form) has the properties of being

1. holistic, i.e. thus considering the whole multifaceted person, and
2. inherently spiritual, in the broadest sense.

Holistic- in that we assess and work at all the koshic levels: body level, alignment posture, tension, imbalance, and also with Ayurvedic principles which work here primarily and also at every level as well, etc. Pranic level which also has the body-level interfaces of the NS and diet as well as the breath and vitality overall. Mental level of which the emotions, are an interface with the pranic sheath – affecting the body and also the thought process too. Mood, thought patterns, beliefs, myths, psychological states, anxiety, depression, moods, also relating to the gunas and their power over our feeling states and thought processes! Intuitive and spiritual aspects of our being – bigger questions: what is important, what shall I do with my life? Where do I find joy? What's my belief centered operating system and is it working for me now? Need od of reboot, or just some tinkering? Or just a dusting off? Equanimity, joy, meaning...

Spiritual – in that this aspect of being is not only acknowledged it is central and the true identity of a person! Paradigm shift from western view!

In terms of a therapy that is based on these factors we can see that we are not oriented to administer or share measures that work solely with conditions per se. We instead—admittedly this is a fine line—work with the entire person. We share measures that promote wellness and health for the entire person. And when we work with the entire person, and they do appropriate yoga therapy practices, we support their wellness at all levels. And by doing so, in many, many cases the condition is resolved, and the client's wellness is restored to a state of balance. If this is not the case, clients often find a “new normal” and are equipped with resources to better manage their condition with self-knowledge and empowered autonomy.

It is however, very important to understand what the medical condition is and what it entails so that we can create safe practices by understanding what is CONTRAINDICATED. We must understand what not to do, while creatively designing practices to support restoration of balance.

And of course, at times there is more than one thing going on, so we may have several issues for which there are contraindications. As we consider the whole person we may bring into awareness not only the presenting physical level issues or injury for instance, but also the person's lifestyle and capacity. How well are they? Are they able to do full practices? Is their mind and emotional life stable enough to practice regularly? How motivated are they? What yoga or exercise experience is already a part of their life? Where is their resistance to this work? Are they resistant to change and growth? How much faith in this process do they have? What support do they have? How did this imbalance come into being?

So, we tailor practices for each individual based on an informed understanding of their unique state of being and available conditions at the various levels. By doing so with skill, compassion and care we can affect the presenting condition or conditions in many positive ways!