

## The Three Wisdom Traditions

### **Psychology, Yoga, Ayurveda, in the Treatment of Anxiety, Depression and Trauma: Working with the Five Elements to develop support for clients and their families**

What are the classical symptoms of anxiety, depression and trauma? How do these symptoms resonate within the yoga therapy and ayurvedic medical systems? What do each of these three: Psychology, Yoga and Ayurveda, offer to create a whole system of healing and support healthy lifestyle?

These are the questions we are going to begin to examine today. Let's look at the symptoms and begin to develop a frame so we can explore how all three "Wisdom Traditions" interact as options for healing and support... and work best when forged together into a holistic treatment plan for in session and at home use.

Psychology helps us recognize or identify our thoughts, feelings and actions. Once identified or once we are aware of our thoughts we have the option to change them. In treatment we hope clients will have empathy for themselves and then compassion for the other. Meditation and contemplation offer us an alternative path to begin to become conscious of our thoughts by helping us turn our gaze inward and learn the landscape of our minds, drives and emotions.

Yoga offers us a pathway to self-realization. This is often a level of work that many people do not experience as they are still attending to the primary needs of safety, food, shelter, and managing other primary important daily activities of being an adult in society. Once mastered, the trip to self-actualization or realization can begin. The Vinyasa Krama or wise progression of using the breath (pranayama), asana (movement/postures), kryia (focus for the mind), mantra (the word or vibration) and or meditation are the tools of yoga. These tools are used to create a personal "practice" to help the practitioner move in the direction of self-actualization.

Ayurveda offers the yogi and non-yogi vibrant daily health, in mind, body and spirit. Ayurveda means "life science". It is the science that keeps the body functioning so the yogi can work toward self-actualization/ realization. For example: if the knee hurts it is harder to meditate. Ayurveda would attend to why the knee is hurting, and organize a series of diet, lifestyle, yoga, herbal, etc.. These adjustments would try to heal the wound while supporting good health. This works with mental/emotional "hurts" as well. Ayurveda works on the principals of the five elements.

The five elements are: Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether (Space)

Each of these elements has certain characteristics or qualities. Based upon these qualities we develop certain tendencies. When we are out of our normal balance, or constitution, we experience symptoms. These may be physical or emotional/mental, or both. Ayurveda then works to correct the imbalance to allow for a life that flows along with nature. "As outside, so within"....

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