

Certificate in Integrative Palliative Care – 3
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Week-03

Lecture 31: Understanding Cancer & Yoga Practices for Dealing with Cancer

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COURSE-THE INTEGRATIVE ROLE OF YOGA IN PALLIATIVE CARE

Session-12: Understanding Cancer & Yoga practices for dealing with cancer

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This session is about understanding the life-threatening disease known as cancer. What is cancer, how it spreads, the role of immune system in fending off these cancerous cells and understanding the yogic interventions so as to improve the quality of life or maybe the quality of death. Let's take a look at what is cancer.

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Introduction of Cancer

- A **tumor** is a mass of abnormal cells, which can be either **benign** (non-cancerous) or **malignant** (cancerous). Cancer occurs when genetic mutations cause cells to grow uncontrollably, fail to mature, and lose normal function. These abnormal cells can invade surrounding tissues and spread to distant organs through the **lymphatic system, bloodstream, or body cavities**—a process called **metastasis**.
- Cancer affects all forms of life, from humans to animals, and bypasses the body's normal regulatory controls. As mutated cells grow rapidly, they disrupt normal tissue and organ function.
- While **one-third** of cancers are preventable, another **one-third** are treatable if detected early. For the remaining cancers, **palliative care** can significantly improve quality of life.



A collection of abnormal cells is called a tumor. A tumor can be either malignant if the cells are cancerous or benign if the constituent cells are not cancerous. Cancer is the disease of cells characterized by genetic mutation, abnormal cells, unrestrained cell production, lack of cell maturation, loss of abnormal cellular function, invasive behavior, and often metastasis which is the spread of the cancer via lymphatic and or blood flow to the distant organs.

Cancer attacks many forms of life with equally devastating force like in fish, birds and animals as well as humans. The cancer cells are not regulated by the normal biochemical and physical forces of the body. They behave like an unregulated entity. For some reasons, the cell's genetic material, known as DNA, undergoes a reversible structural change which is called mutation.

As a result, the cell loses its normal function and starts behaving erratically. It starts growing and multiplying very rapidly. Eventually, it invades the normal surrounding tissue. It not only affects the neighboring tissues but also spreads to distant organs by moving through the lymphatic system and the bloodstream or through body cavities adversely affecting these distant organs. One-third of all cancers are preventable.

A further one-third, if diagnosed sufficiently early, are potentially curable and appropriate palliative care of the remaining one-third can bring about substantial improvements in the quality of life.

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Introduction of Cancer

Cancer is named based on the organ where it originates, such as lung cancer, breast cancer, or brain cancer. If it spreads to other organs, it retains the name of the original cancer. For example, breast cancer that spreads to the bones is still called breast cancer with bone metastasis, not bone cancer.

Cancer can develop in any part of the body. The most common causes of cancer-related deaths worldwide are lung, stomach, liver, bowel, esophagus, and prostate cancers in men, and breast, lung, stomach, colorectal, and cervical cancers in women.

Cancer is classified into stages that describe the tumor's size, lymph node involvement, and whether it has spread (metastasized). Staging helps determine the prognosis and treatment plan. Some cancers have a precancerous stage, where the condition is often reversible, such as cervical dysplasia or oral leukoplakia.

Cancer-causing agents, known as carcinogens, can be physical (like radiation and sunlight), chemical (such as tobacco and free radicals), or biological (like hepatitis B and HPV). From a yogic perspective, suppressed emotions and negative mental patterns, including guilt, frustration, and sadness, are also considered harmful. A yogic lifestyle, which promotes balance and emotional well-being, helps reduce exposure to these carcinogens. While minimizing carcinogens may lower the risk of cancer, it does not guarantee complete protection from the disease.

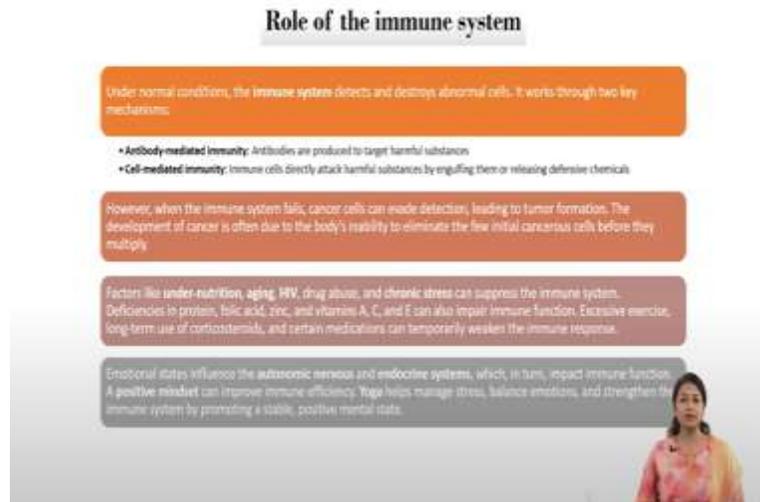
The cancer is named after the area of origin in the body, for example, lung cancer, brain cancer, breast cancer. When it spreads to distant organs, it is still identified as cancer of the original organ. For example, when a breast cancer spreads to the bones, It is called breast cancer with secondary deposits or metastasis in the bone rather than being called bone cancer. Any area in the body can develop cancer.

Worldwide deaths due to cancer are most commonly caused by lung, stomach, liver, bowel, oesophagus and prostate cancers among men and breast, lung, stomach, colorectal and cervical cancers among women. The stages of cancer describe the extent of the cancerous growth, including the size of the primary tumor, the level of spread to the lymph nodes, and the presence and absence of metastasis. Identifying the stage of cancer is often used to establish the prognosis and decide the treatment. Some cancers have a precancerous stage. At this stage, they are generally completely reversible.

Dysplasia of the cervix and some types of leukoplakia of the oral cavity are the most commonly found precancerous diseases. It is important to know that cancer causing agents are known as carcinogens which can be physical such as radiation including sunlight, chemical such as tobacco and free oxygen radicals or biological such as hepatitis B virus and human papilloma virus known as HPV. Additionally, from a yogic point of view, suppressed emotions, vicious patterns of thinking and negative emotions including guilt, frustration, revenge and sadness are also injurious to health. A yogic lifestyle and attitude towards life provide an environment with minimum carcinogens. By minimizing our exposure to these carcinogens, we try to minimize the occurrence, growth or re-occurrence of cancer.

However, minimum or no exposure of carcinogens does not guarantee freedom from cancer.

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Let us understand the role the immune system plays. Under normal circumstances, the immune system senses the abnormally behaving cell and tries to destroy them. The immune system operates through two main modes. One, antibody mediated immunity.

In this form of immunity, antibodies against the harmful substances are produced. In the second form of immunity, known as cell-mediated immunity, immune system cells are induced to destroy harmful substances by doing such things as physically engulfing the harmful substance or producing specific defensive chemicals. When the immune system fails, then cancer gains the upper hand and a tumor can develop. The malignant transformation of a cell is probably not a critical event in the development of cancer. Rather, it is the body's inability to destroy the newly formed cancerous cells when they are few in number that leads to the manifestation of cancer.

Under nutrition, old age, HIV infection, some form of drug abuse and chronic stress are some of the common causes of suppression of the immune system. Lack of protein and deficiency of folic acid, zinc and vitamins A, C and E can impair immune responses. Severe unaccustomed exercises induces stress and can diminish immune responses temporarily. The immune system may be suppressed by the long-term use of corticosteroids and certain other therapeutic drugs. Emotional states of mind affect the autonomic nervous system and endocrine system, which in turn strongly influence the functioning of the immune system.

It is clear that the state of mind can play a major role in the efficacy of the immune system. At this stage of time, yoga helps us to understand the workings of our mind and provides techniques to help manage it efficiently. Regular practice and a yogic lifestyle helps to boost our immune system by releasing stress and creating a positive and stable frame of mind. From a yogic point of view, a polluted environment puts a strain on the immune system by overloading it. A clean environment is highly charged with energy or prana or vital life force energy and negative ions that boost the immune system.

The mind also spontaneously shifts into a happy peaceful state in a clean environment thus further strengthening the immune system.

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NEED FOR CONNECTING WITH THE SELF

Connecting with the self is a fundamental need for everyone, whether consciously recognized or not. When we connect with ourselves, we gain a better understanding of our body, mind, and energy, leading to improved interactions with others and a smoother flow of life.

For cancer patients, this connection is even more crucial. In addition to the benefits of self-awareness, they need to:

- Activate their **inner healing power**
- Draw on **internal support** to face the crisis
- Harness their **willpower** and strength to fight cancer and its challenges
- And, importantly, they need the **wisdom** to know when to fight and when to accept their situation with grace
- This need becomes especially urgent as they become more aware of life's fragility and vulnerability

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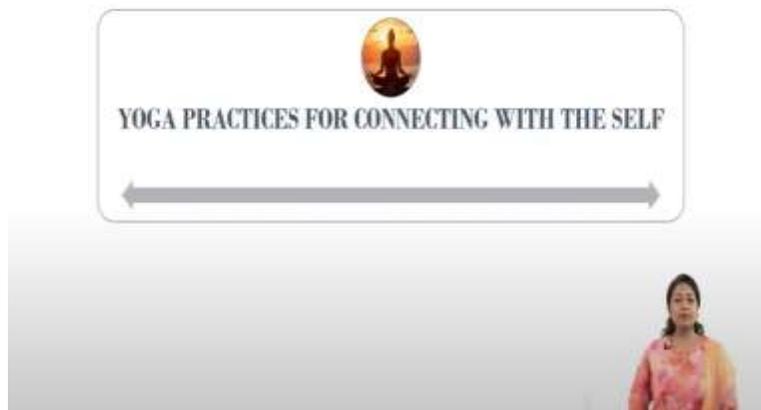
So at this juncture of life, when a subject is dealing with a life threatening disease like cancer, it is noteworthy to mention that connecting with the self is essential for faster recovery and for embracing a quality of life filled with acceptance and gratitude. Connecting with the self is the most essential and pressing need of every being, whether they recognize or acknowledge this or not. When we start connecting to ourselves, the understanding of our body, energy system, mind and its functioning improves. One's interaction with other people and the environment becomes pleasant and growth promoting.

Life starts flowing smoothly. For people with cancer, this need to connect with the self is stronger because they need the inner power of healing. They need the internal support to face the crisis. They need to summon their willpower and all their strength to fight and overpower cancer and the associated difficulties. And finally, but very importantly, they

need the wisdom to know how much to fight and when to accept gracefully and the most of the situation that has become irreversible.

The need at this stage feels very urgent because the person has become very aware of the vulnerability of life.

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Here comes the yoga practices which helps in connecting with the self.

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Being aware of the present moment is key to connecting with the self, as it sparks self-discovery and growth. A well-rounded **yoga practice** can support this connection, but it's important to learn these practices from a qualified teacher, as individual needs vary.

Key practices include:

- Asana (physical postures)
- Breath awareness
- Pranayama (breathing exercises)
- Yoga nidra (deep relaxation)
- Pratyahara or dharana (meditative concentration)
- Bhakti yoga (devotion)
- Mantra japa (repetition of sacred sounds)

These practices together promote mindfulness and self-awareness, helping to deepen the connection with one's inner self.

A slide with a white background. It contains a paragraph of text, a list of seven key yoga practices, and a concluding sentence. The list is preceded by an orange header box. In the bottom right corner, there is a small video inset of the same woman from the previous slide.

The meaning of the word yoga is connecting with the self. The process of uniting involves minimizing *tamas* and *rajas*, allowing *sattva* to fill up the whole thing.

Awareness of the present in time and space is the most important key for connecting with the self.

Awareness initiates the process of learning about and improving oneself. Any balanced program of yoga practices is helpful in establishing this connection. It is essential that practices be learnt under the guidance of a qualified yoga teacher as each individual's needs and capacities are different. These practices can be grouped under asana, breath awareness practice, pranayama practice, the practice of yoga nidra, pratyahara, dharana or maybe bhakti yoga or mantra japa.

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Let us understand how to manage the bothering conditions which are physical in nature and then we will cover the mental and emotional conditions as well which are to be managed efficiently.

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Physical Discomforts in Cancer

The slide features two blue arrows pointing right. The top arrow contains text about cancer growth and organ function. The bottom arrow contains text about tumor expansion and localized symptoms. To the right, a white box lists common physical symptoms. At the bottom right, a woman is visible, and a text box states that managing symptoms is essential for quality of life.

As cancer grows in the body, it disrupts the normal function of affected organs. Cancer cells compete for space and nutrients, impairing organ function. In advanced stages, the cancer can completely take over the organ, causing its failure. Symptoms like nausea, bloating, constipation, persistent cough, weakness, and visual disturbances often result from this dysfunction. Both conventional treatments and yoga practices can help manage these effects, and alternative therapies may also offer benefits.

As the tumor expands, it may press on surrounding tissues, causing localized symptoms. For example, pressure on the skin may create a lump, while pressure on the liver can lead to jaundice. Other symptoms, such as hoarseness, arise from pressure on the vocal cords, and can be relieved by shrinking the tumor.

Common physical symptoms include:

- Pain (including burning pain)
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Indigestion, flatulence, and heartburn
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Weakness and fatigue
- Sleep disturbances
- Shortness of breath
- Restricted movement
- Swelling
- Scarring, amputation, or hair loss

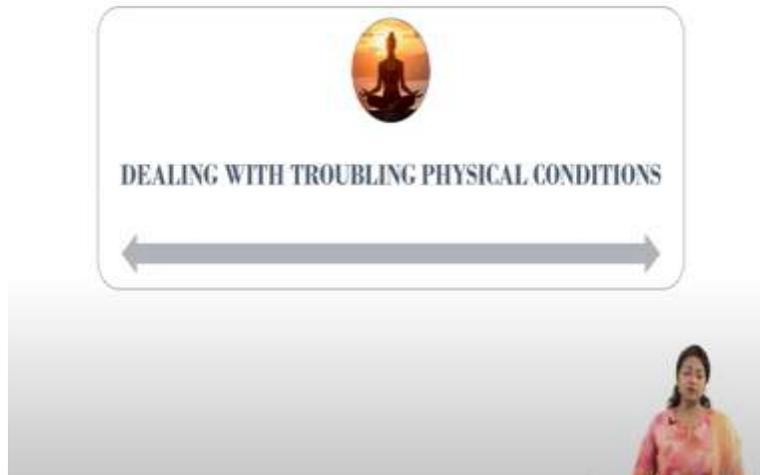
Managing these symptoms is essential to improving quality of life during treatment.

So speaking of the physical bothering conditions when cancer establishes itself in the body its effects eventually begin to manifest. Some of the effects are due to interruption in the normal functioning of the organ. The cancer cells compete for space and nutrients with normal tissue causing some impairment of functioning depending on the stage of its growth. In advanced stages, it completely takes over leading to total failure of the organ. Indigestion, bloating, constipation, irregular bowel habit, persistent cough, muscular weakness and visual disturbances are some of the commonly found symptoms due to the impaired organ function.

Both conventional medical treatment and yoga practices are well geared to manage these effects. Home remedies and alternative therapies also have a lot to offer in this area. As the cancer area increase in size, it also exerts pressure on neighboring tissues causing local symptoms. This result in different symptoms depending on the tissue where pressure is applied. If pressure is being placed on the skin, a lump may develop.

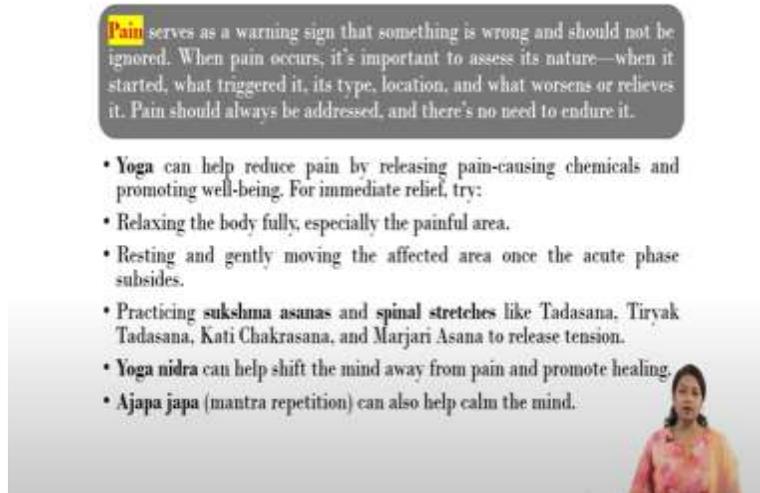
If it is being placed on the liver or its surroundings, the jaundice can occur. Pressure on the vocal cords can cause hoarseness of the voice. These symptoms can only be relieved by shrinking the cancer. So what are the common bothering physical conditions which a subject facing cancer experiences. So the subject faces a lot of pain including burning pain, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, indigestion, flatulence and heartburn, regular constipation and diarrhea, weakness and fatigue, sleep disturbances, shortness of breath, restricted movement or limited mobility, swelling and scarring or amputation along with the hair loss.

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So the question comes how to deal with pain which is the mostly experienced physical condition.

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So pain has many causes it is a warning sign coming from the body telling us that something is wrong please attend to it. Pain should not be neglected at any cost. When a new pain starts ask yourself a few questions. When did it start? What were you doing then? What type of pain is it? Throbbing? Dull? Aching? Shooting? Burning? Where is

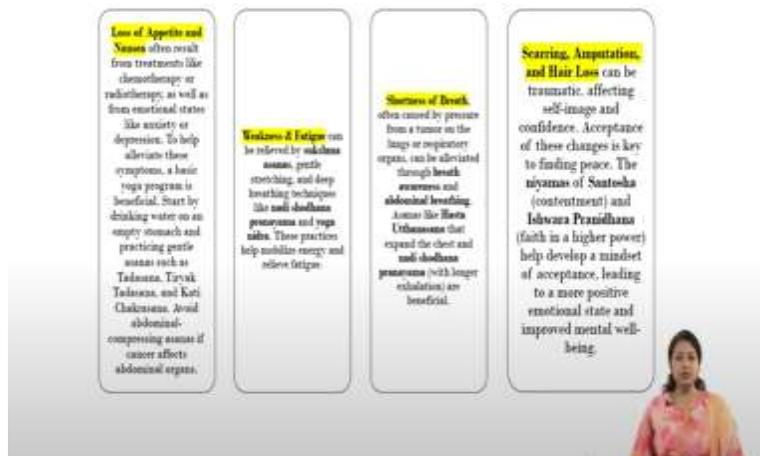
it? Spreading somewhere or localized? What makes it worse? What eases it? Please remember that there is no need to endure pain.

It must be duly attended to. To deal with pain, regular practice of a balanced yoga program will reduce it by helping to remove the pain-producing and harmful chemicals and releasing chemicals that are responsible for our sense of well-being. For immediate relief of pain, however, one can try any of the following. Practice staying still and relaxing the body with full awareness. Particularly, relax the painful areas. In acute pain, rest the affected area.

If you need to move that part, then do it gently and cautiously. Once the acute phase is over, then start mobilizing the area gradually. This will release the stiffness and improve the circulation of prana and blood, giving pain relief. Sukshma asanas and the spinal stretching asanas such as Tadasana, Dhirak Tadasana, Kati Chakrasana, and Marjari asanas are very effective in relieving the pain, making the spine supple. Mental relaxation will allow the mind to be moved from its attachment to a painful area.

So to achieve this mental relaxation, Yoga Nidra can be practiced. The practice of Ajapa Japa or effortless chanting of a mantra also helps relieving the pain. One can practice a Ajapa japa while in a sitting posture or semi-reclined or lying posture or as comfortably as the subject wishes.

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Let's talk about the next physical condition that bothers the subject is the loss of appetite and nausea and digestion related problems. Surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy or other drugs can also produce loss of appetite and nausea. It is essential to understand that surgery chemotherapy radiotherapy or other drugs can also produce loss of appetite and

nausea a changed taste in the mouth can lead to a dislike of food.

Fearful, depressed or anxious states of mind can also produce aversion to food. A basic and balanced yoga program will help relieve these symptoms. Along with this, the practice of drinking two to three glasses of plain lukewarm water early in the morning on an empty stomach and then performing TTK or Tadasana, Tiryak Tadasana and Kati Chakrasana five times each proves to be very useful. If the cancer is affecting any abdominal organs, then avoid the asanas that compresses the abdomen. For weakness and fatigue, sukshma asana or general subtle stretches are very helpful.

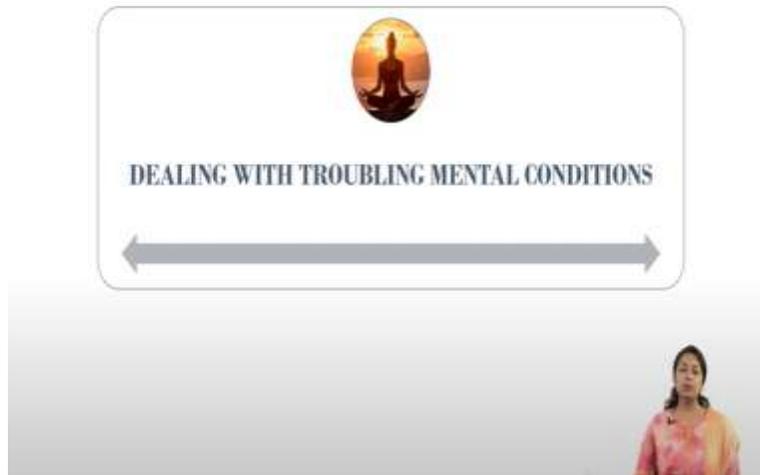
Yoga works on the energy system or prana. It mobilizes stagnant energy and also helps to generate extra prana. Deep slow breathing or yogic breathing Nadi Shodhan Pranayam and if possible Bhastrika Pranayam at a slow speed may be practiced. Yog Nidra in such a case is a highly rejuvenating practice for cancer patients. Meditation practices such as Ajapa Japa and Tratak or one pointed Focus or one-pointed concentration technique generate fresh energy helping to relieve fatigue and generalized weakness.

In case of shortness of breath which happens on pressure of a tumor on respiratory organs, practice breath awareness which involves breathing deeply and slowly. Practice abdominal breathing. Asanas such as Hasta Utthanasana which expand the chest are beneficial. Practice Nadi Shodhan Pranayama in the ratio of 1 is to 1 or 1 is to 2 which is the ratio for both inhalation and exhalation. The longer the exhalation more the detoxification happens.

Additionally, practice Ujjayi Pranayama, Prana Mudra and Mudra breathing which helps relieving the shortness of breath. As we know, the scarring or amputation or hair loss can be quite traumatic, having a strong effect on one's self-image and confidence. Often the disfigurement is a long term or permanent. Sometimes however there is no easy solution and it is only by developing the attitude of acceptance that peace can be felt. Very often in order to gain something, something else has to be given up or let go off.

At times we must choose a lesser reveal in order to escape a greater reveal. The mind tends to be good at accepting rational arguments and so developing a clear understanding of the situation can be a great help in learning to accept change after an initial shock and attendant feelings of denial. The niyamas of santosh, contentment and Iswara pranidhana, faith in a higher reality help us develop an attitude of acceptance and even gratitude. Such attitudes lift us out of self-pity and into positive states of mind and emotion.

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Now, let's understand the mental bothering conditions which affect the subjects the most.

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A diagnosis of cancer produces an emotional shock which causes disturbances in our mental functioning. If the cancer involves the brain either primarily or as a result of its spread, then it can produce a direct and physiologically based imbalance in mental functions. The mental conditions of cognition can become distorted for various reasons. Some people lose self-confidence and willpower perhaps only initially when they learn

about the presence of any major illness within. Once they adjust, they may recover from the emotional shock and show increased self-confidence and willpower.

Kindled by their survival instinct, however, some fail to recover their mental strength. They succumb to the fear of death and enter into the deep valley of self-pity and passive acceptance. This lack of self-confidence and willpower slowly percolates into every activity of daily life. Yoga not only provides relief from the physical symptoms but also relaxes the mind completely. With yoga practice, the mind becomes calm, composed and receptive.

The emotions also settle to some extent. With training in one-pointed awareness through yoga, clarity of mind is restored. The mind starts thinking rationally and making decisions confidently. People come out of their shell of hopelessness and depression and again take charge of their lives.

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Poor Concentration and Mental Clarity: Difficulty in focusing and understanding creates confusion, leading to poor decision-making. The mind, overwhelmed by insecurity or fear, struggles to stay focused, shifting between thoughts (rajas guna) or becoming withdrawn and unresponsive (tamas guna), further deepening insecurity.

Yoga: Through relaxation, yoga helps calm the mind, fostering creativity and mental clarity. Practices like breath awareness, Bhramari pranayama, nadi shodhana, and yoga nidra promote relaxation. Concentration techniques such as trataka, ajapa japa, and mantra japa strengthen focused attention. Practices like antar mouna (witnessing thoughts) help address the root causes of fear, and bhakti yoga awakens inner strength to overcome it.

Low Self-Esteem: Negative emotions can lower self-worth and lead to feelings of insecurity.

Yoga: Yoga nidra helps release negative emotions, while practices like sadbhavana (goodwill meditation) and bhakti yoga promote love, nurturing, and protection. Jnana yoga (self-reflection and analysis) can also reduce the power of these negative emotions by cultivating logic and intuition.

Weak Willpower: Lack of willpower can hinder personal growth and motivation.

Yoga: Breath awareness strengthens the connection to the inner self, and practices like ajapa japa and trataka enhance concentration, building willpower. Yoga nidra also supports regaining strength, while bhakti yoga fosters emotional balance through faith and connection with a higher power, supporting inner resolve.

So these disturbing mental conditions may be poor concentration and difficulty in understanding. So this limitation leads to difficulty in understanding the situation.

It hampers the process of learning and acquiring new skills. It creates confusion in the mind. The mind is unable to make decisions promptly and correctly. Lack of mental clarity complicates all other issues of practical importance. Many unnecessary thoughts preoccupy the insecure and fearful mind.

Such a mind jumps from one thought to another under the effect of rajas guna. At other times, under the effect of Tamas Guna, it withdraws into its shells and becomes totally unresponsive. In both of these states, the mind cannot be applied effectively to anything. It cannot concentrate on anything and therefore cannot grasp or understand anything.

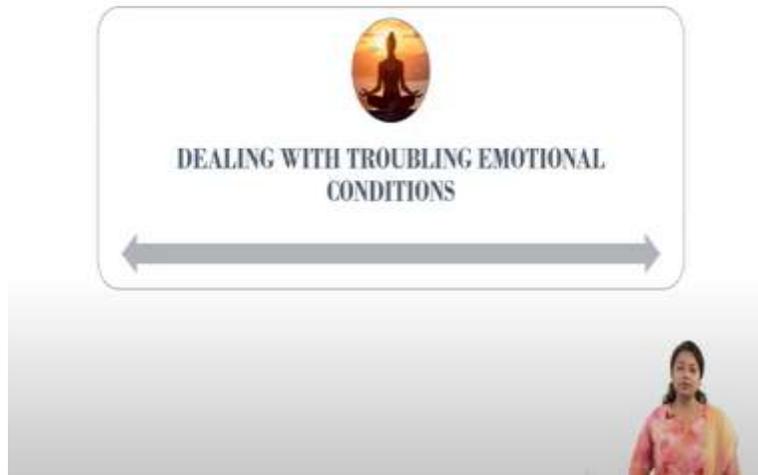
This compounds the feeling of insecurity. Yoga through its ability to relax the mind awakens creativity which is the ability to find a solution to an obstacle. Awareness of the breath, Bhramri Pranayam, Nadi Shodhan Pranayam and Yoga Nidra are primary practices for inducing relaxation. Yoga re-establishes the power of focused awareness through concentration techniques such as Trataka, Ajapa japa and Mantra chanting. In the practice of Antar mouna as well, the practitioner is guided to observe various thoughts and feelings as a drashta or witness. In the hands of adept or under the guidance of a skilled teacher, Antar mouna is a very powerful practice to go to the root cause of fear and then to deal with that fear.

Bhakti Yoga can awaken our innate strength which helps us face all fears. Low self-esteem is also experienced by the subjects. Through the wonderful practice of Yoga Nidra, the opportunity to work out these emotions are provided. The power of these negative emotions can also be reduced by cultivating the opposite positive emotions of love or nurturing or by the protection generated during Sadbhavana, goodwill meditation or by Bhakti Yoga. These negative emotions can also be dealt within contemplative, self-analytic Jnana Yoga practices using logic and intuition.

The subject also experiences weak willpower very often. So, the yogic intervention of breath awareness is the first step towards re-establishing our connection with the inner self. Once we have laid a foundation, with the breath awareness, dharana or concentration practices of Ajapa Japa and Tratak are the leading tools for this purpose. Yog Nidra is another useful tool for regaining willpower. Bhakti Yoga practices help to balance disturbed emotions. In Bhakti Yoga, it is essential to have faith in the Lord and to feel a relationship or bond with Him.

Bhava or feeling in the vehicle on which the bhakta or the devotee, the practitioner rides top, meet the Lord.

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Let's take a look at the emotional bothering conditions. Let's take a look at the disturbing emotional bothering conditions.

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A diagnosis of cancer tips our emotional balance. The ongoing physical discomforts and suffering aggravate the balance.

The root cause behind the emotional upheavals that a person with cancer undergoes is the feeling of insecurity which is called *Abhivivesha* in yogic terms. The person is not sure about their lifespan, the amount of suffering that is ahead, their own capacity to cope

with it, the ability to cope with the additional financial burden and the future of family members who may be left behind. Through yoga, a person can regain their emotional balance. Yoga can be the best counselor and friend. Yoga helps one establishing a link with the innermost corner of one's being.

This provides an unshakable support to rely upon. The unknown and half-known truths about the cancer itself and also about death and life after death generate a great amount of fear and anxiety. Spiritual guidance and practices in such cases can resolve many fears about suffering, the dying process, death and life after death. Yoga practices help clear the clouds of doubts, restore self-confidence and allow the bright sun of clarity in understanding the situation and deciding on coping strategies to shine in one's intellect. Yoga allows the heart to open to an acceptance of that which is beyond one's capacity to know or to change. Yogic spiritual practices help cleanse the conscious, subconscious and unconscious levels of the mind of this sense of guilt which often weighs heavily on one's heart preventing inner peace.

When unresolved, this sense of guilt can result in feelings of frustration, and anger against oneself, family members or caregivers, society at large or even the higher self or God. Difficulties and limitations experienced in performing daily routine jobs can be another trigger for difficult emotions. Waiting for test results, sitting outside the treatment procedures or being in a crowd can also trigger stress or difficult emotions. Common emotional imbalances resolve around the emotional states of anxiety, depression, fear, guilt, self-pity, frustration and grief.

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• Yoga for Emotional Stability:

- A yogic lifestyle with awareness is key to stabilizing negative emotions.
- Regular practice of cleansing kriyas, asana, and pranayama helps release stagnant energy (prana) and ensures its smooth flow throughout the body, preventing emotional outbursts.
- Hatha yoga clears blockages in the nadis (energy channels), allowing a balanced flow of both physical and mental energy, leading to emotional stability.

• Patanjali's Eight Limbs of Yoga:

- Yamas (ethical guidelines) and Niyamas (personal observances) are foundational to emotional balance.
- Yamas include truthfulness (satya), non-violence (ahimsa), honesty (asteya), mindfulness (brahmacharya), and non-possessiveness (aparigraha).
- Niyamas include cleanliness (shaucha), contentment (santosha), austerity (tapas), self-study (svadhyaya), and surrender to higher will (ishwara pranidhana).
- Incorporating even one of these principles promotes inner transformation, calms emotional turmoil, and brings clarity to the mind.

• Service to Others:

- Serving others, whether through humanitarian work, caring for animals, or protecting the environment, can shift the focus away from personal suffering, changing karma and its effects.

By practicing yoga and adopting ethical and spiritual guidelines, emotional upheavals can be soothed, leading to greater emotional balance and clarity.



How yoga can provide a helping hand in dealing with emotional conditions is a topic to discuss.

A yogic lifestyle lived with awareness is the most simple and most basic step to stabilize our negative emotions. Regular practice of cleansing kriyas, asanas and pranayama will mobilize the stagnant prana or energy and ensure its free flow throughout the body. When the nadis or the energy meridians, the passages for the movement of prana are obstructed, the prana bottles up at a certain point usually due to some trigger. It bursts out wildly in the form of emotion whether positive or negative. Hatha yoga cleansing kriyas, asanas and pranayamas ensure unobstructed nadis and a free, smooth and controlled flow of physical energy as well as the mental energy.

This means a smooth, balanced flow of both physical and mental energy leading to emotional stability and constructive expression of the feelings. Patanjali's eight limbs of yoga begin with Yama guidelines for social conducts and Niyam guidelines for inner conduct. In fact, the Yamas and Niyamas do not belong only to Rajyoga but to all religions and spiritual paths of the world. In Rajyoga there are five yamas and five niyamas and in other systems there may be a few more. The practice of serving humanity or other animals or planet earth can also bring an end to personal sufferings by changing the focus and changing the karma and its fruits. Thank you.