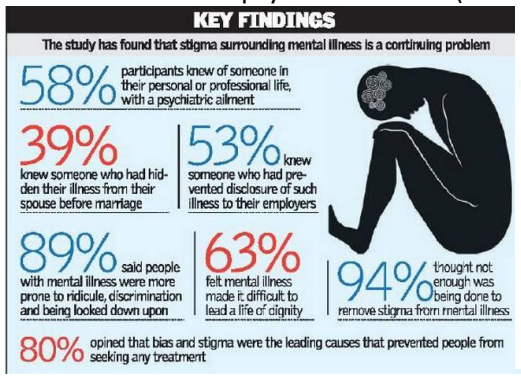
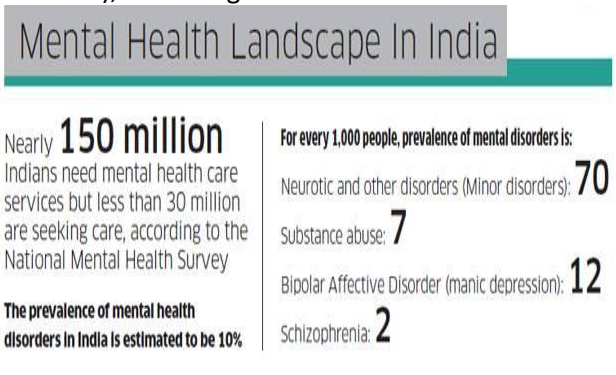
In India, misconceptions about mental illness are pervasive, and the lack of understanding can have serious consequences for millions of people who have psychiatric illness (mental illness), according to the National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia and Depression (NARSAD).







In our country, the main culprit that is influencing people's attitudes toward mental illness is the stigma associated with mental disorders, which is rooted deep in the cultural beliefs and myths about mental disorders and that result in people avoiding association with individuals who suffer from mental illness as well as their families. Furthermore, untreated mental disorders may produce negative health consequences. Stigma can manifest in different forms, such as fear, bias, embarrassment, rejection, and avoidance. It worsens the experience of having a mental disorder by becoming a barrier that holds people and their families back from seeking professional help. Some people are embarrassed by individuals with mental disorders. Cultural beliefs, myths, and misconceptions about mental disorders develop negative attitudes toward mental disorders and those who suffer from it. As a result of negative opinions about mental disorders, individuals tend to self stigmatize , which results in either not seeking professional mental health care or hindering the treatment and recovery of the person with a mental disorder.

According to the study of the data we have collected since past 10 years, it is seen that individuals with mental disorders not only experience stigma and social rejection but they and their families also face employment, economic, social, and education marginalization. Culture influences how people perceive pathologies and label disorders, and how they react to them emotionally, and then guide them in expressing their suffering. Faith healing practices in India in cases of major psychiatric disorders like Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorders, or in OCDs, etc. People are also not comfortable having a marriage with an individual recovered from mental disorder. Some people associate psychological distress with bad karma. Most of the trauma survivors perceive their mental dysfunction as karma of a past life. Their experiences of mental illness were sins manifesting in their present lives. The trauma survivors perceived the sufferings and psychological trauma as bad karma and avoided seeking mental health service because of the stigma associated with revealing their bad karma. People believe that God was punishing those suffering from mental health for their past sins People attribute illness as results of "black magic". Another prevalent misconception in India is that mental illness is due to the patient 'not getting married at proper age', and that marriage will cure his/her sexual frustration or problem and thereby cure his/her mental illness. The stigmatization of individuals who are going through psychological distress creates hurdles for people from seeking mental health care; as a result, they may tend to seek help from traditional healers. Some people may visit a general physician for help because it is not as stigmatizing as it is to see mental health professionals. These individuals and their families turn to mental health services as a last resort. There have been many cases where some families have even registered patients under false names at our hospital / clinic to remain anonymous.

In the present study, for psychiatric illness, most cases contacted faith healers as the primary helping agency. However, subsequently, after not getting any relief, they sought the help of other agencies, such as, allopathic practitioners, traditional healers, and so on. The psychiatric treatment was taken as a last resort when all other treatments had failed. A study on the treatment of psychiatric disorders in India observed that in view of the paucity of facilities, 80% of the population had to depend on indigenous treatments consisting of Ayurvedic and Unani systems of medicine, religious treatments consisting of prayers, fasting, and so on, as also various witchcrafts and magical rituals. The situation is more or less the same even today, and not surprisingly 68.5% of the cases in our study contacted faith healers as the primary helping agency. Another study in India has noted that a substantial number of patients suffering from severe mental disorders seek non-professional care. Although, the ancient wisdom may have some role in the treatment of mental disorders, there is a need for generating awareness in the psychiatric patients in India to get professional help.

The traditional healers, while dealing with psychiatric patients, often hide their inability to understand and treat these disorders and attribute them to supernatural causes, further enhancing the misbeliefs of these patients. A study on the Indian indigenous healers observed that relatively more healers than doctors revealed their diagnoses to the patient; and that the healers, when they did diagnose, did so in terms of 'tick', and 'evil' and treatment was largely with ashes, mullets, and holy water. Psychiatric patients used to go through different traditional and faith healers, including indigenous methods of exorcism, before arriving to proper care. This caused a delay in presentation, which was largely attributable to the stigma associated with such illnesses, which in turn, led to suffering, and affected the outcome.





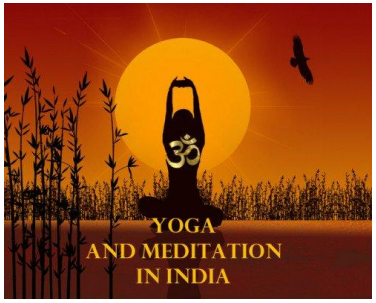


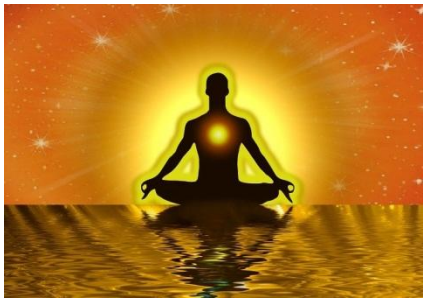











Yoga is a group of physical, mental, and spiritual practices or disciplines which originated in ancient India. Yoga in Indian traditions, however, is more than physical exercise; it has meditative and spiritual core. One of the six major orthodox schools of Hinduism is also called Yoga, which has its own epistemology and metaphysics, and is closely related to Hindu Samkhya philosophy. It is a meditative means of discovering dysfunctional perception and cognition, as well as overcoming it for the release from suffering, inner peace and salvation. It is the raising expansion of consciousness from oneself to being coextensive with everyone and everything. Yoga is a workout for not only our body, but for our mind and emotions, as well.

With the modern world being as hectic as it is, the fact that most people live sedentary lives only increases the buildup of stress in the mind. Practicing yoga for just a few minutes can rid our body and mind of the stress that has accumulated throughout our day. Yoga is one of the best ways to calm a disturbed mind and bring ourselves to a place of peace.

When practicing yoga, because your attention is focused on the most present parts of yourself (your body and breath), you create a state of increased of awareness, which brings the mind to the present state moment, where it can stay happy and focused. When your mind is relaxed, happy and content, you are better able to be present for others and sensitive to your own behaviour and how it affects those around you. Yoga and meditation help to maintain a happy and positive state of mind and those effects extend out to your ability to listen, be attentive and have compassion.

Your brain is a marvelous organ capable of doing the unbelievable. Protecting its sanity and well-being should be the top priority. Many factors degenerate the brain, allowing psychiatric disorders to set in. To avoid this, strengthen and maintain your brain's capabilities by practicing the following 5 yoga poses.

These 5 yoga poses are the best form of exercises that improve brain function. Stress and anxiety can cause your brain to malfunction, and that is what yoga can help avert. These 7 yoga poses can regulate the vagus nerve that deals with your body's mood and stress levels.



Bhramari Pranayama (Humming Bee Breathing)
Releases negative emotions like anger, agitation, frustration, and anxiety
Improves concentration and memory
Builds confidence



Paschimottanasana (Seated Forward Bend)
Stretches the spine, helps relieve stress
Relaxes the mind by removing negative emotions like irritability and anger



Setu Bandhasana (Bridge Pose)
Strengthens and stretches the neck and spine
Relaxes tight muscles
Improves blood circulation to the brain
Helps calm the brain and the nervous system, thereby reducing anxiety, stress, and depression



Sarvangasana (Shoulder Stand)
Regulates and normalizes the functioning of thyroid and parathyroid glands
Nourishes the brain as more blood reaches the pineal and hypothalamus glands
Helps improve all cognitive functions



Halasana (Plow Pose)
Helps improve blood flow to the brain and calm the nervous system
Stretches the back and neck, reducing stress and fatigue