

EATING DISORDERS

- I. **Introduction:** When the child's inner life is ignored and or squelched, not nurtured, the child will turn to some coping mechanism to gain control, fill the void, establishing a pattern that will continue until overpowered by deeper urges of the soul.

Definition: The person substitutes a relationship with food for meaningful relationships with others and to address separation with nature and natural rhythms and harmonies.

TYPES:

Anorexia: Control over body image is satisfied by deliberate self-starvation. Accompanied by distorted body-image and low self-esteem.

Bullemia: Control over body image is accomplished through binge-purge cycle (vomiting, laxatives/diuretics, excessive exercise in combination). Ritualized eating

Obesity: No control over body image or food intake resulting in overweight—attempt to nurture self by surrounding self with extra flesh.

II. The Koshas

A. Anamaya Kosha: The main systems affected are the digestive, nervous, and endocrine system although respiratory, muscular, skeletal and circulatory are affected as well.

1. Digestive: irregular feeding and elimination can lead to inflammation, constipation, diarrhea. Hunger appostat ceases to function. Ama collects.
2. Nervous: Anxiety and depression are associated with this disorder. Difficulty in focus and concentration due to obsessive-compulsive nature of the disease. Stream of negative thoughts. Restlessness.
3. Endocrine: Hormone balance for metabolic function (pancreas, thyroid) is disturbed as is reproductive cycle in women.
4. Skeletal-Muscular: Muscles, bones and joint can get stressed from poor nutrition and over-exercise; poor self-esteem leads to poor posture, which effects breathing and circulation. Hatred of body areas can lead to poor circulation and oxygenation to that area.

B. Pranamaya Kosha: 1-4th Chakras can be out of balance; 6th and 7th can be attuned.

1st chakra: frequent fear, lack of discipline

2nd chakra: overly emotional, poor boundaries alternating with emotional numbness, fear of pleasure, rigidity

3rd chakra: weak will, poor self-esteem, passive alternates with dominating, blaming, aggressive

4th chakra: deficient—can feel shy, lonely, isolated

5th chakra: communication issues, speaking my truth

6th chakra: insight, inspired

7th chakra: unity consciousness

Vayus: Samana vayu disturbed, apana vayu deficient, udana vayu excessive

C. Manomaya Kosha: Samskaras evident here are low self-esteem, obsessive compulsive behavior, fear of intimacy, shame and guilt. Mistaken belief that this body is permanent, identification with body; anger and repressed emotions

D. Vijnanamaya Kosha: Separation from Self--attention is directed externally to artificial and unrealistic ideals away from the Self. Lack of understanding of the transience of the body, emotions and material world. Attachment.

E. Anandamaya Kosha: Separation from God, nature, source and others.

- III. Stress Response: The sympathetic nervous system is overactive due to constant fear, anger and anxiety from this disease. This in turn disturbs the endocrine system.

- IV. Ayurvedic Perspective: Depending on one's constitution, the imbalances will show up differently.

Vata Excess: anxiety, negative thoughts, nervous, restless, bloating, poor digestion, cold in extremities, exhaustion

Pitta Excess: Angry, impatient, vain, self-righteous, critical, compulsive behavior, Type A

Kapha Excess: depressed, dull, aches and pains

V. Wellness factors: How can these separations be healed?

Asanas that soothe Vata and Pitta will begin to introduce a sense of harmony into the body-mind. Restorative poses that open the rib cage will allow deeper, open breathing, which will assist in soothing Vata and Pitta imbalance, calming the nervous system, and begin to enhance circulation. It will also allow samskaras to surface and be let go of.

Asanas that strengthen the body from the ground up (standing poses, standing balancing poses) will increase a sense of grounding, strengthening chakras 1-3. Grounding will also assist in releasing samskaras. Gradually work up to asanas that are intense and challenging to meet the intense level of anxiety associated with this disease. Spinal flexibility as in half moon (working laterally, backward and forward) will begin to tonify the nervous system and improve posture. Prone floor poses, such as cobra series, will tonify the digestive system and help promote regularity, strength, and harmony in digesting food, ideas, and experiences.

Pranayamas at first need to be soothing, to begin the process of promoting relaxation and harmony. But after a while, clients will get bored unless they have an intense practice to match the intensity of their still unsatisfied longings. Langhana leading to Brahmara pranayamas, as fire is required to cleanse the body of its physical toxins and impure thoughts. Also a practice which focuses on awareness of the chakras, their meaning, and how opening them can bring the unity they seek.

Awarenesses: Cultivate awareness of feelings as they arise, teach the process of letting go of samskaras so that dissociation no longer perpetuates the problem. Accept responsibility for choices—learn that what the mind thinks helps create our reality. Teach goal setting and cultivate self-acceptance and honoring where I am today. Heal relationships through forgiveness and communication. Teach awareness of rhythms of nature (for example, moon cycles and rituals that can be done around nurturing and honoring the Self; goal-setting). Cultivate true talents and interests (why did God bring me to life? What is my mission here?) and seek the company of positive enlightened people. Play, have fun, find out what you enjoy and do it!

Meditation is not usually recommend during early stages of healing due to obsessive nature of the anxieties, negative thoughts and depression. **Guided imagery** focusing on sensory experience can be very relaxing and soothing. **Activity** is much better, as is sensory pleasures (a walk in the fresh air, gardening, aromatherapy, an artistic hobby, listening to music, dancing, window-shopping, any activity which involves textures, or cultivation of food as an art form, or eating as a sacred act of sharing). The emphasis is to get the person up and involved, as this disease can be socially isolating. Trust is hugely important as fear of betrayal is a trigger to the disease behavior.

VI. CLASS for BULLEMLIA

Body Awareness: Go inside a body part or area that you feel drawn to—tight, painful, difficult to access, energy). Take your full concentration to that area and begin to compress or contract around it. Continue compressing more and more till you imagine it disappearing into a black hole. Hold this state for a few moments, and then slowly begin to release it. Let the sensation slowly expand from that area and notice and feel the sensations fully. Let them expand as far out into and beyond the body as possible. Notice if there are any places that resist the flow of sensation.

Pranayama: Nadi Shodana—alternate nostril breathing for balancing, and Anuloma Krama—3 short inhales followed by long exhale. Left nostril for Langhana

Select from the following Asanas: to open muladara and for anxiety and digestion

1. Bridge to spinal rolling (dynamic then static)
2. Abdominal strengtheners – boat, half boat, wide boat
3. Supta padotthanasana – balance on back while holding onto big toes or heels
4. Pavana muktasana – wind releasing pose
5. Sun Salute with high lunge to warrior (sun salutation B)
6. Ardha Chandrasana series (lateral stretch to each side, backward bend, forward bend)
7. Ardha Chandrasana Iyengar style (from triangle balance on one foot and one hand) very light producing asana
8. Separate leg stretching to goddess pose (relaxing to grounding)

9. Uttkatasana (grounding)
10. Squat – malasana grounding
11. Cobra series (cobra, locust, bow)
12. Half tortoise, camel, rabbit
13. Marichyasana – spinal twist
14. Sitting or Savasana relaxation

Guided Imagery: Scenery with imagery that appeals to visual sense, sense of smell, hearing, textures.

Mudra: Kalesvara Mudra which calms thoughts and agitated feelings. Touch thumbs and middle fingers to each other, fold other fingers in. Thumbs to chest, elbows wide.

Meditation, relaxation: "Light", by Nelson Mandela

Mantra: Om Sri Chandraya Namaha – Cooling moon, stomach, lymphatic, sympathetic NS

Light

**Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerfully beyond measure.
It is our light,
Not our darkness, that most frightens us.
We ask ourselves,
Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?
Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.
Your playing small doesn't serve the world.
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking
so that other people won't feel insecure around you.
We were born to make manifest
The glory of God that is within us.
It's not us in some of us:
It's in everyone.
And as we let our own light shine,
We unconsciously give other people
Permission to do the same.
As we are liberated from our own fear;
Our presence automatically liberates others.**

*--Written by Marianne Williamson and used by Nelson Mandela in his
inauguration speech.*