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***The Theory and Practice of Yoga as a treatment module for addictive disorders***

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Yoga for wellbeing is gaining popularity universally. Its acceptance as a complementary form of treatment for many physical as well as psychological problems is being recognized by many health professionals all over the world. It has especially been researched in the treatment of addictions for several decades. One study performed by the Harvard Medical School found that yoga was as effective as traditional psychotherapy in assisting clients who were part of a methadone program (Shaffer, LaSalvia, & Stein 1997). However not many people know that yoga is much more than the popularly known physical stretches and poses. It promulgates a practical theory for emotional as well as physical wellbeing.

The term yoga literally means “union”; in a broad sense it implies the union of the body and the mind. It is based on a theory that includes 8 aspects. Body postures and stretches, breathing techniques and meditation are the three most commonly known aspects of Yoga. The other aspects relate to relationships and communication with others as well as with oneself, attitude, the spirit of enquiry, state of relaxation, restraint especially withdrawing from engagement through the senses etc. The use of this technique as a method of psychological intervention is slowly gaining ground in the field of mental health. It offers a long-lived method to overcome suffering and reach higher consciousness. Nespor (2001a) incorporated yoga practices of meditation, postures, breathing, with attention to the 8 aspects to help people overcome

their addictions. Yoga uses each of these tools, and through their practice improves regulation of the mind-brain-body system, it enhances self-direction through self-awareness. The result is an accessible set of invaluable interventions for overcoming psychological problems. As per contemporary interventions for addiction, it also runs a 12 step programme as well as the Jim Maclaine Inter ACT Self Help Therapy Programme.

Translating this into implementation encompasses a thorough bio-psycho-socio-spiritual assessment and developing individualised yoga practice programmes for each client. Depending on the capacity of the client, these practices may involve regular *asana*, breath and chanting practices and theory aimed at surrender and reducing anxiety levels – which can trigger drug and alcohol use relapse – and aid with their recovery from addiction.