

When You're Ready, Just Let Go!

Understanding the Effect of Emotional Energy on the Physical Body in the Treatment of Eating Disorders

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It was when I stopped searching for home within others and lifted the foundations of home within myself I found there were no roots more intimate than those between a mind and body that have decided to be whole.

Rupi Kaur

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Learning Objectives:

Describe the Mind/Body disconnect created by Eating Disorders (ED) and other mental health issues

Explain the connection between emotional energy and the physical body

Discuss simple mindfulness practices to release emotional energy from the physical body and clarify emotional wording connected to body sensation

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To understand the effect of emotional energy on the physical body, we need to contemplate Chakras. We could spend a lifetime studying Chakras and never learn all there is to know. The information in this webinar is a brief compilation of the most “agreed upon” areas of Chakra study.

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Chakras – Making the Connection

You may be familiar with the word “Chakra”. It is a Sanskrit word that means “wheel” and is used in many therapeutic modalities. Chakra sound association is used in Music Therapy, Chakra color association is used in Art Therapy, Chakra movement association is used in Yoga Therapy, and Chakra breath association is used in Relaxation/Meditation Therapy. While all of these associations are part of Chakra study, they merely reflect the main issue – physical engagement with emotions.

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Chakras – Making the Connection

Simply stated, Chakras are the physical map of how emotional energy affects our physical body. “Where” we feel emotions can often be attributed to “why” we feel emotions. Understanding this emotional map can give us insight into mind/body disconnect and associated avoidance patterns.

The study of Chakras is the study of Energy Waves!

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Interpreting/translating Energy

The universe is made up of energy waves. Light, sound, thermal energy, etc. The significance of the energy is present when it is interpreted.

- Light: the light spectrum is interpreted as color – various light waves moving at various speeds.
- Sound: the sound spectrum is interpreted as tone – various sound waves moving at various speeds.
- Thermal: the thermal spectrum is interpreted as temperature – various thermal waves moving at various speeds.

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Interpreting/translating Energy

While energy waves always exist, human translation gives meaning to the diversity of energy experience:

- Light/color: light waves always exist, but color is an interpretation of the optic nerve
- Sound/tone: sound waves always exist, but tone is an interpretation of the tympanic membrane and inner ear
- Thermal/temperature: thermal energy waves always exist, but temperature is an interpretation of the integumentary and other systems

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Similarly, emotions have a wavelength and we are the interpreters

- Just like light, sound and thermal, emotions are an energy wave, and we can feel their effect in the physical body
- Different emotions must have a different wavelength because we feel them in different areas of the body
- “Where” we feel an emotion is often due to “why” we feel an emotion – “emotional theme”
- We can map these emotional themes within the body and identify physical symptoms associated

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ENERGY FLOW

Nervous System

- Millions of nerves
- All link into the spinal cord
- If there is an injury at a certain location, it can affect all the nerves past the injury
- A healthy nervous system has free-flowing energy

Chakra System

- Millions of Chakras
- All link into the 7 main Chakras
- If there is an “injury” at a certain location, it can affect all the emotional themes past the injury
- A healthy emotional system has free-flowing energy

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Feeling versus Emoting

- Physical feeling/primal sensation comes first
 - My big toe hurts
 - My heart/chest hurts
- Emotions are words we use to describe/explain/justify/understand the physical sensations
 - I'm angry that I kicked the corner of the chair and hurt my big toe
 - I'm upset I broke up with my partner

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Our body doesn't know the difference between a physical injury and an emotional injury

The body's response to an injury is to send heat and moisture to the area to help minimize further injury and analyze the situation – this is the inflammation response. This physical response is the same whether I bang my knee on the couch or I break up with my partner. The body experiences both circumstances as an equally meaningful injury. This is why feeling and emoting are so confusing!

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I'm not sure what it is.....

Clients often state, "I feel something, but I'm not sure what it is; all I know is that I need to eliminate this feeling!"


The need to eliminate "feeling" may cause exercise issues in eating disorders. Sometimes, we don't have connection to what an emotion "feels like".

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This may lead to inaccurate emotional connection/explanation

- Here are some physical sensations – identify what the emotion is:
 - Contraction/tightening in the pit of the stomach
 - Butterflies in the stomach and heart
 - Rapid Breathing
 - Tightening/soreness in the throat
 - Heat in the face
 - Fluid/tears coming to the eyes
- What is/are the emotion(s)?

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Now, let's zoom out and see the whole Picture:

- Imagine you are standing on a beach at sunset and your partner is holding a ring box – what are the emotions?
 - Clenching/tightening in the pit of the stomach
 - Butterflies in the stomach and heart
 - Rapid Breathing
 - Tightening/soreness in the throat
 - Heat in the face
 - Fluid/tears coming to the eyes
- Why do we always lean towards the negative?

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BECAUSE...

**Life comes first,
Living comes after life is secure**

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Primal Instinct vs Emotional Intelligence

Limbic System

- Anxiety
- Fear
- Flight/fight/freeze
- Conditioned Reaction

Prefrontal Cortex

- Emotional Regulation
- Emotional Interpretation
- Identify Physical Cues
- Mindful Exploration

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Chakras – Making the Connection

- Working through the physical aspect of emotional energy is often a road to breakthrough
- Recognizing emotional patterns can help identify incorrect/negative thinking patterns and association
- Chakras may also align with emotional stages of development – this is called “age of resonance”

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Understanding and Practicing Congruent Energy

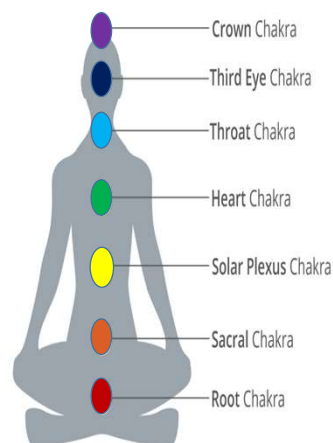
- **Stages of Development – Physical Body**
 - Age when a baby rolls over/sits up
 - Age when a baby walks/talks
 - Age when a child reads/rides a bike
 - If we break a leg, we re-visit learning to walk
- **Age of Resonance – Emotional Body**
 - Emotions have “stages of development” also
 - Age when we focus/learn emotional intelligence
 - If we have an emotional “injury”, we re-visit learning that emotion

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Chakras – Making the Connection

There are 7 main emotional ideas:

- Root: survival – I HAVE (0-7)
- Sacral: personality – I FEEL (7-14)
- Solar Plexus: power – I CAN (14-21)
- Heart: relationships – I LOVE (28-35)
- Throat: communication – I SPEAK (35-42)
- Third eye: wisdom – I SEE (35-42)
- Crown: spirit/intuition – I KNOW (42-49)



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Root Chakra – Muladhara – I Have (0-7)

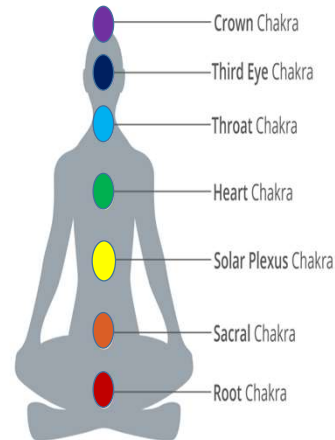
Color: Red

Location: Perineal floor, legs

Physical: Elimination issues, running, extremity shaking; Highly correlated with sense of smell

Emotional: What is mine? What do I have the right to? What is my foundation? Am I safe? Can I survive?

May present as “helplessness”



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Sacral Chakra – Svadhisthana – I Feel (7-14)

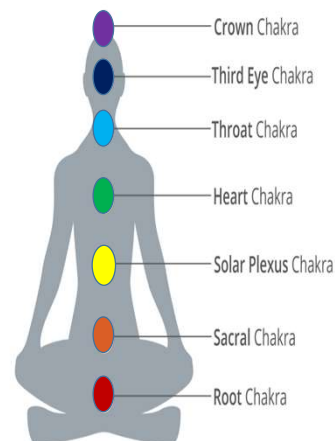
Color: Orange

Location: Base of spine, low abdomen

Physical: Reproductive issues, low back/low abdominal issues; Highly correlated with sense of taste

Emotional: What is my personality? What do I like/dislike? Do others approve of my personal preferences? How do I know others love me?

May present as “confused”



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Solar Plexus Chakra – Manipura – I Can (14-21)

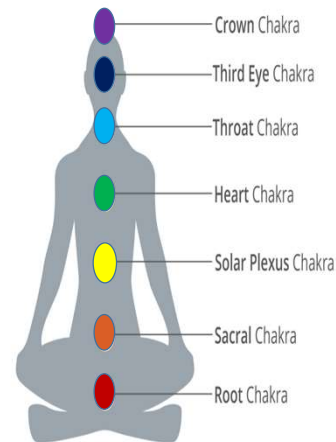
Color: Yellow

Location: Mid-abdomen, “6-pack” area

Physical: Digestive issues, Intestinal issues;
Highly correlated with sense of sight

Emotional: What can I do? What do I have
control over? What/where is my power?

May present as “passive or aggressive”



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Heart Chakra – Anahata – I Love (28-35)

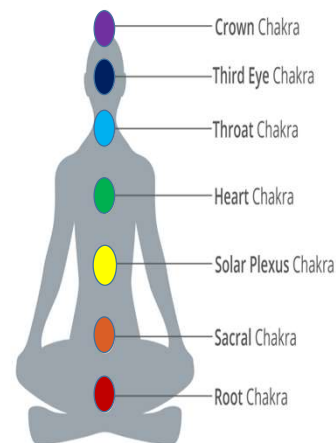
Color: Green

Location: Heart, lungs, arms

Physical: Breathing issues, heart issues,
constant crossed arm position, physically
“touchy” or “stand-offish; Highly correlated
with sense” of touch

Emotional: Who am I connected to? What
are my passions? How do I express myself
in the world? How do I love others?

May present as “hyper/hypo-attached”



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Throat Chakra – Vissudha – I Speak (35-42)

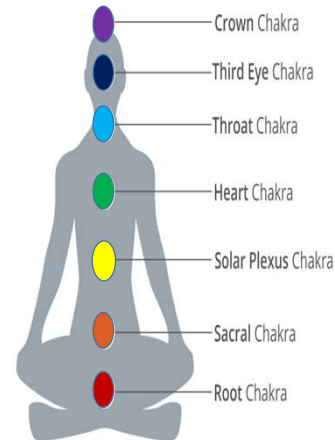
Color: Teal/Light Blue

Location: Throat, shoulders, neck jaw

Physical: Sore throat, neck and shoulder tension, TMJ, teeth grinding, sensitivity to sound; Highly correlated with sense of hearing

Emotional: What can I say? How do I communicate? Can anyone hear me? Can I argue? How do I verbally express my opinion and needs?

May present as “excessively chatty” or “silent”



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Brow Chakra(third eye) – Ajna – I See (35-42)

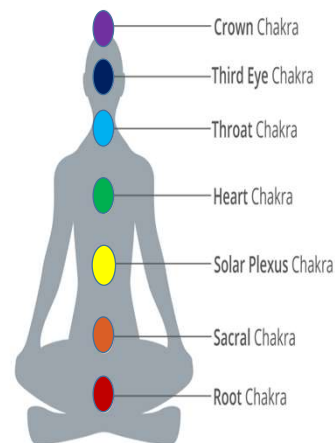
Color: Royal/Navy Blue

Location: Brow/forehead, eyes, ears, cranium

Physical: Headaches, eye strain, sensitivity to light; Highly correlated with sensing emotional energy in the environment

Emotional: What do I know? What do I think? What have I learned? What do I understand? What do I want to learn?

May present as “know it all”



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Crown Chakra – Sahasrara – I Know (42-49)

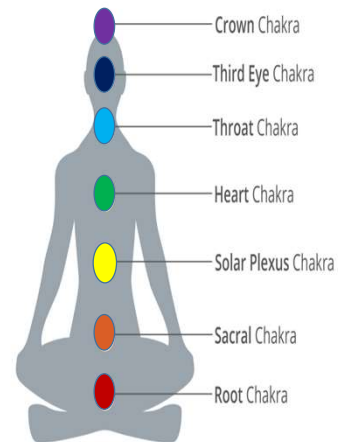
Color: Purple

Location: Top of head

Physical: Homeostasis, all body systems working well; Highly correlated with relaxation/inability to relax

Emotional: What do I believe? How do I impact the world? What is my purpose? Who am I?"

May present as "rigid beliefs"



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Patterns of physical/emotional avoidance can often be identified by using the Chakra Map with clients.

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This circular diagram illustrates 100 related words for four primary emotions: Happy, Sad, Angry, and Fearful. The words are organized into concentric rings, with colors corresponding to the emotion's family. The central words are Happy (yellow), Sad (blue), Angry (red), and Fearful (orange). The words are arranged in concentric rings around the center, with colors corresponding to the emotion's family. The words are arranged in concentric rings around the center, with colors corresponding to the emotion's family.

Emotion	Related Words
Happy	Amused, Content, Proud, Powerful, Peaceful, Trusting, Optimistic, Lonely, Vulnerable, Destructive, Guilty, Depressed, Hurt, Relieved, Awful, Disappointed, Disapproving, Critical, Distant, Infuriated, Annoyed, Withdrawn, Numb, Dismissive, Judgmental, Enthusiastic, Joyous, Grateful, Hopeful, Inspired, Isolated, Abandoned, Victimized, Fragile, Grief, Powerlessness, Perseverance, Renowned, Inferior, Empty, Enthusiastic, Joyous, Grateful, Hopeful, Inspired, Isolated, Abandoned, Victimized, Fragile, Grief, Powerlessness, Perseverance, Renowned, Inferior, Empty
Sad	Lonely, Vulnerable, Destructive, Guilty, Depressed, Hurt, Relieved, Awful, Disappointed, Disapproving, Critical, Distant, Infuriated, Annoyed, Withdrawn, Numb, Dismissive, Judgmental, Enthusiastic, Joyous, Grateful, Hopeful, Inspired, Isolated, Abandoned, Victimized, Fragile, Grief, Powerlessness, Perseverance, Renowned, Inferior, Empty, Enthusiastic, Joyous, Grateful, Hopeful, Inspired, Isolated, Abandoned, Victimized, Fragile, Grief, Powerlessness, Perseverance, Renowned, Inferior, Empty
Angry	Disappointed, Disapproving, Critical, Distant, Infuriated, Annoyed, Withdrawn, Numb, Dismissive, Judgmental, Enthusiastic, Joyous, Grateful, Hopeful, Inspired, Isolated, Abandoned, Victimized, Fragile, Grief, Powerlessness, Perseverance, Renowned, Inferior, Empty, Enthusiastic, Joyous, Grateful, Hopeful, Inspired, Isolated, Abandoned, Victimized, Fragile, Grief, Powerlessness, Perseverance, Renowned, Inferior, Empty
Fearful	Disappointed, Disapproving, Critical, Distant, Infuriated, Annoyed, Withdrawn, Numb, Dismissive, Judgmental, Enthusiastic, Joyous, Grateful, Hopeful, Inspired, Isolated, Abandoned, Victimized, Fragile, Grief, Powerlessness, Perseverance, Renowned, Inferior, Empty, Enthusiastic, Joyous, Grateful, Hopeful, Inspired, Isolated, Abandoned, Victimized, Fragile, Grief, Powerlessness, Perseverance, Renowned, Inferior, Empty

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- Disconnect from physical awareness of the body (e.g.: feeling the waistband of pants, feeling “jiggly” movement of body parts, etc.)
- Disconnect from emotions associated with past trauma that may manifest in the physical body
- Disconnect from personal interpretation of physical sensation

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Don't be afraid to physically confront the emotion

- Check in to make sure the emotion is accurately correlated to the physical/primal sensation
- Actively redirect and reconnect emotions connected in error
- Give the emotion physical space to “let go”
- Connect to new physical sensation with positive emotions

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Creating Positive Embodiment

Embodiment is the subjective experience of the world through the physical body as a holistic being. In other words, it is the state of mind/body/spirit congruency in connection.

It is important to identify areas of physical avoidance to determine the source: a) is it a natural inclination of preference (e.g.: some short people may not like basketball) or b) is it an avoidance of energy engagement in that particular area of the body (e.g.: I don't want to be aware of my stomach or this movement reminds me of negative past experience).

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Philosophy in Practice

There are many ways to reconnect mind and body within the therapeutic process:

- **Mindful Stretching:** utilizing simple stretches while asking questions (e.g.: what do you feel when you move this way, etc.)
- Don't be afraid to work with the emotions that come up
- Accepting "down time" as part of health and wellness
- Embracing ebb and flow of mind, body and spirit.
Recognizing that we are not "always on" or "always off"

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Philosophy in Practice

Yoga on the Mat and Breathing Techniques: these go hand-in-hand and support each other. The body moves because we breathe/we breathe because the body moves.


- It is not enough to experience body awareness; we must use physical movement to reconnect to body sensation and reestablish appropriate body responsiveness
- Rumination leads to disconnection. To slow the mind, you must slow the heart; to slow the heart, you must slow the breath. When the breath slows down, awareness and mindfulness occur

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REPLACE BODY IMAGE WITH BODY CONNECTION

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Philosophy in Practice

Living from the inside-out: ED is often driven by external expectations and social cues. Giving permission for self-discovery and self-affirmation builds positive embodiment.

- Contemplative Journaling: asking questions of the self; identifying and affirming core values/beliefs
- “Checking in” throughout the day and mindfully noticing how it feels to inhabit the physical body (Do you “feel” as well as “fill” your entire body?)
- Studying anatomy and physiology allows for a different self-perspective than the reflection in the mirror

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Philosophy in Practice

Relaxation & Meditation: Re (again) Lax (loose) & Meditate (listen). Relax and meditate simply means to get loose again and listen for what comes next.

- It doesn't have to be done in a reclining position with quiet music and low lighting. It's about letting go of "stuff" and becoming connected to the present moment
- It is a learned skill, just like playing the piano or riding a bike. You must practice and explore. It is difficult to master and easy to give up on – but worth the effort!

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Chakra Energy and Positive Embodiment:

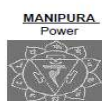
- Allow participants to remain seated and keep eyes open
- Discuss what works for the participant and what doesn't when they are practicing body connection and emotional identification
- Anything that draws the mind and body into the present moment is a form of relaxation and meditation
- Creating positive embodiment is crucial to countering negative body image and rumination.

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We are all a BODY LIVING –
not a BODY IMAGE!

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CHAKRA CHART



	MULADHARA Root	SVADHISTHANA Sacral	MANIPURA Power	ANAHATA Heart	VISSUDHA Throat	AJNA Brow	SAHASRARA Crown
COLOR	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Teal / Light Blue	Indigo / Royal Blue	Purple / Violet
ENDOCRINE	Perineum	Reproductive	Pancreas	Thymus	Thyroid	Pituitary	Pineal
STATEMENT	I HAVE	I FEEL	I CAN	I LOVE	I SPEAK	I SEE	I KNOW
NOTE	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
LOCATION	Base of Spine	Low abdomen, low back, hips	Solar Plexus	Heart area	Throat	Center of Brow	Crown of Head
CENTRAL ISSUE	Survival	Sexuality, emotions	Power, will	Love, relationships	Communication	Intuition, imagination	Awareness
ELEMENT	Earth	Water	Fire	Air	Sound	Light	Thought
MASSAGE DIRECTION	Male - clockwise Female - counter	Male - counter Female - clockwise	Male - clockwise Female - counter	Male - counter Female - clockwise	Male - clockwise Female - counter	Male - counter Female - clockwise	Male - clockwise Female - counter
REFLEXOLOGY LOCATION	Base of Heel, Base of Wrist	Base of Arch, Pulse of Wrist	Center of Arch, Base of Palm	Base of Ball-mount, Center of Palm	Base of Big Toe, Base of Fingers	Center of Big Toe, Top of Little Finger	Top of Big Toe, Top of Fingers
INCENSE	Red Cedar	Gardenia & Ylang-Ylang	Cinnamon & Clove	Winter Pine	Frankincense	Lavender & Mint	White Sandalwood
AGE OF RESONANCE	Conception to 7	7 to 14	14 to 21	28 to 35	35 to 42	35 to 42	42 to 49
MUSIC TYPE	Drumming	Latin Dance	Marches	Choral	Opera	Classical	Chanting
SENSORY ASSOCIATION	Smell	Taste	Vision	Touch	Hearing	Intuition	Bliss
NERVE PLEXUS	Coccyx	Sacrum	Solar Plexus	Tactile	Nervous System	Nervous System	
ARCHETYPES							
Negative	The Victim	The Martyr	The Servant	The Actor	The Silent Child	The Intellectual	The Egoist
Positive	The Mother	Emperor/Empress	The Warrior	The Lover	The Communicator	The Wise Person	The Guru

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