

At Home Within Program

Results of Yoga Nidra / iRest on Reducing Stress in Homeless Shelter Residents with a History of Trauma

The Center of Timelessness Being (CTB) partnered with The Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS) and the Committee on the Shelterless (COTS) in 2007 to deliver yoga nidra / iRest to a population of homeless adults with a history of trauma. Yoga nidra / iRest is a non-dualistic standard nine-step practice developed by psychologist and long-time meditation teacher Richard Miller. The practice centered around mindful awareness, inquiries into the nature of one's mind and body, and teaching several skills for self-regulation through awareness practices. CTB's collaboration was part of the ongoing IONS and COTS 'At Home Within Program' which develops, delivers, and tests the effect of mind-body wellness programs for homeless adults.

The study was comprised of 26 participants spread between 2 groups. Each participant completed the Perceived Stress Scale, The Kellner Symptom Questionnaire, The Quality of Life Scale, and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule both prior to practicing yoga nidra / iRest and just after completing the Yoga Nidra course. The variables being measured within the questionnaires were stress, anxiety, depression, quality of life, and emotional well-being. Participant's prior and post yoga nidra / iRest scores were compared using a paired-samples t-tests.

Statistically significant results were observed for most of the variables measured.
The results show significant positive improvements were made
by most participants practicing yoga nidra / iRest.

Variable	Average Scores Prior to Intervention	Average Scores Following Intervention	p value
Perceived Stress	23.8	17.8	.000
Anxiety (Kellner)	33.2	30.5	0.01
Hostility (Kellner)	30.2	27.4	0.01
Depression (Kellner)	31.3	28.7	0.01
Somatic Symptoms (Kellner)	34.1	31.6	0.01
Negative Affect (PANAS)	39.5	34.7	.000
Fear (PANAS)	23.2	21.7	0.02
Hostility (PANAS)	24.9	22	0.02
Guilt (PANAS)	24.3	21.1	0.03
Sadness (PANAS)	18.9	16.2	0.01
Positive Affect (PANAS)	24.3	26.2	.207 (ns)
Serenity (PANAS)	7.5	9.2	.000
Quality of Life	50.6	54.7	.095 (ns trend)

Note: results not shown – no significant differences in shyness, surprise, joviality, or fatigue

Note: p value of <.05 is considered significant

In addition to observed statistical significance, the positive effect of practicing yoga nidra / iRest was observed in collected qualitative data. Participants were asked open ended questions to see if practicing yoga nidra / iRest changed, for example, their views of themselves or their lives, or the ways they deal with stressors. The preliminary review of the collected data has shown tremendous change between prior and post responses.

The At Home Within Program has included other mind-body practices such as Meditation, Qi Gong, and Hatha Yoga. Facilitators of the At Home Within Program have reported that in comparison to the other practices, the Yoga Nidra Program was the best tolerated intervention. The Yoga Nidra Program had the highest retention/completion rate, and generally appeared most accessible to participants. The results from the At Home Within Program shows yoga nidra / iRest to be a feasible intervention and as having strong initial promise.

