Laughter Yoga in the Workplace: Laughing At Work Makes Business Sense

with Andréa Crisp

Portland Laughter Yoga
Your health actually is a laughing matter!!
Objectives

• Define the problem
• Define Laughter
  • Physical Benefits of Laughter
  • Emotional & mental benefits of Laughter
• 3 Myths of Laughter
• What is Laughter Yoga
• Results of Laughter Yoga in the workplace
• Laughter Yoga Session!! 😊
STRESS!!@#$%@!!

- **Stress** – (noun) the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change. & Bodily or mental tension resulting from factors that tend to alter an existent equilibrium.

- **Change**

- **Dis-stress & Dis-ease**
Stress & Disease

- More than 70% of our illnesses in fact are in some way connected to or made worse by stress.
Good News!

The good news is that laughter really is the best medicine!
What is Laughter? What is Humor?

- Laughter is a physiological response
  - Gestures
  - Sound
- Humor is intellectual, laughter is often the response, but not always
Physical Benefits

- Lowers blood pressure
  - Reduces cortisol
- Enriches our blood & organs with ample oxygen
- Boosts the immune system
- Counts as exercise
  - increases pulmonary & cardiovascular function.
More Physical Benefits

- Reduces pain
  - Increases endorphins
- Relieves anxiety & depression
  - Increases serotonin
- Massages internal organs
  - Aids digestion & healing
- May ensures better sleep & reduces snoring
Mental & Emotional Benefits

- Puts us intensely in the moment
- People who laugh more, worry less
- Laughter is cathartic, help coping
- Laughter lends perspective
- Defusing the 3 most painful emotions:
  - Fear, Anger & Boredom
Even more benefits

- Cultivates joyfulness vs. happiness
- Motion creates emotion
- Laughter breaks barriers
  - The TRUE Universal Language
The History of Laughter

- Norman Cousins, writer
- Dr. William Fry, psychiatrist @ Stanford
- Dr. Lee Berk, @ Loma Linda University
- Dr. Patch Adams, M.D.
Laughter Yoga

- Medical Doctor
- 1995, in India
- Just 5 people in a park
Laughter Yoga in the Workplace
What are the effects of Laughter Yoga on Stress in the workplace?
The subjects: IT professionals.

200 participants were randomly selected from 3 Bangalore IT companies. All were non-smokers aged 20-50 yrs with normal weight, no infections, no alcohol consumption within 4-6 days, not on medications, without high BP, diabetes or other clinical conditions, and had not previously tried or practiced Laughter Yoga.
Bangalore Study Design

- Healthy IT Professionals
- Base Line Assessment
  - Control Group
  - No Intervention
  - Laughter Yoga Group
  - Laughter Yoga Sessions
- Final Assessment
Bangalore Study Results

• Drops in heart rate, blood pressure
• 27% drop in cortisol levels
• Positive emotions increased by 17% and negative emotions dropped by 27%
• Perceived stress dropped significantly
• Alexithymia dropped by almost 9%, indicating a significant improvement in emotional intelligence.
It is remarkable that such significant results were found after only seven 20 minute sessions of Laughter Yoga over a short period of time.

~ Lead Researcher Dr. M S Chaya
Laughter Yoga & Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is the belief in one’s ability to organize and carry out courses of action necessary to achieve a goal or manage a situation (Bandura, 1986).
Personal efficacy testing: the week before, the week after, and 60-90 days after the series of daily sessions.

Laughter Yoga was administered for 15 minutes a day for 14 days.
Self-efficacy Study Results

The Results: Self Competencies

- Assertiveness
- Optimism
- Motivation
- Adaptability
- Self Regulation
- Self Actualization
- Self Acceptance
- Self Awareness

![Graph showing changes in self competencies over time](image)
Why Laughter Yoga in the Workplace?

- Reduce workplace stress
- Reduces sick days
- Lowers healthcare costs
- Creates a positive work environment
- Creates team bonding
- Increases problem solving and creativity
- Improves self-efficacy
- Improves employee performance
Q & A
3 Myths of Laughter

1) You must have a sense of humor to laugh. Laughter is a physiological response to humor.

2) You need to be happy to laugh. Laugh to be joyful & happy!

3) You need to have a reason to laugh. How ‘bout for your health?
Now for some Laughter Yoga!!!

The union of laughter and breath.
What is it?

- New unique physical activity incorporating:
  - Clapping
  - Chanting
  - Yogic Breathing
  - Child-like playfulness
- Group Interaction
- Eye contact
- Laughter Exercises
Contact

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