

Positive Mental Health: A Correlated Study of The Consciousness Based Advait Vedanta and Modern Psychotherapy

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Abstract

In the quest for holistic mental well-being, a unique and effective approach emerges through the integration of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and the ancient Vedic wisdom of the Advait Vedanta (principle of Non-Duality of the Individual Reality and Universal Reality), a philosophical system that underpins many schools of thought in Hinduism. This innovative blend combines the evidence-based practices of modern Psychotherapy CBT with the profound rich teachings of the Advait Vedanta, offering individuals a comprehensive roadmap towards positive mental health.

Drawing from the Research work in CBT, which provides a structured foundation for identifying and challenging negative thought patterns and the behaviors that contribute to mental health issues. On the other hand, the Advait Vedanta offers a rich profound understanding of the SELF, Consciousness and the interconnectedness of all beings. By incorporating the Vedantic principles into therapy, individuals can deepen their Self-awareness, cultivate mindfulness, and align themselves with their inner Self in its real nature and true essence.

Research by Kriyananda (2011) highlights the benefits of incorporating the Advait Vedanta philosophy in therapy, showing promising results in promoting emotional-wellbeing and Self- realization. The integration of CBT and the Vedantic principles offers a unique perspective that not only addresses symptoms but also seeks to uncover the underlying causes of mental distress, guiding individuals towards a more profound sense of purpose and fulfillment.

This integrated approach empowers individuals to navigate the complexities of the mind with a blend of Western psychology and Eastern philosophy, providing a harmonious path towards positive mental health and spiritual growth. By embracing the synergy of CBT and the Advait Vedanta, the individuals can embark on a transformative journey of Self-discovery, resilience, and inner peace.

The ancient rich profound wisdom of the Advait Vedanta and the modern western psychotherapy, both are time-tested, and evidence based verified methodologies which cater for the

mental well-being of an individual in all the spheres of life from the childhood to elderly group. In the search of positive helpful mental well-being processes, people generally look for a psychotherapeutic remedy to cater for the problems of their psyche as traumas, depression, anxiety, and other such related issues of human psyche which some or the other way create a turbulence in the emotional, social and professional lives of an individual, which affects the overall mental health of an individual thereby leading to acute mental illness and severe disorders in many cases. In the same order of addressing the issues of human mental well- being, the ancient practical principles of the Advait Vedanta enriches and serves with its rich and profound insightful methodology of diving into the deepest levels of the human psyche and its progenitor, the Consciousness as the SELF in its real nature and true essence.

Now in this article we are discussing the correlated study of these two practical methodologies of the modern psychology and the eastern philosophical wisdom of the Advait Vedanta in the light of their comparative, complementarities, and their intersections to provide a real holistic and truly purposeful process of mental well-being as in the absolute positive mental health to the individuals and the present-day society as a whole. This new unique new blended therapeutic model will be analyzed as an enhancing the present day modern therapeutic practices and processes by observing how these two ancient and modern processes complement each other in a blended holistic version to serve and promote the mental well- being in our society in all walks of life.

As known through the ancient practices and the scriptural knowledge, the Advait Vedanta is the oldest school of philosophy incorporating the principles of the “Non-Duality” between the Individual SELF as the pure consciousness known as “Jiva” or “Atman” and that of the Universal ultimate reality and totality known as “Brahman”. The individual Jiva or Atman being the Microcosmic whereas the Universal ultimate reality being the Macrocosmic in their very relation to each other. In this school of philosophy, the sense perception of the separation between the two is said to be due to the impact of the grand illusion known as the “Maya” which covers the “Brahman” as an ignorant veil yet active and passive both at the same time in its nature, thereby giving rise to the three operative modes of “Sattva” or Equilibrium mode, “Rajas” or Attraction/Repulsion mode and “Tamas” or Veiling mode.

These three modes of operation of the Maya serve as the building blocks of the entire creation of the existence from the macrocosmic level as in the entire multiverse till the microcosmic level as in the smallest fundamental particles in terms of quantum physics and its energy fields. When the Brahman associates with its own Maya being projected on to it as a reflection then this reflection of the Brahman into Maya with the Sattva or Equilibrium mode, emerges as the “Ishvara” or the “Saguna Brahman” which is the creator of this existence as described above and most known as the God in various other religions of the world. Herein, the true realization of the individual SELF as the Atman identical with the ultimate reality as the Brahman in the absolute oneness being one without a second and second to none, leads to the absolute transcendental ultimate path of liberation or “Moksha” from the Maya or the grand illusion and hence complete liberation from all the worldly miseries which arises in to the individual psyche by the product of these above described the operative modes of the Maya.

Now, as it is evident that in the modern mental health therapeutic process which is also known as Psychotherapy, incorporates the working modality addressing to the mental health issues of an individual, is primarily and majorly through a professional expert of modern psychology who is well trained professionally and equipped with various objectivity based therapeutic tools to investigate the causes and the distinctive thought patterns of an individual which leads to the core of the mental health issue and the behavioral aspects of an individual. The prevalent version and form of such modern psychotherapy models is commonly known as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), which focuses on the investigation and understanding the various traumatic thought patterns of an individual and thereafter alter them with its evidence based therapeutic tools, methods and practices to balance them out in order to provide sufficient improved mental health and well-being in relation to emotions and other social behavioral temporal aspects of that individuals psyche and the personality such then the individual leads a relativistic harmonious social and professional life in the society. These therapeutic tools, methods and practices are purely objective in their nature and performed under the close supervision and guidance of a professionally trained therapist only.

This methodology of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has proven to be highly beneficial in many of the psyche disorders of mental health such as the bipolar disorder, multiple personality disorder, depression, past traumas, anxiety, fear psychosis, etc. The individuals who undergo these therapeutic processes and tools need to go through a series of sessions which are decided by the professional therapist only, after the intervention and diagnosis of the exact mental health issue of that individual. These deliver remarkable effects and improvement in the personality of an individual in the due course of time and duration of the therapy. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is an evidence-primarily based totally mental intervention that focuses on identifying and modifying negative thought patterns and behaviors that contribute to various mental health issues. As outlined in the information provided, CBT operates through a structured framework, enabling individuals to explore the core thought processes that underlie their psychological difficulties, such as depression, anxiety, and trauma. By employing a range of therapeutic tools and techniques, trained therapists guide clients in recognizing maladaptive thoughts and replacing them with more constructive ones, ultimately promoting emotional well-being and improved social functioning. The effectiveness of CBT has been well- documented in addressing a spectrum of mental health disorders, providing individuals with the skills necessary to navigate their emotional landscape and foster resilience. Through a series of targeted sessions, clients are empowered to achieve lasting change, enhancing their overall quality of life and contributing to a healthier mental state. When integrated with the principles of Advait Vedanta, CBT can further enrich the therapeutic experience by encouraging deeper self-awareness and a sense of interconnectedness, guiding individuals towards both psychological and spiritual growth.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) can significantly enhance self-awareness by encouraging individuals to critically examine their thought patterns and emotional responses, leading to greater insight into the underlying mechanisms that drive their behaviors and mental health challenges. This process involves not only recognizing and re-evaluating negative thoughts but also understanding the connections between these thoughts, feelings, and actions. As individuals become more attuned to their internal dialogues, they can uncover the beliefs and assumptions that shape their self-perception and interactions with others. When CBT principles are integrated with Advait Vedanta, a philosophy that emphasizes the Non-Duality of the Individual SELF and Universal Reality, individuals can cultivate a profound sense of interconnectedness, realizing that their experiences, emotions, and existence are part of a larger whole. This perspective fosters compassion for oneself and others, reducing feelings of isolation and enhancing emotional regulation. Consequently, this holistic approach not only facilitates psychological resilience by equipping individuals with cognitive tools to manage their mental health but also nurtures spiritual growth by encouraging a deeper exploration of identity, purpose, and the interconnected nature of existence, guiding individuals towards a more integrated and fulfilled life.

Intervening Cognitive Behavioural Therapy & Consciousness as A Holistic Approach

To effectively intervene Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) with consciousness as a holistic approach, practitioners can integrate mindfulness and self-reflective practices alongside traditional CBT techniques. This can begin by encouraging clients to cultivate present-moment awareness during therapy sessions, prompting them to observe their thoughts and emotions without judgment. By incorporating mindfulness exercises, such as meditation or breath awareness, clients can develop a heightened sense of consciousness that allows them to witness their cognitive patterns more objectively. This practice not only aids in identifying maladaptive thoughts but also fosters a deeper understanding of the interplay between thoughts, emotions, and actions. Additionally, exploring concepts from philosophies such as Advait Vedanta can enhance this approach by prompting clients to reflect on their sense of self and interconnectedness with others, thereby transcending limiting beliefs and fostering a broader perspective on their experiences. This synthesis creates a comprehensive therapeutic environment where individuals can not only challenge negative thought patterns but also engage in a transformative process of self-discovery and spiritual growth, ultimately guiding them toward greater emotional resilience and a more integrated understanding of their place within the universe.

In addition to integrating mindfulness and self-reflective practices, several other interventions can enhance the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) within a holistic framework. One approach is to utilize expressive therapies, such as art or journaling, which allow clients to externalize their thoughts and feelings creatively, enabling deeper exploration of their emotions and facilitating the processing of complex experiences. Another method involves incorporating positive psychology techniques, such as strengths identification and gratitude exercises, to build resilience and enhance overall well-being, focusing on what is right rather than solely addressing deficits. Engaging in body-oriented therapies, like somatic experiencing, can also be effective, as

these practices emphasize the connection between the mind and body, helping individuals to release stored tension and trauma through physical awareness and movement. Additionally, group therapy can foster a sense of community and support, providing clients with opportunities to share their experiences and realize that they are not alone in their struggles. Integrating these various modalities creates a multifaceted therapeutic experience that caters to diverse client needs and promotes a holistic understanding of mental health as it intertwines with emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of well-being.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the integration of consciousness within Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) represents a transformative shift towards a more holistic and comprehensive therapeutic model. By weaving mindfulness and self-reflective practices into the fabric of traditional CBT, practitioners empower clients to cultivate present-moment awareness and develop a nuanced understanding of their cognitive and emotional landscapes. This profound exploration is further enriched by incorporating expressive therapies, positive psychology, and body-oriented practices, each contributing unique dimensions to the therapeutic process. The incorporation of philosophies such as Advait Vedanta fosters deeper self-reflection and a sense of interconnectedness, encouraging individuals to transcend limiting beliefs and embrace their holistic identity. Additionally, the communal aspect of group therapy reinforces the understanding that struggles are often shared, enhancing resilience through social support.

Collectively, these integrative strategies do not merely seek to alleviate distress but aim to promote comprehensive well-being; they facilitate a journey of self-discovery, emotional resilience, and spiritual growth. Ultimately, this enriched therapeutic environment empowers individuals to navigate their experiences with greater awareness and insight, enabling them to appreciate their place within the broader tapestry of life and fostering an ongoing commitment to personal evolution and interconnectedness.



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