Yoga for Children With Autism

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My Background

- Occupational therapist
  - And WHAT does an OT do????
- Yoga practitioner and RYT

[RYT 200 Registered Yoga Teacher]
Funded by RU’s Seed Grant Program

Combined the principles of Yoga with the focus of occupational therapy

Qualitative study (phenomenological approach)

7 children (5 boys and 2 girls, ages 6 to 15) with high-functioning Autism and Asperger’s Disorder

6-week long group with one-hour sessions, 2 times per week

Student/adult ratio 1/1
Characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorders

- Delayed motor skills and poor coordination
- Poor sensory processing and body awareness
- Decreased play skills
- Poor emotional regulation skills
- Increased anxiety
- Poor eating habits and digestion
- Poor social and communication skills
- Delayed language and cognitive skills
Data Collection and Analysis

• Pre-Yoga group interview with caregiver and child
  – Sensory Processing Measure (parent)
  – Spence Anxiety Scale (child and parent)

• Yoga Group

• Post-Yoga group interview with caregiver and child
  – Sensory Processing Measure (parent)
  – Spence Anxiety Scale (child and parent)
  – Likert scale to rate poses

• Data analysis in progress
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asana (poses)</th>
<th>Hate it</th>
<th>Don’t like it</th>
<th>It’s OK</th>
<th>Like it</th>
<th>Love it</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arm Swings</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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<td>Boat Pose</td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bow Pose</td>
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<td>Bridge Pose</td>
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<td>Butterfly Pose</td>
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Pranayama

Inhale

Exhale
Paired Asana
Music and Games
Savasana

- Children rated savasana as their #1 favorite asana!
Savasana: Alex’s View

- Rae: Well what about after Yoga, how does your body feel?
- Alex: It feels ready to, like go do some stuff
- Rae: Feels ready to go do something? Do you remember in Yoga when we would do something called Savasana?
- Alex: Umhum.
- Rae: Remember what that is?
- Alex: It’s when you rest your body so you can get all the things that you learned down inside your body.
- Rae: Umhum, so how did you feel when we would do Savasana? How did you feel during that?
- Alex: I felt like it was a thing that I really needed.
- Rae: How do you feel after savasana is over?
- Alex: Um I feel caaaalllmm.
Future of Yoga Group for Children With Autism

- Seeking funding for future projects
- Collaborate with Yoga teachers in community
- Develop 1-2 programs in community in New River Valley for children and adolescents with Autism of all functional levels
- Continue qualitative and quantitative research