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Dhyani Bella Niedelman

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Sound Bathing as a Healing Modality

By Dhyani Bella Niedelman, Sound Bath Instructor



Sound therapy is thousands of years old. But today the ancient practice of singing bowls is hitting the mainstream. What is a sound bath?

It is an acoustic “concert” session, either individual or group, devoted to wellness, intention, grounding, and relaxation, conducted by a sound bath practitioner. They orchestrate overlapping sounds, creating deep soothing vibrations. The experience allows people to integrate mind and body (1, 3, 4, 5).

Sound bath practitioners use a variety of instruments in their programs to achieve healing. Singing bowls, both Tibetan and crystal, are each tuned to a different note to promote a calm meditative state that corresponds to the body’s chakras, otherwise known as energy centers. Other instruments include gongs, tuning forks, chimes, drums, didgeridoos (the oldest known sound healing instrument used by Aboriginals) ocean drums and rain-sticks (4, 5). To me, each instrument has a purpose; in short, gongs bring up deep emotions, bowls retune and balance, water sounds wash away, chime sounds bring in manifestations. Each instrument also corresponds to each of the energy centers, the lower deeper frequencies being more grounding for the root, sacral and solar plexus and the higher pitch/note instruments for higher chakras.

Listening to music can trigger the release of dopamine in the body, according to a Harvard Health article. Certain sounds and frequencies are known to promote healing. Sometimes a sound bath will engender a release so strong

that it brings a person to tears. Typical benefits of a sound bath include:

- lowered heart rate and blood pressure
- lessened stress
- greater energy levels
- more positive outlook
- reduced physical pain
- reduced anxiety and depression
- better sleep (3, 4, 5, 6)

Sound baths have also been successfully used with trauma patients. In his groundbreaking book *The Body Keeps the Score*, van der Kolk points out that art forms such as music can successfully treat trauma nonverbally (7).

Trauma induces a freeze response in a victim. Healing needs to take place at the body level, as opposed to analytic thinking. Sound therapy practitioner Simone Vitale points out that “[T]herapeutic application of sound vibration, as it travels through bones, muscles, and fascia, can help to bring movement to these stagnating . . . areas, therefore helping the stuck energy to circulate again” (2, 8).

Sound bath therapy is not a cure-all for every disorder. But it is a powerful tool in advancing both mental and physical health in human beings. Perhaps that is why people have been using it for so long.

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