How Color Changes the Spectrum of Your Health and Wellbeing

Look around. What colors do you see? Unless you are colorblind, you probably encounter a range of colors in the clothes you wear, the food you eat, the landscape and other items you see on a daily basis. You might feel drawn to some of these colors, while others leave you feeling drained.

Colors influence people, which is why they are used for a variety of purposes from marketing to healing. In fact, color therapy, also known as chromotherapy, was used by ancient civilizations as diverse as the Egyptians, Chinese and Greeks. The modern theory behind color therapy stipulates that the organs and limbs of the body vibrate at certain energies that harmonize with the vibration frequencies of colors. When the body's vibrations change, it can lead to dysfunction or disease. Certain colors help to shift the energy back into balance in order to heal, and this association typically correlates with the chakras.

The therapeutic potential of color does not just begin and end with color therapy. The emotional and physical influences of color provide several potential benefits to your body and mind's wellbeing, which is why you should strive to surround yourself with the right colors in every aspect of your life.

Color Influences Emotions

Green with envy. Red with anger. Feeling blue. Our language is filled with instances of color reflecting emotion—and with color evoking certain emotions. You might also be familiar with the utilization of the psychology of color for marketing due to its ability to connect with certain emotions—the power to stimulate them. The relationship between emotions and color might be an individualized experience. Some authors contend that there is a cultural connection to the meaning of certain colors.

The color choices that you make might also be influenced by your current emotions. In one study, researchers showed videos to participants that were either associated with joy or fear. Afterwards, they were asked to choose an appropriate color using sliders. The researchers found that the participants in general selected brighter colors to match with joy, and these tended to be in the red-yellow spectrum. The participants tended to correlate the fear videos with the cyan-bluish hues.

Colors also have the power to stimulate certain psychological states or actions. For example, red is highly associated with aggression and alertness. It also has the potential to make people anxious. In one study, researchers found that reading words in red type or reading the word red in any color type led to increased stress, ultimately affecting cognitive performance and making it harder for people to read the words. Other colors have the capacity to improve the psychological state.

Using Color to Express Emotions Creates a More Positive Outlook on Life

Color is also a tool for expressing emotions. Art therapy is a great example of the positive psychological effects of harnessing color for emotional exploration and expression. One study looked to see if using color as part of art therapy improved stroke patients' purpose in life, as well as that of their caretakers.

Upon utilizing colors in art therapy, including as a way to express their emotions, both caregivers and patients had improved scores on a Purpose in Life questionnaire. Interestingly, the patients also chose a greater variety of colors, including those that correspond to more positive emotions, to express their emotions later in the process, reflecting the improvement in their emotional state during the therapy sessions.

Harnessing the Power of Color with Light Therapy

Surrounding yourself with color is not the only way to harness its power for your health. The benefits of color might also stem from the light waves. Electromagnetic waves that
are not visible to the human eye have the ability to affect the psychology and physiology of people, such as UV light, Gamma rays, infrared light, microwaves, X-rays and more. Following a similar logic, then it is possible that the waves of light within the visual spectrum would also be able to affect people not just on an emotional or psychological level, but on a physiological level as well.

One way that light waves might provide therapeutic value is through impacting the melatonin and serotonin pathways. Serotonin and melatonin regulate the sleep-wake cycle, as well as heart rate, temperature, blood pressure and more. You have probably heard a lot recently about the negative effects of using blue light items, which is found on digital devices like phones and tablets, at night. This is typically due to their effects on circadian rhythms and sleep patterns. Through utilizing light therapy, it is possible to modulate these important regulators that ensure you get sufficient sleep, as well as regulate many other components of health.

For example, one study found blue-enriched white light helped to keep people awake and improved cognitive performance during the day. Therefore, blue light itself is not bad—it is at what time of day you are exposed to it. Another study looked at the effects of red, green and blue light on heart rate variability, or the time between heartbeats, and autonomic regulation. Heart rate variability has a direct correlation with the efficiency of regulatory systems and overall health. They found that the different colored lights had the capacity to influence heart rate variability in a short period of time.

With so many benefits, it is high time that you focus on what colors you encounter on a daily basis. You might find that some have a negative influence on your health, while others might have a positive effect. It is possible to harness the therapeutic power of colors without specifically engaging in light or color therapy. You simply have to pay attention to your environment and make changes as needed.

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References