

JOURNAL OF YOGA SERVICE

SPRING 2013 • VOL. 1, NO. 1



REFLECTIONS

ADVANCING THE FIELD

RESEARCH

CASE REPORTS

YOGA SERVICE IN ACTION

From Inspired to Effective


YOGA SERVICE COUNCIL
www.yogaservicecouncil.org

JOURNAL OF YOGA SERVICE



A publication of the Yoga Service Council
SPRING 2013 • VOL. 1, NO. 1

Editor in Chief

Kelly Birch, ERYT-500, PYT-500

Editorial Advisor

Stephanie M. Shorter, PhD

Volunteer Assistants for Volume 1 (Spring 2013)

Editors

Gretel Hakanson
Roseanne Harvey
Maureen Molinari, MS, RD, LD, CDE
Kristen Paquette, MPH
Stephanie M. Shorter, PhD
Steven Szydlowski, PhD

Copy Editors

Jennifer K. Crawford
Kendra Ford, MA
Wendy Kagan

Proofreaders

Gretel Hakanson
Sandra M. Perez, MA
Stephanie M. Shorter, PhD

Designer

Susanne Murtha, RYT500, PYT-1000

Contact

Editor in chief: Kelly Birch, ERYT-500, PYT
editor@yogaservicecouncil.org
Membership information: Sarah Johnson, JD, RYT
membership@yogaservicecouncil.org
Conference director: Jennifer Cohen Harper, MA
jenn@yogaservicecouncil.org

YSC Board

Rob Schware, PhD, *President*
Jennifer Cohen Harper, MA, ERYT, *Vice President*
Sarah Johnson, JD, RYT
Chandlee Kuhn, JD
Mark Lilly

YSC Advisory Council

B. K. Bose, PhD
Jasmine Chehrazi, ERYT-500, PYT-500, DY-800
Molly Lannon Kenny, MS-CCC
Kelly McGonigal, PhD
Ali Smith
Kerri Kelly

Peer Reviewers for Volume 1 (2013)

Bethany Butzer, PhD
Jnani Chapman, RN, BSN, RYT
Jasmine Chehrazi, ERYT-500, PYT-500, DY-800
Laura Douglass, PhD
David Emerson, ERYT
Patricia L. Gerbarg, MD
Andrea M. Hyde, PhD
Ivy Ingram, MA
Sarah Johnson, JD
Leah Kalish, MA
Mark Lilly
Kelly McGonigal, PhD
Michael McKenzie, PhD
Rob Schware, PhD
Stephanie Sohl, PhD

If you would like to be a peer reviewer for the
Journal of Yoga Service, please contact
Kelly Birch at editor@yogaservicecouncil.org.

Membership

The Yoga Service Council's mission is to develop a community of professional support in the field of yoga service and to engage in helping YSC members move from inspired to effective in using the tools of yoga and mindfulness to reach underserved and vulnerable populations.

Mission

By joining the Yoga Service Council (YSC) you help affirm four goals for 2013–2014: to increase connection between people active in the field of yoga service; to broaden the reach and effectiveness of our community; to deepen the professionalism of our collective work; and to strengthen the YSC's capacity to provide leadership and opportunities for members. To become a member of the YSC, visit our website at www.yogaservicecouncil.org/join-the-yoga-service-council. Benefits of membership include subscription to the *Journal of Yoga Service* (JYS), discounts on conferences, and free listing in the JYS of your workshops and trainings.

Submissions Information

Please visit our website for guidelines for submitting to the *Journal of Yoga Service*. Submissions are on a rolling basis and may be submitted at any time. Publication is twice yearly in spring and fall. For further information, please contact Kelly Birch at editor@yogaservicecouncil.org or visit www.yogaservicecouncil.org/journal-submission-guidelines

CONTENTS

From the Editor

- 4 *Kelly Birch, ERYT-500, PYT-500*

Reflections

- 5 How To Be Happy (or How We Serve)
Beryl Bender Birch
- 8 Devotion, Intention, and the Purposeful Creation
of Culture
Molly Lannon Kenny, MS-CCC
- 11 Working with a Yoga-Based NGO in Cambodia
Sarah Ball

Research

- 15 Yoga at the Intersection of Research and Service—
Part 1: Experimental Foundations
Stephanie M. Shorter, PhD

Advancing the Field

- 23 A Necessary Catalyst: Dismantling the
School-to-Prison Pipeline with Yoga
Bidyut K. Bose, PhD, ERYT
- 29 Responsible Service: Yoga Philosophy
*Evan Harris, RYT, Erin Burchett, RYT,
Christine Gradert, Sarah Johnson, JD, RYT,
Jennifer Vondracek, RYT*
- 33 Self-Care as the Foundation for Social Action:
How to Thrive and Sustain Your Personal Well-Being
in the Field of Yoga Service
Jill Satterfield

Case Report

- 38 Promoting Resilience Through Yoga: Initial Findings on
the Implementation of Trauma-Informed Integrative
Mindfulness Programming in Post-Earthquake Haiti
Danielle Rousseau, PhD, LMHC, Elizabeth Jackson, MPH

Yoga Service In Action

- 47 Creating a Seva Yoga Program: A Joint Project
with the New England School of Integrative Yoga
Therapeutics and Healthworks Community Fitness
*Fiona Y. Akhtar, MS, RYT200, Bo Forbes, PsyD, ERYT500,
Lauren Broadhurst, Mark Harrington*
- 53 Yoga In Schools: Delivering District-Wide
Yoga Education
Joanne Spence, BSW, ERYT, Andrea Hyde, PhD
- 60 Yoga in the Trenches: Crime Prevention Through
Mindful Practice
Toni Carbone White, JD
- 66 Female Inmate-Centered Practices:
Wisdom From Yoga Behind Bars
Irene Hauzinger

Members' Listings

- 73 YSC Member Trainings and Workshops

From the Editor

Kelly Birch, ERYT-500, PYT-500



It is my great pleasure and honor to present the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Yoga Service*. It is tremendously exciting to be a part of this relatively young field of yoga service.

This peer-reviewed journal is intended to provide a forum for discussion and a place to publish research, suggestions for best practices for working with specific populations, and advice and wisdom on how to make yoga service both effective and sustainable. What are the obstacles and barriers that we need to overcome for program implementation? What do we need to know about working with various cultures and populations? How do we care for ourselves as we serve others? To inspire and educate, stories from the field and lessons learned are presented.

It can be said that all true service begins with inspiration, and from there we define the steps we need to take for our inspiration and vision to become a reality. In this issue, we begin with Reflections, articles that speak to our deepest intentions for this work, exploring our motivations and offering wisdom to guide us along the path. A description of how to evaluate the effectiveness of this work follows, in the Research section—an in-depth report on experimental design and its application to the field of yoga service. Next, in Advancing the Field, we offer perspectives and advice from the direct experience of people in the field that you may find relevant to work you are doing or plan to do, including how to make your service sustainable through self-care. Following this are several articles on yoga service in action, including a preliminary case report from the field and several program reports that serve to both inspire and to educate.

I am immensely grateful to all the people who helped to produce this issue. To the peer reviewers, who formally and informally offered their expert advice and feedback, often at short notice; to the copyeditors and proofreaders who generously gave of their time, especially Gretel Hakanson; and to the 70+ people who responded to our call for help.

I would especially like to thank the board of the Yoga Service Council for making this journal possible—for recognizing the need for a journal and their commitment to its production, for their advice and support, and for giving me this opportunity to be a part of it. Thanks also to Grace Bullock, editor of the *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*, for her advice and help. My deep gratitude to our designer, Susanne Murtha, who pulled out all the stops for this first issue and whose beautiful work graces these pages. Finally, I could not have produced this issue without the ongoing and unstinting advice, support, and assistance from Stephanie M. Shorter.

Some of you have worked in yoga service for many years and some are just starting out. I am hoping that this journal will contain something of interest for all of you. I invite you to send in your submissions for the next issue and expand the content to other areas of interest, such as special populations. Through this collaborative effort to advance the field, I hope to encapsulate the contributions, the challenges, and the beauty of yoga service along with practical, how-to advice from those immersed in it.

In service,

Kelly

editor@yogaservicecouncil.org

REFLECTIONS

How To Be Happy (or How We Serve)

Beryl Bender Birch

The Give Back Yoga Foundation | The Hard & the Soft Yoga Institute | info@power-yoga.com

One day in late March I turned on the TV looking for a weather report and happened upon Matt Lauer and the rest of the Today crew perched in front of the Vatican Palace in Rome, covering the inaugural Mass of Pope Francis. The new pope was riding along through the crowds in an open-air vehicle, waving to his well-wishers. At one point the procession stopped, the pope jumped off the car and ambled into the crowd to greet and bless a severely disabled person. It was a glorious moment. A humble and real human had just been chosen to lead 1.5 billion Catholics around the world, and here he was showing compassion and caring for the disabled. At that point, one of the news anchors interrupted the coverage with a translation of part of the pope's earlier address to the people: "Don't mistake tenderness and caring with weakness. Real power is in service."

That stopped me in my tracks. I was stunned that someone would say that on national TV! *Real power is in service.* As yogis in service, as most of the readers of this inaugural issue of the *Journal of Yoga Service* are, we understand. We might not be able to explain it, but we get it. Pope Francis was not talking about political power or economic power or any other form of tangible power. Rather, I think he was referring to spiritual power. And by that I don't mean spiritual arrogance. He didn't mean that because you serve others, you have permission to think of yourself as better than others. I think by "real power" he meant the power that comes when you dedicate your life to the upliftment of our beloved Mother Earth and all of her inhabitants. As we work to support the universe, we are supported and protected in turn. As we experience this more frequently, it strengthens our faith in how the universe works. We come to understand this reciprocity as a universal law. We feel totally vulnerable but totally protected at the same moment because we are in alignment with a higher power. What is that power? It is an inner strength that helps us, for example, to cultivate compassion and loving-kindness when we are faced with ignorance or violence or hatred. We all know that it isn't easy to extend loving-kindness toward someone who is mean or violent or nasty to us. But it also isn't always easy to extend friendliness toward someone who is happy, especially when we are feeling blue or depressed. It takes work in both cases. It takes deep-down digging; a desire to grow, to evolve, to watch oneself; and a willingness to replace negative thoughts of jealousy or envy with true joyfulness. It takes power and *practice*.

And that practice can take many forms. Yoga *practice* isn't just about doing *asana*. You can be a yoga practitioner and never even do *asana* or own a yoga mat. Your yoga practice

might consist of chanting the praises of God or studying the ancient texts or scrubbing floors at your local church or temple, or even just meditating or mindfully breathing. All of these can be considered yoga practice. And all have the same secret ingredient. Attention! I believe that attention is a primary driver of evolution and transformation. Getting our attention in present time and working to keep it there ultimately leads us to the realization that it is in serving the universe that we find lasting happiness.

We do the work! That's all. And when we do this work of yoga—which is simply to focus on the here and now and to accept reality as it is, in this moment, in all its grit and glory—our circle of compassion expands and extends beyond our self, beyond our friends and family. It keeps growing and growing, taking in more and more of the world, until it meets itself and has encompassed all. And once that happens we realize that it isn't enough to just make ourselves happy by chasing material gain and pleasure and fame and praise. Our yoga practice trains us to pay attention, to be more conscious, and thus to see more clearly and intuitively. We want everyone to be happy and to be free from suffering. That is how we come to find service.

I once heard someone ask the Dalai Lama what our ultimate purpose in life was. I thought he was going to answer, "To help alleviate suffering in the world." But he said, "To be happy." At first, that might sound a little self-serving. But think about what it is that makes us happy. Is it stuff? A new car? A new relationship? Maybe those things bring us pleasure for a while, but they are all subject to change, as is everything in the world of form. And when the new car gets old or the relationship turns sour, the pleasure turns to pain. None of those things can be counted on to bring us lasting happiness.

When I ask people who have been practicing yoga in any of its various forms for a while if yoga has changed their lives, everyone says that it has made them more calm, more relaxed, more creative, more compassionate, more centered, and, well, more *happy!* So what is it about our *yoga practices* that make us happy?

When we take out our mats day after day or sit and breathe or chant or study or sit for meditation, we begin to find moments of stillness, moments of true joyfulness and contentment. We start to feel a change. We begin to recognize that life is the way it is and that when we argue with reality, we are always going to lose. We start to appreciate the difficulties we encounter as opportunities for growth rather than pronouncements of punishment. Life seems to get a little easier because we are more relaxed and at peace with the way things are. This doesn't mean

that we bail out on life or fall into a torpor of non-caring or non-action—in fact, we may feel more spurred to action. It means that we recognize we are stuck in the mud when we are stuck in the mud. Then we can begin to take steps to free our selves from the unhealthy or counterproductive situation in which we find ourselves. But first we have to acknowledge the stuckness. We pay attention to what is going on here and now! Attention drives transformation.

Paying attention in this way leads to an *experience* of connectedness, and this experience of connectedness is the experience of yoga. Yoga really cannot be defined. It is what happens when we are able to quiet our mind. It cannot be known until it is experienced. I tell my yoga students all the time, "I can't teach you yoga or even teach you to teach yoga. All I can do is teach you a set of instructions and, hopefully, if you follow those instructions, they will lead you to the experience of yoga."

This new level of seeing expands our circle of compassion beyond our own backyard and is, I believe, what kicks in the desire to serve and leads to lasting happiness. Somehow we are no longer content to just take care of our individual selves because we don't see ourselves as separate any longer. We see ourselves in the whole of humanity and that if one of us is hungry, we are all hungry. And when we roll up our sleeves and get down to work, to feed the hungry, the joy that brings us is incomparable. We like to be happy. It feels good. It not only feels good, it is also *practice*. Every breath we take in awareness is *practice*, but it is also *seva* (service). Our practice inspires our *seva*, and our *seva* inspires our practice. If you want to serve, practice! The way will become clear. The direction you need to go, the work to be done, will all be revealed to you through your practice. Practice is making an effort to keep the mind steady, to be present, to stay focused. And as yogis, we have a responsibility to practice, to do the work. As we put forth the effort to grow, that effort infuses the collective unconscious and makes it easier for everyone else in the world to access that awareness. Energetically, the effort infuses the morphogenetic field that we all share, and others are able to tap into the greater level of awareness more easily. So we serve through our practice.

It used to be that if you wanted to follow a spiritual path, you cloistered yourself from the world and went off to a monastery or a cave somewhere. You renounced the world and all its pleasures and pains in order to contemplate in solitude and simplicity the true meaning of life and the nature of God. If, however, you wanted to change the world and make a difference, you became a social

activist and went out into the world. You demonstrated and marched and wrote letters and got yourself arrested oftentimes. Those two paths were completely divergent and rarely intersected. But that is not the case any longer. Now those two paths have become convergent! We, as awakened citizens, have a responsibility to go out into the world and help wake things up. We don't preach. Yoga doesn't proselytize. We each have our own place on the evolutionary spectrum. Some people are ahead of us on the path, and some are behind. It is okay to recognize this. We are grateful for where we are and have an obligation to respect all and help those coming along behind us. But we cannot hide from the world once we are awakened to it. We have become spiritual revolutionaries and our job is to serve. And an added bonus is that it makes us happy, which is what keeps us serving!

The power of service comes in serving without attachment to the outcome. There is always hope that you are helping. But hope is a non-yogic ideal. It means that you are somewhere in the future, hoping for some outcome, as opposed to being in the present with what is. We do hope, a little. We hope that our service makes a difference. But what good does the hoping do? In the end, it's useless. Do the work. That is what helps. Breathe consciously. Pay attention, and do what you can, with what you've got, in this moment!

I started teaching yoga in 1974 and started my school, The Hard & The Soft Yoga Institute, in the early 1980s, which is when I began training yoga students to be yoga teachers. From the very beginning, one of the requirements for graduation for each of the students was to develop a "give-back yoga" project in their home community. This could be any kind of service. My objective in giving them a broad criterion in which to design a project was to disseminate the idea that yoga was more than just asana. Really, it was service. They could plant trees; walk dogs at the local animal shelter; teach meditation; pick up trash on the beach; start an organic farm; work for clean air, water, soil; or just about anything local that served the greater good. All of it, to me, was yoga. In the past seven to eight years, these give-back projects have grown to become more comprehensive and more integrated into the training. When, in 2007, Rob Schware, Lori Klein, and I started the Give Back Yoga Foundation (GBYF) that was still my objective. We all wanted to support yoga teachers in their seva!

Our very first grant application was from a woman who asked for \$87 so that she could buy reusable bags in order to distribute fresh fruits and vegetables that

had been donated by the local supermarket to the senior citizen center. Since that time we have gone on to support yoga in prisons and a variety of yoga projects in Nepal, Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Africa, and all over the United States. For the past two years GBYF has focused on the production of yoga materials—tapes, CDs, DVDs, books, and manuals—designed to help veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, and navigating the tricky transition from deployment and combat to civilian life back home.

More and more people are getting into service. Look at the Yoga Service Council conference—it didn't exist two years ago. That is encouraging, but we still need a quantum leap in human consciousness. Awareness is collectively growing, evolving. More and more people are more and more conscious. The important thing is to consciously work on your own evolution and to take that growing awareness out into the world to serve: not to proselytize, not to preach some self-righteous blather, but just to help. Every day, show up for your practice. Do the work to make your self better for the benefit of all beings everywhere. This is the real power that the pope was talking about.

To be effective, pay attention and listen. And try to be in rapport with the people whom you are working with. If you are too proactive and come on with too much energy and too many self-righteous plans, you will turn off the people you are hoping to help. Conversely, if you don't have enough energy, you will put people to sleep. They will give up and go home, feeling discouraged by your lack of worthiness. So, you find a balance between giving out and holding back.

Whether we are feeding hungry sparrows or working to preserve the oceans for the whales and finned ones or teaching yoga to veterans, those of us who serve have to take the time to listen, to feel, and be aware of what we hear and feel. It is a conscious tuning into awareness. We are not locked into knowing this world only through the limited perspective of our five senses. We are multisensory and can open ourselves to the infinite. Isn't this the experience of yoga? And isn't that yoga service? Yoga service is yogis, serving! That's all. And that feels good. We are joyful and *happy!* 

Note: some of this material first appeared in an interview for the Huffington Post, with Rob Schware, executive director of the Give Back Yoga Foundation on April 22, 2013; Yoga: How We Model Leadership Working With Unserved Populations http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rob-schware/service-yoga_b_3097282.html.

Devotion, Intention, and the Purposeful Creation of Culture

Molly Lannon Kenny, MS-CCC

Founder, The Samarya Center, Seattle, Washington | www.samaryacenter.org | molly@samaryacenter.org

“Things do not grow better; they remain as they are. It is we who grow better, by the changes we make in ourselves.” Swami Vivekananda

Last winter I had the opportunity to meet with several leaders in the field to discuss the current state of yoga in the West, including the explosion of yoga therapy and yoga service. I remember feeling a surge of excitement and hope when one of our group stated, “The collective consciousness and perception of yoga in America is changing. People are now realizing, more than ever, that yoga is not just a physical exercise, but is a legitimate and effective means of healing on multiple levels.” I believe that to be true. And with this inaugural issue of the *Journal of Yoga Service*, we are committing ever more deeply to sharing and teaching yoga not only as a means to individual health and well-being but also for healing on a societal and global level. We are embarking on this venture together, joining diverse communities in practice, as well as establishing and defining our own community.

Swami Vivekananda

When Swami Vivekananda showed up at the 1893 World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago, Illinois, he was an immediate sensation. He came largely at the behest of his teacher, Sri Ramakrishna, with the intention of bringing Hinduism, yoga, and Indian culture to the West. Passionate about an interchange between Indian and American values, he was a champion of taking the best that each country and culture had to offer and the free exchange of ideas and resources to uplift all of humanity. Although Vivekananda loved America’s sense of individualism and reliance on self, he was equally passionate about the ubiquitous sense of devotion that pervaded his own culture.

Vivekananda’s dedication to his fellow humans was a cornerstone of his teachings and was evident in his many famous and forthright statements, such as “All differences in this world are of degree, and not of kind, because oneness is the secret of everything,” and “The moment I have realized God sitting in the temple of every human body, the moment I stand in reverence before every human being and see God in him—that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free.” Typical of Vivekananda was to refer to humanity as “the other God.”

Although in our contemporary Western culture we may not think of one another as “the other God,” it seems clear that as practitioners, teachers, and students of yoga, we may adopt the essence of this sentiment: that we are deeply and connected to our fellow human beings. As such, we might develop the same sense of devotion and awe for one another and our shared humanity as we have for the statues and pictures on our altars and in our yoga studios.

When I think about the heart of yoga service as social change, I think of a statement I often make when teaching my students the basic premise of yoga therapy as I see it. It is this: the yoga that is in yoga therapy is the yoga that is in *you*, not in what you teach to others. I feel the same way about yoga service, and I resonate deeply with Vivekandanda’s powerful words: “You cannot believe in God until you believe in yourself” and “They alone live, who live for others.” As an agent of social change, let the yoga be within us, not in what we do or what we teach, but in the very fabric of our being and our soul’s deepest desire to serve as a means to alleviating suffering and to uplifting humanity.

To live our yoga as a catalyst for social change, we must focus first and foremost on our own practice, and above all our practice of love of others as unique expressions of the divine, or that sense of *source or atman* that connects us to ourselves and others through our shared humanity. This is indeed a value system that we have the opportunity to cultivate as we gather, organize, and spread the notion and culture of yoga service.

The Meaning of Culture

The basic meaning of culture encompasses the ideas, customs, and social behavior of a particular people or society and the attitudes and behavior characteristic of a particular social group. Culture has its origins in the Latin words that mean “to grow, to tend, to cultivate.” In anthropology, culture also refers to the multiple dimensions of a particular group’s social and behavioral patterns and beliefs.

As I reflect on the meaning of culture and how it might be purposefully created to elevate its members and the whole of humankind, I began to think about the many cultures I have identified with in my life and the ones to which others assigned me, whether I wanted to identify with them or not. I reflected on my own conscious cultivation of my part in each of those cultures, whether influencing them, abiding by them, rejecting them, or changing them. Sometimes, I have been taken

by surprise by a cultural identity. I thought of the first time I realized that growing up where I did, when I did, with the family I did, constituted a specific Irish Catholic culture of which I would come to meet and recognize members throughout my lifetime. I also remember coming home from a yoga training and weeping at the realization that who I had idealized as the culture of “yoga people” was, in fact, just the general public, with a common interest in something called yoga. And I recall the overwhelming sense of being at home in the devotional culture of India.

This question of culture is a fruitful topic to explore as we dedicate ourselves ever more intentionally to the intersecting worlds of yoga, whether in service or outreach or therapy, each with its own unique culture and set of potential opportunities and pitfalls.

There is the question of yoga itself as a means of service and potential issues of cultural assimilation or appropriation. There are the questions about “outreach” and “service” and accompanying issues of cultural relativism. There is the question of therapy and the provider’s cultural competency. As this new vocabulary becomes a part of the culture being created through yoga service, it would serve us well to become familiar with some basic concepts and broad definitions, borrowing here from cultural anthropology:

- **Cultural assimilation** refers to the often-painful process in which an individual or minority group loses its unique characteristics, including language and customs, when absorbed into a dominant culture.
- **Cultural appropriation** refers to the apportionment of one culture’s customs, practices, and beliefs to another, but without cultural context.
- **Cultural relativism** refers to the view that one can only judge another culture based on its own, necessarily biased, social context. From the vantage point of cultural relativism, for example, what is considered practical in one society may be considered ridiculous in another. As there is, in fact, no universal standard of beliefs and practices, one must be very cautious and thoughtful in judging another society’s customs.
- **Cultural competency** refers to the ability to appreciate and positively relate to people with belief systems and practices that are (sometimes very) different than our own.

These are all issues we must be familiar with and address on some level as we create and define our own culture of yoga service. These are points of discussion and con-

cern that will be brought to us, both overtly by people well versed in the issues and vocabulary of institutionalized oppression and community activism, but also incidentally as we move into our positions of yoga service, which, by definition, means working with people who are generally marginalized and disempowered.

Cultural Sensitivity

Reflecting on my own journey through life and my experiences with yoga, yoga therapy, and yoga service and on the specific qualities of each of these cultures, I always come back to the basic values of yoga. For me, this means quieting the mind and being as aware as I can of its disturbances and how to manage them. By doing this, I am coming home to my true nature, one in which I and my fellow beings are inextricably connected through our shared humanity and journey through life.

I believe this is the yoga that Swami Vivekananda wanted to share with America when he spoke of religious tolerance and universal acceptance at the Chicago parliament. These, indeed, are the roots of yoga. Should we embark on a purposeful creation of our own culture of yoga service, we might use this sentiment as a foundation, for it holds a key to addressing each of the culturally sensitive issues above. How can we keep this spirit of tolerance and universal acceptance at the forefront of yoga service?

When we address cultural competency or cultural relativism, we can bear in mind that to understand or accept an unfamiliar community and its practices and norms, we must first inform ourselves about it. Ours in yoga service should be a collective consciousness that is passionately and proactively seeking to learn as much as we can about the people and cultures with whom we share our yoga practice, especially when they appear different to our own, while courageously acknowledging and facing our own biases, projections, and fears. We might find that the greatest joy in service is the opportunity to connect on a very human level, that our desire to serve one another is in the spirit of devotion and equality, rather than an effort to pity, “save,” or convert anyone.

When we think about cultural assimilation or appropriation, we can consider and attend to the difference between stealing and celebrating a particular aspect of a culture that we choose to emulate. We can reflect on the context we have for our own use of the practice and make sure that we are honoring and, as we can, keeping intact the collective culture we are drawing from.

We can remember that the yoga we are so passionate about is neither one of some standard of physical

postures nor one that creates broad-stroke truisms to confine the experience of others. We must be very careful, I believe, when talking about “yoga for veterans” or “yoga for homeless youth” or “trauma-sensitive yoga,” and be sure that we are not changing the sense of yoga as a practice of seeing what connects all beings to a practice of limiting people’s experience based on our own well intentioned, but necessarily biased, lens.

Defining the Culture of Yoga Service

As we develop this focus on service for the field of yoga in America, we collectively stand on a precipice, with an opportunity we are not often afforded: the chance to decide what the culture of our community will be, what other cultures it will draw from and why, and what we will bring that is new and necessary. We know that we are drawing from a blend of Indian and Western traditions, but we must also remember that we are drawing from, and reaching out to, multiple new cultures with their own sets of unwritten social rules, competencies, needs, and desires. In order to serve and connect in the deepest way possible, we must make the commitment to examine our own biases, experiences, and agendas, and to recommit to our own practice of self-study and authenticity, and to our most heart-felt intention—the desire to connect, to love, and to share. From this place, we can create an intentional community and culture that stands for equality and inclusion at all levels, as a path to our own liberation and the liberation of others. 🌱

Working with a Yoga-Based NGO in Cambodia

Sarah Ball

Krama Yoga | www.yogacambodia.com | sarah.dimity@gmail.com

Krama Yoga, Asia's first yoga-based non-governmental organization (NGO), brings yoga to over 300 Cambodian children and adolescents every month, most of whom are orphans, impoverished kids, and young women rescued from abuse and sexual trafficking. Krama Yoga offers upwards of 75 monthly classes through seven affiliated NGO programs in and around Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital and largest city.

Krama Yoga is a non-political, nonprofit, NGO organization legally registered in the Kingdom of Cambodia since December 2010. Krama Yoga programs are financed by private donation, public fundraising with affiliated international teachers, and, vitally, through the NataRaj Yoga Studio, Krama Yoga's public yoga studio in Phnom Penh.

Krama's programs evolved through a direct relationship between Krama Yoga founder Isabelle Skaburskis and NGOs in Phnom Penh. Through NataRaj, Isabelle began offering yoga instruction to the clients of local NGOs who work with Cambodian youth. Several years later the program has expanded to include seven partner organizations with over 300 youth taught each month by the six Cambodian teachers who were initially introduced to yoga through Isabelle's outreach yoga programs. All are internationally certified instructors, having completed in-house training as well as external certification programs with international trainers.

Krama's classes are a powerful model of leadership and healing for the kids because the Cambodian teachers' own pasts mirror those of their students. The efficacy of Krama's yoga programs is evidenced by the ongoing relationships with other local NGOs who have seen the invaluable role that yoga can play in the emotional and physical health of the vulnerable youth with whom they work. Participants in Krama's classes report an increase in self-respect, peacefulness, and resilience in the face of challenges thanks to their yoga practice. Krama's classes are offered in a way that encourages these youth to explore avenues for re-inhabiting their bodies in a safe way following experiences of trauma, which are, unfortunately, common among Krama's students. As the local community has become increasingly aware of the positive contribution yoga can make to the emotional and physical health of Cambodia's youth, there has been a consistent growth in requests for yoga programs from other NGOs around Cambodia. This demand has motivated a new generation of teacher trainees, who are currently undergoing a two-year part-time pre-teacher training with Krama Yoga, alongside their ongoing education at school and university.

While several of the Cambodian teachers offer public yoga classes through NataRaj, the NGO classes are taught in the Khmer (Cambodian local) language to ensure that the classes are

delivered in a culturally sensitive way that is mindful of the needs of the students. Krama's classes weave foundational yoga principles with traditional Cambodian values, thereby forging a valuable path for Cambodian children to reconnect to the roots of their own culture following the cultural devastation caused by genocide in the recent history of this resilient country.

Uncovering the Inner Activist

My zeal for yoga as social action came alive during my yoga teacher training with the School of Sacred Arts in Ubud, Bali. During this training I had the privilege of being taught by Bex Tyrer, a wonderfully ethical practitioner and teacher at Ubud's Yoga Barn. Bex passionately shares her conviction that yoga has the potential to effect social change and leads by example not only through her teachings to tourists and teacher trainees, but in the commitment to teaching yoga in impoverished communities around the world. For Bex and the other facilitators of this teacher training program, there is no division between personal practice and collective healing.

While I had already been a student of yoga for many years, beginning my first 500-hour yoga teacher training in Sydney over 10 years ago, at the age of 17, in Bali I found that my yoga practice evolved from a personal exploration to a global aspiration for social change. I had never really considered myself to be much of an activist of any kind, despite previously working within the fields of disability rehabilitation, eating-disorder recovery, mental health, and addiction treatment. The word activism still sits uncomfortably with me, as "isms" can be so fraught with misunderstanding and are often associated with a population of a specific few. Instead I prefer the notion of "spiritual activation." Something wakes up. Once the passion for yoga's potential to transform lives beyond the framework of personal practice had seized my heart, I became completely preoccupied with this possibility.

In Bali I began to understand that my personal practice and yoga activism are not mutually exclusive. It became very clear to me that my yoga practice had become not only an act of personal integration but also a deep ethical impetus to support others in our collective journey home to our own hearts.

In early 2013, when Isabelle returned to Melbourne to pursue further studies, I was offered the role of studio coordinator of the NaraRaj Yoga Studio, and my partner, Pete, was offered residency as the Zenthai Shiatsu therapist. The role of the studio coordinator at NaraRaj includes teaching public yoga classes, supporting the

day-to-day running of the studio, organizing visiting teacher programs, and facilitating well-being retreats in Cambodia's lush wilderness, all the while working closely alongside the teachers of Krama Yoga.

On the Ground

Phnom Penh is a colorful city of about 2 million people, inhabited both by folk from all over the world, as well as by a diverse Cambodian community of urban settlers from various parts of this country. As a nation, Cambodia is still fraught with a terrifying and traumatic recent history, and the ongoing inherited issues are evident in daily life here. The disparity between wealth and paucity can be found everywhere. In the span of a single city block, one can find an air-conditioned coffee shop offering French pastries and, a few doors down, the shell of a burnt-out building where a local family gathers to carve out a living selling coconuts, tangy-sweet dry-season mangoes, and steaming bowls of soup made from chilies, pork, and vegetables.

I find this economic disparity to be the most challenging aspect in adapting to life here. In my previous experiences of traveling in the developing world, I had little access to the luxuries of home, yet in Phnom Penh, with such a large expatriate population who are comparatively wealthy and with a rapidly growing class of wealthy Cambodians, it takes all my open-mindedness to greet within me the emotions that arise in the face of a shiny 4WD barging its way through a street of dwellings where folk live on a few dollars a day. I am not an expert on Cambodian business and economic policy, but I find that the absence of regulation in economic development in this country has created a heartbreaking collision of poverty and privilege evident across the nation.

One of our first priorities upon arrival was to obtain bicycles. For a fraction of the cost at home, we happily rode away after a morning of test riding and bartering on a pair of gorgeous old bike frames that carry us through the flat streets of Phnom Penh. Riding our bicycles through the bustling streets is an adventure in itself, given the unstructured approach to road rules wherein an auto may swiftly spin past you, heading into peak-hour traffic on the wrong side of the road. The locals flow with the traffic with such good humor and patience, however, that even traffic jams in the busy streets are negotiated with a minimum of fuss—a great lesson in maintaining a patient outlook to keep one's center during challenges. A smile goes a long way here, and even when bartering for the fare of a tuk tuk or a kilo of dragon fruit at the lo-

cal market, social interactions are generally performed in a good-humored way that ensures each party is able to maintain dignity in front of others.

Culturally Appropriate Teaching

As for teaching yoga, the multicultural nature of the yoga classes at the NataRaj Studio requires a gradual exploration of culturally appropriate teaching so that it is our shared humanity, rather than isolation via our differences, that is the focus of our classes. I am mindful not to use colloquialisms, as we Aussies are famous for abbreviating our sentences with slang. For example, a fellow Australian teacher recently used the term “six-pack” to describe the abdominal muscles in a way that would be humorous in Australia, but was met with incomprehension here. Teachers at NataRaj use Sanskrit terms wherever possible so we are highlighting the shared international language of yoga. A level of ongoing inquiry as a teacher into culturally appropriate touch when offering assists in asana is also important. When I offer an assist, particularly during *savasana*, I always ask for the student’s permission prior to assuming it is okay to touch, in order to encourage autonomy in the practice of the student and ensure that I don’t cross cultural boundaries with which I may be unfamiliar.

Serving as the studio coordinator has been a valuable opportunity to practice an open and curious approach to the values and perceptions of another culture without imposing one’s own culture upon a place. If we are to practice yoga, the essence of which is union, then these meeting points of cross-cultural challenges in terms of values must be explored openly and with large doses of kindness and humor. Essentially, whether the practitioners in the space are Khmer, expats, or tourists, the intention of the NataRaj Studio is to provide a safe space in which connection to self and community can flourish, regardless of ethnicity or belief.

Having been in the Kingdom of Cambodia just two short months, I am becoming increasingly aware of the remarkable privilege of working within an organization that is primarily run by an inspiring team of Cambodian yogis. Our team and organizational structure are centered around building strategies and sharing yoga in a way that will allow the Cambodian team to carry Krama Yoga forward with long-term autonomy in the future. We achieve this through developing strategies with the direct feedback and input from the team and then working closely together as we implement these changes to ensure that any new techniques or strategies are easy to

manage in an ongoing way. Contributions from the expat community are offered in the spirit of this intention to support the long-term autonomy of the organization and with respect for cultural differences to ensure all that happens within the organization and the sharing of yoga remains culturally appropriate and respectful to all.

Because Pete and I are living at the NataRaj Studio, which is located within the property that houses Krama Yoga’s office, we are sharing our working and living space with the Cambodian team. This enables a considerable degree of intimacy and insight into the challenges and joys of contemporary Cambodian life. Many of the Krama Yoga teachers are young adults who, as fully employed older siblings, are now housing and finding the resources to educate their younger siblings who have moved to live with them in the city. Such a load would rarely be given to a young adult working in the Western world, and it is testament to the resilience of the Krama teachers and family values of the Cambodian culture, which can offer a stark contrast to an individualistic Western value system. As these kids are often playing amidst the garden of the yoga studio, we are able to practice teaching each other our languages and share the timeless exchange of games and drawing that cross language barriers. Together with the team at Krama Yoga, we share the language of English, in which the majority of the team is fluent. This capacity to communicate in English is coupled with the bafflement, laughter, and encouragement of all, as Pete and I attempt to learn to speak Khmer. Our laughter is a true celebration of differences colliding with the sameness of our shared humanity.

The Way Forward

The path forward is one that will continue to be navigated gradually. Stepping into a leadership role in a foreign land requires us to be sensitive, so that our presence here is felt as a welcome one that contributes to, rather than negates, a sense of collective vision and mutual support. It is always a challenge to step into a leadership role in any team in which there hasn’t been a gradual establishment of relationship over time. As such, working together to understand the history of the team and the way forward together needs to be a gradual and sensitive process. The organization, much like Cambodian culture itself, operates within a familial value system. The team has worked together for many years and most of them have gone through the intimate process of teacher training together, so they know each other deeply. While they are thirsty for input and ideas, they are



Krama yoga instructor Eam Lita teaches village children in Kom Pong Cham province. Photo used with permission.

also understandably feeling Pete and I out gradually as we explore our way into relationship together. Patience with this process will provide a much greater chance of integrating into the strong team spirit that will support us all into the future, yet there are times when I have an idea that I want to implement immediately and I notice impatience rising in me.

With so many details of life here, such as navigating through the flow of busy traffic, a slow and patient approach with keen awareness of those around you works best. Sudden movements cause accidents both in traffic as well as within an organizational team. As our regular conversations as a team confirm, it is yoga that is central to the whole reason for this organization existing. When each of us carries this value system at the center of our relationships and our organizational decisions, we cannot fail to continue growing with a sense of unity and collective energy.

Taking Yoga Off the Mat

I recalled reading once that when you're truly clear about what you want your life to be about, the kindest thing you can do for yourself and the world is to say "yes" to whatever takes you closer to your passions, even if you're terrified or you have no idea how you might logistically do it. I knew, clearly, that this opportunity would bring

me closer to my passions—and, indeed, it landed me smack bang in the middle of them.

If you feel inspired to take your yoga practice or teaching into a different context beyond that which is familiar, do not wait until you feel "good enough." We live in a time when we so often believe there are those who are more professional, experienced, or better qualified to lead others or to embrace unknown contexts than we are. If you've already obtained professional accreditation and are committed to ongoing passionate learning, don't wait for the next piece of paper that will ready you for action. Rather, if you feel inspired by a particular cause in your local area, get in touch with its leaders. It is amazing how receptive many organizations are to the offer of yoga within their programs and would welcome new teachers to their pre-existing initiatives. Choose a cause or community group close to your heart and simply make contact. You may be surprised at how things flow from there.

On an international level, the same basic principle applies. There are many inspiring international examples of yoga off the mat. You may hear about organizations or find them online that light your inner spark. Get in touch and see what you can discuss in terms of volunteering or offering your services as a visiting teacher. Krama Yoga welcomes visiting teachers and offers of professional development workshops for the teachers, and we encourage the international yoga community to be a part of the programs of this great organization.

There is a growing number of other organizations that would no doubt welcome creative energy from other teachers. So, if you're inspired, don't wait to act. As the old Zen proverb suggests, leap and the net will appear! 🌱



Village children in Kom Pong Cham province. Photo used with permission.

RESEARCH

Yoga at the Intersection of Research and Service

Part 1: Experimental Foundations

Stephanie M. Shorter, PhD

Mind-Body Collective | stephanie@mind-bodycollective.com

The yoga service research literature strives to represent the convergence of community service, empirical rigor, and therapeutic best practices. This article offers a primer for understanding reliability and validity as the foundations of good measurement techniques in yoga research and the basis of drawing correct inferences from any dataset. Different areas of yoga research tend to be characterized by different types of validity. As a result, the strengths of yoga service research are different from but complementary to the strengths of well-controlled laboratory yoga research. Some alternative experimental designs are suggested for yoga service research that expand beyond the commonly used pre-post design. Finally, a neuroanatomical pathway uniting brain and body is discussed and is shown to be the pathway through which yoga service providers can heal and transform. Interestingly, this pathway also unites yoga research in the laboratory and yoga service in action.

Yoga research has increased 10-fold in peer-reviewed publications across the past few decades. As of March 2013, 74 yoga research studies had already been published and indexed in PubMed this year (figure 1; Dr. Troy Cellmer via Active Life DC, 2013), which continues a trend of exponential growth in the last decade. These studies document the physical and psychological benefits of practicing yoga using research protocols that typically focus on *asana* (see Büssing et al., 2012 for a review).

Therapeutic yoga has also recently proliferated in the United States with the efforts of service-based yoga organizations, especially those that function as hubs to share resources and field-tested methods, such as the Give Back Yoga Foundation (www.givebackyoga.org) and the Yoga Service Council (www.yogaservicecouncil.org). Yoga service involves sharing yogic practices to underserved populations that might not otherwise be exposed to the healing benefits of practicing yoga. We may not have the clearest operational definition of yoga service, yet we know it when we see it. The success of the inaugural Yoga Service Conference in 2012 and the demand for this journal are excellent metrics for how quickly yoga service—yoga therapy in the field—is advancing.

Building the evidence base for yoga as a natural healing modality that takes the whole person into account—mentally, physically, and spiritually—will take a village. It will take

efforts in the lab and efforts in the field and clinic; just as importantly, it will involve connecting these efforts or at least meeting in the middle. The emergence of yoga service research literature represents how community outreach, experimental expertise, and clinical best practices are coming together in a novel and powerful way. Other authors have articulated some of the issues around bringing yoga therapy and yoga research together (e.g., Bullock, 2013; Hagins & Khalsa, 2012; Bhavanani, 2011) and have prepared yoga therapists to confidently introduce the growing evidence base to allopathic medicine professionals (e.g., Birch, 2012).

This article describes a conceptual framework for varied yoga research methodologies and discerns how the strengths of laboratory research differ from the studies being done by yoga service organizations—differences that are complementary in their approaches and outcomes. By reviewing some classic concepts in drawing inferences from scientific data, this article may point the reader to new possibilities in experimental design beyond the widely used pre-post design.

The yoga community at large has proven itself to be very interested in research, given the popularity of workshops on how to conduct yoga research that frequently kick off the annual International Association of Yoga Therapists (www.iayt.org) conferences. In the same spirit, what is presented below is offered with the goal of elevating the yoga community to greater degrees of research sophistication. We will begin with some bedrock foundations of experimental design to pave the way.

The Continuum of Validity

In experimental design, *validity* is of primary concern. Validity refers to accuracy in measurement, but it is important to realize that there are several types of accuracy in how we measure complex phenomena. These fall into two main categories of validity: internal validity and external validity. Different experimental designs tend to be strong in one but less so in the other. *Internal validity* taps into the certainty with which we know we are measuring what we intend to measure. The most pristine and simplified laboratory conditions where all variables are

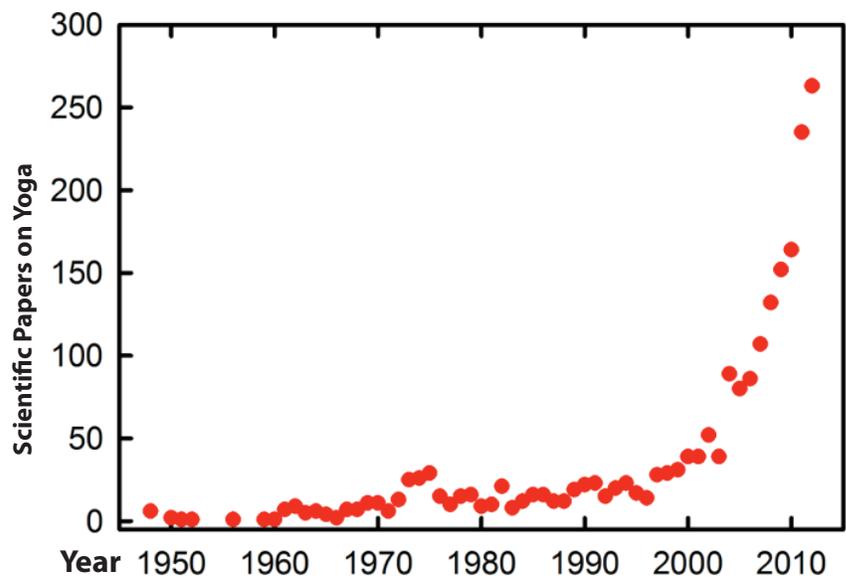


Figure 1. Exponential growth of the yoga research literature in the past decade. Published with permission from Active Life DC.

diligently controlled (what we refer to as experimental reductionism) will lead to the strongest internal validity. We can be confident that we are accurately measuring the phenomenon of interest and making valid conclusions from the data—in this case, the cognitive, psychological, or physical benefit of practicing yoga.

Yoga research often employs self-report questionnaires. In designing valid questionnaires, several types of internal validity become relevant. For example, there is validity as defined by whether the measurement taps into all facets of the concept being studied (content validity) and the degree to which the measurement predicts another measurement that is already established (predictive validity). Only when a whole list of validity criteria gets satisfied do we say that we have a psychometrically sound instrument that has scientific utility (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). See Baer et al. (2006) for an exemplary demonstration of the necessary rounds of psychometric testing with various mindfulness measuring instruments. A questionnaire's strong internal validity is only established after multiple tests and refinements, so this is why one cannot casually write a new questionnaire and publish data with it right away; the psychometric groundwork has to be done first to literally validate that the questions are accurately tapping into what was intended.

While the psychometric approach is necessarily very dependent on statistical analyses (often complex, iterative statistical techniques like factor analysis), it serves the reader well to keep statistics and validity in two separate mental categories. To explore this relationship between

statistics and validity, we need to introduce the concept of *reliability*, a precursor of validity. Reliability refers to repeatability in collecting data. If something is measured multiple times and the same result occurs each time, then the measurement technique is reliable. Let's take the example of a bathroom scale. The scale might be off in such a way that it registers that you weigh three more pounds than you actually do. But every time you weigh yourself, the number is consistently three pounds off the actual (true or valid) weight. So your scale is functioning *reliably* but is not functioning *validly*. Although a simple example, it shows us that a measure can be reliable when it is not valid. However, the opposite is not true. If the scale produces a different number each time, then there is no way to know the true weight of the person. A measurement instrument can never function validly (accurately) if it can't function reliably (consistently).

Statistical analysis is fundamentally about establishing reliability, while good experimental design is the concrete foundation of validity and correct logical conclusions. Using more complex data analysis strategies will not make for better quality data and more clever conclusions. All manner of complex statistical gymnastics can be done on a shoddily designed experiment, but those analyses can't save the day to draw clear and strong inferences. From shoddy design comes shoddy data. There is an old adage that says calling in the statistician to perform a miracle after flawed data collection is like calling in the physician to work wonders at the autopsy!

In addition to high reliability as a prerequisite, we can associate strong internal validity with standardization, reductionism, control, and causation. Well-designed, reductionistic experiments tend to be high in internal validity and focused on mechanisms.¹ These studies are more likely to include biomedical markers that correlate with behavior change. Using biomedical markers in mind-body research is a growing trend and gives a competitive advantage in securing grant funding to support the research efforts because biomedical

¹ Because *mechanism* may be novel in this context to some readers and will subsequently be used throughout the rest of the article, a thorough working definition is offered. Most simply, a mechanism is what determines a certain behavior. More thoroughly, it refers to both the cause-and-effect principles and the components that operate according to these principles. How we define a mechanism in practice depends on what we are interested in. A mechanism could be simultaneously found in culture or in molecules. Modern science ultimately drives for the most fine-grained answer possible. When talking about yoga research, mechanisms usually refer to a change in anatomy and physiology that causes behavior change.

markers get at mechanisms (high internal validity, explaining cause and effect).

Similarly, all other things being equal, it is also easier to get grant funding when the data collection strategy is based on a randomized control trial (RCT) design. An RCT involves having participants in a study randomly assigned to either an experimental group or a control group; each participant has an equal chance of being assigned to either group. Such random assignment is relied upon to create equivalent groups and rule out pre-existing biases where individuals would be more drawn to volunteer for one group over the other. RCTs are commonly thought of as the gold standard in biomedical research and, to their credit, they do create strong internal validity, but they also often require a sacrifice. That is, RCTs can often have diminished generalizability, meaning that we know how the results worked in one laboratory scenario but we don't yet know how the phenomenon works in the real world in general.

External validity is, in a sense, at the other end of the spectrum opposite to internal validity, which is why they tend to tradeoff with each other: When internal validity is the highest, external validity will be the lowest, and vice versa. External validity refers to generalization, the degree to which we can make broad conclusions that accurately reflect the entire population of yoga practitioners in the real world. Unfortunately, when experimental design is more naturalistic, like when studying a yoga service program in action, we can make general conclusions from the data, but we can only talk of correlation, not causation. Field studies (applied science) tend to be naturalistic and stronger in external validity, meaning that their results can often be generalized to other similar scenarios and populations. This is great news for yoga service organizations because it means that data can be shared, paving the way to establishing sound practices within the field. When we make measurements in a natural state, we can draw more accurate conclusions about the entire population of individuals who practice yoga from our specific sample.

Yoga service research tends to have higher external validity and lower internal validity. However, that doesn't mean yoga service research is less scientific. Science refers to the process, not the result (much like practicing yoga). An overwhelming majority of published studies about the benefits of yoga rely on the pre-post design in which measurements are made at baseline (pre), then a yoga program is implemented (intervention), and then the same measurements are repeated again (post). The

logic is simple: Is there an improvement from the pre to the post measurement? Although the most popular design in use, it turns out that this experimental design is one that is easily susceptible to several challenges to internal validity. However, there are other appropriate alternatives that are well suited to yoga service research.

Alternative Designs for Yoga Service Research

Campbell and Stanley (1963) and Cook and Campbell (1979) are classic references on experimental and quasi-experimental designs that can readily be applied to measuring behavior—in this case, measuring transformation through yoga. Depending on the experimental design, a study is more or less susceptible to threats to internal or external validity. For example, inaccurate (invalid) results can come from history, maturation, repeated testing effects, or participants differentially dropping out of one study group more than another; the data become biased, which leads to invalid measurements and invalid conclusions. In the conclusion section of many research reports, authors often cite small sample size as a limitation of their study, but rarely do the more biting threats to validity get admitted, even though they are certainly there. Take a moment to recall our quirky bathroom scale and how limited sample size is a criticism of reliability. When reliability is not established, then our confidence in validity is naturally lessened too.

Table 1 presents the pretest-posttest control group design (line A) and two alternative designs that are rarely used in social science or biomedical research. Following the conventions of Campbell and Stanley (1963), O's represent an observation or measurement, and X's represent an experimental intervention. The logic of the pretest-posttest control group design is, given that group 1's and group 2's O's are equal when first measured, if they differ when measured again, we can ascribe that difference to X (e.g., yoga intervention). That is, the yoga intervention probably caused the change. This is the best-case scenario but the design itself has not made that logic airtight. Let's consider two alternatives that are sometimes superior, depending on the research question at hand.

The Solomon four-group design (table 1, line B) can be seen as an elaboration on the basic pre-post building block. The multiple observations of four groups can serve to rule out the threats to internal validity not covered when just two groups are tested in pre-post fashion. Further, a huge advantage is built-in replication. Scientists have more confidence in the accuracy of a result when it has been demonstrated several times over. With

A. Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design (Experimental)				
Group 1:	O	X	O	
Group 2:	O		O	
B. Solomon Four-Group Design (Experimental)				
Group 1:	O ₁	X	O ₂	
Group 2:	O ₃		O ₄	
Group 3:		X	O ₅	
Group 4:			O ₆	
C. Counterbalanced Design (Quasi-Experimental)				
Group 1:	X ₁ O	X ₂ O	X ₃ O	X ₄ O
Group 2:	X ₂ O	X ₄ O	X ₁ O	X ₃ O
Group 3:	X ₃ O	X ₁ O	X ₄ O	X ₂ O
Group 4:	X ₄ O	X ₃ O	X ₂ O	X ₁ O

Table 1. Diagrams of three different research designs.

O = an observation (measurement).

X = experimental intervention (e.g., yoga program).

Random assignment to all groups is required.

a classic pre-post design, this means conducting several studies, which can get costly in both time and money. With the Solomon four-group design, the effect of the intervention (e.g., yoga program) is assessed in four different ways and, ideally, this pattern falls out of the observations: $O_2 > O_1$, $O_2 > O_4$, $O_5 > O_6$, and $O_5 > O_3$. Moreover, these comparisons provide a sophisticated frame of reference for interpreting the results of other pre-post studies that use the same yoga intervention. This design could be cleverly used in a yoga program for children or adolescents because it has a built-in way of factoring out the changes in latter observations that are due simply to maturation, not the yoga intervention per se. For efficiency, O_6 can serve as the baseline observation for a subsequent study.

Another alternative to the pre-post design that is particularly well suited to compare the therapeutic efficacy of practicing yoga against other mind-body or physical exercise interventions is the counterbalanced design (table 1, line C). Counterbalancing refers to when there are multiple interventions being tested and each participant or group experiences every intervention in a different order. Unlike the other two designs we've considered, the counterbalanced design effectively uses the participant as his/her own control. Statistical analyses that are geared for "within-subjects" comparisons are more sensitive than those that do "between-subjects" comparisons, like the previously mentioned designs. In effect, the "noise" in each participant's data gets subtracted out; this mathematical step of cleaning the data

cannot happen when comparisons are drawn across different individuals. The counterbalanced design is a wise approach if the goal is to establish the relative effectiveness of a particular yoga program protocol—for example, if you wanted to show that a new yoga protocol (X_1) has a stronger effect on participants than your original protocol (X_2), as well as acupuncture treatments (X_3) and a particular type of manual bodywork (X_4).

Much more can be said about the use of these and other experimental designs that could expand the repertoire of yoga researchers. We have just been able to scratch the surface here. The take-home messages are that there is a broader experimental design menu than simply the commonly used pre-post design and that these other designs have strong suits for particular situations. Thus, the nature of the question being asked should, after careful consideration, determine the experimental design; the pre-post design should be the result of a conscious decision and not the default option.

Two Different Types of How

Therapeutic yoga research and yoga service research are both on the quest of asking how, yet they are often in search of two different answers. Not a koan, this distinction of two kinds of “How?” is useful to keep in mind as the two fields of research develop. In effect, these niches of yoga research will develop in different ways—and rightly so because each area has its own advantages and utility.

The first how question gets at *how yoga works*. We can identify mechanisms when internal validity is strong. We can explain the cognitive, psychological, or physical benefits of practicing yoga. We can make statements about cause and effect at the very root of what instigates behavioral change. It is more mechanism-focused and moves into theory building.

The second how question is more descriptive and programmatic: *How do we use yoga to change people's lives?* The mechanism of interest is at the level of the group or the whole person, not brain structures or chemistry. It is less involved with theory and more focused on describing how to apply the results of the yoga program (i.e., external validity).

Yoga service research often validates and shares best practices, which are often applicable to a broad population. So when yoga service research asks how, it refers to the story of yoga changing lives, in a broader, more realistic, sometimes more qualitative—and yes, often more messy—way than mechanism-focused yoga research. Yoga service is about sharing self-transformational tools

to empower individuals to change their lives. Hopefully, it is obvious that both answers are important; sometimes we need to *explain* in a *specific* way, and sometimes we need to *describe* in a more *general* way. Human behavior is complex and can only be fully understood by examining it from multiple viewpoints and gross-to-fine levels of analysis. This means taking different approaches to answering the question “How?” on various levels.

Although standardization is a logical necessity in research, the more that we standardize a yoga protocol, the more we lose that human touch and the compassionate tailoring of a yoga practice to the individual student. In the author's experience, this has been an ongoing debate at SYTAR (the annual Symposium for Yoga Therapy and Research conference), going back to at least 2008. It gets at the very motivation of why do yoga research in the first place—that is, if we know it works (and we do), then is yoga research a waste of time? This critique brings us to an examination of different motivations for doing both types of research on the effects of practicing yoga.

Research Motivations and Relation to Funding

Therapeutic yoga research is largely done to explain (hence, internal validity is emphasized). The goal is to narrow down the anatomical and physiological mechanisms of how moving and breathing mindfully can affect a person so profoundly. The motivation is in understanding cause and effect in a pure, logical, deterministic way, which can be a challenge when talking about the elusive mind-body bridge.

Running a research program can be very expensive. Publishing a study with a 12-week protocol that has both questionnaires and biomedical markers can easily cost \$200,000 or more; each question answered has a high price tag. An all-important criterion in grant funding is that the researchers must be posing questions that unveil mechanisms. This slant in how we ask questions translates into a bias and oversimplification in the kinds of answers we receive, and it changes the culture within which modern scientists operate (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010). Funding must precede this type of research, and the demands to be competitive to snare that funding shape the very questions that are asked.

Yoga service research, on the other hand, is more applied and programmatic in the real world (i.e., related to high external validity). An organization usually has developed a yoga service program over time and has received feedback from participants that the program is

enjoyable and effective. The organization may have qualitative and anecdotal evidence that the program works well; they hear the stories that yoga is changing the program participants' lives. However, to convince grantors to fund the work, it is often necessary to have quantified evidence and show statistically significant effects. The motivation for publishing research about their program is based on program evaluation and its necessity in securing funding to continue to expand the services. The research is needed first to secure more funding.

It may be useful to think of mechanism-focused therapeutic yoga as having a top-down approach, while yoga service research has a bottom-up approach. The top-down approach is about providing the hard evidence required to induce a systemic change in our culture's health care approach. Only when the health benefits of practicing yoga are rigorously documented (multiple studies across many samples where the RCT design carries a special weight for convincing an audience of health care decision makers) will the allopathic medical community begin to open the doors more widely to yoga therapy. Yoga service, on the other hand, is a bottom-up, grassroots approach, putting the knowledge into action right here and now.

It is exceedingly difficult to fund and operate both a basic mechanism-focused research program and provide yoga outreach to members of the community. Because of funding limitations, few groups are actively involved in both reductionistic yoga research and community-oriented yoga service simultaneously. A notable exception is the Austin-based nonprofit organization PURE Action (www.pureaction.org), which has a research program based in the cardiovascular and metabolic benefits of Bikram Yoga, a style of asana practice that readily lends itself to experimental study because of its set sequence of 26 postures (i.e., a standardized protocol; Hunter et al., 2013). At the same time, PURE Action also provides classes at no cost to underserved Austin residents.

Sample Diversity

There tends to be greater gender and ethnic diversity in yoga service studies. Therapeutic yoga studies originate in university or medical settings and often recruit individuals who already practice yoga. As shown by Quilty et al. (2009), yoga practitioners in America generally tend to be wealthy, educated, Caucasian females. By extension, therapeutic yoga research also leans more heavily to affluent, educated, and ethnically homogeneous participants. Yoga service research, on the other hand,

is motivated to reach the broadest swath of the public, especially minority and underserved populations—ideally, meeting them where they are and not making the participants fit the protocol but rather having the protocol accommodate the yoga participants.

Bringing It All Together: Mechanism Supports Service

Finally, let's turn our attention to finding the entry point in the nervous system through which yoga service providers can heal and transform. Even before we bring asana into the conversation, one of the most critically foundational pieces to a yoga service program is providing a psychologically safe place for the participant to explore his or her thoughts without fear, criticism, or punishment and to return once again to experience the sensations of the body. Interestingly, some research is now beginning to show mechanistically how yoga works in the nervous system. What it reveals is the very reason that yoga is so well received by many of the populations that yoga service organizations reach. Having a psychologically safe place is at the heart of both.

Streeter et al (2012) is an advance in yoga theory with its emphasis on how yoga asana and breathing can increase the activity of the parasympathetic nervous system. This paper is a developmental landmark because it represents that enough knowledge has accumulated so that theory may begin to be constructed. *The field is beginning to move from description to explanation.* At the same time that the theory offers an explanatory framework for how yoga asana works, the paper also gives credence to the social component of yoga service programs.

To understand Streeter et al's theory, we must introduce the vagus nerves. These nerves are one of twelve pairs of cranial nerves that originate in the brain and then exit the brain and innervate the face, neck, and periphery of the body to carry out various sensorimotor functions (such as moving the eyes and controlling the voice). The vagus nerves provide a bidirectional information highway between the brain, the autonomic (peripheral) nervous system, and the organs. The term *vagus* comes from the Latin word for *wandering*; those vagus nerves are wanderers. They meander and bifurcate throughout the torso, synapsing with the heart (to pace the heart beat), lungs, and organs of digestion and elimination. Through mechanical stimulation by yoga asana (literally stretching the vagus nerves in the torso; chest-opening postures are particularly effective in this regard) and mindful breath-

work (a breathing rate of six cycles per minute is optimal; see Bernardi et al., 2001, for fascinating demonstrations using pranayama and chanting), the tone of the vagus nerves is improved and the autonomic nervous system moves toward a healthier, moment-to-moment dynamic balance of sympathetic and parasympathetic activity. Consequently, all organs and systems move toward greater health. Vagal tone (and its correlate heart rate variability) will be discussed more within the yoga community in the coming years.

Porges (2011) discusses the evolution of the bifurcating vagus nerve, some branches of which are coated in myelin sheaths and some not. Myelin is a layer of proteins and fatty lipids that insulate nerve cells. Myelin makes information transmission faster for the coated nerves and, just like rubber insulation on electrical wires, decreases the chance of cross-talk interference of electrical signals from neighboring nerve cells. The myelinated vagus nerve is the more recent evolutionary development in mammals and forms the basis for feeling safe in social situations. When we are in unsafe conditions, we revert back to cortisol-driven sympathetic activity (the fight-or-flight response). When we are in safe conditions, our bodies can initiate the relaxation response and begin to repair themselves and uninstall those unhealthy conditioned patterns of fear, anger, and trauma. Complementary to Porges's polyvagal theory, Devi (2012) shares her observations of a new paradigm of relaxation in medicine. By physiologically escaping the conditioning and restoring autonomic nervous system balance, yoga helps to bring people out of unsafe places of vulnerability.

Yoga service programs naturally come with a built-in social component that empowers people. The influence of the warm relationship with the yoga instructor or with other participants in the program is something that, with the most rigorous experimental mindset about how yoga works, we may opt to eliminate, control for, or negate through the use of co-variance statistical techniques. The social support that participants get in addition to the yoga asana/breathing/meditation is, strictly speaking, a confounding variable, which is troublesome in mechanism-focused yoga research. In yoga service research, even if using a standardized protocol, the yoga intervention is a yoga-plus-social-support intervention. However, this is a positive in that the social support adds to the therapeutic benefits. While social variables may muddy the internal validity of a study, they do capture an accurate snapshot of how yoga service programs function in the real world. Very importantly, these social

variables are critical ingredients in the recipe for success in recruiting for and expanding such yoga programs.

Most of the underserved populations that yoga service organizations reach out to (e.g., incarcerated individuals, veterans, homeless individuals, survivors of domestic abuse and sexual assault) are working with some level of trauma. Psychological trauma manifests in the physical body—it is said that the body keeps score. Providing a methodology to safely access this somatic trauma is, in part, why an asana-based intervention can be so transformative in releasing long-held traumatic emotional-behavioral patterns and their associated chronic hypervigilant physiological states (Karl, 2012; Emerson & Hopper, 2011; Emerson et al., 2009). Manafort and Libby (2013) of the Veterans Yoga Project (www.veteransyogaproject.org) do a fine job of clearly explaining the three core symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder—hyperarousal, re-experiencing, and avoidance—and how mindful yoga can empower people in releasing and moving beyond trauma.

In quite a literal way, the vagus nerves are a mechanism for unlocking trauma and tension in the body and, in effect, soothe the anxious brain by way of a back door through the parasympathetic pathway. Yoga service programs that produce the greatest results are the ones that start by creating a safe space where unconditional positive regard can be brought to the individuals they serve.

Molly Lannon Kenny (2011), founder of the Samarya Center (www.samaryacenter.org), which brings yoga to individuals in mental health and hospice settings in Seattle, has articulated this sentiment very beautifully: "Sometimes I feel, even with all my clinical background and my empirically inclined mind, that what I am really offering is the experience of total love and acceptance—and that, in fact, is the very thing that heals them."

Ultimately, the validity of our work is much more than creative asana sequencing and clever data analysis strategies. Awareness on the breath happening within a safe place transforms lives, and that is what we are bringing into focus with the growing yoga service research literature. 🌱

References

- Baer, R. A., Smith, G. T., Hopkins, J., Krietemeyer, J., & Toney, L. (2006). Using self-report assessment methods to explore facets of mindfulness. *Assessment, 13*(1), 27–45.

- Bernardi, L., Sleight, P., Bandinelli, G., Cencetti, S., Fattorini, L., Wdowczyk-Szulc, J., & Lagi, A. (2001). Effect of rosary prayer and yoga mantras on autonomic cardiovascular rhythms: Comparative study. *British Medical Journal*, *23*, 1446–1449.
- Bhavanani, A. B. (2011). Don't put yoga in a small box: The challenges of scientifically studying yoga. *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*, *21*, 21.
- Birch, K. (2012). In the spirit of collaboration: Sharing research with the medical community. *Yoga Therapy Today*, *8*(3), 16–19.
- Bullock, B. G. M. (2013). Crossing the divide between yoga therapy and research: Lessons from the field of psychology. *Yoga Therapy Today* *9*(1), 18, 40.
- Büssing, A., Michaelsen, A., Khalsa, S. B., Telles, S., & Sherman, K. J. (2012). Effects of yoga on mental and physical health: A short summary of reviews. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, [PMID: 22852023].
- Campbell, D. T. & Stanley, J. C. (1963). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Cellmer, T. (2013). The explosion of scientific literature pertaining to yoga. Active Life DC. Retrieved March 12, 2013 from <http://www.activelifedc.com/yoga/the-explosion-of-scientific-literature-pertaining-to-yoga/111056>
- Cook, T. D. & Campbell, D. T. (1979). *Quasi-experimentation: Design and analysis issues for field settings*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Devi, G. (2012). *Unlocking your natural relaxation system*. New York, NY: Dutton.
- Emerson, D. & Hopper, E. (2011). *Overcoming trauma through yoga: Reclaiming your body*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.
- Emerson, D., Sharma, R., Chaudhry, S., & Turner, J. (2009). Trauma sensitive yoga: Principles, practice, and research. *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*, *19*, 123–128
- Hagins, M. & Khalsa, S. B. (2012). Bridging yoga therapy and scientific research. *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*, *22*, 5–6.
- Hunter, S. D., Dhindsa, M., Cunningham, E., Tarumi, T., Alkatan, M., & Tanaka, H. (2013, in press). Improvements in glucose tolerance with Bikram yoga in older obese adults: A pilot study. *Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies*.
- Karl, L. (2012). Compassionate presence: Teaching trauma-sensitive yoga. *Yoga Therapy Today*, *8*(2), 20–22.
- Kenny, M. L. (2011). Yoga and change: The power of partnership. *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*, *21*, 5–6.
- Manafort, S. & Libby, D. J. (2013). *Mindful yoga therapy for veterans recovering from trauma*. Boulder, CO: Give Back Yoga Foundation.
- Nunnally, J. C. & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (third ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, Inc.
- Palmer, P. P. & Zajonc, A. (2010). *The heart of higher education: A call to renewal*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Porges, S. W. (2011). *The polyvagal theory: Neurophysiological foundations of emotions, attachment, communication, and self-regulation*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Quilty, M. T., Goldstein, R., Khalsa, S. B., & Saper, R. (2009). Yoga in the real world: Motivations and patterns of use. *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing*, *5*(3), 154–155.
- Streeter, C. C., Gerbarg, P. L., Saper, R. B., Ciraulo, D. A., & Brown, R. P. (2012). Effects of yoga on the autonomic nervous system, gamma-aminobutyric-acid, and allostasis in epilepsy, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. *Medical Hypotheses*, *78*(5), 571–579.

ADVANCING THE FIELD

A Necessary Catalyst: Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline with Yoga

Bidyut K. Bose, PhD, E-RYT

Founder and Executive Director, Niroga Institute | www.niroga.org | bk@niroga.org

The school-to-prison pipeline is disproportionately populated with youth of color, many of whom have grown up with chronic stress and trauma from abuse or neglect at home and are surrounded by crime, violence, and drugs in their communities. Stress-induced academic failure often leads to quitting school, substance abuse, homelessness, and juvenile delinquency. Yoga-based prevention strategies could help dismantle this vicious cycle. Niroga Institute provides a model of evidence-based yoga programming in underserved schools throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. The fiscal return on investment for yoga training is tremendous: up to 2,600 percent compared to the lifetime cost of a single high school dropout. It also yields returns academically by closing the achievement gap and raising graduation rates, and psychologically/socially by lowering stress, cultivating self-control, enhancing resilience, and fostering interpersonal success. Niroga's yoga-based Transformative Life/Leadership Skills program benefits educators, mental health professionals, social workers, and violence prevention officials who are committed to working with these students in an integrated development framework. The vision of the Niroga Institute is to design an approach that is scalable, replicable, sustainable, and designed to achieve generational transformation.

“Wow! If everyone did yoga, there would not be so much violence in the world.” These words were uttered by an incarcerated youth after attending a few yoga sessions at Alameda County Juvenile Hall. Another detained youth said, “I learned a lot from it—whenever I get mad and angry, I just start breathing. And I actually *like* yoga.” Speaking of the participants in the program, Janice Thomas, PhD, senior clinical psychologist at the Guidance Clinic in Alameda County Juvenile Hall said, “They are really starting to internalize the practices and beginning to understand how they can use them to increase self-control. It’s really true. When someone is having difficulty in group, I’ve heard girls spontaneously say to the troubled person, ‘now breathe. . .’ It’s so cool!” (J. Thomas, personal communication, February 7, 2011).

Youth are going from school to prison due to a host of individual and environmental conditions, involving numerous participants. These include youth, parents, educators, health care officials, police, probation officers, judges, and attorneys. As explained below, yoga cost-effectively addresses many of these internal conditions and has been validated by scientific research as well as the experiences of participants (Frank, 2012).

The Problem: High Levels of Stress and Trauma Impact Youth

Many vulnerable children come to school not ready to learn. Many children are dealing with chronic stress and trauma from abuse or neglect at home, crime and violence, guns, gangs, drugs, and killings in their communities. Responsible parties often rush to teach them before attempting to help them heal. When children are unable to focus and engage in school resulting from dysfunction at home or in the community, repeated discipline, or being suspended and expelled, why is it a surprise if they drop out and end up in a juvenile hall or jail? When a child drops out of school, there is high probability that substance abuse, homelessness, and juvenile delinquency will follow (Grady, 2012).

The school-to-prison pipeline is populated with a disproportionately high number of youth of color. And in communities with disproportionate minority populations, there is disproportionately higher stress and trauma (PBS, 2008). Let us examine the tentacles of stress—whether chronic stress, primary (direct) or secondary (indirect/vicarious) traumatic stress, or post-traumatic stress. Epidemiological data reveal that stress is a risk factor for most common chronic conditions (Potts, 2007). Epigenetics tells us that stress affects us down to our DNA and that our gene maps have chemical markers called tags, which respond to chronic stress (UCSF, 2011). Public health data show that stress is the single common effect of every major social determinant of health, such as income inequality, institutionalized racism, and the breakdown of traditional family structures (PBS, 2008).

The latest research in neuroscience (Davidson et al., 2012; Jha, Krompinger, & Baime, 2007) tells us that the brain is the organ most responsive to the environment; the brain is plastic and malleable, abiding by the principles of neuroplasticity and neurogenesis. Environmental stressors affect our brains and thereby our behaviors—our thoughts, words, and actions—which in turn affect our environment. The effects of chronic stress on our brains include (a) attention control, (b) emotion regulation, (c) healthy coping, and (d) empathy (Liston, McEwen, & Casey, 2009). Learning and creative thinking cannot happen if there is lack of attention. Our ability to regulate emotions affects everything we do—what we read and watch, who we hang out with, what we discuss, what we eat, and so on. When overwhelmed by chronic stress, individuals are often tempted to reach for self-destructive means for coping and survival (Casey, Jones, & Hare, 2008). Finally, what is an individual without

empathy for self, what is a family or community without empathy for each other? As we examine these effects, we quickly realize that chronic stress has a devastating impact on brain and behavior. Is there no way out of this vicious cycle?

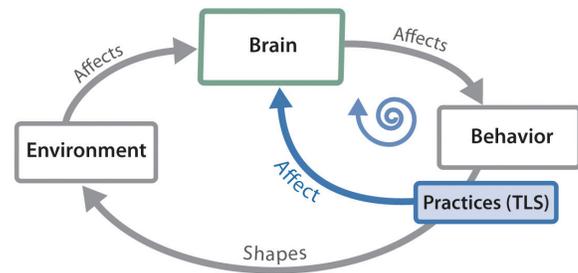


Figure 1: The Brain-Behavior Connection

The Solution: A Prevention and Intervention Model for Resolving Stress and Trauma

Neuroscience tells us what happens to the brain when subjected to chronic stress and also suggests a powerful solution. Neuroscience indicates that mindfulness practices mitigate every one of these effects ([a] to [d]) enumerated above; see Figure 1). The essence of mindfulness is present-moment awareness. This can be defined as being aware of what we are doing as we are doing it, aware of what we are feeling as we are feeling it, and aware of what we are thinking just as we are thinking it. Raja Yoga, developed thousands of years ago, is a science of mindfulness. The essence of asana (physical postures) and pranayama (breathing exercises) is mindfulness in motion, which is connecting with breath and emerging in movement. The latest trauma research shows that our bodies hold trauma in our tissues and that physical movement is essential for dissolving trauma (*Integral Yoga Magazine*, 2009; van der Kolk, 2013). The latest somatic psychology research (Ogden, Minton, & Pain, 2006) suggests an integrated approach to information processing, including the kinesthetic, emotional, and cognitive, is an optimal treatment response to trauma. These fields of research point toward the critical importance of an integrated whole-person approach to managing chronic stress and healing from trauma past or present, whether primary or secondary.

Just as we need to brush and floss our teeth every day to avoid the build-up of plaque, in the same way we need to regularly wash away our stress; otherwise, it accumulates and leads to devastating consequences for ourselves and for those around us. The essence of yoga is nothing other than moving meditation (Vivekananda,

1898). It is dynamic mindfulness, a synthesis of the findings from neuroscience, epigenetics, trauma research, and somatic psychology, systematically helping develop self-awareness that leads to self-mastery (Davidson et al., 2012; Jha et al., 2007; Ogden et al., 2006; van der Kolk, 2013). Providing skills for managing chronic stress and healing from trauma, especially among low-income communities of color, has to be an integral part of systems change aimed at correcting racial and ethnic disparity, catalyzing racial healing and enabling community health and well-being.

As an example model, the probation, health care, and education departments in Alameda County, California, have jointly supported Niroga Institute's cost-effective, evidence-based, and trauma-informed yoga program in Juvenile Hall for the past eight years. School districts throughout the San Francisco Bay Area are funding yoga programs in schools, both inside and outside of academic time. Although yoga is often viewed as socially elite and culturally incongruent, it is a time-tested, secular, universal practice that has been validated by multiple scientific disciplines. Niroga brings yoga to over 2,000 children in schools, alternative schools, juvenile halls, and jails throughout the San Francisco Bay Area each week. The primary focus has been at-risk youth, mostly of color, at high risk of school failure and juvenile delinquency.

In addition to direct service, Niroga Institute conducts Transformative Life/Leadership Skills (TLS) trainings for hundreds of educators, mental health professionals, social workers, criminal justice and violence prevention officials, parents, adult allies, and community partners serving vulnerable youth. TLS is a multi-modality intervention including yoga postures, breathing techniques, and meditation, and provides a dual advantage:

- Personal sustainability (stress management, self-care, and healing from vicarious/secondary trauma) for the adults caring for vulnerable youth
- Professional application of yoga programs by these adults for children and youth, in schools and alternative schools, juvenile halls and jails, rehabilitation centers, homeless shelters, and foster homes

Scientific Research Provides a Growing Evidence Base for Yoga

A recent independent research report summarized three studies, including a randomized control trial of in-class TLS in a challenging urban alternative high school. The report showed compelling findings and implications, spanning three interconnected domains of social func-

tion: education, health care, and violence prevention. Jennifer Frank, PhD, research scientist at the Prevention Research Center at Pennsylvania State University, said, "Students showed lower levels of perceived stress and greater levels of self-control, school engagement, emotional awareness, distress tolerance and altered attitude towards violence" (Frank, 2012).

Social psychologists have shown that "high self-control predicts good adjustment, less pathology, better grades and interpersonal success," and that "low self-control is a significant risk factor for a broad range of personal and interpersonal problems" (Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004). Research suggests that self-control is a better predictor of academic achievement than IQ and concludes, "A major reason for students falling short of their intellectual potential is their failure to exercise self-discipline" (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005). This presents a strong inductive connection. If self-control improves academic achievement and yoga increases self-control, it stands to reason that yoga must enhance academic achievement. When a police chief heard that yoga could increase self-control, he said, "Do you know what that means on my streets? It is literally a matter of life and death!"

Participants Support the Effectiveness of Yoga

A recent TLS training in Delaware was conducted upon the request of Chandlee Kuhn, the chief judge of family court for about 60 staff and leadership of the Brandywine School District, Delaware, and Youth Rehabilitative Services (YRS). Below are comments from post-training from the participants that include the school-to-prison perspective :

- You should know that lives were changed yesterday! After the training, I debriefed with our staff from Claymont Elementary and the energy that they shared was amazing. They got so much out the experience and they are committed to implementing this in their school. As I continue to process and formulate ideas in my mind, I get excited about the possibilities and opportunities to incorporate mindfulness teaching practices in the Brandywine School District, especially as it relates to disciplining our children. This is a journey and as we continue to build this coalition, good things will happen for Brandywine School District, Niroga, and YRS, but more importantly for the students, staff and communities we serve (D. Green, personal communication, November 14, 2012).
- From my perspective, the training was an overwhelming success! I definitely had a few staff who were skeptical. . .

and everyone walked away with a very positive outlook and a new enthusiasm for the work that they do. Who could ask for more! Thank you for spending time with our group. It is amazing to see the transformation (A. McGonigal, personal communication, November 18 2012).

This is what Judge Kuhn, also a member of the Council of State Governments School Discipline Consensus Project, had to say: "I believe that a yoga-based prevention model could help dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline. Niropa Institute recently came to Delaware and trained a group of teachers, school administrators, youth detention staff, and leaders in the juvenile justice community on the Transformative Life Skills (TLS) curriculum. The program was embraced by all. It is programming such as TLS that I would like to see in schools across the country" (C. Kuhn, personal communication, November 19, 2012).

Yoga Is a Cost-Effective Approach

I posit that not only is teaching yoga in schools good policy and a moral imperative, it is also an economic imperative. About a million youth drop out of school each year, and about a million youth are detained in juvenile halls across the country. The dropout rate is over 50 percent in our inner-city schools, and the recidivism rate for juveniles with criminal justice system involvement is approximately 75 percent; these high percentages are major signs of system failure (Dillon, 2009). The lifetime cost of a high-school dropout is \$260,000, and the annual cost of school failure is estimated at \$260 billion (Rouse, 2005). It costs \$1,000 per year to saturate a youth's life with yoga (\$10 per yoga session x 2 hour-long sessions per week x 50 weeks). With \$260,000, we could comprehensively provide yoga to 260 youth for a year. If even one more youth stayed in school and out of trouble, the program would break even. If 10 percent or 26 more youth changed the course of their lives in a positive direction, the return on investment (ROI) would be 26-fold. We would get our money back 26 times over, with a rate of return of 2,600 percent!

The principal of an alternative high school gave us a 90-minute period, five days a week for an entire semester. The principal requested us to provide a TLS program for the 15 students in the school with the most trauma. The Mental Health Department of the City of Berkeley collaborated with us on the program and administered a questionnaire to measure the prevalence of trauma among the students. Ninety-eight percent of all the students in the school qualified for a diagnosis of post-traumatic

stress disorder (PTSD). The semester-long program was completed, and a TLS training for countywide school-based behavioral health professionals was completed a few months later. One of the participants in that training was Dr. Micheline Beam, a clinical supervisor in the Mental Health Department of the City of Berkeley, who excitedly stated, "Did you hear? Did you hear? Every single student in that program graduated from high school. Every one of them!" (M. Beam, personal communication, October 21, 2010). In a school where the graduation rate is historically deplorable, this outcome was unimaginable.

Policy Implications and Actionable Steps

I believe these findings have direct multidimensional impact on the school-to-prison pipeline, education equity, and the academic achievement gap. In a presentation at the annual meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Science (ACJS) in the Rehabilitation and Treatment track in March 2013, in Dallas, Texas, first author Dr. Lynette Lee, professor of criminal justice at California State University, Sacramento, wrote,

Current rehabilitation and treatment models such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) have transitioned from an exclusive focus on cognition, to include affect and relational influences on behavior. Connections have been established between anti-social behavior and traumatic stress. The latest research in neuroscience suggests that mindful movement is an optimal treatment response to traumatic stress (van der Kolk, 2013). This paper presents an Integral Developmental Practice (IDP) model that incorporates kinesthetics (a historically overlooked component) into existing cognitive, emotional, and relational treatment models. We will also discuss the implications of IDP for individual, institutional and community transformation.

(IDP is a class of transformative practices, and TLS [mindful yoga] is an example modality.)

Adding to the three Rs of reading, writing, and arithmetic, the fourth R of reflective capacity for enhancing resilience and self-reliance, self-awareness, and self-mastery is essential for mental training to prepare children for the twenty-first century. The pervasive application of yoga in schools nationally, especially in inner cities and low-income communities with disproportionate minority contact, will require infrastructural development and investment. We will need systematic yoga training for classroom teachers and school-based behavioral health professionals in our inner-city public schools across the

country, spanning preschools, early and late elementary schools, middle and high schools, alternative education, and special education. It will be essential to provide adequate follow-up in-person and online yoga supports to ensure fidelity and to address application-specific questions. Technology will need to be harnessed, including the Internet, social media, and mobile applications. Yoga training can be an important part of the education and educator training of mental health professionals, social workers, and violence-prevention officials who are committed to working in an integrated development framework with children and youth. That will ensure their personal sustainability (stress management, self-care, and healing from vicarious or secondary trauma), as well as the professional application for stress resilience and healing from primary/secondary trauma. This could lead to the development of an approach that is scalable, replicable, and sustainable in the long term, and designed to achieve generational transformation.

Conclusion

Martin Luther King reminds us from decades ago, “We have guided missiles and misguided men.” In an attempt to change systems, we put so much emphasis on our external environments, often neglecting the efforts needed on our internal environments. If even a fraction of the resources that we spend on incarceration could be spent on transforming our internal environments (stress management and healing from trauma), the social return would be substantial. Can we afford not to do it? How many generations of children are we going to waste? Let us dream of a world where most of us are acting with self-mastery, for the greater good, most of the time. 🌱

Note: Some of this material was submitted by the author as a statement to the Senate hearing on the School-to-Prison Pipeline in December, 2012, and expressed in an interview for the Huffington Post, with Rob Schware, executive director of the Give Back Yoga Foundation on December 12, 2012; http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rob-schware/service-yoga_b_2074338.html.

References

- Casey, B. J., Jones, R. M., & Hare, T. A. (2008). The adolescent brain. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1124, 111–126. doi: 10.1196/annals1440.010
- Davidson, R. J., Dunne, J., Eccles, J. S., Engle, A., Greenberg, M., Jennings, P., . . . Vago, D. (2012). Contemplative practices and mental training: Prospects for American education. *Child Development Perspectives*, 6(2), 146–153. doi:10.1111/j.1750-8606.2012.00240.x
- Dillon, S. (2009, April 22). Large urban-suburban gap seen in graduation rates. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/22/education/22dropout.html>
- Duckworth, A. L., Seligman, M. E. P. (2005). Self-discipline outdoes IQ in predicting academic performances of adolescents. *Psychological Science*, 16(12), 939–944. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9280.2005.01641.x
- Frank, J. (2012). “Results of TLS Evaluation,” Research Report, October 2012. www.niroga.org/research/papers.php.
- Grady, B. (2012, July 05). Beating the school-to-prison pipeline. Oakland Local. Retrieved from <http://archive.oaklandlocal.com/article/beating-school-prison-pipeline>
- Integral Yoga Magazine. (2009). Yoga and post-traumatic stress disorder: An interview with Bessel van der Kolk, M.D. *Integral Yoga Magazine*, Summer, 12–13.
- Jha, A. P., Krompinger, J., & Baime, M. J. (2007). Mindfulness training modifies subsystems of attention. *Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral Neuroscience*, 7(2), 109–119.
- Liston, C., McEwen, B., & Casey, B. (2009). Psychosocial stress reversibly disrupts prefrontal processing and attentional control. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, 106(3), 912–917. doi: 10.1073/pnas.0807041106
- Ogden, P., Minton, K., & Pain, C. (2006). *Trauma and the body: A sensorimotor approach to psychotherapy*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co.
- PBS (2009) *Unnatural Causes*. Documentary series.
- Potts, J. (2007). Stress contributes to range of chronic diseases, Carnegie Mellon psychologist says. Retrieved from http://www.cmu.edu/news/archive/2007/October/oct10_cohenjama.shtml
- Rouse, C.E. (2005) *Labor market consequences of inadequate education*. As quoted in Alliance for Excellent Education Issue Brief. Teachers College, Columbia University.

- Tangney, J. P., Baumeister, R. F., & Boone, A. L. (2004). High self-control predicts good adjustment, less pathology, better grades, and interpersonal success. *Journal of Personality*, 72(2), 271-322. doi: 10.1111/j.0022-3506.2004.00263.x
- UCSF (2011). The New Science of Stress: Can We Turn Back the Biological Clock? Retrieved from University of California San Francisco, The Chancellor Priorities, Discovery in Action. Retrieved from <http://ucsf-chancellor.ucsf.edu/priorities/new-science-stress-can-we-turn-back-biological-clock>
- van der Kolk, B. (2013). What Neuroscience teaches us about the Treatment of Trauma. [Webinar]. Conducted on April 24, 2013, by the National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioral Medicine. www.nicabm.com.
- Vivekananda (1898). *The Yogas and Other Works*. Ramakrishna Vivekananda Center. Fourth Printing 1996.

Responsible Service: Yoga Philosophy

Evan Harris, RYT

Owner, Tapas Yoga Shala (IL)

Erin Burchett, RYT

Certified Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Teacher, yogaG Trainer

Christine Gradert

Executive Vice President, Family Resources, Inc.; Trauma Expert

Sarah Johnson, JD, RYT

Founder, yogaG; Certified Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Teacher

Jennifer Vondracek, RYT

Executive Director, yogaG; Certified Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Teacher

www.yogag.org | sarah@yogag.org

yogaG is a nonprofit organization offering free yoga classes to women, children, and staff of domestic violence shelters. This article shares the experience-based yogaG perspective that yoga philosophy should be excluded from domestic violence yoga service. Although it may not apply to every instructor in all service settings, we find that discussions of abstract yoga philosophy and ethical guidelines can serve to distract our clients from the tangible experience of reconnecting with their bodies in the wake of trauma through a gentle physical practice. Such discussions can also reinforce potential power dynamics between yoga teacher and clients that might otherwise leave them feeling slightly disempowered. yogaG's trauma-sensitive instructors are trained to simply share the physical practice and carry themselves as examples of yoga philosophy in action.

Yoga philosophy, in the context of yoga for underserved populations, is the topic of much discussion. This article details the viewpoint of yogaG teachers and our social service partners on this subject, culminating in the opinion that service-related aims can be achieved without overt references to yoga philosophy during class.

For the purposes of this article, we define yoga philosophy as a catch-all term for the “theory” side of the practice of yoga. This includes non-yoga elements such as “new age” thought, Western psychologies, Buddhist theory, and Hindu myth (to name a few). Philosophy is essentially the intangible, abstract element of yoga, the traditional approach to the thinking mind that underpins the practice of *asana* (physical postures). Yoga is an experimental science of personal development, and all science has both practice and theory.

Yoga philosophy interprets the experiences we have through practicing asana and attempts to capture those experiences in abstract concepts such as the underlying structure of the mind, body, and universe; ethical practices; and explanations of why certain practices yield certain results. These concepts allow for the evolution and dissemination of yoga practice. As more people come to the practice, the techniques are tried, tested, and refined. However, on another level, turning practice into philosophy is difficult because yoga practice is primarily a subjective experience. Philosophy requires the generalization and solidification of experience into objective ideas. It is an interpretation by the thinking mind, and that is unavoidably colored by the conditioning of culture, location, language, and place in society.

yogaG Viewpoint

Our viewpoint is rooted in how we serve through yogaG, a nonprofit organization offering free yoga to domestic violence shelters and training for yoga teachers in trauma-informed yoga. We serve shelter staff, adult female clients, and children through weekly yoga sessions. Our instructors volunteer their time because the work we do is intended to be a “G”ift.

Our point of view as trauma-informed yoga teachers serving in domestic violence shelters is not intended to apply to every instructor in all service settings. Yet our core value of omitting reference to yoga philosophy during shelter classes stems from our experience of working with trauma clients, consulting with those well versed in yoga philosophy, and regular communication with our host-service agency partners. We believe that it is ethically responsible to leave yoga philosophy discussion out of the classes we lead.

All of the residents in a shelter setting have experienced trauma prior to being there. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) research shows us that trauma deeply impacts the entire organism, from brain and endocrine functioning to our relationships with ourselves and with others. We also now know of the existence of “secondary PTSD,” which is trauma sustained by those who work with trauma victims. Hearing about and living with others’ trauma day after day is its own trauma. yogaG’s host shelter environment, like many shelters throughout the country, is an extreme coexistence of primary and secondary trauma for up to 50 residents between infancy and age 70 and the staff who serve them.

During yoga classes, yogaG teachers strive to provide a container for the clients to simply reconnect with

their bodies through a gentle physical practice. A 30-minute yoga session, bookended with time for comfortable entry and exit from the room, provides an appropriate amount of physical practice for the women and children we serve. For the children, our aim is to help them cultivate an inner resource of resiliency through mindful play and movement. For the staff, we explore accessible levels of asana and include time for relaxation, self-care, and one-pointed awareness.

The objective of the shelter classes is to reestablish a connection to the physical body in the wake of trauma. We are dedicated to helping the students to balance their nervous systems (restoring healthy tone of the parasympathetic nervous system after a period of sympathetic overload) and to foster their ability for nonattachment. In our opinion, sharing philosophy gets students caught up in the particulars and the “shoulds,” shifting an already distracted audience away from the physical practice. It is possible that the philosophical axioms will emerge on their own for the people we serve—but with a relevance, intimacy, resonance, and power unlike being taught those same axioms in abstract lecture form. The furthest we go in this realm might be to name what the student is already feeling or experiencing as a result of contemplating yoga outside of the shelter class.

Further, residents have recently left an imbalanced, unhealthy power relationship. Having the awareness that people impacted by trauma are often thrown into a fresh set of challenges as they interact with organizational structures (e.g., the penal system, transitional housing) that may be rife with hierarchies and power interplay further supports the position we hold to not explicitly share yoga philosophy. Choosing to omit yoga philosophy neutralizes any potential power dynamics between the yoga teacher and client that might otherwise leave the client feeling slightly disempowered.

From yogaG’s perspective, we are simply sharing a physical practice; in fact, we encourage our instructors to not find out why clients are there. We are not their therapists—a highly trained staff is on hand and we are not in the business of disrupting their process. We do answer questions and hold an appropriate container for students to process their experiences on the mat. If the conversation shifts toward philosophy and personal stories, we redirect our clients in a kind and compassionate manner to speak with the shelter staff. We see the shelter clients one to six times in total, while the staff and clients are together through the duration of the shelter stay. Per yogaG standards, at least three instructors share

responsibility for each eight-week session, so that even if we believe it could complement the scope of our work, deepening an instructor–student relationship would be quite difficult. Without a deepened rapport and earned trust, philosophy is awkwardly out of place.

Finally, consider the comparison to public yoga classes that are premised on a mutually agreed upon cultural exchange taking place. The instructor offers a description of what the class is going to be about and the student willingly engages. If a class contains tidbits about subtle energy, asana, and philosophy, students can decide for themselves if it is something they are interested in by choosing whether or not to attend that particular class. Because this is not the nature of a shelter class, where residents are offered only one teacher option per week, we suggest that it can be enough to model and carry ourselves as an example of yoga philosophy in action. This becomes effortless through a deep understanding of yoga philosophy, which simultaneously seems to aid the instructors in letting go of any attachments or outcomes around their commitment to this service.

Yoga Philosophy in Perspective

We believe that sharing philosophy in a shelter setting is unnecessary for, and potentially detrimental to, the students receiving the asana practice. Yoga philosophy clouds the self-evident power and simplicity of the asana experience, and it is also where we see great misunderstandings around yoga as a religion keeping people away from practicing yoga. Yoga is not a religion in the sense that practitioners believe in a particular God or gods or a specific creation story. Because yoga comes from India, it incorporates some elements of Indian culture, like Hindu gods and myths, but these can be understood as aesthetics and archetypes rather than beliefs. For many people, yoga is or becomes spiritual in the sense that it makes them feel more alive and more connected with the world through its effect on the nervous system.

Just as it is not expected to put the feet to the head on the first day of yoga class (although some children do!), sharing advanced moral practices while serving is out of place. Putting the feet to the head is child’s play next to ethical living. Moral practices are infinitely complex in the real world and the tireless but forgiving dedication to their ideals is endless. For example, if we lose our temper and fall short of our moral ideals, it is important to resume practice *not* by penance or self-loathing for our “failure,” for this is just more violence and anger, but to take that

internal reaction of disappointment and hold it with clarity, acceptance, and kindness. Similarly, in a setting such as a domestic violence shelter, the very abstract concept of forgiveness might blur the lived experience that it may not be best to forgive and forget interpersonal violence when it results in remaining in an abusive relationship. The average female domestic violence victim will leave her partner an average of seven times before she leaves permanently. Returning to the relationship may or may not be an appropriate and safe thing to do. Filtering these decisions through yoga philosophy (i.e., how I should live) has too much potential to become blurry for someone who has come forward and made the decision to step away from violence. Receiving support in the shelter is critical if healthier *samskaras* (thought patterns) are to take hold within the people we serve.

If yoga is a practice aimed at consciously engaging and directing human development, then addressing the effects of trauma is essential. Self-care keeps us in touch with ourselves and makes us resilient by helping us to integrate and welcome all parts of ourselves. The body is concrete; however, in the wake of trauma, the body begins to feel abstract to the person who is living in it. Philosophy can interrupt the vital connection between the physical and physiological benefits of performing asana and the true healing of the emotional issues that underlie many sources of suffering.

Yoga philosophy is what is known to be true by tradition and collective wisdom. However, when yoga is shared in the form of service between instructors and clients, yoga philosophy is simply out of place. Yoga philosophy makes a subtle but important impact through the way we carry ourselves as instructors, as well as the intention we bring to the physical practice while serving. Cultivating our own understanding of yoga philosophy frees us to simply embody the principles yoga and effectively hold a container for our clients to experience asana as a felt sensation of present moment awareness. This is a critical experience for traumatized and underserved individuals who are on a healing journey.

Shelter Agency Viewpoint

Consider that most clinicians are trained to diagnose and that diagnosis is based on the medical model that tends toward a reductionist “cause-and-effect” model. Increasingly, clinicians and other licensed care providers working with clients impacted by domestic violence are beginning to understand that their work doesn’t necessarily help people to relax and that many of their clients

are not tuned into their body and do not know how to physically calm down. Yoga is an exquisite framework through which to discover and connect with inner calm, and yet an explanation of this is simply not clinical. The widely shared evidence base for yoga's effectiveness is in its infancy of being documented in dominant mental health discourse. Most clinicians we encounter state that they believe yoga to be helpful, even if they do not practice themselves. That being said, these clinicians also do not rely on yoga to hold the potential to "solve" the emotional issues that underlie many diagnoses.

Most clinicians are trained in and expected to use evidence-based practices, so given the elusive nature of concrete "results" in yoga, experience has shown that further clouding the waters with philosophy negates the support of agency staff and care providers who are otherwise accepting of introducing the physical practice of yoga. Without their support, there is no yoga to be had. Specifically for trauma survivors, it seems better to offer a physical practice than nothing at all.

Conclusion

In our view, yoga is not yoga without service and personal commitment to responsible service matters, especially in the shelter setting. We believe that a core component of yogic living is to serve, assist, or uplift others. By simply focusing on the physical practice in service, we are meeting people where they are, both the clients and the care providers. Perhaps as yoga instructors continue to serve and pique the interest in yoga of many professionals, then doctors, therapists, social workers, and teachers will begin to practice themselves. This will provide a context in which this discussion on yoga philosophy can be expanded among those in the service professions. 🌱

Self-Care as the Foundation for Social Action: How to Thrive and Sustain Personal Well-Being in the Field of Yoga Service

Jill Satterfield

Founder and Director, Vajra Yoga + Meditation | The School for Compassionate Action
www.vajrayoga.com | www.schoolforcompassionateaction.org | jill@vajrayoga.com

It is essential for yoga service providers to find a balance between self-care and caring for others in order to maintain their mental, physical, and emotional health in the long term. This sustainable balance can be found in practices that cultivate wisdom and compassion. This article offers a five-week exploration of techniques that can be layered onto your existing asana and meditation practice. Beyond facilitating our own self-care, observing the breathing restrictions, fear, anger, and sadness that may arise with these techniques can help us to become more compassionate toward those we serve now and prepare us with rich experiences to pass on to the next wave of those interested in continuing this work.

We need to maintain a delicate homeostasis in our lives to meet the challenges of working in the social action fields. Without balancing our approach toward self-care and care of others, we become susceptible to mental exhaustion, physical burnout, and emotional fatigue, unable to give of ourselves any more. We may lose insight into the nature of self and other, take things personally when they are not, and project our own issues onto others. Inflamed with resentment or anger, our capacity for self-reflection is impaired, and we may even become physically or emotionally ill. To skillfully engage in the world requires dedication, perseverance, wisdom, and compassion.

Neglecting self-care is often rationalized by thinking that we have too much to do and no time for practice or, more perniciously, that the suffering of others should take precedence over self-care. Caregivers commonly feel that another's needs are more important than their own and that taking time for yoga and meditation is self-indulgent or even selfish. This way of thinking sometimes stems from a misunderstanding of the bodhisattva ideal in Buddhist philosophy. A *bodhisattva* is a munificent being dedicated to relieving the suffering of all sentient beings, willing to delay his or her enlightenment until all suffering ceases. However, a bodhisattva is also a practitioner on a path. Much like the path of yoga, this path includes equal parts practice and study, as well as a determination to adhere to ethical guidelines. When either practice or study outweighs the other, this imbalance may result in one becoming overly conceptual and not grounded in practical wisdom. If we neglect ethical integrity, we risk losing sight of the greater

good. And if we cease to practice, we can lose sight of our deepest motivations for service.

While empathy may keep us committed to the pursuit of helping others, it is of the utmost importance that we engage in action skillfully and sustainably, both for ourselves and for those we serve. We achieve this sustainability by regular self-care in the form of practices that cultivate wisdom and compassion.

Interdependence

A good place to start in shifting our viewpoint on self-care is with an understanding of the interdependence of all life, which can be likened to a woven fabric in which every being is connected, like the gems in Indra's great net. Each individual is a sparkling jewel woven into the net that reflects all others within the net of existence. To view ourselves as less deserving than those we serve is to pluck ourselves out of the shared web of an interdependent existence. We can understand this conceptually or intuit it directly through contemplative practices. From the perspective of our interconnectedness with all of life, caring for self becomes an act of kindness toward all beings, stripped of the guise of selfishness. With this understanding, we can effectively open into an energizing mode of clear seeing and self-compassion.

Taking care of ourselves ripples outwardly as we develop a profound understanding of all beings. Knowing our own mind, body, and heart through contemplative practice opens the doors of awareness to all minds, bodies, and hearts. We recognize that the differences between self and other lie merely in the details of our unique story that is based on our individual patterns of previously learned association. Although a necessary component of survival in the world, our story is not the whole truth of our being. When we know our own minds and hearts, we know those of others. When we care for ourselves, we care for others, and this is the foundation for a natural arising of compassion.

Cultivating Compassion

Neuroscience is catching up with ancient wisdom. It is now understood that practicing compassion decreases the effects of stress, increases social connectedness, and elicits kindness towards oneself and others (Davidson, 2012; Light et al, 2009; Slagter, 2011). These benefits of compassion serve us well when embarking on a committed path to serve others. We must remain connected to each other and practice self-compassion or we risk succumbing to compassion fatigue. To cultivate com-

passion, we begin by developing moment-to-moment awareness, commonly known as *mindfulness*.

Mindfulness is being in the present moment and allowing what we notice in our thoughts to be gently held without grasping, clinging, disliking, or desiring. We become attentive to whatever is going on, in and around us, rather than unconsciously wandering in our daydreams and inner commentaries. When we see clearly, we can make skillful choices about each moment and what it might require, and we are no longer reacting but thoughtfully and skillfully responding. From here, wisdom develops and flourishes.

Our messages and methods of practice must come from our own direct experiences to be accessible and useful to those we serve. Our ability to meet others where they are reflects an understanding of our own suffering. Suppose we are working with underserved youth. If we have not yet uncovered our own feelings of anger, displacement, or abandonment, for example, we cannot expect to understand how troubled adolescents might be feeling. If we cannot relate on some level to their suffering, we may feel pity, which is the antithesis of compassion. Without relating to their emotional needs and the underlying causes of their behavior, we lose the ability to be compassionate and, importantly, our capacity to pause if triggered by their behavior diminishes.

As another example, when working with people who have experienced trauma or who are in chronic pain, it is helpful to reach into our own practice of being gentle, kind, and accepting of ourselves. By practicing loving-kindness and compassion toward ourselves, we unearth what we dislike about ourselves and where we need to forgive ourselves and forgive others. We know in our bones how transformative and helpful the practice is, and we become able to pass on this gift of self-acceptance. Individuals suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder often feel that they should already have moved beyond the experience. Through our own personal transformation, coupled with an understanding of psychology of trauma, we can adapt the phrases of loving-kindness accordingly. For example, "May I be patient with myself" is an appropriate mantra for someone who is frustrated with experiencing the insidious and repetitive symptoms of trauma.

We evolve creatively to meet each community or population we encounter because of what we cull from our practices as our information becomes embodied. How and what we practice changes over time if we are deeply listening and attuning to ourselves. Once we have developed a strong foundation—alignment

in a yoga practice, and the ability to stay present to the breath and to focus the mind in meditation—we hold the fundamental tools for practice to become an expression of our being. This then becomes the greatest gift we as teachers and caregivers have to share.

Meditation in Motion

Many of us are accustomed to practicing asana while controlling the breath. However, practicing with the breath as it naturally occurs can change our relationship to breathing and provide an opportunity for a different kind of self-care. At first, it might seem uncomfortable to not manipulate or elongate the breath or emphasize retentions. By reflecting on the interconnection between breath and mind, we can begin to recognize breath as it is, without its usual covers of manipulation, preferences, or previous training.

Think of a posture as a shape or form and the breath and mind as the content. Where does the mind and breath go in this particular shape? Just as importantly, where do they not go? Little by little, we begin to distinguish where we like to breathe in the form of the pose and where we don't. This observation can only be made when we stop trying to accentuate the breath here or there, making it this long or that short. We witness the movement of natural breath by allowing it to be as unadulterated as possible. I call this "meditation in motion" because, as in a meditation practice, we are watching the breath come and go just as it is. Welcoming of the breath rather than trying to fix it, a meditation in motion practice increases mindfulness because it trains attention and self-awareness.

Listed below are other suggestions that may help develop a new and possibly more personal view of your own practice in just five weeks. After you have experienced them for yourself for a while, envision how you would tailor the practices to the community you serve.

A Five-Week Self-Care Practice

Week One: Changing the View

Meditation generally involves a simple seated posture so that our focus can rest with the mind and breath rather than adjusting the pose. Try to adapt this principle to your asana practice: Emphasize content rather than form. Don't do any other practice first. Allow yourself to experience yourself without the benefit of what you already know an asana practice offers (e.g., more room to breathe, more comfort in the body, more ease in the mind). Start

by exploring five simple postures that you know well—nothing too complicated or physically rigorous.

As you watch the movement of your breath in a posture, you are observing the movements of your mind and heart. The body and breath reflect our thoughts and emotions; the body can become the physical shape of the mind and heart. Recognize that where your breath flows easily are the areas of your body where you are comfortable. Where the breath cannot flow (yet) tends to be the areas of holding or constriction—emotional, mental, or both. Over time, practicing in this way will reveal the nature of the constriction. However, the first step is becoming familiar with the internal landscape of our home—our body.

Week Two: Moving the Mind

Use the same five postures as in week one. As you settle into each individual posture, choose an area of your body and imagine that your breath carries your mind there. As you draw a gentle breath into your right hip, for example, imagine this breath like a fresh breeze that lightly brushes the internal crested shape of the hip and the nearby organs and glands. Move your breath and your attention everywhere you can imagine. Note all of the places that you cannot breathe into or cannot imagine breathing into. Observe how you feel during and after this moving of the mind; listen to the thoughts that arise and make note of them. Feel the emotions that might come up from either lingering in an area or from difficulties in accessing a particular area.

Week Three: Staying With What Arises

Once you have discovered the areas of your internal landscape that are not so easily accessible, choose a different posture to explore those areas. I suggest a restorative posture, something that is very easy to stay in for a longer period of time. For example, if you have discovered that the breath does not move into your heart area with ease, roll up a mat and place it directly behind the heart center, a bit under your shoulder blades. Lie on this roll for at least 10 minutes.

As you are in the pose, imagine that you are simply pulling up a comfortable chair and sitting inside this area. Rest your awareness gently inside, returning your mind to this place over and over again every time you notice that you have wandered. Do not expect anything to happen. Simply sit as if you were with a dear friend who needs you. Notice the effects of this practice on your mind and body.

Week Four: Skillful Means

Begin to develop this keen sense of awareness in an asana practice of your choice. As you fully occupy your posture with mindfulness, more patterns may reveal themselves, such as the desire to not pay attention or the impulse to stay on one side less because of discomfort. As you begin to notice these relationships of mind and body, hold them very gently and kindly. Become aware of any tendency to judge yourself. Thoughts of being less than perfect or directing harshness toward yourself will help you to be aware that these tendencies will also tend to arise in those you serve and you can meet them with the same kind acceptance.

As you move from one posture to another, be mindful of transitions as much as the periods in which you rest in the pose itself. Transition times are very revealing moments; they reflect the internal adjustments that occur (often unconsciously), such as holding the breath or tightening the belly. Witness what happens when you step off the mat and move into the world, or how you are right before you enter a crowded room, or the moment after something is complete just before you move to the next thing. Such moments have stories to tell about our habits of mind, body, and heart. If you would like to reintroduce *ujjayi*, breathe into or toward the places that are beckoning your attention, rather than assuming your breath as it was before this experiment.

Week Five: Loving-Kindness and Compassion

Finally, introduce the practice of developing *metta*—loving-kindness and compassion—and infusing it into your practice.

Begin in a seated or restorative posture. Imagine yourself in the present moment or as you were when a child. As you imagine yourself, with as much detail as possible, offer the following phrases to yourself, repeating them silently or aloud as many times as you like.

May I be happy
 May I be joyful
 May I be peaceful
 May I be healthy in body, mind, and heart
 May I be safe
 May I be loved and know I am loved
 May I love others freely and abundantly
 May I be forgiving
 May I be at ease
 May I be free from all suffering

Next, imagine that from deep within your heart, you can offer these phrases to all sentient beings—seen and unseen, born and yet to be born, human and animal, plants, and everything on our planet and beyond. Imagine these sentiments radiating from your heart in all directions. Sit quietly after this practice and allow your mind to rest on the coming and going of your breath for as long as you like.

Practice the metta phrases as they are or add your own. Repeat one or more phrases as you are practicing asana. Pay attention to what arises as you repeat these phrases. Whenever you become aware of judgements or self-criticism during your practice, recite the phrases, “May I be at ease” or “May I be loved.”

Metta is a personal practice but it also transcends the personal; it is as much about our connection to others as it is about ourselves. Becoming aware of what arises in this practice—such as fear, anger, or sadness—can help you to understand how difficult this practice can be for people who have suffered trauma or who have troubled lives. Use this practice frequently; it is very portable. A phrase can be silently repeated as you go about your daily life, without anyone else knowing what you are doing. Share this with those you serve—it can be both comforting and empowering.

Reflections

These practices are among my favorites. They arose out of many years of my personal practice of yoga on silent meditation retreats, especially during the years when I suffered from chronic pain and illness. They have helped me transform a critical view of myself into a more compassionate understanding. They have provided ways to turn my asana practice into meditation in motion so that I am mindful and can work with my mind as much as possible to stay present, no matter what I am doing or feeling. Importantly, these practices have kept me committed to practicing, reflecting, and taking kinder, more holistic care of myself. That, I think, might be their greatest gift. I am a much healthier human being and better teacher because of these practices.

I sincerely hope that you find treasures for yourself within these or similar practices so that you can remain healthy, vital, and flourishing with the work you are doing in the world. You are an extremely valuable and integral part of this relatively new and growing field of yoga service. Take excellent and kind care of yourself so that you last for many years to come.

As we collectively become more mature and seasoned leaders in this field of work, remember that taking care today will offer you the chance to continue long enough to guide the next generation. Within each new generation, there are the seeds of the previous generation. What you will be offering from your own experiences and practices will inform the next wave of those interested in continuing this work. This is ultimately the very best service we can offer to anyone. 🌱

References

- Davidson, R. J. (2012). The neurobiology of compassion. In C. K. Germer & R. D. Siegel (Eds.), *Wisdom and compassion in psychotherapy: Deepening mindfulness in clinical practice* (Chapter 8). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Light, S. N., Coan, J. A., Zahn-Waxler, C., Frye, C., Goldsmith, H. H., & Davidson, R. J. (2009). Empathy is associated with dynamic change in prefrontal brain electrical activity during positive emotion in children. *Child Development, 80*(4), 1210-1231.
- Slagter, H. A., Davidson, R. J., & Lutz, A. (2011). Mental training as a tool in the neuroscientific study of brain and cognitive plasticity. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience, 5*(17). doi: 10.3389/fnhum.2011.00017

CASE REPORT

Promoting Resilience through Yoga: Profiling the Implementation of Trauma-Informed Integrative Mindfulness Programming in Post-Earthquake Haiti

Danielle Rousseau, PhD, LMHC

Assistant Professor, Boston University, Boston, MA | danrou@bu.edu

Elizabeth Jackson, MPH

Program Manager, Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, MA | elizabeth.k.jackson@gmail.com

The current work presents a preliminary case report exploring the translation, adaptation, and implementation of a trauma-informed integrative mindfulness program (TIMBo), through a train-the-trainer model, as developed to address the effects of gender-based violence and traumatic stress in post-earthquake Haiti. The development and implementation of this yoga-based program is examined, demonstrating implications for quality service provision with underserved populations. The program targets the mitigation of traumatic symptomology as well as preventative strategies addressing the intergenerational cycle of trauma and violence. Initial anecdotal and observational outcomes are presented, exploring the process to date in translating this yoga-based curriculum for women in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Findings suggest that participation in the TIMBo programming may ameliorate the impact of traumatic stress and encourage alternative strategies for emotion regulation.

The current work presents a case report exploring the translation, adaptation, and implementation of TIMBo, a trauma-informed integrative mindfulness program, through a train-the-trainer model, as developed to address the effects of gender-based violence and traumatic stress. Here we profile an integrated mindfulness program in its initial implementation in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. This work examines yogaHOPE's Trauma-informed Mind Body (TIMBo) program as carried out in partnership with local Haitian organization Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMURT-Haiti). Background on both organizations is provided and the initial implementation process is detailed. In this paper, we discuss initial promising outcomes and challenges in translating this yoga-based curriculum for Haitian participants. We describe initial processes as well as goals for future program development and implementation based on what has been learned to date. Although this work represents a preliminary preview of a cross-national translation of yoga-based programming, we are hopeful that later outcome measures will demonstrate the benefit of programming. In profiling the successes as well as challenges to date, we hope to encourage culturally competent

partnerships that recognize the benefits of yoga and mindfulness in addressing the impact of traumatic stress as well as to foster continued work in this area.

In presenting this preliminary case report, we provide contextual background information on Haiti, introduce the agencies involved, and profile the TIMBo program itself. We then discuss implementation, monitoring, and evaluation to date, including an examination of challenges and successes. Finally, we outline the next steps in the evaluation of this yoga-based program in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Background

On January 12, 2010, Haiti experienced a major earthquake that left significant devastation in its wake. As a result of damage to the city, many were forced to relocate to tent communities throughout the capital city of Port-au-Prince. Reports indicate 230,000 people were killed and over 300,000 injured with nearly two million left homeless. Both prior to, and in the wake of the earthquake, Haitian women have faced multiple and complex traumas. Many face concerns common to women in the United States, including poverty and distinct physical and mental health issues. Further, without the infrastructure for sustained management of the impact of local weather systems, Haitians have endured multiple devastating natural disasters.

As a result of the 2010 earthquake, many women faced displacement, loss of loved ones, and physical and emotional trauma. In addition, these women face ongoing gender-based sexual and physical violence occurring in the temporary housing areas (tent cities) that have arisen throughout Port-au-Prince and beyond. As Paul Farmer has stated, “These challenges—housing, water, and sanitation, but also gender based violence—were questions of recovery and reconstruction, not rescue and relief” (Farmer, 2011, p. 87).

Even prior to the earthquake, intimate-partner and sexual violence toward women were present, but resources for women were inadequate. In addition, many of the limited resources that did exist were destroyed in the earthquake. According to Amnesty International, “Sexual and other forms of gender-based violence were widespread in Haiti before 12 January 2010, but the earthquake shattered what few protection mechanisms did exist” (Amnesty International, 2011, p. 6). For example, the local branch of International Planned Parenthood Federation, PROFAMIL, lost two primary clinics during the earthquake. Further, the vulnerability of

women and girls was often neglected during the initial crisis response to the earthquake (Claeys, 2010). Due to conditions of poverty and lack of organized resources, women and girls in Haiti frequently face precarious health situations and lack provision for basic gender-based needs (Claeys, 2010). There exists a need to address gender-related norms and structural factors that have placed Haitian women at risk for intimate-partner and sexual-based violence (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006).

Ultimately, the specific needs of women who have suffered trauma often go unrecognized and, therefore, are inadequately addressed. Victims of gender-based violence constitute a population under-served by programming and, specifically, programming addressing physical and mental health and substance-abuse treatment. In understanding this population and in delineating their distinct treatment needs, it becomes clear that programming must focus on treatment strategies that are gender-responsive as well as trauma-informed. We believe that these women would benefit from tools garnered through integrative mindfulness programming.

Organizational Profiles

We begin by presenting profiles of the two organizations involved in program implementation, yogaHOPE and AMURT-Haiti. The collaboration of these two agencies has become fundamentally important in actualizing the adaptation and implementation of the TIMBo program in Haiti.

yogaHOPE. YogaHOPE is a nonprofit yoga outreach program dedicated to bringing rehabilitative mind-body programming to women in acute crisis, recovery, or life transition. The organization was founded in 2006 by Suzanne Jones, a professional yoga instructor concerned by the disparity in access to yoga practice as a tool for empowerment and recovery. Founded on the results of scientific studies from the fields of neuroscience, physiology, psychology, and human development (Anodea, 2004; Bloom & Covington, 2008; Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2003; Covington & Bloom, 2006; Craig, 2011; Levine & Frederick, 1997; Mate, 2003; Naparstek, 2005; Rothchild, 2000), yogaHOPE is dedicated to improving health and well-being through increased access to yoga-based mindfulness tools for underserved women in recovery. In just five years, yogaHOPE has touched the lives of hundreds of women, throughout the United States and internationally.

AMURT-Haiti. In 2012, yogaHOPE partnered with local Haitian organization AMURT-Haiti to bring the

TIMBo program to trauma survivors in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. AMURT-Haiti, rooted in yoga philosophy, promotes rights-based strategies to eradicate poverty and to help create opportunities for everyone to realize their potential. AMURT-Haiti's mission is to reinforce local capacities through a participative approach. For the past eight years, AMURT-Haiti's long-term development initiatives have been focusing on three domains: education, rural livelihoods, and environmental transformation. REV-Ayiti (Renforcementet Éducation Vivante), the education and teacher-training department of both AMURT-Haiti and local partner LOCAL-Haiti (Local Capacity Alliance), have been working to build the capacity of teachers, child-care providers, and community leaders through an integrated project-based pedagogical approach. Teacher-training teams consist of curriculum developers, master trainers, and support staff who develop and facilitate regular experiential teacher-training modules. A combined staff of 50, including trainers, educators, and support personnel, manage the Sineyas model learning and community center in Delmas 33 (a neighborhood in Port-au-Prince) and support independently led women's groups.

Program Objectives and Design

Most recently, yogaHOPE's focus has been on the development and implementation of the Trauma-Informed Mind Body (TIMBo) program. The TIMBo program offers a deliverable, research-based curriculum addressing the ways in which mind-body practices allow for long-term traumatic stress recovery. TIMBo was developed specifically for women suffering from chronic trauma, addiction, and/or abuse, offering them the tools needed to address the psycho-social, emotional, and physiological root causes and enabling them to heal from trauma and to improve emotional regulation naturally. TIMBo is empirically based, trauma-informed, and gender-responsive, utilizing the strengths that already are present in female survivors of trauma. Trauma-informed programming specifically takes trauma into account while avoiding triggering trauma reactions; supports individuals' coping capacity; and allows survivors to manage symptoms successful in order to access, retain, and benefit from services (Covington & Bloom, 2006). The fundamental components of trauma-informed programming are safety, awareness, and acceptance.

Initial piloting of the TIMBo program was conducted with a forensic population; programming was piloted for trauma survivors in a women's prison. yogaHOPE postulates that the integrated mindfulness techniques of

TIMBo programming are translatable to trauma survivors more generally. There is specific evidence that integrated mindfulness is effective in settings outside of the United States, as well as in response to traumatic stress resulting from mass disasters (Brown & Gerbarg, 2009; Descilo et al., 2010; Gerbarg & Brown, 2005; Gerbarg, Wallace, & Brown, 2011; Telles, Naveen, & Dash, 2007; Telles, Singh, Joshi, & Balkrishna, 2010).

The TIMBo curriculum is composed of 16 sessions. Each session consists of the same structure, which includes three central components: (1) group discussion, (2) a focused breath exercise, and (3) yoga (physical postures) and meditation. Each session is conducted for approximately 1 ½ hours and sessions are held once a week, with approximately 30 minutes allocated to each session. This structure was designed to allow for a feeling of safety and predictability for the participants, conducive to the implementation of trauma-informed recovery. Facilitators lead with, and participants utilize, a program workbook. Each of these components is detailed below.

Group Discussion. Group discussion opens each TIMBo session. Each session focuses on a specific emotion as well as balancing emotion (for example, fear balanced by a wider perspective). Participants discuss both emotional as well as the physical impacts of specific emotions, learning the physical manifestation that each emotion has in the body. This format is both gender-responsive as well as trauma-informed. Groups are closed, with structured discussion led by trained co-facilitators. According to relational theory, women are more likely to be motivated by relational concerns, and psychological development is often connected to a sense of relatedness and connection (Covington & Bloom, 2006). By engaging in a group setting, a cooperative environment is created to meet women's relational needs, provide peer feedback, and encourage a prosocial interpersonal pattern. The group discussion component is also trauma-informed in that it allows for group cohesiveness and feelings of safety, predictability, structure, and repetition.

Breath exercise (pranayama). In each session, after the group discussion, facilitators introduce a breathing technique. A variety of breathing techniques are introduced throughout the program and the women practice the breathing strategies together. These breathing exercises allow the women to have concrete tools to utilize in creating a sense of inner space. Additionally, the breathing strategies are offered to the women as an alternative coping mechanism for dealing with traumatic-stress responses impacting the way the women think, feel, and react.

Breathing exercises teach women tools in a structure that is safe, predictable, and repetitive. In learning breathing techniques, the women are able to change impulsive reactions into thoughtful responses. Evidence suggests the value of yogic and mindful-breathing techniques for survivors of mass disasters. Yoga breath practices can safely and effectively reduce stress, anxiety, and depression (Brown & Gerbarg, 2009; Descilo et al., 2010; Gerbarg & Brown, 2005). For example, Descilo et al. (2010) explored the use of yogic breath for survivors of the 2004 tsunami in South-East Asia. Results indicated a decrease in trauma symptoms as well as decreases in symptoms of depression, suggesting that the use of yogic breath may help address psychological symptoms following the impact of mass disasters. As Brown and Gerbarg hypothesize, "Yoga breathing provides a neurophysiological 'work-out' that leads to greater flexibility and plasticity in the nervous system" (Brown & Gerbarg, 2009, p. 58).

Yoga (asana) and meditation. The final component of each session involves the practice of yoga followed by a guided meditation. The yoga practice incorporates a series of yoga poses that include integrative, endurance, and restorative postures. The structure of the asana series is trauma-informed in that it provides safety, predictability, structure, and repetition. Further, the group practice encourages mutuality, empathy, and as with the group discussion, is relational in nature. Poses are gentle, and facilitators always give options for modifications. Facilitators also provide trauma-informed restorative yoga assists after the facilitators feel that enough comfort and trust has been established through the initial sessions. The practice of yoga in this way encourages the women to recognize body sensation. The overall approach of the facilitators is not authoritative, but instead empowering.

Researchers in the field have demonstrated the benefit of yoga in addressing trauma reactions to mass disaster. Telles et al. (2007) evaluated the implementation of a one-week yoga program following the 2004 tsunami in South-East Asia. Programming was found to decrease symptoms of fear, anxiety, sadness, and sleep disturbance. Additionally, physiological results were observed, including observation of a decreased breath rate. In another example, Telles et al. (2010) explored the impact of a one-week yoga program for flood survivors in Bihar. Results from an evaluation involving random assignment to either a yoga or control group indicated a decrease in sadness as well as a potential avoidance of increased anxiety for those participating in yoga.

Each session ends with a guided meditation. The meditations included in the TIMBo workbook all involve guided visualization in order to be sensitive to trauma victims. Due to trauma symptoms such as hyperarousal, survivors can often experience sensory overload. Here language is provided, but participants are allowed time to experience sensation. The meditation allows for the women to experience a new parameter or safe space of containment.

According to the goals of the TIMBo program, with active participation in the curriculum, group members will reprogram their responses to internal and external triggers of traumatic stress. In addition, TIMBo hopes to empower women to share tools garnered in the program, thereby creating a cycle of healing and empowerment. Ultimately, the TIMBo program purports to be a powerful and innovative solution to social issues that become increasingly damaging from generation to generation.

Program Implementation

This program report examines the adaptation, training, and early implementation of the TIMBo program delivered by Haitian community leaders in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Members of both the yogaHOPE and AMURT teams worked together to determine how to bring the TIMBo program to Haiti in a culturally appropriate way. The specific objectives for the TIMBo program implementation in Haiti are to (1) give women in Haiti simple, effective, and accessible tools to utilize as active coping strategies for self-regulation; (2) help women in Haiti gain awareness of their bodies and their body sensations, thus providing them with a clear understanding of their emotional anatomy; (3) help women in Haiti renegotiate their self-belief through awareness of their inner experience and begin the process of transformation; and (4) explain the fundamentals of both how stress and trauma affect the body and the mind, as well as how mindfulness practices work to reverse the potentially devastating effects of traumatic stress.

Over the course of 2012, the 22 Haitian AMURT community leaders underwent the extensive 100-hour TIMBofacilitation training program, which is composed of four training modules. Rooted in a train-the-trainer model, these local leaders were empowered to deliver the programming to target populations throughout Port-au-Prince, including teachers participating in AMURT teachers' trainings and participants in the self-led women's groups. The first facilitator training in February 2012 was an introduction to the fundamentals of the

TIMBo program. In April of 2012, training focused on the utilization of healing touch and learning trauma-sensitive yoga assists. In July 2012, the team was instructed on trauma-informed yoga facilitation. Finally, in November 2012, the Haitian facilitators underwent specific training on facilitation techniques, including initial implementation of the program for target groups.

These Haitian community members are among the first group of fully certified TIMBo facilitators globally. As of January 2013, program implementation began throughout Port-au-Prince, with AMURT-Haiti trained facilitators running TIMBo programming for five groups of 20 women. As mentioned above, group participant members include two target groups involved in AMURT programming: teachers and self-help-group participants. Implementation is being followed by a joint American and Haitian research team, with the hope that outcomes from the evaluation process will demonstrate the effectiveness of the adaptation and implementation of the TIMBo program in Haiti, thus suggesting the benefit of trauma-informed integrative mindfulness practices for trauma survivors in the Haitian context.

Implementation: Challenges, Findings, and Adaptations

A number of challenges arose during the process of adapting and translating the TIMBo curriculum for the Haitian context. Challenges included issues of language usage, literacy levels, and developing a culturally competent translation of the program. While the TIMBo program is rooted in a workbook format, culturally informed adjustments needed to be made beyond simple language translation. For example, the discussion component of each session begins with reading aloud a selected quotation and then a section of descriptive text. Given that Haiti is a storytelling culture, the joint team of yogaHOPE and AMURT-Haiti felt that the quotes and readings would not generate discussion as naturally for Haitian participants as a story might. In addition, literacy rates among participating populations are extremely low, so facilitators cannot necessarily expect participants to read aloud from the workbooks. As a result, the yogaHOPE and AMURT teams adapted each session's discussion section by adding more pictures, photos, diagrams, and Haitian-specific references so that the program would resonate more naturally with Haitian women. Another example of a necessary cultural adaptation can be found in modification of the teaching of asana. Because of common Haitian religious and spiritual beliefs, the

AMURT team advised that it would be best not to use many Sanskrit terms during the yoga practice.

Challenges in program translation have also arisen as the certified program facilitators have begun to implement the program within Port-au-Prince. Reluctance to participate has arisen out of gender-specific norms of Haitian society. For example, the gender dynamic in many marriages required that husbands be aware of and approve of their wives engaging in programming. In order for men to feel comfortable with their wives participating in the program, male leaders from AMURT-Haiti working with the teachers and women in the larger community participated in the TIMBo facilitation training and also completed TIMBo certification. Prior to yogaHOPE's focus on gender-responsive programming, men had not participated in the yogaHOPE certification process, and this was the first context in which men trained to become TIMBo facilitators through yogaHOPE. As a result, the trained male facilitators make themselves available to talk to the husbands of participants in future TIMBo groups. This has led to husbands being more accepting of their wives practicing yoga and participating in the TIMBo program.

Other challenges arose requiring adjustments in order to ensure cultural competency of program translation. For example, based on the religious dictates of some participants, women must wear skirts. As a result, the women did not have pants (trousers) for participation in the yoga postures. AMURT-Haiti purchased pants for the women to wear under their skirts to allow for appropriate participation in the yoga practice. Ultimately, both yogaHOPE and AMURT-Haiti have been, and remain, committed to implementation of the TIMBo program in an attempt to provide a positive means of coping for a nation dealing with complex traumas and gender-based violence. Doing so in an ethical as well as effective manner requires specific attention to issues of cultural competency and the appropriate translation of programming and yogic practices. To date, these necessary adaptations have not hindered the implementation of TIMBo programming in Haiti, and it appears that integrated mindfulness-based components of the TIMBo program have been well received. Initial observations suggest evidence that programming is of value outside of an American context.

Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to explore the effectiveness of TIMBo in Haiti, yogaHOPE researchers and a group from AMURT-Haiti formed a

united team to decide how to best monitor and evaluate the implementation of the TIMBo program in Haiti. With the specific input of the Haitian trainers and leaders, two initial surveys were developed in April 2012 for pre- and post-program implementation. While the evaluation developed for use in the United States includes validated scales assessing depression, anxiety, PTSD, and self-compassion, culturally appropriate validated scales were not available for use in the Haitian context. Prior assessment strategies and the validated scales from the United States were used as a guide to develop a culturally appropriate assessment tool in collaboration with Haitian community leaders and trainers. The final tool was modified for language, understandability, literacy, appropriateness of questions, and understanding of the Haitian experience of physical symptomology. The tool was then translated into Haitian Creole. The assessment protocol consists of a pre- and a post-program survey incorporating short-answer and scale items. The questions included address experiences of depression, anxiety, PTSD, self-compassion, and physical and somatic experiences of trauma. The Haitian research team informed assessment strategies, clarifying unique cultural manifestations of these constructs. In addition, the assessment includes a structured interview shaped by open-ended questions. The interviews are conducted in Creole and later transcribed and translated in English for analysis. The research team hopes to address the specific evaluation strategy as well as the process of cultural translation of assessment in future articles/publications.

Haitian trainers and community leaders were instructed in conducting the evaluation tool. Role-play assessments were enacted for training purposes and to assist in the exploration of the validity and practicality of the research tool. Haitian researchers were trained in record keeping as well as in utilization of research tools (e.g., digital recorders, online-survey input). The American research team routinely monitors the Haitian trainers to help ensure accurate and valid data collection. These assessments will provide valuable data on the effectiveness of the TIMBo program, as well as on the success of its adaptation to the Haitian culture. A fundamental component of evaluation includes qualitative data gathering and analysis. Qualitative data will be obtained through the open-ended survey questions, interviews, and field/program observations by AMURT-Haiti research staff. Based on input from the local Haitian research team, the American research team believes that the most valuable data will be obtained from qualitative outcomes, because of the suggested importance of story in local culture.

To date, the decision to develop a joint team (American and Haitian) for monitoring and evaluation of program implementation has proven valuable. As was the original goal, it appears that the joint research team has fostered a greater degree of cultural competency in program implementation as well as monitoring. Working closely with the local Haitian community leaders that compose the research team provided insight that would not have otherwise been available. This insight has most certainly shaped both program implementation and decisions for the assessment protocol.

Monitoring and Evaluation Challenges

There have been numerous challenges to work out with the Haitian research team in developing a culturally competent monitoring and evaluation strategy and determining how to utilize the assessment tool. The most notable challenge has been the realization that given literacy rates, most participants are not able to read and complete the pre- and post-assessments on their own. In brainstorming solutions with the Haitian research team, it was determined that members of the Haitian research team would interview participants one on one. Although this is possible, it is also extremely time consuming, so the facilitators have had to plan accordingly. In establishing a protocol for data collection, the Haitian researchers were able to alert the American team to potential pitfalls in data collection, allowing for challenges in cross-cultural data collection to be overcome. For example, Haitian researchers suggested the need for a revision of scales, resulting in scales that were more visual as opposed to quantitative. ,

Synthesis of Findings

Working with the Haitian research team throughout the training and initial implementation process of delivering TIMBo in Haiti, our research team was able to gain insight into the intricacies of translating this yoga-based program for the Haitian context. This case report does not include the presentation of the pre- and post-program data from the assessment tool. The intention of this report is to describe the translation, adaptation, and implementation of the TIMBo program in the Haitian context. A subsequent paper will present the pre- and post-program data from the five groups currently being conducted in Haiti. At this stage, we can present the anecdotal evidence collected and observations noted throughout the TIMBo facilitation-training program in Haiti by way of informal one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions with the AMURT-Haiti facilitators.

The training itself and the mind-body practices taught as part of the TIMBo program seem to have had a clear impact on the lives of participants. One participant stated: "Sometimes we think we are guilty when something bad has happened, it feels like I want to die, but thanks to this training, I now have become strong and able to help others. The training has given me a chance to live again."

As the facilitation training was conducted, it became clear that the Haitian trainees participating in the facilitator training were receptive to the program and were open to learning yoga as well as integrating yoga practices into their lives, evidenced by their open discussion of this integration as well as the impact of such practices. Participants not only engaged actively in the four training modules, but indicated sharing practices with family and others. Participants indicated increased access to, and utilization of, mindfulness-based tools for positive coping and discussed utilizing yoga-based tools with their children, as well as teaching other parents how to use tools with their own children. As one participant stated, "This is a way to teach parents how to deal with their children while they work on not feeling victimized."

In discussion with yogaHOPE researchers, facilitator-training participants addressed the experience of sharing yoga asana with others. The facilitators indicated integrating yoga asana into the teacher-training program they were conducting in schools throughout Port-au-Prince. The facilitators indicated sharing physical postures, but not always using the term "yoga." They suggested some hesitancy to use the term due to religious connotations or initial reactions that "yoga" could be associated with voodoo. Despite this, the facilitators indicated that they did share asana, and the practice of asana was well received. When asked by a teacher what yoga was, one facilitator stated that she responded "Yoga is from India. It is a tool that can help you be balanced. It can help you to stop, and not be angry. You can find balance. You can use asana." Facilitators specified that they were now using asana in training of school teachers and further, that they were encouraging the teachers to continue the practice at home.

Training participants were able to confer the impact of the program on the experience of emotion. There was a clear connection specifically to the experience of anger. One woman stated, "Before, I was someone who became angry easily. After, I am a different person. I stop. I take a few seconds. That is how this training is helpful." Another participant discussed her experience as an edu-

cational trainer working with local teachers. She stated, "The women used to struggle with each other. Fight. After being taught asana, when they are angry, they heal themselves. They can calm themselves. The anger is less. They do not fight anymore." In work throughout the four modules of training, it became apparent that in addition to an understanding and discussion of emotion, the use of controlling breath and engaging in breathing exercises for emotional regulation was particularly well received and impactful for participants. For example, in discussing the use of breath, one participant stated: "Before the training I would get angry very quickly. I feel like a new person. I now create the space to pause for three seconds before I react."

Participants related to the visualization of the location of emotion within the physical body. In discussing the mind-body connection, participants made a drawing of the human body, labeling the location of emotions as experienced in the body. Participants indicated the realization that they had been having pain in their body and they now better understand the origin of the pain as well as how to manage pain and disease with asana practice. Haitian trainees indicated an ability to both understand as well as relate to the notion that emotion is carried in the physical body and can lead to disease. There is evidence that participants were able to use asana as a tool to manage the manifestation of both emotional and physical pain and disease within their bodies.

Implementation of the current program has certainly not been without challenges. The transition of facilitators implementing the program with target populations has been slower than expected. Barriers related to the impact of gender roles and religious beliefs have been noted. Overall, despite general hesitance, women participating in the initial implementation do appear to be garnering personal benefit from the TIMBo program and yoga practice, and many have indicated sharing the practice (asana and pranayama) with their children and others.

Next Steps

In January 2013, AMURT-Haiti-trained facilitators began to implement the TIMBo program with five community groups of approximately 20 women each. The groups are led by the certified AMURT-Haiti TIMBo facilitators. All participants from the five new AMURT groups receiving the TIMBo program have already engaged in the pre-test assessment and will engage in the post-test assessment following the completion of the program after 16 sessions. As of summer 2013, a group of women in

the Northwest part of Haiti have participated in TIMBo programming, and three new programs are starting in Port-au-Prince. In addition, there are plans to begin training TIMBo facilitators to work in the Northwest part of Haiti. Throughout the process, monitoring and evaluation will occur as a joint effort of the American and Haitian research team. The collection of the pre- and post-program data will be informative as to fully assessing the program's impact and effectiveness. Results will be available after completion of the program and following analysis by the yogaHOPE research team. After completion of initial community groups, yogaHOPE and AMURT leadership will develop a plan for future scale-up and implementation throughout Haiti. The joint American and Haitian research team will continue to monitor program implementation throughout its expansion in Haiti.

Conclusion

Implementation of trauma-informed programming can be complex, particularly when programming is integrated into areas of turmoil such as Haiti. Providing mindfulness and yoga-based trauma-informed programming in other countries can bring about unique operational concerns and challenges. Approaching implementation in a culturally competent manner informed by participation of local constitutions becomes fundamental. In implementation of programming, there is a need not only for language translation but also program translation in a manner sensitive to unique issues of religion, culture, and gender roles. In addition, it is important to consider cultural competency in defining outcomes and establishing monitoring and evaluation protocol.

Overall, the preliminary case report presented indicates the potential for discovery that yoga and integrated mind-body practices are beneficial in addressing the far-reaching impacts of traumatic stress and promoting resilience in survivors. TIMBo appears to be a promising program for Haitian women as survivors of traumatic stress and gender-based violence. The program targets the need for a culturally sensitive, gender-responsive, and sustainable program to address the epidemic of violence and trauma facing Haitian women. Results following the implementation of the TIMBo program with the first five women's groups will further determine the success and challenges of translating gender-responsive, trauma-informed scholarship and programming into practice in the Haitian setting.

References

- Amnesty International. (2011). *Aftershocks: Women speak out against sexual violence in Haiti's camps* (No. AMR 36/001/2011). Retrieved from <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AMR36/001/2011/en/57237fad-f97b-45ce-8fdb-68cb457a304c/amr360012011en.pdf>
- Anodea, J. (2004). *Eastern body, Western mind: Psychology and the chakra system as a path to the self*. New York, NY US: Celestial Arts.
- Bloom, B. E., & Covington, S. S. (2008). Addressing the Mental Health Needs of Women Offenders. In *Women's mental health issues across the criminal justice system*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Bloom, B. E., Owen, B., & Covington, S. S. (2003). *Gender-responsive strategies: Research, practice, and guiding principles for women offenders*. National Institute of Corrections. Retrieved from <http://static.nicic.gov/Library/018017.pdf>
- Brown, R. P., & Gerbarg, P. L. (2009). Yoga breathing, meditation, and longevity. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1172(1), 54–62. doi:10.1111/j.1749-6632.2009.04394.x
- Claeys, V. (2010). Beyond despair—sexual and reproductive health care in Haiti after the earthquake. *The European Journal of Contraception and Reproductive Health Care*, 15(5), 301–304.
- Covington, S. S., & Bloom, B. E. (2006). Gender responsive treatment and services in correctional settings. *Women & Therapy*, 29(3-4), 9–33. doi:10.1300/J015v29n03_02
- Craig, A. D. (2011). The significance of the insula for the evolution of human awareness of feelings from the body. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, (New Perspectives on Neurobehavioral Evolution).
- Descilo, T., Vedamurtachar, A., Gerbarg, P. L., Nagaraja, D., Gangadhar, B. N., Damodaran, B., Adelson, B., Braslow, L. H., Marcus, S., Brown, R.P. (2010). Effects of a yoga breath intervention alone and in combination with an exposure therapy for post-traumatic stress disorder and depression in survivors of the 2004 South-East Asia tsunami. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, 121(4), 289–300.
- Farmer, P. (2011). *Haiti: After the Earthquake*. New York, NY US: Public Affairs.
- Gage, A. J., & Hutchinson, P. L. (2006). Power, control, and intimate partner sexual violence in Haiti. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 35(1), 11–24.

- Gerbarg, P. L., & Brown, R. P. (2005). Yoga: a breath of relief for Hurricane Katrina refugees. *Current Psychiatry*, 4, 55–67.
- Gerbarg, P. L., Wallace, G., & Brown, R. P. (2011). Mass disasters and mind-body solutions: Evidence and field insights. *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*, 21(-1), 97–107.
- Levine, P. A., & Frederick, A. (1997). ***Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma***. North Atlantic Books.
- Mate, G. (2003). *When the body says no: Exploring the stress-disease connection*. Hoboken: Wiley.
- Naparstek, B. (2005). *Invisible heroes: Survivors of trauma and how they heal*. New York, NY US: Bantam.
- Rothschild, B. (2000). *The body remembers: The psychophysiology of trauma and trauma treatment* (1st ed.). W. W. Norton & Company.
- Telles, S., Naveen, K. V., & Dash, M. (2007). Yoga reduces symptoms of distress in tsunami survivors in Andaman Islands. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 4(4), 503–509.
- Telles, S., Singh, N., Joshi, M., & Balkrishna, A. (2010). Post-traumatic stress symptoms and heart rate variability in Bihar flood survivors following yoga: A randomized controlled study. *BioMed Central Psychiatry*, 10(18).

YOGA SERVICE IN ACTION

Creating a Seva Yoga Program: A joint project with the New England School of Integrative Yoga Therapeutics and Healthworks Community Fitness.

Fiona Y. Akhtar, MS, RYT200

The New England School of Integrative Yoga Therapeutics | fionayogini@gmail.com

Bo Forbes PsyD, E-RYT

The New England School of Integrative Yoga Therapeutics | www.boforbes.com | BoForbes@aol.com

Lauren Broadhurst

Healthworks Community Fitness | www.healthworkscommunityfitness.org

Mark Harrington

Healthworks Community Fitness | www.healthworkscommunityfitness.org

Creating a successful seva yoga program requires more than simply offering yoga to an underserved community. It requires an understanding of the target population, awareness of instructor skills and motivations, and community support. It benefits from strong partnerships and access to resources. This article describes the process of launching a seva yoga program at a community fitness facility in an underserved community in Boston, MA. Offered by the New England School of Integrative Yoga Therapeutics in partnership with Healthworks Community Foundation, the seva yoga program was launched in 2009. The authors present details on instructor preparation, class structure, and communication strategies, along with suggested best practices and lessons learned. Also included are strategies for creating a culture of seva within a yoga teacher training program, developing mentoring and support systems, and evaluating the program.

Healthworks, Inc., a Boston-based company with centers located in Boston area communities, specializes in fitness for women. In 1998, inspired by the concept of women's empowerment through fitness, the founders established a non-profit organization called Healthworks Community Fitness (HCF). Initially, HCF operated as a foundation, awarding scholarships to low-income women for the use of its fitness facilities. However, after an initial evaluation period, the founders observed that scholarship recipients did not attend the facilities, which were located in more affluent neighborhoods. The club was far from the homes of the scholarship recipients and did not reflect the demographics of their communities. Healthworks' founder Mark Harrington realized that in order to accomplish its goals, HCF needed to serve women of low socioeconomic status in the communities

in which they lived. HCF's mission evolved from one of changing individuals to transforming communities.

To meet the growing needs of its community, HCF opened two full-service fitness and health education centers in Dorchester, a low-income neighborhood in Boston, Massachusetts. HCF opened its first facility, Healthworks at St. Mary's, in 2002 in partnership with St. Mary's Center for Women and Children, a homeless shelter that offers family-centered programs for women and children who have experienced trauma and are living in poverty. Members of Healthworks at St. Mary's include women and pregnant teens who reside in shelters or receive government assistance. HCF opened its second Dorchester facility, Healthworks at Codman, in 2009. Established through a partnership with the Codman Square Health Center, Healthworks at Codman offers a large-scale public health intervention focused on physical fitness and health education for women and children. Healthworks at Codman's goal is to empower and strengthen vulnerable Boston neighborhoods by creating awareness of important health issues, improving self-care behaviors, and enhancing physical fitness. At these two locations, HCF works directly with community health centers and hospitals to provide holistic patient care. Through its innovative Physician's Referral Program, doctors write exercise "prescriptions" for patients diagnosed with health conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity, or mood disorders; HCF then "fills" these prescriptions with free memberships. In 2012, HCF filled roughly 400 exercise prescriptions.

The New England School of Integrative Yoga Therapeutics (NESIYT) maintains a long-standing relationship with Healthworks. NESIYT teachers in training have assisted in yoga classes at Healthworks locations, along with volunteer teaching they may pursue elsewhere. In 2009, NESIYT graduates discussed expanding their post-graduate teaching opportunities. Some graduates lived in Dorchester and wanted to share the benefits of yoga with their community. Aware that the Healthworks at Codman facility had recently opened, they explored creating a seva (defined in the NESIYT program as unpaid volunteer work) yoga program at the site. The new yoga teachers saw this as an opportunity to serve the community and evolve their teaching skills.

Population Profile

HCF serves approximately 1,500 members at its two centers. The majority of members are single mothers who receive government assistance. Many are referred to HCF

by their physicians to help them manage lifestyle-related chronic diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and obesity. HCF fosters a constructive relationship with physical activity, builds self-esteem, and promotes positive body image, especially among young members. Healthworks at Codman, the location of the seva yoga program, serves both women and children. The focus of Healthworks at Codman is promoting fitness and health education.

Community Demographics

The HCF centers are located in Dorchester, Boston's largest and most diverse neighborhood (City of Boston, 2013). In 2010, Dorchester had one of the highest poverty rates in the city of Boston and the highest child poverty rate in the state of Massachusetts (Kahn & Martin, 2011). Of the families served by HCF, 75 percent are African American and 16 percent are Latino. Dorchester has the state's fourth highest prevalence of obesity (Li, et al., 2009), which is associated with higher rates of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, stroke, and arthritis (Must, Spadano, Coakley, Field, Colditz, & Dietz, 1999). These illnesses not only reduce quality of life but also cost the state of Massachusetts an estimated \$1.82 billion dollars annually (Massachusetts Department of Public Health, 2010).

Although it has a small staff and lean operating budget, a network of volunteer staff enables HCF to pursue its mission of promoting health in at-risk neighborhoods. Volunteers do everything from teach classes to clean the centers, and their involvement and commitment is valued by the community. According to Executive Director Lauren Broadhurst,

"Yoga instructors have consistently been the most generous of our volunteers with their time and expertise. Thanks to their steadfast presence in our centers, interest in yoga has progressively increased among our members and class sizes are growing. Considering the high level of stress many of our members face on a regular basis, yoga is particularly important to their health and well-being."

Background of the Codman Seva Yoga Program

The yoga teachers in the Codman Seva Yoga Program are graduates of the New England School of Integrative Yoga Therapeutics (NESIYT) 200-hour teacher training program.¹ Throughout the training, participants learn

¹ This program, founded by Bo Forbes, Psy.D., E-RYT500, prepares participants to teach yoga from a therapeutic perspective and to address the needs of diverse populations.

how to adapt yoga to special populations, including people with physical challenges such as spinal anomalies, hypermobility, and arthritis, as well as emotionally mediated issues such as anxiety, insomnia, depression, and chronic pain disorders. The NESIYT program prepares trainees to teach both therapeutic vinyasa and restorative yoga, offer therapeutic modifications, assess students' ongoing and fluctuating needs, and tailor the teaching to a diverse group of students. Seva is required during the training year, and its importance is emphasized beyond graduation. Although the NESIYT students are trained to assist in free sessions, they do not teach yoga during the training program.

The Codman Seva Yoga Program was initially envisioned as an opportunity for the NESIYT teachers and Healthworks at Codman members to engage in a reciprocal learning experience through yoga. The NESIYT Codman experience was designed with two purposes in mind: 1) to offer recently graduated teachers experience in teaching yoga to a special population, and 2) to offer therapeutic and restorative yoga to the Codman population. Although yoga classes were already offered at Codman, a therapeutic approach to Hatha yoga (including restorative yoga) was not part of the regular fitness program. The two organizations shared a desire for the program's initial years to be experimental, allowing for evolution of the program over time.

In 2009, Fiona Akhtar, MS, RYT-200, along with three other NESIYT graduates, contacted HCF with the support of their training director to explore the possibility of creating a seva yoga program at Healthworks at Codman. As part of an initial needs assessment, Akhtar and her fellow graduates met with HCF Director Lauren Broadhurst and interviewed Healthworks at Codman fitness instructors to learn about their experiences. They also conducted a site visit and met with gym members, staff, and instructors to discuss the general characteristics and health and fitness goals of the Codman members. They also examined the physical environment, noting factors such as public transportation access, perceived safety of the neighborhood, size of the gym floor space, studio noise level, and available yoga equipment.

In July of 2009, the four NESIYT graduates launched the inaugural Codman yoga class on a weeknight, rotating teaching on a structured schedule. In order to maintain consistency from one week to the next, the instructors created a Google Docs spreadsheet to track class sequences, first names of attendees, attendance, and notes from each class.

The Inaugural Year: Lessons Learned

During the 2009–2010 teaching year, class attendance varied significantly. Numbers ranged from 2 to 12 members per class. The four yoga instructors encountered a diverse mix of students with varying levels of fitness ability, reasons for attending, prior yoga experience, and English language proficiency. Seeking to understand student motivation, instructors asked students why they had chosen to attend the class. Many students attended because they had a prescription from their doctor and wished to improve their physical fitness. Most were unfamiliar with yoga, and thus were unclear how a yoga class complemented cardiovascular and strength training. Some attendees had limited mobility or suffered from health conditions such as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. Others had taken vigorous hatha yoga classes and desired a strong physical workout.

Although the class attendance fluctuated, there were several class "regulars." As the class progressed, the instructors adjusted their teaching style to meet attendees' needs, abilities, and desires. Teachers offered several modifications and whenever possible, individualized instruction. For example, instructors would often teach an active practice to several members while simultaneously offering restorative yoga to others.

The NESIYT training emphasized the importance of therapeutic sequencing and also prepared the instructors to be able to modify and adapt their teaching to each class. As new instructors, the NESIYT graduates initially felt more comfortable with planned sequences. However, due to the varying attendance and needs of the class, they soon realized that advanced preparation made it more difficult to meet the needs of this population. The instructors decided to adopt a style of teaching that allowed for moment-to-moment assessments of the students. At the beginning of each class, teachers gauged the level of subtle and gross body awareness of the student, which then determined whether teachers should use basic or more sophisticated alignment, sequencing, and proprioceptive cues. The instructors assessed nonverbal cues such as energy level and body awareness; they also asked students for a self-reported assessment with the goal of encouraging awareness of internal physiological and emotional states. In addition to teaching about the form of a yoga class, the NESIYT teachers sought to convey the essence of yoga to each attendee: that yoga is more about an opportunity for self-awareness and self-compassion than it is about practicing complicated physical postures.

Early in the program's inaugural year, the NESIYT teachers discovered that most students were new to yoga. Like most new students, they were unfamiliar with common yoga conventions and etiquette. The teachers focused on setting a "container" for the class, establishing clear guidelines about mobile phone use and chatting in class. Mobile phones were not allowed in class, while "light" chatting relevant to the class itself was welcomed. Rather than attempting to replicate a typical studio setting, the instructors created an atmosphere that reflected the character of the students. For example, because students were collaborative and liked to chat, the instructors encouraged them to help one other with alignment or questions about a posture. The NESIYT yoga instructors learned that because students had a beginning level of proprioceptive awareness and often did not speak English fluently, most responded better to modeling of postures and visual cues than verbal directions. Students also responded better to English rather than Sanskrit names.

The Codman students represented various fitness levels, injuries, and other physical limitations such as arthritis. Several had limited range of motion. While the NESIYT teachers taught a therapeutic vinyasa style when appropriate, they also made significant modifications to the class structure such as removing sun salutations and incorporating chairs as props when warranted. The instructors taught the class at a beginner level and then offered modifications for students with greater fitness levels. They took note of the students' positive responses to restorative postures and incorporated them into every class. In addition, the instructors offered hands-on assisting, while remaining sensitive to students with trauma histories and emphasizing that assists were voluntary. The students were particularly receptive to an extended savasana and frequently remarked that the Codman yoga class was the only opportunity they had to relax and not be preoccupied by others' demands. They grew to value the opportunity for self-care and some reported integrating savasana into their lives when not in yoga class.

One of the challenges to teaching in a gym environment is that students often feel the need to push beyond their capabilities in order to feel that they are getting a workout. In one case, a student with chronic fatigue syndrome tried to keep up with more advanced students even when offered modifications, because her doctor had told her to lose weight. The instructors framed modifications to encourage each student to

work at her appropriate level, and determined when recommend modifications more assertively. Strategies for doing this included

- Personalizing instruction by using student names.
- Using language that emphasized the benefits of a modification for a particular student and then generalizing this language to the group at large.
- Emphasizing the challenging aspects of using modifications to appeal to students who exhibited a more competitive spirit and less self-compassion.

By the end of the year, the NESIYT instructors had grown more adept at working with physical limitations, emotional issues, and language barriers. The skills they acquired were reflected in the last class offered in the inaugural year. Twelve students attended, which demonstrated the growing interest in yoga. Of these, four were returning students, while the rest had little or no yoga experience. Two students said they wished to participate in the class but were unable to stand for long periods of time or bend forward, and one spoke no English. Abandoning her plans for the class, the instructor used chairs for the two students who could not stand, removed sun salutations for those with injuries and arthritis, and reduced the time held in each pose to make the class more accessible to all. In order to effectively teach all students, the instructor realized she had to model each pose twice, once on the ground and once in a chair. At the end of class, students said it was a great experience, feeling that they "worked and relaxed their bodies."

Observations from the 2010–13 Teaching Years

No NESIYT graduates volunteered for the Codman Seva Yoga Program in the 2010–2011 year. In response, the NESIYT teacher training requirements now include mandatory seva during the training year, which helps bring awareness to the importance of volunteer work to the teacher trainees. This requirement offers a broad range of choices for volunteer work. Teachers can volunteer in formal programs such as Codman or informal classes for colleagues or other groups. Since this requirement was formalized, graduating teachers have consistently and enthusiastically volunteered for the Codman program, even though the time and travel commitments are greater than most of the other volunteer opportunities.

Four graduates from NESIYT taught at the Codman Seva Yoga Program in the 2011–2012 year and two in the 2012–13 year. As in the program's inaugural year,

these instructors taught in a rotation. The instructors also assisted each other's classes, offering modifications and individualized attention to students. Classes generally consisted of two to three students completely new to yoga, two to three regular students, and several drop-in students.

Since the program's inception, the NESIYT teachers have gleaned several insights. They realized that teaching in a "real-life" gym environment with loud music and bright lights, and to a student population that doesn't observe "traditional" yoga etiquette, requires a change in teachers' perceptions of what yoga class should be. Without the trappings of a typical yoga class, the instructors came to realize that it was possible to convey the essence of yoga, as described above, in any setting. Additionally, each class year required a willingness to offer modifications for different physical abilities and to teach alignment in simple, straightforward ways. The teachers found it helpful to teach the class as a six-week series so that students could build on what they learned in previous sessions. Each week, the teachers broke down complex elements such as sun salutations to facilitate learning the postures and sequences. The teachers also emphasized the core body, breathing exercises (*pranayama*), and relaxation as tools to help students develop greater mind and body awareness. Initially, the teachers were concerned that teaching a progressive course in which elements built upon one another from week to week would not work well in a gym environment. However, class participants responded enthusiastically and exhibited greater confidence and engagement in the class.

Reflections from the Codman Seva Yoga Program Teachers

Each teacher felt that supporting the Codman women's practices and watching them grow is an invaluable experience for new teachers. They also voiced the challenges inherent in the experience and concluded that instructors need support and guidance throughout the year. The teachers identified a need to elicit advice or suggestions from colleagues who had taught in previous years. Starting with the 2013–14 rotation, the program will create a community forum where past and present instructors can share ideas, ask for advice, and voice concerns. The instructors believe that this will not only offer a means of support but also enhance involvement and satisfaction with the program. These improvements, in turn, will allow more Codman women to experience

the benefits of yoga. The program teachers and HCF also plan to administer a student survey to assess satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.

The following two comments have been excerpted from a survey of the Codman yoga teachers from 2009–2013:

"Aspects that stood out to me: we had to adapt our training to the unique conditions of teaching at Codman. We adjusted our goals from what we thought a traditional yoga class should look or feel like. We had no sound proofing. There was harsh lighting. We didn't have props. Some of the women weren't aware of yoga class etiquette, such as the importance of arriving on time or turning off cell-phones during class. Yet I've seen this plenty at yoga studios—and other Healthworks locations too! We were called upon to be very mindful of the range of student yoga experience in each class, and to offer a range of adaptive, on-the-spot modifications. Even with occasional language barriers, we were able to "speak" and "teach" through adjustments and demonstrations. All of these things made the experience very meaningful to me."

"I really loved my time at Codman. Working with the women taught me so much about self-acceptance, about showing up as who you are and not being afraid to do so. It was so moving to be part of that space we all created together. Those women peacefully took the time each week (potentially some of the only time they had to themselves) to enhance and embrace their self-care practice, along with their bodies, minds, and spirits. So many of them had the essence of true yogis: they were not attached to the physical practice and didn't force their bodies to fit the postures. Instead, they were able to laugh when they couldn't get into a pose. And when they needed to, they dropped into final relaxation early, arms and hearts wide open. I think that for so many of them, just being there in that space for an hour was healing in and of itself. I was honored to be a part of their growth, while feeling the seeds of my own self-growth expand at the same time."

Neither HCF nor the NESIYT yoga teachers collected formal feedback from the Codman students. However, the teachers frequently solicited suggestions and reflections from their students and have continued to do so in each successive year of the program. The Codman Seva

Yoga Program teachers have received positive feedback from students, as well as constructive suggestions. Members report that they enjoy the helpful, customized assisting and the restorative nature of the classes.

In the future, we would like to see funding allocated to the Healthworks at Codman for a permanent therapeutic yoga program. This program could involve teachers who have gone through the initial training period at Codman, who would then be available to support incoming teachers. HCF is also considering regular team meetings to support interaction and dialogue between the Codman Seva Yoga Program teachers and the other Healthworks yoga teachers.

Conclusion

Instructors from every year of the program agree that participating in the Codman Seva Yoga Program is an inspiring, humbling, challenging, and fulfilling experience. Instructors have the opportunity to bring the benefits of yoga to underserved women who would likely not otherwise experience them. In turn, the experience enriches the Codman instructors' initial year of teaching.

According to Healthworks and HCF founder Mark Harrington, successful businesses in various settings are rich in human resources as well as unique "products" or specialty services. These businesses are well equipped (and often more financially stable) to offer programs that strengthen the cohesiveness of the communities in which they operate. Many health service organizations in the United States are struggling financially. HCF receives financial support from its founder, Healthworks, Inc., as well as from fundraising events, individual donations, and grants. This model helps to offset operating costs and affords underserved communities a unique opportunity for growth and well-being.

Creating a seva yoga program is a challenging task. It requires an understanding of the target population, foresight, and flexibility. Since its inception, the Codman Seva Yoga Program has evolved and will continue to do so. The teachers have initiated discussions with HCF on ways to make the experience more meaningful to the participants. This dialogue will enable us to improve our teaching and help more participants to make positive changes in self-care, fitness behaviors, and overall physical and emotional well-being.

Authors' Note

The authors wish to thank Ginny Hamilton, Robyn Long, Sam Wechsler, Sibylle Bosslet, Allison Jones, Joanna Gardy, Rachel Brailove, Jessica Hicks, and Lindsey O'Neill for their participation in this program and for their contributions to this article. 🌱

References

- City of Boston. (2013). Dorchester. Retrieved from <http://www.cityofboston.gov/neighborhoods/dorchester.asp>
- Kahn, C. B., & Martin, J. K. (2011). The measure of poverty: A Boston indicators project special report. Retrieved from http://www.boston.com/multimedia/2011/11/09poverty/poverty_report.pdf
- Li, W., Kelsey, J. L., Zhang, Z., Lemon, S. C., Mezgebu, S., Boddie-Willis, C., et al. (2009). Small-area estimation and prioritizing communities for obesity control in Massachusetts. *American Journal of Public Health*, 99(3), 511–519.
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health. (2010). A profile of health among massachusetts adults, 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/behavioral-risk/report-2010.pdf>
- Must, A., Spadano, J., Coakley, E., Field, A., Colditz, G., & Dietz, W. (1999). The disease burden associated with overweight and obesity. *JAMA: the journal of the American Medical Association*, 282(16), 1523–1529.

Yoga In Schools: Delivering District-Wide Yoga Education

Andrea M. Hyde, PhD, Assistant Professor

Educational and Interdisciplinary Studies, Western Illinois University | am-hyde@wiu.edu

Joanne Spence, BSW, E-RYT

Executive Director, Yoga in Schools | www.yogainschools.org

This paper discusses the Yoga in Schools (YIS) district-wide training model. The model is based on empirical and experiential evidence of the positive effects that yoga can have on both students and staff. We describe the YIS mission and philosophy and how the work of this organization is positioned within a wider movement to include yoga in public schools. We also discuss how we approached schools, sought and developed key relationships, and leveraged funding. Finally, we consider some of the challenges involved in working with schools, and districts in particular, including making a sustainable exit from the district with responsible maintenance. We close by describing our current project and our hopes for the future.

Yoga In Schools (YIS) is a 501(c)(3) organization that provides yoga programming and teacher training to several school districts in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The most comprehensive projects teach Health and Physical Education (HPE) teachers to use yoga in their curriculum through custom-designed, standards-aligned, district-wide professional development. In addition, YIS provides training and support to teachers and other school staff on how to use yoga techniques in the classroom to calm students and prepare them for learning. Schools in Cleveland, Chicago, Savannah, and Milwaukee have sought YIS training for their HPE staff and teachers. YIS uses the Yoga Ed™ curriculum, a standardized model of physical and emotional wellness for teachers and students in grades K–12. The Yoga Ed curriculum is utilized around the country, meets state and national physical education standards, and has proven to be effective on a variety of measures.¹ To date, YIS has exposed nearly 20,000 children and 1,000 teachers and staff members to varying levels of yoga programming.²

YIS was founded in 2005 by Joanne Spence, a clinical social worker and yoga studio owner. Spence presents both nationally and internationally to audiences on the topic of yoga education. Spence also serves as an advisor to the yoga recreation program at Shuman Juvenile Detention Center and provides yoga therapy to the patients at Western Psychiatric Institute

^{1,2} See www.yogainschools.org/articles-research

and Clinic. Spence is a certified Yoga Ed Trainer and prepares yoga teachers to teach Yoga Ed K-8, High School, and Tools for Teachers curricula. Yoga Ed educators must be certified yoga instructors interested in working with schools. Dr. Andrea Hyde, assistant professor in the Department of Educational and Interdisciplinary Studies at Western Illinois University, teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in the social foundations of education, philosophy of education, and education policy. Hyde studies yoga and mindfulness curricula and teacher training programs and highlights how non-physical education teachers use yoga in their classrooms; she relates such programs to the social justice mission of progressive education. Hyde received her Yoga Ed training from Spence in 2009 and has since helped YIS plan HPE teacher trainings and assessments. Hyde also teaches Tools for Teachers workshops to education students and active educators at all levels and offers a free adult yoga class on campus.

In this paper, we discuss the YIS district-wide training model that was initially developed for the Pittsburgh Public Schools.³ This model complements the mission and philosophy of YIS and is positioned within the broader yoga in schools movement. The model is based on empirical and experiential evidence of the positive effects that yoga can have on students and staff. We also discuss how we approached schools, sought and developed key relationships, and leveraged funding. In conclusion, we consider challenges involved in working with schools, and districts in particular, including making a sustainable exit from the district with responsible maintenance. We close by describing our current project and our hopes for the future.

The School Yoga Movement

As a current focus of school reform, student health and wellness is written into federal and state policies and standards that address the following goals: educating the whole child; social-emotional learning; obesity prevention; stress reduction; and anti-bullying and school safety (Hyde, 2012). The “movement” (Hyde, 2012) to introduce yoga and other mind-body techniques into schools is, in part, a response to these goals.

³ We thoroughly describe the evaluation of our TTT program in the Pittsburgh Public Schools in a white paper available at <http://yogainschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/yis-white-paper-final-april-2012.pdf>.

Appropriateness of Yoga for Public Schools

As a complete philosophical system, yoga can be traced to practices arising in the Indus Valley more than 5,000 years ago (Danino, 1999). However, yoga as it is most often practiced in the United States is a system of mind-body techniques that includes physical postures, conscious breathing, and deep relaxation. Yoga is not a religion, although some people—of any faith or none at all—may use it as a spiritual practice. The yoga techniques that are taught in public schools are, or should be, explicitly secular. The practice of yoga neither asks for nor requires an expression or practice of a transcendent belief, nor does it interfere with any expression or practice of any religious belief. Therefore, including yoga and meditation in public schools does not violate the Constitutional protections of the First Amendment.

Research on special and mainstream populations suggests that yoga and meditation can decrease school behavior referrals (Marie et al., 2008; Walker et al., 2004), increase “time-on-task” (Peck et al., 2005), and improve academic performance by reducing stress (Beets & Mitchell, 2010; Kauts & Sharma, 2009). Successfully managing stress may reduce the incidence of “life-style related diseases like diabetes, hypertension and obesity” (Sexton, 2010, p. 106). According to Harvard researcher Sat Bir Khalsa, Americans could conceptualize yoga as a tool for “mind-body hygiene,” something we should use “as often as a toothbrush” (Barrett, 2010, p. 77).

According to “brain-based” educator Eric Jensen (2005), “[t]oday, the evidence has become a groundswell, and most neuroscientists agree that movement and cognition are powerfully connected” (p. 61). In a recent meta-analysis, investigators at the University of Maryland’s School of Nursing determined that, “yoga may be as effective or better than exercise at improving a variety of health-related outcome measures” (Ross & Thomas, 2010, p. 10). However, in contrast to other sports and fitness systems that also improve mental health, the mind-body techniques of yoga, as used in schools, have consisted of gentle, noncompetitive, self-care practices of physical, emotional, and psychological wellness.

Scope of the Movement

The scope of the school yoga movement is hard to describe because yoga teachers and organizations that offer school programs lack central coordination. The International Association of School Yoga and Mindfulness (IASYM) collected survey data that indicated that there are over 1,000 schools with some level of yoga and

mindfulness programming and over 25,000 professionals trained to offer some form of yoga or mindfulness in schools (K. Carpenter, personal communication, December 15, 2010).

Currently, there is no national- or state-level standardized curriculum for school yoga. A number of umbrella organizations have distributed their curriculum in some form or another to schools via local yoga educators or school staff who have received training in a specific curriculum model. These organizations include Yoga Ed., YogaKids™ International, Radiant Child Yoga, Yoga for the Special Child®, YogaFitKids!, Yoga Playgrounds, Core Yoga in Schools, Yoga 4 Classrooms®, Niroga Institute®, and Yoga Calm®.

Although there is a wide variety of children's yoga programs available in the United States, not all are suitable or intended for schools. For example, some children's programs are taught at an offsite yoga studio or health club and, therefore, do not integrate into the school day as easily as other programs. The following are examples of programs that specifically reach out to teachers in classrooms as part of their mission: The Niroga Institute®, The Luster Learning Institute, NFP, Growing Minds, Yoga 4 Classrooms®, Move with Me™, Holistic Life Foundation, Inc., Little Flower Yoga, Shanti Generation, Every Child's Yoga, The Wellness Initiative, YogaKids™ International, RECESS, Headstand, Newark Yoga Movement.

Let The Model Fit The Mission: YIS And TTT

We understand that yoga is just one of many mindfulness practices, all of which bring benefits. Many school programs incorporate mindfulness in the form of seated meditation, focused attention through guided visualizations, or mind-body stillness. We do not dispute that teachers and students benefit from moments of quiet rest and we incorporate rest into all of our training programs and curriculum products. However, many of our teacher-trainees and students tell us that they have trouble being still (physically and mentally) during a mindfulness practice that does not include movement. The addition of movement to any mindfulness practice, we believe, makes that practice accessible to more people. Our vision is to make yoga widely available in schools so that students and teachers develop body-mind awareness and the ability to nurture their own well-being. We do this by seeking grant-funded projects that introduce and support a professional-development training program for HPE teachers and a set of classroom-ready tools for teachers, with an eye toward sustainability of the program after project completion.

The YIS-TTT Model

The YIS-TTT is an integrated train-the-trainer (TTT) model⁴ that focuses 70% on professional development for HPE teachers, 20% on one-on-one consultation with HPE teachers, and 10% on supplemental training for classroom teachers. This method contrasts with free-standing models of direct yoga instruction for youth in after- or outside-of-school programs. TTT is a preferred model of professional development in many disciplines. It is based on principles of adult learning theory and "diffusion of innovation," which explains how ideas are communicated through social networks (Rogers, 1995; Rogers, 1962).

To extend the influence of our yoga educators, HPE teachers are the focus of four to five in-service trainings per school year. These teachers receive customized presentations, workshops, curriculum materials, and equipment that introduce them to yoga practice, pedagogy, and instructional techniques. The HPE teachers then include yoga activities in their classes with students as either a stand-alone unit or a modification of existing activities (e.g., swimming, weight training, basketball, or gymnastics). Each HPE teacher receives monthly classroom visits from one YIS yoga educator. Classroom visits include a professional observation, feedback, and suggestions for improvement, and opportunities to discuss the observed lessons. As a result, HPE teachers are eligible to become trainers for their students and colleagues. This may mean that HPE teachers deliver in-service training to other staff or become in-house curriculum experts and program developers. To increase saturation of yoga learning throughout the school and district, this training model may be paired with ancillary workshops for classroom teachers and other staff in the use of yoga techniques and/or adult yoga classes for the specific benefit of teachers and staff.

We adopted a train-the-trainer model after realizing that there is little chance of attracting ongoing funding unless our programs are financially sustainable. We also realized early on that HPE teacher buy-in would be critical to the success of this model. A few early professional-development sessions with HPE teachers confirmed that while many showed initial skepticism and even surprise that the students would like yoga, they soon discovered that even a short, simple yoga practice was not only feasible but supported their own health and well-being as

⁴ We think that "educate the educator" (a term we credit to Kelly Skeff, MD, PhD at the Stanford School of Medicine) is a better descriptor of our intentions and procedures.

teachers. The benefits of this train-the-trainer method can be summarized as follows.

Resource Maximization

The train-the-trainer model has allowed for exponential growth of the program. We are able to extend our reach to all students in the district by training all of the HPE teachers. These teachers are then available as in-house yoga educators for other staff and future students. Programs that use yoga teachers to teach yoga to students as part of their school day or in after-school programs report the same kind and quality of results that we have produced, but cannot extend the scope of their program as quickly and efficiently as YIS does. We admit that efficiency is not a primary concern of yoga teaching in general, but it is a practical concern for schools with finite resources of money and time.

Whole School Program

The YIS training model is designed as professional development for HPE teachers with the flexibility to extend training to classroom teachers and other school staff. By offering Mind-Body Tools for Teachers (MBTT) workshops, the instructional team can reach all of the non-HPE teachers and staff, including behavioral specialists. In this way, the entire school community receives yoga education; everyone is working on the same project.

Increased Likelihood of Sustainability

Training school personnel to support continuous instruction and program implementation develops their internal capacities (skills, knowledge, and confidence), which then increase sustainability after the completion of the formal project. Our model plans around a two-year training and customized support timeline. It focuses on teacher buy-in and facilitates district-wide communication among teachers, administration, and other staff. As program director and lead instructor, Spence meets regularly with curriculum leaders and administrators to increase the likelihood that YIS programs will run smoothly. At the same time, the instructional team is small enough to be flexible and responsive to the sometimes stressful and always changing environments of public schools.

Program Evaluation

The Importance of Evaluation

Yoga service organizations should expect to provide their funders with, at minimum, a report on the success

of their project at completion. Project evaluation makes an easy job of reporting and demonstrates to funders a systematic and defensible claim to success. Some funders will provide guidelines for reporting, while others will leave evaluation and reporting up to the organization. Evaluation also demonstrates to potential funders that they may have some confidence in the ability of the project to meet the goals that it proposes.

Increasingly, yoga service projects are seeking research partnerships with university faculty and research staff to conduct quantitative, controlled studies of their programs. While controlled studies receive privilege in some government grant programs, they must be planned for before service-relationship projects begin. Qualitative studies, on the other hand, can begin at any point in the service relationship. A qualitative research plan can be changed during any part of the project in response to the needs of participants or changing conditions in dynamic places like schools. Qualitative plans can also change to accommodate new learning as it arises. For example, when we learned at the midpoint of a current project that our participants needed more classroom support and less in-service training, we were able to change our service plan without compromising our concurrent program evaluation. In these ways, we find that qualitative methods complement our yogic philosophies, our values, and ethics.

The generous and laborious work of legitimizing yoga by providing scientific studies to demonstrate efficacy has unquestionably advanced yoga programming in schools. We are grateful to the people doing hard science in this field. The point to remember is this: there is no such thing as a single best method for researching/evaluating service projects. A research method should always fit the context of the project that it seeks to evaluate or the questions that the researcher seeks to answer.

Partnering with Schools and Communities

Seeking and Sustaining Relationships

Many people have asked Spence where she learned to write grant proposals and how she has been able to gain continuous funding since 2004. Spence explains that she took a course at her local community college on how to start and run a nonprofit. However, equally as effective was developing the ability to write a short letter of inquiry to a potential funder, following up on the inquiry, and booking a meeting with the relevant person. From Spence's perspective, these are the key elements in se-

curing foundation grants. It is only after an initial meeting that organizations may be invited to submit a grant proposal. Therefore, getting an in-person meeting is key.

Spence acknowledges she has been greatly assisted in these funding efforts by two communities in particular. She leverages these circles of influence to build critical mass for continued support and interest and to build sustainability, which is key to long-term success of any nonprofit.

The first group is the large network of yoga students from her studio, Yoga on the Square. The studio sits in the middle of the school districts she serves. Therefore, many of her yoga students are also stakeholders in these school districts as parents, teachers, students, and even school-board members. This community wants to see yoga in schools succeed for the same reasons they come to the studio to practice and learn.

The second influential group has been Spence's faith community. For about 10 years, Spence and her family have been members of an Anglican church in Pittsburgh. The church is in Oakland, a part of Pittsburgh that Carnegie Mellon University, University of Pittsburgh, and Carlow University call home. The church attracts many academics and people linked to local foundations who care about kids and teachers. Before YIS was incorporated as a 501(c)3, it operated under the auspices of The Oakland Service Ministries, a separate church-sponsored 501(c)3 that was able to act as a financial conduit for the fledgling Yoga in Schools. Spence reached out to several people in the congregation that helped her set up a board, incorporate, write her first proposal letter, and schedule meetings with key foundations, including the Heinz Endowments.

Leadership

Spence blends her leadership roles in the non-profit Yoga in Schools and the for-profit Yoga on the Square to function as a social entrepreneur who makes a living (albeit modest) in the field of yoga service. She offers the following advice: Start small. Do what you will say you will do. Build on your successes. Believe that yoga works. Tell the stories of how yoga changes peoples' lives for the better.

Identifying and encouraging in-house leaders is crucial to the sustainability of programs. Two key HPE teachers in the PPS district, Kelly Gavlik and Chriss Wol-ski, have taken on the work of sustaining yoga in their district. These teachers have developed a model of yoga HPE for all PPS high schools. They provide the internal training and infrastructure and call Spence for occasional consultation and support. Spence and Gavlik presented

this work as a guide to others who wish to make yoga a part of the HPE curriculum of their schools at the 2012 Pennsylvania State Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (Spence & Gavlik, 2012).

Finally, both YIS and PPS welcomed local news media into the schools to report on their projects. Many schools in the Pittsburgh area have become interested in yoga programming in HPE due to the success of the Pittsburgh Public Schools' program.

Challenges and Strategies

Overcoming Resistance

In partnering with schools to deliver yoga programs, whether through professional development, in-service trainings, workshops, or classroom demonstrations, participant buy-in is the biggest challenge. In trainings, we often notice that teachers are preoccupied with how difficult they think it will be to get kids to practice yoga; the teachers have little confidence in trying anything new. In many public school environments, teachers often feel powerless to make any changes and are frustrated and resentful about this. Within this context, and considering as a backdrop the past 25 years of "top-down" school reform and the fickle, fad-based climate of educational initiatives in many public schools, it is not surprising that some teachers are skeptical about bringing yoga into the classroom or have difficulty believing that having yoga will make a difference in the district. However, once teachers experience the benefits of yoga themselves, they begin to build confidence in sharing yoga with their students. The key to sustaining the initial momentum is building and maintaining a reliable structure and a mutually agreed upon and committed time and space for practicing yoga. Often, this emerges naturally from trial and error, but it is absolutely essential to secure a commitment from key school leaders—which may vary across contexts, from superintendent to principal to lead teacher—to make yoga a part of the school culture. Being patient and persistent and building relationships over time has been a significant factor in our success.

Cutting Through Bureaucracy

Sometimes, even when all the participants are on board, the project plan will be challenged by the bureaucratic nature of school systems. On several occasions, our project was threatened by competing mandatory in-service workshops or grant-funded project demands. In large districts, teachers sometimes received

conflicting messages about which programs to attend. To remedy this, service organizations should secure a reliable point-person with authority for communicating with teacher participants about training dates and times and the requirements of meeting project goals. Whenever conflicts arise, rather than demand adherence to our project guidelines, we attempt to provide participants with strategic and creative compromises. For example, at one of the PPS high schools, access to the building was denied to all external programs, including ours, after a stressful conversion of the school's administration. Spence approached the school principal directly with an offer of yoga classes for her and her staff so that they could better manage their stress and improve morale. The two decided to schedule seven twice-weekly yoga classes, specifically for teacher self-care. As a result, that school is now open to our organization.

Another way that school yoga programs are challenged by bureaucracy is that teacher-participants often lack a voice in creating or changing curriculum and professional development activities. This is where qualitative evaluation strategies come into play. At the final in-service training for Year 1 of a two-year project, we decided to ask the teacher participants what they felt was lacking in our plan and what they most needed from us in the following year. It was through this open forum that we discovered that the teachers wanted a common curriculum and more in-class demonstrations from yoga educators. At the midpoint evaluation meeting with multiple district stakeholders, we suggested changes to our project plan based on what the teachers told us they wanted and what we could afford to give within the guideline of our grant. We believe that this contributed to a remarkable increase in positive teacher attitudes toward the program.

Our Next Steps

In the 2011–2012 school year, YIS began a two-year partnership with Woodland Hills School District (WHSD), a small, urban district (nearly 4,000 students and 215 teachers) that includes 12 municipalities bordering the city of Pittsburgh. In addition to evaluating the effectiveness of our HPE training program, we plan to focus on how the practice of yoga among students and the use of mind-body tools by HPE teachers, classroom teachers, and other school staff affects the behavioral climate of the district. Preliminary findings suggest that HPE teachers have been incorporating yoga into their students' favorite sports and attracting hard-to-motivate students into active play. Meanwhile, classroom teachers are us-

ing yoga to calm their students and reduce stress (including their own) before taking state tests.

At the midpoint of Year 2 in the WHSD project, the superintendent asked YIS for help with his most challenging new school in Rankin, Pennsylvania. The Promise Program is a newly created, stand-alone, alternative school for WHSD students in grades 4–12 who need intensive behavioral support or who are at risk for academic failure for other reasons. Spence invited B. K. Bose from the Niroga Institute in California (www.niroga.org) to teach the staff and students his 15-minute Transformational Life Skills (TLS) protocol, which has been successful in reducing stress and improving self-control in populations that are similar to Rankin's (Ramadoss & Bose, 2010). The TLS training provides much-needed professional development in the basics of brain science and is honest in pointing out that due to the overwhelming amount of stress that kids suffer these days and the high-pressured, accountability structure, teachers must heal before they teach (Bose, 2012). This is especially so in schools in impoverished neighborhoods, but true in other environments, as well (Ending the School to Prison Pipeline, 2012; Myers & Chiang, 2012; USDJ, 2012).

Bose and Spence conducted an all-staff training for the Promise Program in late January of 2013. Spence has been following up with weekly visits to the school, where she observes and demonstrates lessons and listens to and offers support and encouragement to the staff and students alike. We have asked the teachers to keep a weekly observation journal to report on how the TLS skills are being used in the classroom and to note any changes in behavior over the course of the 16 weeks. Joanne is also keeping field notes of her experiences working as a consulting professional for the school.

At the WHSD midpoint evaluation (end of Year 1), the superintendent requested that we concentrate intensive efforts specifically on the junior high school. However, pulling all resources into one school was not possible within the guidelines of our current grant and would require us to abandon the other schools in the district. It was at that point that we decided to pursue additional grant funding with the specific aim of saturating the junior high school with yoga programming. This is where our current efforts lie. 

References

- Barrett, J. (2010). Healing power of yoga. *Yoga Journal*, May, 74–77; 119–123.
- Beets, M. W., & Mitchell, E. (2010). Effects of yoga on stress, depression, and health-related quality of life in a nonclinical, bi-ethnic sample of adolescents: A pilot study. *Hispanic Health Care International*, 8, 47–53.
- Bose, B.K. (2012). Transformative life skills (TLS): A necessary condition for dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline. Brief statement submitted as part of *Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline: Hearing before the Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights of the Committee on the Judiciary, Senate, 112th Cong. 2* (2012).
- Danino, M. (1999). The Indus-Sarasvati civilization and its bearing on the Aryan question: Chennai's Indian Institute of Technology (IIT-Madras).
- Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline: Hearing before the Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights of the Committee on the Judiciary, Senate, 112th Cong. 2 (2012). Available from <http://www.senate.gov/isvp/?comm=judiciary&type=live&filename=judiciary121212p>
- Hyde, A. (2012). The yoga in schools movement: Using standards for educating the whole child and making space for teacher self-care. In J.A. Gorlewski, B. Porfilio & D.A. Gorlewski (Eds.), *Using Standards and High-Stakes Testing for Yoga in Schools Students: Exploiting Power with Critical Pedagogy*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
- Jensen, E. (2005). *Teaching with the brain in mind* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Kauts, A., & Sharma, N. (2009). Effect of yoga on academic performance in relation to stress. *International Journal of Yoga*, (2), 39–43.
- Marie, D., Wyshak, G., & Wyshak, G. H. (2008). Yoga prevents bullying in schools. Available at <http://www.calmingkidsyoga.org/Gifs/YogaPreventsBullyingInSchool.pdf>.
- Meyer, L. & Chiang, R. (2012). Policies to promote safety and prevent violence. In National Association of State Boards of Education. Fit, healthy, and ready to learn: A school health policy guide. Available at <http://www.nasbe.org/project/obesity-prevention/fit-healthy-ready-to-learn-updated-release/>.
- Peck, H., Kehle, T., Bray, M., & Theodore, L. (2005). Yoga as an intervention for children with attention problems. *School Psychology Review*, 34(3), 415–424.
- Ramadoss, R., & Bose, B. K. (2010). Transformative life skills: Pilot studies of a yoga model for reducing perceived stress and improving self-control in vulnerable youth. *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*, 20(1), 75–80.
- Rogers, E. (1995/1962). *Diffusion of innovations* (Fourth ed.). New York: The Free Press.
- Ross, A., & Thomas, S. (2010). The health benefits of yoga and exercise: A review of comparison studies. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 16(1), 3–12.
- Sexton, S. (2010). Teach your children well. *Yoga Journal*, October, 76–78;105–108.
- Spence, J. & Gavlik, K. (2012). Yoga as PE: How and why? Annual Meeting of the Pennsylvania State Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, Nov 29–Dec 2, Champion, PA.
- United States Department of Justice. (2012). Children Exposed to Violence: The Report of the Attorney General's National Task Force. Available at <http://www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood/cev-rpt-full.pdf>
- Walker, H. M., Ramsey, E., & Gresham, F. M. (2004). Heading off disruptive behavior: How early intervention can reduce defiant behavior-and win back teaching time. Washington D.C: American Federation of Teachers.

Yoga In The Trenches: Crime Prevention Through Mindful Practice

Toni Carbone White, JD

Co-Founder and Director, Ascend Program, Inc. , Sacramento, California
www.ascendprogram.com | tcarbone46@gmail.com

As a criminal defense attorney, I observed clients that, traumatized and weighted down by dysfunction, returned to crime and were incarcerated time and time again. After finding yoga for healing from a stress-related illness, I began to search for a solution to this negative cycle that would address the underlying causes. Through partnership with another criminal defense attorney, Ascend was created. Ascend is a nonprofit holistic alternative-sentencing program for offenders that has become a court-approved alternative for jail time. Using our primary methods of yoga and cognitive behavioral therapy, we focus on life skills and changing criminal thinking patterns through increasing offenders' awareness and self-worth. This article details how trust, positive reinforcement, and accessible yoga postures are key to Ascend participants' acceptance. Now in our third year, Ascend's recidivism rate is 10%, which stands in great contrast to California's statewide average of 64%, and we have a pay-for-services contract with the sheriff's department. Advice is shared for how and where to share your yoga service in the criminal justice system.

I am a criminal defense lawyer holding a law degree, a license to practice law, and a YogaFit® certificate to teach yoga. I believe that the latter has been the most effective in guiding my clients away from a life of crime. I began my work with criminal offenders in college over 20 years ago, and subsequently dedicated my entire career to criminal defense work and, more recently, criminal offender rehabilitation.

As a young lawyer, I quickly learned that the trauma experienced by both the victims of crime and the offenders was worse than I had ever imagined. I observed that much of this trauma and, in fact, the great majority of crime, flowed generally from greater societal ills played out by the offenders. My experience as a criminal defense attorney confirmed my hypothesis that balanced, happy, healthy human beings free of dysfunction do not, as a general rule, commit crime. Healthy human beings are able to care for their fellow community members and possess the ability to navigate challenges and regulate their actions so as not to harm others. In addition, they have no need to act out of desperation because they generally have the ability and resources to attend to basic survival needs.

With a heavy heart, I witnessed client after client return to jail because their willpower and good intention were no match for the dysfunction in their lives. I also saw victims whose pain could have been avoided by a different approach to crime prevention. I began to observe,

but refused to accept, that my role as a criminal defense attorney did little or nothing to solve these bigger problems. I could bring justice to light by winning a case for an innocent client, negotiate a favorable plea bargain, or get the few clients that could afford or find funding for rehabilitation into a program that would temporarily stall their return to jail. I could fiercely protect the constitutional rights of my clients so that those rights would remain protected for us all. I could spend each day in the courtroom protecting the individual as a check on immense government power. I did all of those things, and I did them with a full heart. I eventually had to accept, however, that none of what I was doing attended to the underlying causes of crime and, worse, I was getting worn out on the soul level.

Stress-related illness brought my own well-being and choices into the forefront of my awareness. It was on that journey that I found yoga. In 2008, I attended a yoga retreat mindful of the fact that I had the resources to try this alleged stress-relieving activity when most of my clients did not. Yoga infused me with a calm respite from the world. From that point of peace, awareness materialized. More yoga practice led to more awareness, which led to more healing, which led to more awareness and, ultimately, to action.

First, I limited my criminal practice so that I could spend more time attending to my own well-being, in recognition that I would continue to absorb the secondary trauma associated with the criminal justice system. Then I began searching for a different solution to guide offenders away from crime. I partnered with like-minded and visionary attorney Christine Galves, who was already on the path that I was just entering. In 2009, we created Ascend, a nonprofit holistic alternative-sentencing program for offenders.

Bringing Yoga to the Forefront of Offender Rehabilitation

“Alternative sentencing,” in criminal law lingo, is a program that can be ordered in lieu of jail time. Galves and I knew that we needed academic support to create a solid program, so we drafted an awareness-based curriculum and presented it to professors in the criminal justice department of Sacramento State University. The professors were fascinated by our approach and quickly partnered with us for curriculum development, research, oversight, and instructor training. Born of the combination of experience, academia, and innovation, Ascend is an intense cognitive behavioral therapy program focused on

changing criminal thinking patterns. Yoga is utilized in every class as a means to cultivate the offenders’ awareness so that they can do the demanding mental work required by Ascend’s curriculum. As far as we know, the Ascend program is the first of its kind.

After we completed development of Ascend, we took our program to the criminal court system for implementation. As attorneys, we had access and credibility with judges that would not readily exist for someone outside the field. One judge in particular was looking for a new and creative approach to offender rehabilitation, which he found in Ascend. He guided us through the long and complex process of getting court approval for our program and courageously urged his colleagues to adopt our approach. Many other judges were intrigued by Ascend’s innovative approach and, even somewhat more so, by the fact that criminal defense attorneys were at the helm.

After 15 months spent gaining court approval, Ascend opened its doors to its first two students in August of 2011: a young man on probation for battery and a parolee just released from prison on an assault charge. Both responded well to the program and remain in contact to this day. The parolee now lives a peaceful life working in a good job that he loves while he attends college and practices yoga. Yoga really stuck with him, although he was embarrassed to practice outside our classroom at first. He would hide in the bathroom before job interviews to privately do tree pose and prayer pose, because those most calmed him.

Cautiously, and one by one, judges began ordering certain offenders to spend time in Ascend in lieu of all or a portion of their jail time. Those early judicial supporters were visionaries, although it seemed that few fully grasped or acknowledged the role that yoga played in the offenders’ rehabilitation.

Ascend emphasizes offenders’ awareness, self-worth, and focus as foundations for positive change. It also aims, directly and indirectly, to increase each offender’s socioeconomic status. The awareness gained through yoga instills a sense of calm empowerment and hope. When an offender believes that college and career are possible, they more easily follow us as we walk them into a GED program or onto a college campus. Those first steps are their literal and metaphorical entrance into a world they once thought closed to them. An offender who values self and community, and who has resources for basic survival and the potential for advancement, is more likely to become an ex-of-

fender. Yoga is a crucial component of the program and is taught in every class.

As a society, we have failed through the political process to agree on the amount of social services necessary to fully rehabilitate those of lower socioeconomic class such that they can, in any great number, transcend the basic necessities of food and shelter to heal family and community dysfunction—and to heal the inner destruction that is so often reflected in the outer destruction. It remains easier to simply place blame on the offender, to whitewash all of their problems with the brush of personal accountability, and to incarcerate them when that does not work. This is not to say that there are not people so dangerous to society that incarceration remains the only viable option or that there is no element of personal responsibility in crime. The point is that the generalities I proffer apply to a great majority of crime and, if we were able to eliminate that majority, we would be better equipped to address the minority of crime that cannot be prevented.

Ascend realizes that, while it cannot solve the enormity of the larger social problems, it can take offenders who have a modicum of stability, pair them with attorneys in which they place great trust, infuse them with new thinking patterns and decision-making skills, teach them an innovative approach to life skills, and empower them through awareness and mindfulness. Ascend believes that change can arise through the work of each individual offender.

Compulsory Yoga Leading to Willing Mindfulness

As we developed Ascend, Galves and I contemplated whether making yoga a program requirement, notwithstanding the attorney-client trust, would work. We had never heard of *compulsory* yoga. Offenders and defense attorneys have a natural bond. At the lowest point in an offender's life, as they sit in a cold jail cell shrouded in fear and uncertainty, it is the visit from the criminal attorney that provides the only hope of information, guidance, and often, empathy. Sometimes one just needs someone on one's side. Galves and I learned that this natural relationship of trust crossed over into our rehabilitation program simply because the offenders knew it was run by criminal defense attorneys. Because of this unique aspect of Ascend, offenders who were never before open to yoga took their first steps onto the mat.

With great relief, Galves and I observed that compulsory yoga yielded willing mindfulness. Once the students

felt the benefit of compulsory yoga, they were open to following us in other program requirements to which they had initial resistance. With rare exception, our offenders had never tried yoga. Most were self-conscious and held misperceptions about yoga. They believed that they would be unable to do yoga or that yoga was reserved for rich and educated people. The offenders coming through Ascend have been ethnically diverse and nearly all have struggled with poverty. Almost all have felt the stinging effect of classism.¹ Many had been ruled by low socioeconomic status and judgment for so much of their lives that it seemed normal to feel excluded from what was, in their mind, a pastime of a higher socioeconomic class.

We quickly discovered that positive reinforcement was key. Initial resistance gave way as fear was replaced by feelings of acceptance. By keeping poses to a basic level and including multiple modifications, we found that all offenders were able to get into most poses. As their confidence built, their resistance generally lowered and eventually disappeared. We also faced a myriad of medical and physical conditions that would be foreign in a traditional yoga class. Our students had ailments such as broken ribs, old bullet wounds affecting balance, prosthetics, and morbid obesity to name a few. Those students were in the same class as students who were in perfect physical shape. Finding a sequence of poses that met everyone's needs was challenging, but we soon learned that the poses were not the most important aspect of yoga.

It also became apparent that the ability that yoga provides to connect with one's self beyond the roles assigned by society is a crucial factor in the program's appeal for participants. In Ascend, and especially in yoga, they were their *spirit*. They were not "offenders," a term of ease for criminal justice professionals that can be laced with judgment in the wrong hands. They were not "criminals," a term of judgment worn like a scarlet letter. They were not "defendants," which described only their legal status. They learned that they were not shackled in yoga. They were free not only of their false identities but of the past and future. The *present* was appealing to them—which was an epiphany for most.

Galves and I, as newly certified instructors, were also a little apprehensive about teaching yoga. We pondered

¹ The common thread binding nearly all of the Ascend offenders has been poverty. Most of our African-American and Hispanic offenders also suffer the ill effects of racism, although that was not reported as a barrier to yoga. The fear voiced by the Ascend students who have approached us is that they would not be accepted in a traditional yoga class due to their economic status as opposed to race or ethnicity.

how we would pull it off, since we had little experience teaching willing participants, much less unwilling ones. As I nervously chatted with my yoga teacher before teaching our first Ascend class, she knowingly smiled and calmly said, “You don’t need to believe in yourself if that is too challenging right now—just believe in the power of yoga.” Truer words were never spoken. We learned right along with our class, which led to profoundly bonding yoga sessions.

A Balance of Success and Challenge

California’s statewide recidivism rate, meaning the percentage of offenders who re-offend, is 63.7 percent.² Ascend’s recidivism rate is 10 percent. That means that roughly 6 out of every 10 offenders re-offend on average statewide but that only 1 in 10 Ascend offenders re-offend.³ Ascend’s success in lowering recidivism brought in widespread support. Ascend became a fixture in local politics, garnering praise from Sacramento’s board of supervisors. The California state legislature eventually took note and, in 2012, awarded the program a Resolution for increasing public safety⁴ by providing offenders a way to better their lives. In January of 2013, Ascend was invited into partnership with the Sacramento County Sheriff whereby select offenders would be released into the Ascend program directly from jail to aid their transition back into the community. Ascend has enjoyed favorable attention in the media; kudos from criminal justice professionals, including attorneys, psychologists, and

² The 63.7% is the latest recidivism rate calculated in the 2012 Evaluation by the California State Prison system, known officially as the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) as cited by Insider CDCR News. The rate is generated by determining how many of the 116,015 offenders released from prison during the 2007–2008 fiscal year returned to prison within a three-year period. For the Insider CDCR News article: <http://www.insidecdcr.ca.gov/2012/10/new-report-shows-recidivism-rate-continues-to-decline/> [the link to the official CDCR report is contained in the news article].

³ Ascend is partnered with Sacramento State University for data collection and evaluation. The latest data report from March 2013 shows that Ascend, with its shoestring budget, has been able to serve 41 offenders with only four re-offending, for a 10% recidivism rate. Although the data pool is small, the results are very promising, and we hope that once Ascend is able to find grant funding, the program can be expanded and more data generated.

⁴ A “Resolution” by the California State Legislature is a statement by one of more members of the legislature that can be used, among other things, to acknowledge efforts that are beneficial to the community. Technically, a “Resolution” is “an opinion expressed by one or both houses that does not have the force of law.” (California Legislative Information; Glossary of Legislative Terms [<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/glossary.html>])

researchers; support from judges who use the program as a sentencing alternative; and loyal support and appreciation from offenders who say that Ascend saved their lives. Awareness, achieved through mindfulness and yoga, is a cornerstone of Ascend’s success.

The creation and implementation of Ascend has been an extensive three-year effort that has tested the limits of our faith, energy, and financial wherewithal. The benefits have outweighed the challenges, but the path is straight uphill, rocky in parts, and very long. We currently run Ascend on a small budget funded through modest fees paid by some of our students and their families along with our personal contributions. We have been seeking both government and private foundation grants but have not, as of yet, been funded. Competition for grant money is fierce and grant writers are expensive. Our contract with the sheriff’s department provided the first small amount of outside funding in a pay-for-services arrangement. Pay-for-services means that when adequate funds exist in the monthly budget the department releases an inmate to us. The contract is beneficial to both sides because our program costs are far less than the cost of incarceration. We are confident that Ascend will eventually receive grant funding beyond our pay-for-services contract with the sheriff’s department, and we would love to see Ascend become a nationwide program, but for now we must remain focused on obtaining grant funding to expand the local program.

A commitment to developing and administering a yoga program in the criminal justice system should be approached with the understanding that perseverance, patience, and heart will rule the day and will, on many days, be your only reward.

The Expansion of Yoga in the Criminal Justice System: How Your Practice Fits In

There are several inquiries for anyone interested in bringing yoga into the criminal justice system. First, you must decide the capacity in which you want to contribute. Are you intent on getting paid, or is volunteering an option? If you are looking to get paid, are you willing to seek grants and alternative sources of funding, or do you prefer to work as an employee or subcontractor of an agency or program? Do you want to work alone, or would you like to collaborate and team-teach with others? Volunteering is a great way to break into what is often a tightly knit network of criminal justice professionals. If you can fund yourself through grants or donations, then you also have the ease of a volunteer because the facili-

ties do not have to pay you out of their budget. Getting paid from a custodial facility or rehabilitation program will be the most challenging of the available paths. As an aside, getting paid by the inmates or the offenders in re-entry is not feasible. One of the best routes in is through a nonprofit corporation that already has a program that either exists inside a custodial facility or provides yoga services to the courts or rehabilitation programs.

The second point of inquiry is the environment and population you wish to target. Options for offender yoga programs exist in state prisons, county jails, juvenile detention facilities, court-led programming, and offender rehabilitation programs. Yoga has been accepted into the state prison system for some time, but more recently we have used it in a broader capacity. In California, we have had a change to our incarceration system called realignment. Essentially, the state prison system relieved its overcrowding problems by filling the county jails. This increased the population in the county jails and resulted in a need for more programming options. This has opened the door for yoga.

County jails often have a recreation department. Contacting someone in that department can be a good start. Another way to get into the jail environment is to volunteer or gain employment with a treatment provider who works with the jail, such as a drug rehabilitation program that has both in-custody and out-of-custody programs. If you work in their out-of-custody programs until they become comfortable with you, then you may have an easier transition into the custodial environment. Once you get the opportunity to begin teaching in a custodial environment, there are additional hurdles to be crossed before you can unroll your mat onto their cold, hard floors. Background checks are often required, as are in-house civilian safety classes teaching you about jail procedures.

After witnessing the huge impact that yoga had on our Ascend students, Galves and I were moved to start volunteering to teach yoga to inmates. Because we had a partnership with the sheriff's department through Ascend, we were able to establish a yoga program in our local jail. Because we were willing to donate our time, the sheriff's department purchased 30 yoga mats for the program. To date, it has been a very successful endeavor in that the participants express positive feedback and desire to have even more yoga sessions.

Targeted populations can also be reached by directing your yoga practice through court-led programming in collaborative justice courts. California is a leader in collaborative justice courts, a model in which a boutique court is created to handle the sentencing and recovery

of certain types of offenders.⁵ A collaborative approach is used as opposed to the adversarial role of a normal court. The role of the defense attorney and prosecutor are minimized, and probation departments and treatment providers have a large presence. A treatment plan for the offender is crafted utilizing a panel of treatment providers chosen by the court. A social worker or probation officer is usually assigned to the offender as a liaison between the offender, the treatment providers, and the court. Lastly, the offender appears in court at scheduled intervals to report directly to the judge on his or her progress. Once a person completes the court-ordered programs and does not re-offend for a certain period of time, he or she is deemed a graduate. Examples of these courts are drug court, veteran's court, mental health court, and, coming soon in California, re-entry court.

Offender rehabilitation programs that work solely outside the custodial environment offer another avenue in which to begin your yoga program. Localized Internet searches can aid greatly in finding offender rehabilitation programs in your area. Another resource is your county probation department. Probation departments are generally split into a division for adults and a division for juveniles. Treatment and rehabilitation services usually segregate juveniles from adults, so contacting both may yield a greater list of providers. In addition, a call to your county public defender's office may yield a list of service providers in the area or at least a referral or two. The superior court clerk for your county may also have a list of service providers. If you strike out in your county of residence, try neighboring counties, as service providers occasionally serve more than one county.

Examples of adult rehabilitation services are drug-recovery programs, anger-management programs, counseling programs, and cognitive behavioral therapy programs. Examples of juvenile rehabilitation services include similar programs but also usually encompass family therapy programs, group homes, and boot camps as well.

Lastly, keep in mind the numerous Alcohol Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings that are available. If you are willing to volunteer, it may be fruitful to contact the organizer of the meetings and offer to run a yoga session before or after their meeting. It may be that their facility can be turned into a peaceful yoga studio through the simple act of moving a few chairs.

⁵ For more on collaborative courts in California, view "California's Collaborative Justice Courts," published by the Judicial Council of California and found at http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/California_Story.pdf.

Adapting Yoga to a New Environment

Offender yoga is replete with both expected and unexpected challenges. There is a variety of security concerns in working with offenders and a host of social interactions that will be foreign to most people not working in the field. Things we take for granted in a traditional yoga practice can be completely missing or obstructed in offender yoga. For example, the students usually cannot afford mats; Ascend receives donated used mats from local yoga classes. Expectations of what comprises a “studio” will be challenged—we teach Ascend yoga on the floor of a career center illuminated by our choice of eye-squinting fluorescent light, complete dark, or the glow of the soda machine. (We have all agreed that the soda machine is the most peaceful.) Calming music from our CD player is occasionally drowned out by the loud banging of metal doors and the raised voices of other inmates. I do not mean to detract from how grateful we are to have the facilities in which to practice and the blessing of each agency that allows us access. Instead I give these details to illustrate the ways in which you will need to adapt to bring peace to your offender practice.

Such revelations are not meant to dissuade a yoga-offender practice or to promote fear or resistance, but to serve as a reminder to enter this field with proper education and awareness. If you are looking to teach in an in-custody environment, there will often be a security class to guide you on interactions with the offenders in the facility. If you teach through a rehabilitation program, the program’s leaders will give you guidance on interaction. There are also yoga teacher trainings aimed at educating yoga instructors to teach offender yoga.

Offender yoga programming is like any other pursuit in that you will need to educate yourself, find a network of like-minded people, and utilize your ambition and ingenuity to find your perfect fit. Amidst the uncertainty, however, is the undeniable truth that offender yoga will change lives, including your own. 🌱

Female Inmate–Centered Practices: Wisdom from Yoga Behind Bars

Irene Hauzinger

California Institute of Integral Studies, Yoga Behind Bars | Irene.hauzinger@gmail.com

Mindfulness-based practices are becoming more visible in prison systems, including yoga-based programming. Recognizing the special needs of incarcerated females is critical to developing safe, gender-responsive classes. With the growing number of yoga programs for inmates, the yoga service community will need to create tailored strategies and best practices for reaching this special population. The following article discusses the Yoga Behind Bars teaching model, practices for successful prison teaching, and lessons learned from over seven years of implementation.

In Washington State, 92 percent of the incarcerated population is male (Washington State Department of Corrections, 2012). As a result, the majority of services are designed with men's needs in mind. Recognizing the special needs of incarcerated females is critical to developing competent, gender-responsive social and recreational services. Although yoga has been offered to male prisoners in many settings and countries for a substantial amount of time, few yoga service initiatives focus on female-centered programs. The number of female inmates is growing; since 1977, female incarceration has risen 757 percent (Talvi, 2007). With the growing number of yoga inmate programs, the yoga service community will need to create tailored strategies and best practices for reaching women. The following article offers insights and suggestions for best practices for working with female inmate populations, using examples from the Yoga Behind Bars (YBB) model in the Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW).

Yoga Behind Bars, a Seattle-based non-profit established in 2007, delivers yoga and meditation instruction to incarcerated youth, men, and women in Western Washington State. YBB incorporates over 35 instructors from various yoga and meditation traditions into seven facilities throughout Western Washington. Inmate populations span a range of custody levels and specializations, including prenatal/parenting, mental health, and sex offender units. YBB utilizes "the transformative power of yoga as a tool for self-awareness, healing, and a pathway to freedom" (Yoga Behind Bars, 2010). YBB has developed methodologies and techniques for delivering culturally competent, gender-responsive services for women.

The Yoga Behind Bars Model

Since its founding in 2007, YBB has expanded its services by building relationships with correctional facility staff members and establishing reliability through the consistency, quality, and effectiveness of its services. The success of YBB has been reflected in a growing demand for classes across correctional facilities in Western Washington. The program's success is also evident in feedback from facility staff and students. Based on observations and anecdotal feedback from corrections officers, staff psychologists, and other Department of Corrections (DOC) professionals, inmates have shown positive behavioral changes as a result of the yoga program. Students have shared that the classes are beneficial in coping with prison life and preparing for the transition back to society. This feedback is vital to ongoing program evaluation.

In order to ensure professionalism and safe, competent instruction in all facilities, YBB is open to instructors with a minimum of 200 training hours and a current registration with the Yoga Alliance. A detailed application form and proof of credentialing are required. Applicants must demonstrate their intention, experience, and passion. YBB offers a comprehensive two-day training annually for successful applicants. To guide the training, YBB designed a 67-page handbook with input from over 100 seasoned prison yoga instructors, professionals, facility staff, and students. During this training, instructors' skills are observed through teaching, role-playing, and movement.

In addition to these requirements, an instructor must apply to his or her facility of choice and undergo a background-clearance process. Upon clearance, the instructor will attend a facility orientation and begin a mentorship program with a current volunteer teacher. The mentorship period may last from three weeks to six months, depending on the facility. The entire screening and training process could take up to six months and is subject to the DOC training schedule. Established volunteers must also attend a yearly Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) training in order to continue providing services. Due to the lengthy application and training process, a one-year commitment is required from all instructors. The training and mentorship duration helps to screen out those who are not ready to commit to the program.

Defining Women as a Special Population

Defining and classifying female inmates as a special population is important in order to create responsive programs. Compared to men, women have

needs, attributes, and concerns that require special consideration while incarcerated (George, 2010; Pollock, 2010; Talvi, 2007; Watterson, 1996). Most notably, between 77% and 90% of women inmates self-report extensive trauma histories, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse (Messina & Grella, 2006). Histories of homelessness, physical and sexual assault, co-dependency, domestic violence, gaps in education, pregnancy, and chronic poverty are common among female inmates (Yoga Behind Bars, 2013).

Gender-specific differences between male and female inmates are further evident in the types of crimes committed (Washington State Department of Corrections, 2012). Although the average age of inmates is the same for both genders at 37.8 years (Washington State Department of Corrections, 2012), there are pronounced differences in the nature of their criminal convictions. For example, only 5% of the female inmate population in Washington was incarcerated for sex crimes in 2012, compared to 19.3% of the total Washington inmate population for similar violations (both genders represented). Female drug crimes accounted for 18.5% of the prison population in comparison to 27.9% for the total WA State offender population. Property crimes accounted for the highest number of female crimes committed at 27.6% of the WCCW population, which was higher than the overall offender rate of property crimes in WA State (16.5%). Out of its 738 WCCW inmates, 17.5% were labeled with highly violent behavior and risk of re-offending. A total of 37.4% of WCCW inmates were assessed as nonviolent high risk of re-offending, while 27.3% were classified with a nonviolent low risk of reoffending. Violent crimes, such as first- and second-degree murder, had lower rates of representation at WCCW at 17.2%, with manslaughter at a mere 2.9%. These numbers reflect national trends (Pollock, 2010).

Among female inmates, 80% are mothers, who face additional challenges due to separation from their children. Nearly a quarter of these mothers (22%) have children under the age of five (Yoga Behind Bars, 2013). Although separated during incarceration, children are formative and important aspects in the lives of their immediate families (Watterson, 1996) and motherhood remains a primary identity for these women. The development and implementation of programs to support attachment and healthy parenting (George, 2010; Moss & Wahidin, 2004; Talvi, 2007) are critical to mother, child, and the family as a collective unit. Upon release from an institution, the majority of mothers return to their

homes and assume the role of primary caregiver (Watterson, 1996). Interestingly, differences in criminal activity are distinguished between mothers and non-mothers (Loper, 2006). Non-mothers have a higher rate of violent offenses while mothers are more likely to have drug offenses and property crimes.

Addiction is also a significant issue among incarcerated women and mothers. Among incarcerated women at WCCW, 94% are chemically dependent upon arrival (Yoga Behind Bars, 2013). While addiction may affect families as a whole on multiple levels (Cunningham, 2010; Platania, 2008), there are specific implications regarding mothers affected by substance abuse (Mooney et al., 2008; Watterson, 1996). Medically safe detoxification, pre-and post-natal screening, assessment, and treatment for both mother and drug-affected children are several key concerns. Drug-addicted pregnant women and mothers require safe and secure means of detoxification, pre- and post-natal medical attention, and continued counseling because “addiction is a chronic, relapsing disease whose recovery takes time” (Talvi, 2007, p. 153). Many facilities extend maternal parenting needs to programming and housing (George, 2010; Talvi, 2007; Washington State Department of Corrections, 2012). Programs such as M.I.L.K. (Mothers Inside Loving Kids Outside; see George, 2010), Girl Scouts Behind Bars (Washington State Department of Corrections, 2012), and the Residential Parenting Program are geared towards fostering mother-child relationships from the inside out.

Crafting a Female-Centered Practice

An effective gender-responsive class for women must move beyond merely practicing postures and also focus on linking physical practice and breath work to create an opportunity for an integrated experience that fosters self-awareness, confidence, and self-worth. Yoga Behind Bars (2013) teaches concepts such as “Impulses are patterns stored in the body and mind,” and “Bad behavior is not solely a product of incorrect thinking” (p. 6). By coupling postures with breath awareness and a practical connection for daily application, yoga can allow “the practitioner to understand the difference between actual feelings and thinking” (Yoga Behind Bars, 2013, p. 6), which initiates changes in self-esteem and positive decision making. Consistent feedback since the inception of the YBB program has shown that breathing and meditation techniques are the most effective take-away lessons from classes. The following strategies have been shown to deepen the female-centered class experience.

1) Yoga Practices for Life Cycle Changes and Women’s Health Concerns

Various health and social concerns arise as a result of incarceration (Yoga Behind Bars, 2013, p. 13), including isolation, nutritional deficiencies (George, 2010), limited health care options, sleep disturbances, lack of privacy, negative environments contributing to low energy, continuation of power and control dynamics, and social stigmas. These conditions may overshadow a woman’s experience of her gender. Incorporating pelvic-centered yoga postures such as squats, *bandha* work, hip openers, and pelvic floor toning can help re-establish gender identity while observing women’s stages of development. Based on consistent student feedback, *baddha konasana* (cobble’s pose), cat/cow pose, *trikonasana* (triangle pose), *vasisthasana* (side plank), and *virabhadrasana* (warrior) have all been helpful in women’s classes at WCCW. Generally, hip openers are frequently requested postures. Seibel and Khalsa’s *A Woman’s Book of Yoga* (2002) offers postures organized by life cycle to honor and respect women’s unique experiences across the life span. Students also express interest in postures for specific conditions. Having knowledge of female health and wellness issues and associated therapeutic postures helps to foster continued interest and increased student benefit.

2) Permission to Omit

Histories of substance abuse, trauma, abuse, and sexual assault as well as ongoing health concerns are common among female inmates. These are all important considerations when working with somatic practices. Gender-responsive classes for women emphasize choice and give students permission to honor their bodies and emotions, particularly with regard to poses that may trigger challenging physical and emotional responses. Instructors should recognize and acknowledge the similarities between yoga postures and sexual postures. For example, child’s pose (*bala-sana*) can be offered as an alternative for downward-facing dog (*adho mukha svanasana*), or a student to can choose to practice cat/cow movements from a chair instead of table pose. Modifications like these may increase a woman’s emotional comfort level without detracting from the postural benefits. Students with trauma histories may also be uncomfortable with the use of certain props such as straps or yoga belts. An instructor should present options and alternatives for poses where such props may be used.

3) Class Co-Creation

The opportunity to co-create a class helps to ameliorate the authoritarian–submissive paradigm experienced daily by female inmates. It also fosters a trustworthy student–teacher relationship. An instructor seeking to utilize a co-creation model can employ the following methods:

A) Pre-class check-in:

Prior to starting the formal class, engage the women in a dialogue regarding observations between classes. Sample questions may include, “What were your experiences after last week’s practice?”; “In what ways have you noticed the effect of your yoga practice in your day-to-day activities?”; “What practices, postures, or techniques do you take back with you and use between classes?”; and “What would you like to focus on today?”

B) Allow for input in class design:

Ask what ailments, challenges, or concerns the students are facing. Demonstrating flexibility in design and an enthusiasm for students’ participation illustrates a depth of involvement, compassion, and genuine interest that may be lacking in other areas of incarcerated women’s lives. The majority of YBB prison students subscribe to yoga magazines, request book lists, and have a deep interest in strengthening their practice. Opening the dialogue to invite students to bring in poses, suggestions, or specific practices that they wish to explore creates a sense of belonging and enthusiasm.

C) Post-class sharing circle:

An opportunity for reflection, observation, and discussion after practice is essential for creating a female-centered class. This creates a space for women to share and verbally process their personal and collective experiences safely among female peers. This process group affords students and teacher an opportunity to deepen the mind-body connection and provides a helpful transition out of class. Women, in comparison to their male counterparts, tend to communicate in a relational context. Creating the space to vocalize concerns, share experiences, and open discussion allows a female inmate the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and self-awareness outside of a general inmate population who may harbor differing attitudes and opinions towards a yoga practice.

An instructor may find that the classes are composed of students from mixed custody levels.

This directly affects class attendance, retention, and consistency. Transfers to different facilities, adjustments in custody levels, pardons, parole, and disciplinary actions are factors that affect the consistency in a class. Additional programming such as participation in vocational or collegiate studies, work programs, and family visits may take priority to class attendance and should be acknowledged when creating and instructing a prison class. With this inconsistency and unpredictability in attendance, post-class discussions may help to inform students of their recent yoga experience and lead them to resources for further study and processing, providing a sense of transition and planting seeds for additional inquiry.

Deepening the Student-Teacher Relationship

Several key elements have been identified in developing a strong relationship between a non-incarcerated instructor and incarcerated students. Building and strengthening trust, a keen awareness of appropriate class language, an attitude of humility, and placing both physical and emotional safety at the forefront of a practice creates class competency and leads to a healthy student–teacher dynamic.

1) Trust:

Developing trust in a class helps to foster and sustain student-teacher relationships. Setting clear boundaries also models healthy behavior. As an instructor, it is important to recognize the power of words and promises and how they are experienced by students, especially in a controlled corrections setting. Maintaining consistent attendance is another way to build trust. In the case of a planned absence, inform students of the reason without disclosing too much personal detail and line up a reliable substitute. In an emergency or illness-based situation, communicate the reason for the absence and an estimated date for returning to class.

2) Language:

Instructors should either choose to define all yoga terms or refrain from using yoga jargon. Unfamiliar terms may confuse and belittle students who have not been previously exposed to Sanskrit and other yogic language. Ask students if yoga terminology is an area of interest; this may provide an opportunity for deeper study. In their study on inmates regarding the effects of Ananda Marga yoga on recidivism

rates, Landau and Gross (2008) incorporated discussions of philosophy, Sanskrit, and the application of yoga principles into daily life prior to the physical asana practice to deepen their incarcerated students' understanding of holistic yoga. Create clear instructions without interpreting or assuming how a student is feeling. For example, instead of saying, "Your spine is now relaxed," try saying, "Allow your spine to relax" (Yoga Behind Bars, 2013, p.10). Becoming familiar with prison terminology may also be helpful in bridging divides in culture. The book *A Woman Doing Life: Notes from a Prison for Women* (George, 2010) offers a clear description of common terms and definitions.

Given the large number of incarcerated students who struggle with chemical dependency and trauma histories, the language of instruction should help facilitate a mind-body connection. Among women dealing with these issues, there may have been a long-term disconnection from the body, and this can impact how a student hears and interprets physical instructions. Direct and simple instructions allow individuals with mind-body disengagement to maintain a clear sense of direction with step-by-step guidelines for movement.

3) Humility:

As an instructor, being honest about one's own physical limitations creates an atmosphere of openness and humility. An instructor teaching postures and breathing practices that are unfamiliar is dangerous in any situation; in corrections settings, it can quickly erode trust by modeling an improper teaching approach. Honoring one's limitations and giving oneself the permission to say, "I do not teach inversions" or "I am not certain of the contraindication, I will get back to you" increases mutual respect. Consistently reminding the students to trust their bodies and intuition regarding their limits in the postures reaffirms that the student is her own personal expert. This is especially pertinent when women are dealing with injuries or histories of sexual trauma.

4) Safety:

Creating a safe container allows students who may be chronically alert and on guard the opportunity to relax and embody their yoga. Some facilities may allow for the storage of props in addition to mats and blocks, such as lavender eye pillows, yoga music, and battery-operated candles. However, instructors must consider and respect the various cultural and

religious traditions represented in the class. For example, music that incorporates chanting may come across as culturally insensitive or be perceived as an impediment to religious practices. Discussing these concerns openly with students may help in the decision-making process.

Safety may also mean rearranging the class if male corrections officers are present or separating chatty individuals from one another in order to minimize distractions. Referring a student to another class time may be necessary if there is an evident power/control dynamic occurring with peers or officers. If officers observing the class creates discomfort in students, the instructor may need to re-arrange students in a way that minimizes excessive bodily presentation (e.g., have students face away from an observation area during certain postures). If the presence of male guards continues to be a concern during class, an instructor may need to contact the staff liaison. WCCW's liaison is the recreation director, a DOC employee who supervises and coordinates all recreation volunteers in conjunction with the volunteer coordinator, who coordinates and trains all prison volunteers. WCCW, along with many other female prisons, is recruiting and hiring female corrections officers in an effort to decrease the number of male guards. This new recruitment emphasis is in response to sexual misconduct lawsuits and crimes committed at WCCW and other facilities (Talvi, 2007).

In teaching this population, your own self-disclosure is a personal choice that requires discrimination and discernment. Some level of communication and sharing can create an environment of trust and support a more egalitarian student-teacher relationship. However, it is equally important to maintain appropriate boundaries and ensure a safe space for everyone present. Instructors should be cautious in deciding when and how much of their personal stories to share with inmates and take note of their intention behind any disclosures.

Lessons Learned from WCCW

An instructor working with a special population should have a thorough understanding of the population's needs, language, and culture. This understanding comes from proper training and experience. The following are a few examples of experiences that have led to a deeper understanding of considerations and situations a teacher may confront when serving women in correctional settings.

Instructors should be aware that the culture of a yoga curriculum may be in direct contrast with other volunteer programs at a given facility. For example, WCCW has a strong volunteer base composed of 600 people; 75% of these volunteers are involved in religious and spiritual programming. Religious biases may arise and misinformed volunteers might attempt to dissuade inmates from participating in yoga and meditation classes. Some individuals may believe that yoga is harmful or in direct conflict with spiritual development. When these concerns arise, contact the volunteer coordinator or other staff liaison as soon as possible.

Due to an often-lengthy wait list for yoga classes, a strict attendance policy should be enforced. At YBB, a student will be discharged from class and placed back on the wait list after two unexcused absences. This policy ensures that attendance is regular, participants are willing, and students follow through on their commitments. When classes are 120 minutes, participants are required to stay for the duration of the class. On occasion, a student may try to bypass this and come for just one hour and spend the next hour socializing. YBB considers it disrespectful to the remaining students for this behavior to continue. Students may be removed from the class and will receive a letter explaining the decision. In these difficult situations, engagement with officers, instructors, and the recreation director allows for smooth communication and transitions.

Instructors should be mindful when entering facilities with personal property and be careful to follow proper procedures, which vary across systems. For example, WCCW allows visitors to lock their personal items in a locker prior to entering the confines of the prison yard. One instructor was unfamiliar with the locker and left her possessions in an unlocked space. During the class, the instructor received an angry phone call from a corrections officer who scolded her for improperly placing her belongings. In addition, all volunteers are required to wear an identification badge at all times. The badge permits entry through various checkpoints within the facility. Although wearing a badge may be uncomfortable while moving through physical postures, removing the badge places the instructor, officers, and inmates at risk. A badge could potentially be stolen and misused, leading to a serious breach in safety.

Conclusion

Understanding female inmates as a special population is necessary for the creation and delivery of gender-

responsive, competent, and effective yoga service programming. Focusing on approaches that recognize women's life cycles, giving permission for omission, using co-creation principles, and developing appropriate student–teacher relationships allow an instructor to provide effective yoga classes. Utilizing female-centered practices, Yoga Behind Bars has been able to identify and tailor to the needs of female inmates and deliver holistic, safe, and transformative instruction. Further research is needed to understand the characteristics and needs of female inmates in relation to yoga and mindfulness practices and how best to provide these important resources. 🌱

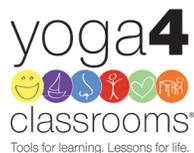
For information on Yoga Behind Bars, please contact Natalie Smith at Natalie@yogabehindbars.org

References

- Cunningham, A. (2010). *Healing addiction with yoga: A yoga program for people in 12-step recovery*. Forres: Findhorn Press.
- Felitti, V.J. (2002). Belastungen in der Kindheit und Gesundheit im Erwachsenenalter: Die Verwandlung von Gold in Blei. *Z Psychosom Med Psychother*, 48(4), 359–369.
- Fine, M. (2007). Feminist designs for difference. In S. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *Handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis* (pp. 613–619). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- George, E. (2010). *A woman doing life: Notes From a prison for women*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.
- Landau, P. S. & Gross, J. B. J. (2008). Low reincarceration rate associated with Ananda Marga yoga and meditation. *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*, 18, 43–48.
- Loper, A.B. (2006). How do mothers in prison differ from non-mothers? *Journal of Child and Family Studies*. 15(1), 83–95.
- Messina, N. & Grella, C. (2006). Childhood trauma and women's health outcomes in a California prison population. *American Journal of Public Health*. 96(10), 1842–1848.
- Mooney, J. L., Minor, K. I., Wells, J. B., Leukefeld, C., Oser, C. B., & Staton Tindall, M. (2008). The relationship of stress, impulsivity, and beliefs to drug use severity in a sample of women prison inmates. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 52(6), 686–697.
- Platania, J. (2008). *The 12-step restorative yoga workbook*. Berkeley: Jon Platania, PhD.

- Pollock, J. (2010). Afterword. In E. George (Author), *A woman doing life: Notes from a prison for women*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.
- River Styx Foundation (2013). Retrieved from <http://www.riverstyxfoundation.org>.
- Seibel, M. M., Khalsa, H. K. (2002). *A woman's book of yoga: Embracing our natural life cycles*. New York: Penguin.
- Sucur, Z., & Zakman-Ban, V. (2005). Characteristics of prison life and treatment of incarcerated women. *Drustvena Istrazivanja*, 14(6), 1055–1079.
- Talvi, S. J. A. (2007). *Women behind bars: The crisis of women in the U.S. prison system*. Emeryville: Seal Press.
- Warr, J. & Hoyle, C. (2007). Women's mental health in prison: Developing an integrated care pathway. *Mental Health Practice*. 11(2), 24–27.
- Washington State Department of Corrections (2012). Prison data sheet. Washington Corrections Center for Women. Retrieved from <http://www.doc.wa.gov/facilities/prison/wccw/docs/WCCWFactSheet2012.pdf>
- Watterson, K. (1996). *Women in prison: Inside the concrete womb*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Yoga Behind Bars (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.yogabehindbars.org>.
- Yoga Behind Bars (2013). *Yoga behind bars: Teacher training manual spring 2013*. Seattle, WA: Yoga Behind Bars.

YSC MEMBERS TRAININGS & WORKSHOPS



Childlight Yoga: Yoga 4 Classrooms Professional Development Workshop

Y4C Professional Development Workshop is appropriate for K–12 classroom teachers, school counselors, phys ed teachers, health educators, therapists and other school professionals interested in incorporating yoga and mindfulness techniques into the classroom setting. Price: \$180. Includes: 6 contact hours, fully-illustrated Program Manual, Certificate of Completion.

Training Locations/States and Training Dates: **AZ** 9/27/13 | **DC** 7/26/13 | **MA** 5/11/13, 6/1/13, 6/8/13, 8/12/13, 7/25/13 | **NH** 5/8/13, 6/6/13, 8/4/13, 11/23/13, 8/15/13 | **NY** 8/9/13, 9/28/13 | **OH** 4/20/13, 9/20/13 | **PA** 4/21/13, 5/19/13, 6/16/13, 7/19/13, 10/26/13 | **Puerto Rico** 5/18/13, 5/25/13, 6/15/13, 8/31/13, 11/9/13 | **RI** 4/27/13 | **VT** 10/18/13

Contact: Lisa Flynn, E-RYT, RCYT, Office: 603-343-4116 | Cell: 603-781-3323, lisa@childlightyoga.com, www.childlightyoga.com



Little Flower Yoga: Children's Yoga and Mindfulness Teacher Training

Certification in yoga and mindfulness practices for youth ages 3–18. Training focuses on the complete physical, emotional and social wellbeing of children. Learn to create activities within a framework of safety, relevance and student engagement, so that all of your students can thrive.

- The Omega Institute, Rhinebeck NY: Level One, August 11–6, 2013
- New York NY: Level One, Sept 28–29
- New York NY: Level Two, Oct 19–20
- New York NY: Level Three, Nov 16–17
- Montego Bay Jamaica: Level One–Three, Nov 2–9

Visit www.littlefloweryoga.com for a complete schedule of national trainings and workshops, as well as our school yoga project offerings and therapeutic classes for children and families.

Contact: Jennifer Cohen Harper, 917-385-2005, jennifer@littlefloweryoga.com, www.littlefloweryoga.com



**moksha yoga®
international**

Moksha Yoga International Teacher Training

The Moksha Yoga Teacher Training is unique in that it combines a one-month intensive certification course with an eleven-month correspondence course, which helps create an inspiring and deeper yoga practice, while providing thorough preparation for the aspiring yoga teacher. We are honored to bring together authors, scholars, health professionals and senior yoga teachers from across North America as part of our teaching faculty.

- Moksha Yoga Teacher Training: Victoria, BC: June 1–30
- Moksha Yoga Teacher Training: Montreal, QC: September 10–October 10

Contact: Ashley Collins, (888) 966-9642, www.mokshayoga.ca



Recovery Yoga: Self Care Workshop

Learn simple daily practices for maintaining personal energy and experience the replenishing practice of yoga nidra. Join Recovery Yoga Founder Elizabeth Johnstone RYT 500, and Recovery Yoga teacher and LFMT, Shaun English, RYT-200, trained in iRest® Yoga Nidra. \$45. Register at www.recoveryyoga.org.

Saturday, November 2, 2–4:30 pm at Mystic Yoga Shala, 80 Stonington Rd., Mystic, CT.

Contact: Elizabeth Johnstone, 860-287-1641, info@recoveryyoga.org, www.recoveryyoga.org



Yoga Service Conference 2014

The Omega Institute: May 16-17th, 2014

The Yoga Service Council and Omega Institute are excited to present the third annual Yoga Service Conference, a unique and intimate opportunity to forge relationships, build skills, and draw inspiration from leading teachers who work with tens of thousands of people in underserved communities every day.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL

WWW.YOGASERVICECOUNCIL.ORG

"The YSC Conference was an excellent way to receive mentorship from those who are paving the path of yoga service! The teachers adeptly wove the thread of learning through spheres of personal, community, and global transformation. I left feeling nourished and supported in both pragmatic and spiritual ways."

—Paula Soto

Who Should Attend? This conference is intended for anyone interested in working to create strong, engaged, and resilient communities. You do not need to be a yoga teacher, or even a yoga practitioner, to benefit from this conference (although yoga teachers are welcome!). Social workers, school teachers, health care providers, and other professionals interested in exploring the possibility of bringing yoga and mindfulness to the populations they serve are encouraged to attend. You do not need to have any prior yoga experience to benefit.

Who Will Be Teaching? The conference is a gathering of some of the nation's most inspiring teachers. Bessel van der Kolk, Sharon Salzberg, Beryl Bender Birch, Kelly McGonigal, Nikki Myers, and BK Bose were all faculty members in 2013. We will be accepting proposals for 2014 faculty members soon. Visit our website for details on plenary, breakout, and poster-session presentation proposals.

VISIT WWW.YOGASERVICECOUNCIL.ORG TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

