



**Yoga for Health and Resilience:
An Evidence-Based Practice Protocol for Yoga in Healthcare**

Syllabus

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March 17 – May 26, 2023; 30 hours (meeting 4p – 7p on ten consecutive Fridays)

Target Audience and Instructional Level

This is an intermediate-level course geared to students in the YogaX 300-hour Therapeutic Yoga Program (YTT300) and the following audiences:

- Healthcare, mental healthcare, and allied healthcare providers interested in bringing principles and strategies of the eight limbs of yoga into their clinical practice.
- Healthcare, mental healthcare, and allied healthcare students in graduate or medical programs interested in bringing principles and strategies of the eight limbs of yoga into their supervised clinical practice.
- Yoga teachers interested in offering integrated holistic yoga practices from all eight limbs, especially to students and clients in healthcare and mental healthcare settings.
- Yoga therapists providing integrated holistic yoga practices, especially in healthcare and mental healthcare settings.

Training Pragmatics

- Cost: \$800 tuition for this 30-hour workshop **or** YogaX YTT300 prepaid enrollment
- This training is delivered via online synchronous instruction and with fulltime contact with the lead teacher, Chris Brems
- (see Training Format below for specific details of training delivery)
- Yoga Alliance Continuing Education credits (30 hours) are included in the tuition cost; a CE certificate is issued upon request
- Participation (by entering the zoom link and/or making payment) implies that you have read and agreed to the Stanford Assumptions of Risk, Release of Claims, and Hold Harmless Agreement at <https://www.yogaxteam.com/healthandsafetyinformation>
- YogaX Refund and Payment Policy is available at https://3de0fc17-ea21-4854-87c7-777a583c02cf.filesusr.com/ugd/37469f_73d3c9e8ebb14214a60e11d8b08baba1.pdf
- YogaX has no commercial support for this event and there are no disclosable conflicts of interest.
- The zoom link for this event is: <https://stanford.zoom.us> **TBA**

Instructor

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Training Content Summary

Yoga as an ancient science and philosophy involves disciplined physical and contemplative practices that strengthen and harmonize body, mind, and spirit. In its most comprehensive form, yoga embodies the raja or eight-limbed path, including ethical practices (yamas), inner disciplines (niyamas), physical postures (asana), breathing (pranayama), inner-focused sense awareness (pratyahara), concentration (dharana), meditation (dhyana), and absorption (samadhi). Ancient claims of physical, emotional, mental, and interpersonal benefits of yoga have begun to receive careful scientific attention and support in the past decade, with recent peer-reviewed published literature providing research evidence for the effectiveness of yoga in a variety of health- and mental health-related contexts, including enhancement of stress management, coping capacity, and self-care strategies. Through deep exploration of yoga as a holistic lifestyle and integrated psychological, physical, and meditative practice, this training focuses on how to use evidence-based practices in yoga to support the development and maintenance of health and resilience.

The training is based on an evidence-based integrated holistic yoga series that was specifically designed to enhance resilience and health among vulnerable groups who are prone to burnout, stress, or physical and mental exhaustion. The series consists of ten 90-minute yoga sessions based on a therapeutic, evidence-based protocol developed by YogaX Director Chris Brems (cf., Brems, 2015; *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*). Each session has a specific psychological focus, intention, commensurate physical practice, breathing focus, and meditation. The 10 sessions carefully build upon one another anatomically, physiologically, energetically, emotionally, and psychologically. The protocol is an excellent support for self-care, especially for healthcare providers. It can (and has been) successfully applied in various healthcare contexts (e.g., CITATIONS).

This training leads participants through the evidence-based protocol for both self-care (including burnout prevention and enhancement of resilience) and application in healthcare settings with clients, patients, or students. It trains participants to apply the protocol in their healthcare settings and personal life. It presents careful discussion and analysis of how the protocol can be used for both purposes and of the underlying concepts as related to yoga humanities (including psychology, philosophy, yoga sutras, and other ancient wisdom); anatomical and physiological principles (including variations and modifications based on body presentation, somatic therapy concepts, and modern science findings related to healthful application of yoga postures); energetic and breathing-related science (including the exploration of optimal functional breathing, adaptation of breathing practices based on autonomic nervous system states, and the prana vayus); and inner wisdom applications (including pranayama, dharana, and dhyana).

The 10 session contents and emphases unfold as follows:

- **Session 1 – Exploring the Layers of Self:** Discussion of the five layers of self (physical, energetic, mental/emotional, intuitive/wise, joyful); invitation of mindfulness through grounding and expansion; introduction to upright standing poses; exploration of diaphragmatic breath; meditative practice of a body scan <https://youtu.be/6JLJsYkUMBs>
- **Session 2 – Committing to the Ethical Practices of Yoga:** Discussion of yoga's ethical lifestyles; invitation of connection to self, others, and the earth; introduction to sun salutations; exploration of ocean-sounding breath; meditation on connection through rooting and grounding <https://youtu.be/qHbLGDL8nas>
- **Session 3 – Finding Purpose and Meaning through Engaged Action:** Discussion of purposeful living, agency, and adaptability; invitation of life balance through finding the middle way; introduction to standing balancing poses; exploration of balanced breathing (inhalation and exhalation); meditation to raise awareness of opposing forces coming into balance https://youtu.be/brfy_wIKFQ
- **Session 4 – Recognizing our Essential Nature and Temperament:** Discussion of the fundamental qualities of nature and human temperament; invitation of stability and calm abiding through inviting integrating effort and ease; introduction to core strengtheners; exploration of the sweet breath (nadi shodhana); meditation of finding luminosity in each layer of self <https://youtu.be/d0kTBSq6d7g>

- **Session 5 – Exploring Clinging or Grasping, Aversion, Fear, and Ego:** Discussion of humans’ emotional predilections/predispositions; invitation of non-grasping and releasing aversion through letting go; introduction to twists; exploration of equal breathing with retention at top of breath; name/self-identity awareness meditation <https://youtu.be/Res9opwIG-Q>
- **Session 6 – Discovering Mental Preoccupations to Transcend Habit:** Discussion of the expressions or fluctuations of the mind; invitation of gaining insight and understanding through stillness; introduction to forward folding Part #1; exploration of breathing against the grain; meditative guided imagery on finding a place of safety <https://youtu.be/RDL5AoAuJ5Y>
- **Session 7 – Identifying the Mind States to Find Luminosity:** Discussion of the five mind states (monkey mind, cow mind, butterfly mind, and more); invitation of single-focused concentration through finding movement in stillness and stillness in movement; introduction to forward folding Part #2; exploration of four-part breathing (inhalation, pausing at the top, exhalation, pausing at the bottom); mind states meditation <https://youtu.be/Dchxx5tHldk>
- **Session 8 – Accessing Conscious and Discerning Decision-Making:** Discussion of the law of cause-and-effect or karma; invitation of open-heartedness and purpose through creating a gap between stimulus and response for discerning decision-making; introduction to heart-openers Part #1; exploration of equal breathing with spacious, open-hearted awareness; spacious awareness meditation radiating from heart center <https://youtu.be/WpQrrtHEdf0>
- **Session 9 – Choosing Lovingkindness, Compassion, Joy, and Equanimity:** Discussion of the mature emotions as the alternative to emotional and mental reactivity; invitation of open-hearted integration through cultivating compassion and lovingkindness; introduction to heart-openers Part #2; exploration of equal breathing with retention of breath at the top and bottom; meditation on compassion, lovingkindness, empathic joy, and equanimity <https://youtu.be/AVFrrYdmG2s>
- **Session 10 – Integrating Our Yoga Practice with Strength and Conviction:** Discussion of the five strengths of conviction, persistence, mindfulness, focus, and discernment; invitation of commitment to living with discernment through radiating strength; deepening of a heart-opening, integrated practice of compassion, discernment, and wisdom; exploration of connection breath; tree-of-yoga guided imagery meditation <https://youtu.be/nx9rCJyd9Uc>

Quotes from Participants in the Original Study:

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“I feel like I am a completely different person now compared to who I was at the beginning [of the series]. This was the result of mostly what we have done in class each week and a few practices at home of mostly breathing and restorative exercises. Even with minimal amount of practice, I have seen tremendous benefits of practicing yoga.”

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“I liked the scientific explanation of what was going on physiologically... For me, the science really helps me to buy in to the benefits of the practice.”

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“I really enjoy when [the teacher] demonstrates a pose that I think looks really difficult and then works me through the challenge of getting into it successfully myself.”

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“I always come in with a flurry of thoughts and anxieties and, somewhere in the middle, those all fade out and I find myself more focused on my own body and my own wellbeing.”

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“I am finding these sessions empowering because I can do things I never thought I could and it makes you feel like you can do everything in life.”

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Learning Objectives

Learning Objective #1

1. Define integrated holistic yoga:
 - a. integration of all limbs of yoga
 - b. attention to all koshas
 - c. attention to context and biopsychosociocultural variables
 - d. commitment to accessibility

Evaluation Method for Learning Objective #1

- list and define all eight limbs of yoga
- list and define the five layers of self
- explain the meaning, aspects, and importance of the biopsychosociocultural context of students and teachers
- give examples of how yoga classes can increase accessibility

Learning Objective #2

2. Define and apply practically the overall arc of an integrated holistic yoga class:
 - a. mindfulness cue
 - b. opening centering and intention
 - c. warm up
 - d. preparation
 - e. peak sequence
 - f. cool-down or counter practice
 - g. closing meditation
 - h. gratitude

Evaluation Method for Learning Objective #2

- list and explain the rationale for the outline of an integrated holistic yoga class
- develop a yoga class sequence using the integrated holistic yoga sequencing arc
- explain how to develop an arc of classes in an integrated holistic series

Learning Objective #3

3. Define and understand the components of the evidence-based protocol:
 - a. attention to intention and purpose
 - b. attention to integration of philosophy or psychology
 - c. attention to anatomical and energetic flow of the class
 - d. understanding of the need for preparing all koshas for the peak pose
 - e. understanding the reason and process for closing a class

Evaluation Method for Learning Objective #3

- explain the intention and how it is integrated throughout the sequence built for learning objective #2
- explain the anatomical principles underlying the sequencing built for learning objective #2
- explain the energetic principles underlying the sequencing built for learning objective #2
- explain the mental and emotional principles underlying the sequencing built for Learning Objective #2

Learning Objective #4

4. Demonstrate an understanding of the EBP protocol:
 - a. rationale for the sequencing within each class as related to koshas and limbs
 - b. rationale for sequencing across all ten as related to koshas and limbs
 - c. understanding of the class and series content related to supporting health and resilience in healthcare and self-care
 - d. understanding of the pedagogy related to supporting health and resilience in healthcare and self-care

Evaluation Method for Learning Objective #3

- teach session 1 of the protocol
- explain your cuing choices
- debrief your strengths and weaknesses in teaching the class
- evaluate your fidelity to the intention of the EBP protocol for the class

Learning Objective #5

5. Demonstrate ability to tailor the EBP protocol to specific healthcare settings:
 - a. necessary modifications or alternations in the physical practices
 - b. necessary modifications or variations related to the energetic or breathing practices
 - c. necessary modifications or changes in the interior practices
 - d. cuing, language, and environment modification

Evaluation Method for Learning Objective #3

- define your teaching setting in your specific healthcare context
- define how you will change the asana sequences
- define how you will change, modify, or vary the pranayama sequences
- explain language and cuing alterations
- address any other special circumstances present in your healthcare setting that may require adaptation of the protocol (at the class and series level)

Yama and niyamas (the ethical code) assist us in this reasoned restraint, acting as a firebreak for our behavior. Asana is a cleansing agent and pranayama begins to tug out consciousness (citta) away from desires and toward judicious awareness (prajna). Pratyahara is the stage at which we learn to reverse the current that flows from mind to senses, so that mind can bend its energies inward. Dharana (concentration) brings purity to intelligence (buddhi), and dhyana (meditation) expunges the stains of ego.

B.K.S. Iyengar, 2005, Light on Life, p. 176

Schedule and Continuing Education Hours by YA Category

Date	Time	Topic	TTP	TM	AP	YH	Prc	Spc
Day 1	4p – 5:30p	Exploring the Layers of Self	1			.5		1.5
	5:30p – 7p	Discussion of teaching principles utilized; analysis of anatomical principles; integration of psychology		1	.5			1.5
Day 2	4p – 5:30p	Committing to the Ethical Practices of Yoga	1			.5		1.5
	5:30p – 7p	Discussion of teaching principles utilized; analysis of anatomical principles; integration of psychology		1	.5			1.5
Day 3	4p – 5:30p	Finding Purpose and Meaning through Engaged Action	1			.5		1.5
	5:30p – 7p	Discussion of teaching principles utilized; analysis of anatomical principles; integration of psychology		1	.5			1.5
Day 4	4p – 5:30p	Recognizing our Essential Nature and Temperament	1			.5		1.5
	5:30p – 7p	Discussion of teaching principles utilized; analysis of anatomical principles; integration of psychology		1	.5			1.5
Day 5	4p – 5:30p	Exploring Clinging or Grasping, Aversion, Fear, and Ego	1			.5		1.5
	5:30p – 7p	Discussion of teaching principles utilized; analysis of anatomical principles; integration of psychology		1	.5			1.5
Date	Time	Topic	TTP	TM	AP	YH	Prc	Spc
Day 6	4p – 5:30p	Discovering Mental Preoccupations to Transcend Habit	1			.5		1.5
	5:30p – 7p	Discussion of teaching principles utilized; analysis of anatomical principles; integration of psychology		1	.5			1.5
Day 7	4p – 5:30p	Identifying the Mind States to Find Luminosity	1			.5		1.5
	5:30p – 7p	Discussion of teaching principles utilized; analysis of anatomical principles; integration of psychology		1	.5			1.5
Day 8	4p – 5:30p	Accessing Conscious and Discerning Decision-Making	1			.5		1.5
	5:30p – 7p	Discussion of teaching principles utilized; analysis of anatomical principles; integration of psychology		1	.5			1.5
Day 9	4p – 5:30p	Choosing Lovingkindness, Compassion, Joy, and Equanimity	1			.5		1.5
	5:30p – 7p	Discussion of teaching principles utilized; analysis of anatomical principles; integration of psychology		1	.5			1.5
Day 10	4p – 5:30p	Integrating Our Yoga Practice with Strength and Conviction	1			.5		1.5
	5:30p – 7p	Discussion of teaching principles utilized; analysis of anatomical principles; integration of psychology		1	.5			1.5
30 hours of YA CE or YTT300 in the following categories:			10	10	5	5	0	30

Notes: YA=Yoga Alliance; CE=Continuing Education

TTP=Techniques, Training, and Practice; TM=Teaching Methodology; AP=Anatomy and Physiology; YH=Yoga Humanities;

Prac=Practicum; Spc=area of program specialization

Suggested Readings and Practices

Blogs

It is recommended that in preparation for the workshop you **read all YogaX blogs**, especially the following:

<https://www.yogaxteam.com/blog/innerlimbs>

<https://www.yogaxteam.com/blog/physicallimbs>

<https://www.yogaxteam.com/blog/lifestylelimbs>

<https://www.yogaxteam.com/blog/koshas>

<https://www.yogaxteam.com/blog/who-can-do-yoga>

Personal Practice

It will be helpful to have cultivated a regular yoga practice for at least 3 months, but it is not required.

Also, peruse YogaX webpage resources and **try out some of the offered free practices** (asana, pranayama, meditation, and more) at yogaXteam.com and on the YogaX Team YouTube channel. If you want to experience the 10-series once all the way through before starting this training, you can find the series on our YouTube channel in the *Yoga for Health and Resilience Playlist*:

(<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzvkJZpUGjwIGkDNAwe79nBp309sdWt5>)

Readings

The following readings will be helpful as you deepen your journey once you have completed the workshop.

Bondy, D. (2020). *Yoga where you are: Customize your practice for your body and your life*. Boulder, CO: Shambhala.

Brems, C. (2022). *Ancient wisdoms and science of yoga: A Companion for 200-Hour Yoga Teacher Training for Healthcare and Allied Healthcare Settings*. Self-published: Santa Barbara, CA.

Feuerstein, G. (2013). *The psychology of yoga: Integrating eastern and western approaches for understanding the mind*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Hanson-Lasater, J. (2020). *Yoga myths*. Boulder, CO: Shambhala.

Johnson, M.C. (2020). *Skill in action: Radicalizing your yoga practice to create a just world*. Boston: Shambhala.

McGonigal, K. (2015). *The upside of stress*. New York: Avery.

Rountree, S. & DeSiato, A. (2019). *Teaching yoga beyond the poses: A practical workbook for integrating themes, ideas and inspiration into your class*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.



Training Format

The workshop uses mixed pedagogical methods, ranging from didactics/lectures to discussion to experiential work, including small group activities. Lecture/didactic time invites discussion throughout and is accented by experiential exercises and activities. The experiential work is yoga-based and includes asana, pranayama, meditation, and guided imagery. To make sure that everyone can enjoy the yoga-based activities safely and with maximum comfort, please note the following (more personal) thoughts and requests.

- Stanford University requires that you sign the release form (link above) to be able to participate in the activities that are part of this workshop. It assumed that you have agreed to this document when you pay or use the provided zoom link for the workshop.
- Required training activities start promptly. To make sure that we can start on time and that you have ample opportunity to get settled or ask questions, it would be lovely if you could arrive as much as 10 minutes early.
- Participants provide their own props for the virtual training sessions. Minimum prop equipment includes 2 yoga blocks, 1 yoga strap (10 feet is preferable), 1 yoga bolster, 1-2 blankets, and a yoga mat. Access to a clear wall space is extremely helpful (a closed door works). Prop substitutes are fine (e.g., a stack of books instead of blocks; a scarf instead of a strap, sofa cushions instead of a bolster, etc.). Please have all props at the ready for each training session.
- Yoga is best practiced on a relatively empty stomach but not starving. A sustaining but light meal prior to class will help you maintain your energy without having a full belly that makes bending and twisting difficult.
- Please ask questions – before class, after class, and during class. If you are wondering about something – whether it’s the reason for a particular shape or movement, an alignment question, or a more healthful way of doing something – someone else is likely to ponder the same thing.
- Always honor your own intuition and body wisdom – if something feels wrong, do NOT do it. We are all anatomically unique and we all express the same yoga shape, breath, or practice in different ways. What works for us, your teachers, or the person next to you, may not be optimal for you. Allow yourself the joy of using props and variations based on the feedback from your own body, breath, and mind. We offer both freely and demonstrate their use throughout.
- Yoga practiced in a group is inspirational. It is never competitive. Work within your own body limits and preferences; give yourself permission not to strive to do what others are doing. Delight in the pleasure of expressing each pose or breath in uniquely your way. If something comes easily, celebrate this state of pure joy; if something is a struggle, embrace the moment of learning.
- Thank you in advance for making me aware of any medical conditions that may affect your yoga practice. It is helpful for me to know if you are modifying practices for a particular reason or if you would like to have help in working with a particular concern.
- Thank for turning off all cell phones, beepers, or other noise-making or distracting devices before you settle in for any given training session.
- Thank you for keeping your cameras on during virtual sessions to the degree possible and appropriate.

