



## TEACHERS TRAINING

Namaste Yoga, Berkeley

August 18-19, 2018

### I. KARMA YOGA

- "The yoga of selfless action" (yoga in action); selfless service - without attachment to results
- The practice of yoga to relieve pain and suffering (your own and others)
- *Ishvara Pranidhana* (Niyama) surrendering to the Divine; offering the fruits of your daily actions in service to a higher power for yours and others highest good

### II. YOGA THERAPY

*"Yoga therapy, derived from the yoga tradition of Patanjali and the Ayurvedic system of healthcare refers to the adaptation and application of yoga techniques and practices to help individuals facing health challenges at any level to manage their conditions, reduce symptoms, restore balance, increase vitality, and improve attitude. The distinction between a yoga therapist and a yoga teacher is that rather than focusing strictly on yoga practices, a yoga therapist looks for ways to help people reduce or manage their symptoms and generally improve their physical and mental health."* American Viniyoga Institute, Gary Kraftsow

**★ PYP's methodology combines Yoga Therapy and Karma Yoga for the emotional and physical relief of pain and suffering.**

### III. SOCIAL ACTIVISM

*"Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world within our reach. Any small, calm thing that one soul can do to assist some portion of this suffering world will help immensely. It is not given to us to know which acts or by whom will cause the critical mass to tip toward an enduring good. What is needed for dramatic change is an accumulation of acts, adding to and continuing. We know that it does not take "everyone on earth" to bring about justice and peace, but only a small, determined group who will not give up during the first, second or hundredth gale."* Clarissa Pinkola-Estes, author

Social activism is an intentional action with the goal of bringing about social change.

- Fire in the belly
- Reclaiming power
- Restorative Justice

**Restorative Justice** is a theory and practice of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused or revealed by criminal behavior. It is an approach to justice that focuses on the needs of victims and the importance of rehabilitative services for offenders, instead of satisfying abstract legal principles and focusing solely on punishment as justice.

#### *Restorative Justice*

- Views crime, first and foremost, as harm caused to individuals and communities
- Victims or survivors: principle concern is to address and find ways to repair harm caused them
- Offenders: primary emphasis on personal responsibility for the impact of harm (pain) caused
- Secondarily provides offenders with services to prevent further crime/harm/offenses
- RJ victim/offender dialogues: highest rate of victim satisfaction and offender accountability
- Opportunities for personal healing, both victims and offenders

*focus on helping  
hurt  
① helping people take  
personal responsibility*

*walk for own walk system*

**Retributive Justice** - model for western legal systems:

- Crime is against the state
- Aim is to establish guilt and administer punishment
- Process involves conflict between adversaries (maintain separation)
- Focus on punishing offenders; accountability = punishment
- Victims secondary concern
- Lack of opportunity for healing

+ treated as only criminal & offender  
& as person

★ \* **"Hurt people, hurt people"** Yoga and mindfulness are foundational practices for Restorative Justice serving as keystones in allowing individuals to take responsibility for their actions. They promote greater sensitivity to self, address harm caused oneself as well as others thus providing for the development of empathy.

#### IV. IMPORTANT ISSUES TO ADDRESS FOR BEHAVIORAL REHABILITATION

- Rehabilitate: "restore" to wholeness
- Unresolved trauma
- Shame based identity
- Remorse, empathy, compassion (emotional intelligence)
- Personal responsibility for harm caused; "making amends"

#### V. EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES OF PRISONERS

##### A. Trauma

- "A wound" (Greek)
- **Psychological trauma**: an emotional or psychological injury usually resulting from extremely stressful or life-threatening situation. Trauma stuns the mind. When the reality of a situation becomes too large or intense to process, the mind automatically goes into psychological shock as a defense mechanism.
- **Complex Trauma**: chronic interpersonal trauma exposure in a prolonged environment of maltreatment, particularly during early in life development, often results in a more profound and wider-ranging impact than P.T.S.D. Studies have shown that chronic neglect has the same impact on the brain as chronic abuse and research has indicated that childhood trauma has a cumulative effect and is associated with a much higher risk of developing serious substance abuse, depression and/or suicidality in adulthood. **Childhood adversity (complex trauma) is associated with adult criminality. We suggest that to decrease criminal recidivism, treatment interventions must focus on the effects of early life experiences.** (ACE - Adverse Childhood Experiences Study)
- **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (P.T.S.D.)**: a severe anxiety disorder that can occur after seeing or experiencing a traumatic event that involved the threat of injury or death.
- **Compound Trauma**: impact of unresolved trauma (past) and exposure to ongoing trauma  
"Prison is designed to break you not to make you better. Our prison system takes people who have had traumatic lives and puts them in circumstances that expose them to even more trauma – like living in a cage with a stranger, being subjected to riots, having live ammunition fired by correctional officers trying to break up fights involving weapons, or being isolated from family, friends and significant others."  
Editorial, San Quentin News, February 2016
- **Vicarious/Secondary Trauma**: personal impact of working with victims of trauma

→ almost all trauma started in childhood  
- take it as women people have it

Can I meet that person as they are + forgive my biases?

Our prison system take people exposed to trauma exposes them to more trauma



**Shame-based Identity**: originates in childhood in the context of relationships. Shame-based identity comes from experiences of being dishonored and/or humiliated, believing the messages that you are not a worthwhile human being. It creates and maintains a false identity of who you are strongly influencing your attitude of yourself and how you believe others perceive you.

★ **"Intense emotions cause memories of particular events to be dissociated from consciousness, and to be stored, instead, as visceral (in the body) sensations (anxiety and panic). Traumatized persons seem to react to reminders of the trauma with emergency responses that had been relevant to the original threat, but that no longer have bearing on current experience."** The Body Keeps The Score: Memory and Psychobiology of Post Traumatic Stress, Bessel van der Kolk, MD

## VII. APPLIED METHODOLOGY: TRAUMA-INFORMED, MINDFULNESS BASED YOGA

**- Complex & Compound Trauma -  
- Dissociative Symptoms & Reactive Behavior -  
- TIY & Embodiment Practices -  
- Discharge & Emotional Regulation -  
- Resilience & Healing -**

### A. Traditional Yoga: Multifaceted Practice (see Patanjali's Eight Limbs)

- Meditation
- Breathwork
- Movement
- Relaxation

### B. Mindfulness Is An Inherent Aspect of Traditional Yoga

*"The highest form of human intelligence is to observe without evaluating."* Krishnamurti

*"Yoga is the settling of the mind into silence."* Yoga Sutra 1.2

***Mindfulness is an inherent aspect of traditional yoga since foundational practices of pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, pranayama and asana require paying close attention with a non-judgmental attitude to one's moment-to-moment internal state of being.***

Mindfulness originates from the *Vipassana* Meditation tradition of India and Southeast Asia (*vipassana* meaning "to see things as they truly are"), which came to be known in the West as Insight or Mindfulness Meditation. Mindfulness is a self-awareness practice that involves paying close attention, on-purpose, with a non-judgmental attitude, to the moment-to-moment experience of our internal state. This self-regulation of attention to the immediate experience entails viewing thoughts, emotions and sensations in the body without judging or evaluating them as positive or negative.

Mindfulness is a skill for developing an expanded sense of awareness in which one shifts from an "ordinary state of mind" of being pre-occupied and governed by thoughts and thinking (rational or analytical mind), into a broader consciousness that enhances the moment-to-moment understanding of our experience. So mindfulness practices can help us shift from reactive to responsive behavior and ultimately to self-control or impulse control.

#### ***Mindfulness for Self-Regulation/Impulse Control***

- Behavioral change begins with increased self-awareness – **an increase in consciousness** i.e. in the moment awareness vs. ordinary state of consciousness
- Involves **paying close attention** to thoughts, emotions and bodily sensations (*alert watchfulness*)
- Observing or witnessing physical, emotional and mental states with deliberate, open and **non-judgmental, non-evaluative attention**
- Emphasizes sensations in the body and awareness of breathing to balance the habitual focus of the rational mind on thinking and to cultivate intuition
- **Allows for slowing things down**, stepping out of time, "hitting the pause button"
- Requires attention and effort (desire and discipline)
- Cultivates a considered response vs. a knee-jerk reaction

**Interoception** is the therapeutic practice for working with the dissociative effects of trauma whereby one develops the awareness of what is going on within the body. The focus is on sensations in the body to inform us of mood, emotions and sense of well-being (Fowler, 2202, Review of book *Visceral Sensory Neuroscience Interoception*)

Most offenders have become dissociated from their bodies and emotions as a result of trauma: childhood backgrounds of poverty, neglect, physical or sexual abuse, exposure to violence, etc. (*Complex Trauma*). These issues if unresolved become exacerbated by alcohol and/or drug abuse. Living in a prison environment and adhering to a “convict code” can further disconnect a person from a healthy relationship with their body, mind and emotions.

★ **“Symptoms of trauma are most severe in prisoners incarcerated for longer than one year who have little access to education, vocational training or rehabilitation.”** Terrance Gorski, author of Post Incarceration Syndrome and Relapse.

### **B. Impact of Unresolved Trauma**

- Impulsive/reactive behavior
- Capacity to reason diminishes
- Intense emotions drive behavior
- A general sense of trouble and unease

(Ross, G. 2007. *Beyond the Trauma Vortex into the Healing Vortex*)

Trauma-impacted people

- Live life from the traumatic experience rather than the present moment
- Thing of the past but the body keeps reacting as if it’s in imminent danger
- Commonly experience acute hyper or hypo-arousal states
- Lack an organized sense of purpose
- Operate on automatic; ability to self-regulate impaired
- Do not feel safe in their own bodies
- Life is viewed and experienced through the lens of fear
- Frequent use of drugs and alcohol to dull the pain

**See graph and diagrams** related to brain and symptoms of un-discharged traumatic stress

Unfortunately, trauma has long-lasting effects on mental health and can be extremely difficult to treat effectively. **It’s estimated that close to half of those who undergo traditional Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for PTSD remain significantly symptomatic after treatment.** Complementary body-centered therapies such as yoga and other treatments (EMDR, massage, acupuncture) have proven effective in addressing cognitive, emotional and physiological symptoms associated with trauma by helping the body to release (*discharge*) accumulated stress and anxiety, calm down, decrease hyper or hypo-arousal, regulate emotions and increase resiliency.

★ **“What most people do not realize is that trauma is not the story of something awful that happened in the past, but the residue of imprints left behind in people’s sensory and hormonal systems. The process of being in a safe space and staying with whatever sensations emerge, and seeing how they come to an end is a positive imprinting process. Yoga helps traumatized people befriend their bodies that have betrayed them by failing to guarantee safety.”** Bessel van der Kolk, M.D.

### **C. Other Common Issues of Prisoners (importance of understanding)**

- Addiction
- Mental health disorders
- Physically over-stimulated (anxiety/agitation); mentally under-stimulated
- Denial (Retributive Justice & “Convict Code”)
- Hyper-vigilance

About 20% of adult prisoners have a serious mental illness; 30-60% have substance abuse problems. When including broad-based mental illnesses, 50% of men and 75% of women in state prisons will experience a mental health problem requiring services in any given year. As one expert put it “*our jails and prisons have become America’s major mental health facilities, a purpose for which they were never intended.*”

<http://healthaffairs.org/blog/2014/04/01/mental-illness-in-americas-jails-and-prisons>

## VI. WHY YOGA FOR PRISONERS

*Studies conducted by Joseph LeDoux, a neuroscientist at NYU, show that each time we retell a story or retrieve a memory, a specific kind of protein synthesis occurs in the brain. This can mean we add to our story in some way and reinforce the neural networks connected to our story or memory. There may be times when telling a story may be therapeutic, and there may be other times when it reinforces the very patterns we are trying to change. In trauma survivors they can find telling the story to be helpful. But they also need to enter the field of the body and re-wire the nervous system for change to take place.* Bo Forbes, PsyD, Yoga Therapy Today, Spring 2013

### A. Evidence-Based Rationale for Yoga/Meditation Program

- **The Body Keeps The Score** – “intense emotional reactions cause memories of events to be stored as visceral sensations in the body.”
- Addresses **dissociation** from unresolved trauma; promotes a healthy connection w/ mind and body
- **Discharges** accumulated stress, reduces anxiety, **resets the autonomic nervous system**
- Engages the brain’s pre-frontal cortex and **strengthens discernment and “executive functioning”**
- **Changes brain chemistry** and effects the nervous system (*vagal tone*) **increasing mental and emotional resiliency** and helping to develop **self-regulation** (regulation of internal states) or **impulse control**
- Aids in **addiction recovery**
- Increases **emotional stability** and helps mitigate aggression, anger (“hostility”), depression and despair
- **Exercises the brain’s attention** network thereby **improving rational decision making**
- Develops **increased self-acceptance** and **self-worth** dislodging a false sense of unworthiness (shame-based identity) toward an appreciation of your own essential goodness
- Assists prison custody (**less violent incidents and infractions**); supports a positive prisoner/prison culture
- Contributes to a **reduction in healthcare costs**
- Serves **public safety** re. reentry concerns
- “Ideal” conditions for self-transformational practice

*“feel the brain”  
Re-engage in body*

*“Yoga has helped me with impulse control, obsessive and compulsive thinking patterns, and given me the ability to calm myself in stressful situations. I’ve learned what it means to be at peace with myself and live everyday mindful of who I really am.”* D.P. San Quentin Student

*“My practice has definitely benefited me in regard to my mood swings. Being bipolar I believe that my yoga practice has everything to do with a natural mindful sense of balance what has become the support I trust enough to reduce my medicine to one prescript.”* B.M. San Quentin Student

### B. Supportive Research/Studies (see PYP website)

- NCCD (National Council on Crime and Delinquency) San Quentin Study
- **Lower Re-incarceration Rate**, University of North Carolina School of Medicine
- **Substance Abuse: Incarcerated Men and Women**, Washington State, Mindfulness (*Vipassana*) Meditation
- **Reduced Hostility** (MBSR Massachusetts Corrections & Prisoners, Bihar, India)
- **Mental Health/Mood Disorders: Incarcerated Women**, U.S. Correctional Facility, Iyengar Yoga
- **Decreased Impulsivity, Improved Mood, Increased Attention: Oxford University**
- **Anxiety and Depression: Harvard University, Preventative Medicine Research Institute; Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine; University of Massachusetts Medical Center; Duke University.**
- **PTSD: Boston University Medical Center, Besel van der Kolk, M.D. and David Emerson**
- **Stress Reduction: Massachusetts Correctional Facilities, MBSR, Jon Kabat-Zinn**
- **ADHD: Duke University; UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center**



## E. Yoga Philosophy

*Yoga provides the tools for a process of self-investigation and self-development that ultimately guides practitioners toward self-realization.* Gary Kraftsow, American Viniyoga Institute

- Importance of secular approach
- Primary aim of yoga “free the mind from confusion; body from distress” *B.K.S. Iyengar* (i.e. relieving stress/tension in the body and creating calmness/peace of mind).
- Ultimate goal: Self-realization (realizing who you truly are – “your basic goodness”)
- Balance/integration of mental + emotional + physical opens doorway to deeper understanding of oneself = Soul
- Yamas and niyamas: ethical codes of conduct toward others and oneself (a “righteous path”).

## F. Develop Pragmatic Topics For Yoga’s Application – *Keepin It Real*

- Whole Person
- “Gut Feeling” – the Second Brain
- Three layered cake
- Effortless Effort
- Learning to consciously deal with pain (working w/ releasing discomfort in the body)
- *The Body Keeps The Score*
- Misperception (*avidya*); Clarity (*vidya*)
- *Ahimsa*: non-harming through thought, word or action
- Third Eye: Medial Pre-frontal Cortex; Executive Functioning
- Resetting the nervous system: *vagal tone* & resultant resiliency
- Impulse control: learning to pause and reflect before reacting (unconscious mind)
- **Taoist Yoga**
  - Tao: “the way”; *The Path of Least Resistance*; effortless effort (where yang & yin meet)
  - Relationship to martial arts
  - Traditional warrior principles of mental, emotional, physical and spiritual discipline
  - Explain meridian system, energy channels (nadis)
  - Chi: yang/yin (balance of assertive and receptive)

## VIII. WORKING WITH PRISONERS AND PRISON STAFF

### A. **Male Role Belief System** (*commonality between prisoners and male custody staff*)

The Male Role Belief System represents a learned male identity of what it means to be a man. It is a “macho” authority image derived from familial, social and/or cultural conditioning that reflects an attitude and belief system that justifies the use of force (i.e. violence) in the world, particularly by men. It is an image and a role of superiority that is projected to convince himself and those around him that he understands what is expected of him and knows how to perform. He is in control, and ready to protect or aggress no matter what the circumstances may be.

### B. Working with Prisoners

*“When we overcome our doubts and suspicions and approach each other with respect, there is much we can learn from each other.”* The Dalai Lama

- Generally respectful and appreciative
- Practicing kindness, patience, understanding and compassion with clear boundaries
- Social skills; relationship skills (*arrested development/adolescence*)
- Conditioned patterns of behavior
- Transference and counter-transference
- Over-familiarity; clear boundaries; personal disclosures
- Histories of addiction
- Living conditions (food, rest, clean air, health, well-being, etc.)
- Sexuality: present conditions and personal histories
- Undisciplined, poor habits impact level of commitment
- Importance of establishing predictability/routine
- Whistle

★ *Authenticity, equanimity, consistency, understanding and compassion are the keys to encouraging personal accountability, the desire to change and behavioral transformation in another.*

### **C. Working with Prison Custody and Administration**

- Cultural issues and training
- Professionalism and professional relationships with staff
- Adhering to protocol and regulations
- Attire
- Acknowledging role of custody (to assure safety)
- Equanimity (Us vs. Them)
- Environment: indifference, unpredictability of prison life, incidents, “expect the unexpected”
- Over-familiarity and things to look out for
- Materials and equipment clearances

### **IX. FREEING THE PRISONER INSIDE YOURSELF** *(personal development)*

*If you've come here to help me then you're wasting your time. But if you've come here because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.*” Lilla Watson, Aboriginal Elder

- Personally challenging (exposure to issues of prisoners, prison system, prison life)
- Understanding the opportunity for your own healing
- Your mental, emotional, physical and spiritual evolution is connected to your practice
- Cultivating a “commanding presence” and leadership qualities
- Presence (how you maintain and model) – ***stay in your body***
- Authenticity as a yogi/yogini (striving to live according to the *yamas* and *niyamas*)
- Integrity, consistency, walking your talk/doing your own work
  - Working on your own behavioral issues
  - Taking personal responsibility; being accountable
  - Letting go of the critical/judgmental mind
  - Addictions
  - Working with “triggers”
  - Addressing “unfinished business”
  - Self-forgiveness
- Unprocessed trauma and the impact of vicarious trauma
- Take care of yourself (physically & emotionally); assure for support and debriefing
- Class preparation

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**Bridging Body and Mind: Considerations for Trauma-Informed Yoga**  
*International Journal of Yoga Therapy – No. 28 (2018)*

- Deliberate engagement of the ANS (via breath, movement and meditation) may help individuals with trauma histories recover and rebalance their nervous system after exposure to a stressful circumstance or environment.
- Yoga is a mind-body practice that engages downregulating practices that emphasize activating the PSNS as well as upregulating or stimulating the SNS (*titration*).
- When the SNS is engaged for long periods an individual can become “stuck” in hyperarousal without any mechanism to dispel that energy.
- Individuals who suffer from trauma related symptoms might either benefit from or potentially be harmed by the mind-body practice of yoga depending upon the yoga practice in which they engage. Some of the more athletic yoga practices (Ashtanga, Power Yoga, Vinyasa Flow) that initiate and sustain a SNS response are geared toward inducing or sustaining hyperarousal and therefore are contraindicated for people with trauma symptoms.
- TIY emphasizes slower pacing, steady rhythm, stability and repetition techniques (e.g. mindfulness cues) to help students become more mindful of their internal sensations (*interoception*) and conscious of their breathing throughout the class. If an instructor’s pacing is too fast it does not facilitate mindful processing of the yogic experience.
- Diaphragmatic breathing, extended exhale and ujjayi pranayama (“ha” breath) are important for engaging the PNS.
- From a TIY perspective instructors should assume participants have “invisible injuries.” Either psychological suffering or physical pain students are dissociated from or not openly acknowledging. Therefore it is important to provide instruction regarding tuning into pain rather than pushing through it.



## **PYP Standards for Trauma Informed, Mindfulness Based Yoga Instruction**

- Attention to physical layout of room
- Centering Practice (introduce *anapanasati*)
- Extended exhale (body's release valve)
- Maximize benefits, minimize harm
- Mindful warm up and attention to bell curve of asana practice
- Employ titration principle easing into activation of arousal re. nervous system
- Teach from mat without moving around; no adjustments
- Establish simple asana routines that insure stability of practice and ease of replicating
- No poses with stress on cervical spine; caution regarding back, shoulders and knees
- Assure rhythmic movement to engage neural pathways and stimulate areas of brain
- Slow down and interject moments of stillness/no movement during asana practice
- Engage parasympathetic nervous system: extended exhale, simple inversions, ujjayi breathing, alternate nostril breathing
- Employ embodiment (interoception) as a principal focus of the entire practice
- "*The Body Keeps the Score*" introduce the concept of discharge through asana practice and consciously working to release discomfort and pain
- Address the importance of "building resilience" (recovery) as a result of the practice
- Teach "effortless effort" in asana practice
- Relate yoga practice to the Whole Person: mental, emotional and physical union/balance
- Explain engaging medial pre-frontal cortex for executive functioning, emotional regulation
- Educate how yoga strengthens the nervous system and vagal tone (the vagus nerve) and helps in developing emotional resiliency
- Stress the use of the body's Second Brain as fundamental to practice of yoga
- Assure all components of traditional yoga are included in the practice: meditation (centering), conscious breathing, movement and relaxation
- Introduce yang (assertive) and yin (receptive) theory of a balanced practice
- Engage participants; establish rapport – "Commanding Presence"

**WHOLE PERSON vs. only the Mind (DIAGRAM)**



**Mental – Thoughts (+)**

**Emotional – Feelings (-)**

**Physical – Sensations (?)**



**Most People  
Most of the time**



## YOGA NIDRA MONOLOGUE

As you settle into a resting position, make yourself 10% more comfortable than you already are. Make any adjustments needed to let go and completely relax. Open the senses, the ears to sound...eyes to shadow or light across the eyelids...the weight of the body on the surface you are resting upon...smell and taste...all of the senses open.

Feel the felt sense of your body, and your breath gently flowing in and out. Sense your mouth and jaw, noticing any tension you may be holding in your face, sensing your ears...eyes...feeling any holding or tension behind the eyes...sensing the whole head, back of the head and neck...shoulders and upper back. Notice what is present, no need to change your experience but being with it just as it is - thoughts coming and going, attention on sensation in the body.

Bringing attention to sensation in the left shoulder, take an inhalation, pausing at the top of the inhale and exhale sensing the entire left arm...inhaling and exhaling, sensing the left arm and hand...at the top of the next inhale, bring attention to the right shoulder, pausing at the top of the inhale and exhale sensing the entire right arm...inhaling and exhaling, sensing the entire right arm and hand...Now inhaling, bring attention to both shoulders, pause at the top of the inhale, and exhale sensing both arms and hands, the exhale flowing down the arms and out the fingertips. Just feeling the flow of the breath and both arms...

Feel the torso, the chest, back, belly, hips...bringing attention to the left hip, take an inhalation, pausing at the top of the inhale and exhale sensing the entire left leg...inhaling and exhaling, sensing the left leg and foot...at the top of the next inhale, bring attention to the right hip, pausing at the top of the inhale and exhale sensing the entire right leg...inhaling and exhaling, sensing the entire right leg and foot...Now inhaling, bring attention to both hips, pause at the top of the inhale, and exhale sensing both legs and feet, the exhale flowing down the legs through the soles of the feet. Just feeling the flow of the breath and both legs...

Now sense the entire body...legs, torso, arms and hands, head and neck, feeling the felt sense of the body and the space around the body, let go of controlling the breath and find the body breathing itself...

Take a moment and notice where/how you might be at war with yourself, struggling against yourself in some way...can you welcome your experience as it is, including any self judgments...and allow yourself (if it feels right) in this moment to stop the war, to drop the fighting, the struggle, and allow yourself to be just as you are, resting here...feeling again the felt sense of the body resting and the breath gently flowing in and out...

Experience just as it is. You, just as you are.... As you rest here, take a moment and visualize yourself as you go about the rest of your day, walking, eating, having conversations, going to bed...and picture yourself doing so from this place of letting go, how does it feel to imagine yourself moving through life from a place of ease and restfulness....Now slowly reorient to the felt sense of the body on the surface it's resting upon, the breath, senses open....wiggle the fingers and toes, bring the knees in to the chest, and roll over to the right side, resting here...at your own pace, coming to a seated position.

Blocked Plug-in

## Researchers find 96 percent of high-risk Denver inmates had traumatic brain injury

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

First Posted: March 09, 2015 - 1:40 pm

Last Updated: March 09, 2015 - 1:43 pm

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DENVER — Nearly every inmate in a high-risk unit at the downtown Denver jail had suffered a brain injury from a traumatic incident in their life — a far higher rate than the national average for inmates, researchers found.

A University of Denver team found 96 percent of the Denver inmates sustained the injury in a fight, shooting, car wreck or some other trauma, The Denver Post reported Monday (<http://tinyurl.com/mboy4ow>).

National statistics indicate 67 to 80 percent of jail and prison inmates have a traumatic brain injury. For the general population, the rate is 6 to 8.5 percent.

High-risk inmates differ from the general jail population because they're considered a danger to themselves and others. More than 90 percent of inmates in the Denver high-risk unit had mental illnesses and substance-abuse problems.

"They are tricky to treat, but with some easy tweaks and more surveillance, I think we could keep them afloat better," said Kim Gorgens, an associate professor in the University of Denver graduate school of psychology.

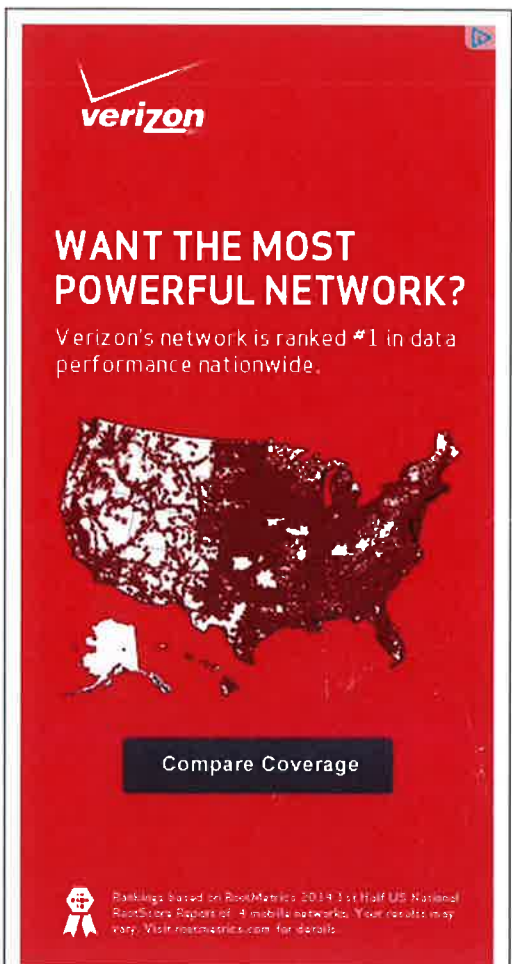
Gorgens' students began interviewing Denver inmates in 2013 and completed a second round of screenings in the summer of 2014.

Working with the Colorado Brain Injury Program, the researchers got two grants totaling about \$1.5 million to develop a jail-based treatment program.

The therapy focuses on helping inmates understand why it is hard for them to follow directions and why it's important to act immediately when officers ask them to put their hands up or come out of a cell.

They are encouraged to keep calendars, follow a routine and write things down.


The program also helps deputies understand the inmates, said Jennifer Gafford, a staff psychologist for the Denver County Sheriff's Department.



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**Sample Letter to Prison Administrator**

Dear

I appreciated the opportunity to speak with you by phone last week. I wanted to send you the following recap pertaining to our conversation about establishing a yoga program at your correctional facility.

As I mentioned, I am a certified yoga instructor with \_\_\_ years of experience teaching in the \_\_\_\_\_ area. I have completed a special training conducted by the Prison Yoga Project's founder, James Fox, who has been teaching yoga and meditation at San Quentin and other California and U.S. prisons since 2002 (<http://www.prisonyoga.org>). The Prison Yoga Project (PYP) has formed chapters in various locations throughout the U.S. and its program has been replicated in more than 275 jails and prisons in 26 states as well as in Europe, Mexico and Canada.

PYP's methodology focuses on the mental and physical health benefits of yoga for prisoners and its application to the important issues they face related to their rehabilitation, such as mental imbalances, addiction recovery, and impulse control. The training offers an evidence-based, trauma informed and mindfulness approach to teaching yoga and meditation. Research studies, some prisoner specific (see references below), have shown these practices to be effective with:

- Anxiety, stress, and depression
- Addiction recovery
- Hostility reduction
- Attention Deficit Disorder (A.D.D.)
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (P.T.S.D.)

Mindfulness-based practices are being increasingly applied for use in schools, hospitals, and mental health treatment facilities and have become a regular component U.S. federal government sponsored, treatment programs for returning combat veterans suffering from trauma-related issues such as anxiety, depression, addiction, and P.T.S.D. Research has also demonstrated that mindfulness practices such as yoga and meditation represent a real potential for lowering individuals' health care costs.

As we discussed, I propose volunteer teaching a weekly class at the prison. I would endeavor to have yoga mats and foam blocks provided for the program. Each participant would also receive PYP's instructional manual for prisoners a copy of which accompanies this letter. We could conduct an introductory pilot module of the program so that its application and effectiveness can be evaluated before establishing it as an ongoing program.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. I am available to discuss it further in person if you so desire.

Respectfully yours,

**Selected References:**

- Low Re-incarceration Rate Associated with Yoga and Meditation, *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*, No. 18 (2008)
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction in Massachusetts Correctional Facilities, *The Prison Journal* 2007, 87:254
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**NOTE: include as attachments your PYP Certificate, prisoner testimonials and recap of NCCD study.**

I  
Prone

12/16  
week  
pmed

BUD

BUD

Prod prod questionnaire  
to terms of use for \$5



# PVP Part 2 (1 of 2)

Contingency = give guidance  $\Rightarrow$  5 min max  
2 min silence circle

- Each breath some is
- " " " intention to let go & relax  
and anticipation of what may hold fear

- experience this moment

- Be open to the here & now

- Breathe deeply

- notice sensations - some pain, etc. acknowledged
- Just notice & witness  $\Rightarrow$  "I am here"
- Invite it all in being open + receptive  
incl. noise

- Breath supports + stabilizes  $\uparrow$  behavior &

as you hear - chime allow self to witness

hands to  $\Rightarrow$  knuckles  $\Rightarrow$  sternum

- give  $\Rightarrow$

sensations as you guide

Practical Context

$\uparrow$  behavior & self-regulation  
 $\Rightarrow$  mind = beautiful garden  
"terrible master"  
 $\Rightarrow$  into Buddha's  
Dali Lama:  $\Rightarrow$   
train yourself for  
wisdom

Observe  $\Rightarrow$  evaluate  $\Rightarrow$  stop judgement & be mindful

Anya = my old friend arrived, Du ck upon a jetty  
- behind your shadow

Mark = like  $\frac{1}{2}$  killed a queen

I'm not perfect & tell stories about it

Starts  $\Rightarrow$   $\Rightarrow$  on stomach

Don't hold back  $\Rightarrow$  be willing to make mistakes

Re-engage w/ body by slowing things down  $\Rightarrow$  Pacng (K) "hitting pump button."

Take stillness in the middle so you learn activation & deactivation: "Feel"  $\Delta$

gross body  $\Rightarrow$  subtle body

learn mindfulness when not on fire mat - on fire - denied from all

- yes in prison,  $\Delta$  but can  $\Delta$  how it's passed



## *In the Service of Life*

Rachel Naomi Remen, MD

In recent years the question *how can I help?* has become meaningful to many people. But perhaps there is a deeper question we might consider. Perhaps the real question is not *how can I help?* but *how can I serve?*

Serving is different from helping. Helping is based on inequality; it is not a relationship between equals. When you help you use your own strength to help those of lesser strength. If I'm attentive to what's going on inside of me when I'm helping, I find that I'm always helping someone who's not as strong as I am, who is needier than I am. People feel this inequality. When I help I am very aware of my own strength. But we don't serve with our strength, we serve with ourselves. We draw from all of our experiences. Our limitations serve, our wounds serve, even our darkness can serve. The wholeness in us serves the wholeness in others and the wholeness in life. Service is a relationship between equals.

Helping incurs debt. When you help someone they owe you one. But serving, like healing, is mutual. There is no debt. I am as served as the person I am serving. When I help I have a feeling of satisfaction. When I serve I have a feeling of gratitude. These are very different things.

Serving is also different from fixing. When I fix I perceive a person as broken, and their brokenness requires me to act. When I fix I do not see the wholeness in the other person. There is distance between ourselves and whatever or whomever we are fixing. Fixing is a form of judgment. All judgment creates distance, a disconnection, an experience of difference. We cannot serve at a distance. We can only serve that to which we are profoundly connected, that which we are willing to touch. This is Mother Teresa's basic message. We serve life not because it is broken but because it is holy.

*- most were awe*  
*we are broken as much as you*  
If helping is an experience of strength, fixing is an experience of mastery and expertise. Service, on the other hand, is an experience of mystery, surrender and awe. A server knows that he or she is being used and has a willingness to be used in the service of something greater, something essentially unknown. We fix and help many different things in our lifetimes, but when we serve we are always serving the same thing. Everyone who has ever served through the history of time serves the same thing. We are servers of the wholeness and mystery in life.

*knowing you selfless*  
The bottom line, of course, is that we can fix without serving. And we can help without serving. And we can serve without fixing or helping. I think I would go so far as to say that fixing and helping may often be the work of the ego, and service the work of the soul. They may look similar if you're watching from the outside, but the inner experience is different. The outcome is often different, too.

*± attached to outcome*  
*service gesture enough*  
Our service serves us as well as others. That which uses us strengthens us. Over time, fixing and helping are draining, depleting. Over time we burn out. Service is renewing. When we serve, our work itself will sustain us. Service rests on the basic premise that the nature of life is sacred, that life is a holy mystery which has an unknown purpose. When we serve, we know that we belong to life and to that purpose. When you help you see life as weak, when you fix, you see life as broken. When you serve, you see life as whole. From the perspective of service, we are all connected: All suffering is like my suffering and all joy is like my joy.

*to relax*  
*power*  
Reprinted from *Noetic Sciences Review*, Spring 1996

*suffering of medicine are all*