

## **Advanced Adaptive Holistic Yoga: Theory and Practice of Making Yoga Accessible**

### **Syllabus**

*Heather Freeman, PsyD, ERYT 500 and Christiane Brems, PhD, ABPP, ERYT500, C-IAYT*  
Dates TBA; 30 hours across two weekend retreat of two 7.5 hour-days each: S, S 9a – 5:30p

### ***Target Audience and Instructional Level***

This is an intermediate-level course geared to students in the YogaX YTT300 and the following audiences:

- Psychologists, psychiatrists, and other mental healthcare providers interested in bringing yoga principles and strategies into their clinical practice.
- Psychology, psychiatry, and other mental health-program students in graduate or medical programs interested in bringing yoga principles and strategies into their supervised clinical practice.
- Yoga teachers interested in offering yoga classes with sensitivity to mental health concerns, especially but not only in mental health care settings.
- Yoga therapists providing yoga interventions with concern for mental health, especially but not only in 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 one or both of the lead teachers, Heather Freeman and 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](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

### ***Instructors***

*Heather Freeman, PsyD, ERYT 500*

YogaX Program Manager

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More information at <https://profiles.stanford.edu/heather-freeman>

*Christiane Brems, PhD, ABPP, ERYT500, C-IAYT*

Clinical Professor and Director of YogaX

Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Stanford School of Medicine

More information at <https://profiles.stanford.edu/christiane-brems>

## *Training Content Summary*

This 30-hour advanced training helps yoga teachers and health professionals develop yoga skills that make a range of yoga practices optimally accessible to all students. It teaches principles and strategies for adapting physical practices, breathing practices, and interior practices to individual needs and histories of each student, regardless of health status, emotional needs, or other circumstances. All strategies taught honor equality and seek to reduce stigma. The basic premise underlying all of these practices is that it is important to teach classes in such a manner that students at various levels of participation feel fully included, not different, and able to express their needs and feel successful. The importance of helping students develop interoception and communication skills about their experiences in the moment is highlighted and exemplified across the various practices that are covered.

Participants learn adaptive skills across three primary yoga practices – physical form and movement, breathing, and interior skills (such as sense withdrawal, concentration, and meditation). As such, participants learn to develop principles, skills, and problem-solving related to the following applications of adaptive yoga:

- Use of props (such as blocks, straps, blankets, bolsters, and other tools) to help students find physical practices appropriate for their body
- Developing and guiding breathing practices that honor students' energetic, emotional, and nervous system needs
- Development of psychological and imagery practices that help students better understand and respond to the fluctuations of their minds
- Integration of yoga philosophy in all practices of yoga and emphasis on always practicing yoga with its ethical and lifestyle underpinnings in mind
- Designing flexible sequences that accommodate students with diverse needs
- Integrating cultural sensitivity and competence, including language skills, empowerment, collaboration, and interpersonal skills

### *Key Concepts*

- Adaptive holistic yoga is suitable for individuals of all body shapes, physical abilities, ages, emotional states, cognitive capacities, and demographics. Once a practice has been established with a qualified, skillful teacher, yoga can be engaged in by anyone, anywhere, anytime, at low cost.
- Adaptive holistic yoga sets a stage for shared learning, seeks to teach insights and skills that facilitate home practice, and is grounded in equality, inclusivity, collaboration, enthusiasm, creativity, and empowerment.
- Adaptive holistic yoga requires teachers to be open-hearted, open-minded, creative, fully present, authentic, and aligned with a commitment to ethical and purposeful living and a sense of responsibility as a teacher.
- Adaptive holistic yoga honors each student as an individual with unique and specific needs, while being focused on teaching yoga in integrative, interactive, empathic, and joyful group settings.
- Adaptive holistic yoga integrates a wide range of principles and strategies (categorized into lifestyle and values-related commitments, physical practices, breathing practices, and interior practices) that can be tailored to any student's presentation to enhance resilience, self-understanding, and wellbeing.

## *Learning Objectives*

1. Describe and use yoga props to adapt, vary postures to needs and skills of my students to create either greater ease or effort depending on students' needs.
  - Evaluation Method for Learning Objective 1
    - Define and provide examples of options of yoga props and their uses
    - Define and provide examples of creating greater ease in yoga postures
    - Define and provide examples of creating greater effort in yoga postures
2. Design and use breathing practices tailored to a student's current physical, emotional, and nervous system needs (i.e., up- versus down-regulation).
  - Evaluation Method for Learning Objective 2
    - Define and provide examples of creating greater ease in breathing postures
    - Define and provide examples of creating greater effort in breathing postures
    - Define and provide examples of human reactivity and the causes of emotional suffering as defined by yogic traditions
    - Define and provide examples of energizing breathing practices, their usage, and contraindications
    - Define and provide examples of calming breathing practices, their usage, and contraindications
    - Define and provide examples of balancing breathing practices, their usage, and contraindications
    - Explain and apply the different types of breathing practices (energizing/calming/balancing) to meet students' needs (according to habitual reactivity)
3. Create and use concentration and meditation practices to a student's current physical, emotional, and nervous system needs (i.e., up- versus down-regulation).
  - Evaluation Method for Learning Objective 3
    - Define and explain the difference between mental patterns (vrittis)
    - Discuss and apply useful and unuseful mental habits for students/clients/self
    - Define and explain the difference between mind states
    - Apply knowledge of mental patterns and mind states into teaching techniques related to concentration, mindfulness, and meditation practices
4. Develop and apply a yoga sequence that can be used with individuals of varying needs at the same time.
  - Evaluation Method for Learning Objective 4
    - Define intended population and be able to discuss teaching considerations related to symptomology presentation outlined on the koshas model
    - Develop a class including theme, sequence, and physical intention
    - Explain and provide a rationale for all choices (e.g., variations, props, etc.)
5. Describe and demonstrate language skills that allow for teaching individuals of varying needs at the same time.
  - Evaluation Method for Learning Objective 5
    - Describe and explain language and cue considerations for varying populations
    - Be able to apply language skills in practice-teaching scenarios

**Schedule and Continuing Education Hours by YA Category**

<b>Weekend One – Days 1 and 2 of the Training</b>								
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>TTP</b>	<b>TM</b>	<b>AP</b>	<b>YH</b>	<b>Prc</b>	<b>Spc</b>
<b>Day 1</b>	9a – 11a	Koshas/adaptive framework; sutra application (2.46)				2		2
	11a- 12p	Application of yoga for therapeutics			1			1
	1p – 4p	Body consciousness considerations; Physical adaptations (use of props)	3					3
	4p – 5:30p	Experiential exercise and homework (practice with props)					1.5	1.5
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>TTP</b>	<b>TM</b>	<b>AP</b>	<b>YH</b>	<b>Prc</b>	<b>Spc</b>
<b>Day 2</b>	9a – 11a	Koshas/adaptive framework review; sutra application (1.34)				2		2
	11a – 12p	Energetic/emotional consciousness considerations	1					1
	1p – 3p	Polyvagal/gunas framework and trauma informed principles	1	1				2
	3p – 4p	Energetic/emotional adaptations: breathwork; language and cuing		1				1
	4p – 5:30p	Experiential exercise and homework (practice with breathing practices)					1.5	1.5
<b>Weekend Two – Days 3 and 4 of the Training</b>								
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>TTP</b>	<b>TM</b>	<b>AP</b>	<b>YH</b>	<b>Prc</b>	<b>Spc</b>
<b>Day 3</b>	9a – 11a	Koshas/adaptive framework review; sutra application (1.2)				2		2
	11a – 12p	Mind consciousness/ psychological considerations	1					1
	1p – 2p	Causes of suffering and mental patterns in yoga				1		1
	2p – 4p	Psychological practices and adaptations (imagery, concentration, mindfulness)	2					2
	4p – 5:30p	Experiential exercise and homework					1.5	1.5
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>TTP</b>	<b>TM</b>	<b>AP</b>	<b>YH</b>	<b>Prc</b>	<b>Spc</b>
<b>Day 4</b>	9a – 12p	Koshas/adaptive framework review; sutra application (1.3); Intuition + bliss		1		2		3
	1p – 2p	Yamas and niyamas (ethical practices applied); mature emotions				1		1
	2p – 3p	Characteristics of a teacher; planning sequences; creativity		1				1
	3p – 4p	Building and sustaining community		1				1
	4p – 5:30p	Experiential exercise and debrief					1.5	1.5
<b>30 hours of YA CE or YTT 300 in the following categories:</b>			<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>30</b>

Notes: YA=Yoga Alliance; CE=Continuing Education

TTP=Techniques, Training, and Practice; TM=Teaching Methodology; AP=Anatomy and Physiology; YH=Yoga Humanities; Prc=Practicum; Spc=area of program specialization

## ***Provided Handouts***

Several handouts and the slide set for the workshop will be provided to registered and paid enrollees on the day of the workshop. These materials are provided with the understanding that students will not duplicate, distribute, or otherwise publicly use these materials without express permission and proper attribution and referencing.

Handouts to be provided include:

- *SANKALPA – Teaching with Intention*
- *Illustration of the Layers-of-Self (Koshas) Model*
- *The Eight Limbs of Yoga Briefly Defined*
- *Gunās as Fundamental Human Ways of Embodying Nature*
- *Interactions of the Kleshas and Vrittis*
- *Pathways of Sensory Processing Engaged in Integrated Yoga*
- *Principles of Trauma-Informed Yoga*
- *Guide to Observing and Assessing Yoga Professionals*
- *Slide Set and Video for the Training*

## ***Suggested Readings***

It is recommended that in preparation for the workshop you read all YogaX blogs, peruse YogaX webpage resources, and try out some of the offered free practices (asana, pranayama, meditation, and more) at [yogaXteam.com](http://yogaXteam.com) and on the YogaX Team YouTube channel.

It will be helpful to have familiarity with the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* prior to attendance (but it is not required). Many translations exist and you can choose any one. Several are available for free online (<http://www.swamij.com/yoga-sutras.htm> and <http://www.arlingtoncenter.org/Sanskrit-English.pdf>).

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

- Dana, D., & Porges, S. (2018). *Clinical applications of the polyvagal theory: The emergence of polyvagal-informed therapies*. New York: Norton.
- Feldman Barrett, L. (2017). *How emotions are made*. New York: Mariner.
- Heyman, J. (2019). *Accessible yoga: Poses and practices for every body*. Boulder: Shambala.
- Justice, L., Brems, C., & Ehlers, K. (2018). Bridging body and mind: Considerations for trauma-informed yoga. *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*, 28, 39-50.
- Parker, G. (2020). *Restorative yoga for ethnic and race-based stress and trauma*. London: Singing Dragon.
- Porges, S. W. (2017). *The pocket guide to the polyvagal theory: The transformative power of feeling safe*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
- Sullivan, M. B., Erb, M., Schmalzl, L., Moonaz, S., Taylor, J. N., & Porges, S. (2018). Yoga therapy and polyvagal theory: The convergence of traditional wisdom and contemporary neuroscience for self-regulation and resilience. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 12, 67-82.

## *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 have to 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.

