Consultation and Supervision of Yoga Service Providers in Healthcare

Syllabus

Christiane Brems, PhD, ABPP, ERYT500, C-IAYT
June 30 – September 29, 2023; 30 hours (Fridays 4 to 7 pm)

Target Audience and Instructional Level

This is an advanced-level course geared to experienced yoga services providers with concurrent healthcare credentials and/or interest in healthcare applications. Trainees will learn how to provide feedback, consultation, and supervision to beginning and intermediate yoga services providers who are learning to apply integrated holistic yoga principles in physical and mental healthcare settings. The course is aimed at individuals with already well-developed skills and applied experience in providing integrated holistic yoga services in healthcare settings who want to teach others how to do so in practical and applied 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 full-time 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/73d3c9e8ebb14214a60e11d8b08baba1.pdf
- YogaX has no commercial support for this event and there are no disclosable conflicts of interest.
- Zoom links for all didactic and experiential sessions are provided on the module’s private webpage.

Instructor

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
This course provides advanced yoga service providers with the learning necessary to serve as consultants or supervisors of yoga teachers who wish to become more integrated and holistic in their yoga teaching and services, particularly in healthcare settings.

Integrated holistic yoga offers a vision that honors the deep cultural tradition that dates yoga back thousands of years. It integrates modern neuroscience with ancient practices to demonstrate the profound wisdoms in the original teachings that we are relearning and rediscovering every day. Integrated holistic yoga embraces inclusiveness, access, diversity, health, wellbeing, and resilience for all. It is a practice of and for community; it honors interdependence and co-regulation. Integrated holistic yoga represents a return to yoga as it was traditionally practiced. Ancient yoga was physical only to prepare practitioners for the more important interior practices (such as concentration and meditation) and interpersonal applications of a thoughtful and deliberate code of life and discipline (Brems, et al., 2016; Freeman et al., 2017).

Modern integrated holistic yoga (as defined by Brems, 2022) is a practice that combines body, emotion, mind, spirit, and community through a comprehensive lifestyle with implications for individual and collective wellbeing (Feuerstein, 2013; Iyengar, 2005; White, 2007). It promotes self-compassion, introspection, and community that lead to insights that alter human physiology and anatomy, and – perhaps more importantly – emotions, cognitions, behaviors, and relationships. Integrated holistic yoga can be practiced by anyone who can breathe without assistance, almost anywhere, for little to no cost (Dittman & Freedman, 2009; Ross et al., 2013). Integrated holistic yoga motivates practitioners to adhere to the practice more so than a unidimensional posture practice (Dittman & Freedman, 2009) and is freed from Western media stereotypes that tend to limit who seeks access to yoga.

Given the benefits that can arise from integrated holistic yoga, it is important to develop systematic ways through which to impart its teaching principles and foundations to individuals who teach yoga, including yoga teachers who may have been trained in yoga systems that did not honor integrated holistic yoga model and principles. An essential aspect of such training is observation, consultation, and supervision of yoga teachers as they augment and refine their teaching skills to integrate this model into their instruction. This requirement has resulted in a need for advanced yoga service providers (preferably with concurrent healthcare credentials) who are already practiced in the integrated holistic model to learn how to provide effective and holistic consultation and supervision.

### Integrated Holistic Yoga – A Definition and Commitment

- **A practice of wholeness** – the layers of self, biopsychosociocultural context, interconnection, and community in all their complexity
- **A practice of integration** – the eight traditional practices (aka limbs) of yoga, four noble truths, science and soul, and their interdependence and coordination
- **A practice for everyone** – accessibility, inclusion, equity, engaged action, and personal as well collective empowerment
- **A practice of intentional lifestyle choices** – commitment to making the world a better place; living with intention
- **A practice with profound benefits** – understanding of health benefits, mental health benefits – via several mechanisms of change
Learning Objectives

Learning Objective #1

Identify, assess, and provide feedback about the presence of all aspects of integrated holistic yoga; namely, attention to all koshas – wholism; integration of all limbs of yoga – integration; considerations of accessibility – equity and inclusivity; clarity and continuity of intention and purpose in the practice – intentionality; and inclusion of psychoeducation about the risk and benefits of the offered yoga practice

Evaluation Method for Learning Objective #1

• assess and provide reinforcing and formative feedback about observed attention to all koshas – wholism
• assess and provide reinforcing and formative feedback about observed integration of all limbs of yoga – integration
• assess and provide reinforcing and formative feedback about observed considerations of accessibility – equity and inclusivity
• assess and provide reinforcing and formative feedback about observed clarity and continuity of intention and purpose in the practice – intentionality
• assess and provide reinforcing and formative feedback about observed inclusion of psychoeducation about the risk and benefits of the offered yoga practice

Learning Objective #2

Define, assess, and provide feedback about the overall sequencing arc of an integrated holistic yoga class; including, opening and intention setting, centering or breathing practice, warm up and preparation, peak sequence, cool-down or counter practice, inner practice and savasana, and closing and gratitude

Evaluation Method for Learning Objective #2

• observe a yoga class sequence to assess the presence of an integrated holistic yoga sequencing arc
• provide reinforcing and formative feedback about the arc of the observed yoga class
• provide feedback that integrates the teaching and application of how to develop and apply an arc within an individual class
• provide feedback that integrates the teaching and application of how to develop and apply an arc within an individual class and – if applicable – across an integrated holistic series

Learning Objective #3

Define, assess the presence of, and provide feedback about the expressed understanding of the components of teaching yoga with intention – the SANKALPA model; namely, Student variables, Aim or intention, New learning, Koshas, Applied psychology, Limbs of yoga, Pedagogy, and Affiliation and safety

Evaluation Method for Learning Objective #3

• observe the presence of all relevant aspects of the model and delineate which ones were not attended to but could or should have been
• provide feedback about aspects of the model that were applied, giving reinforcing and constructive (or formative) feedback
• provide feedback about missed aspects of the model that would have been relevant but were overlooked
Learning Objective #4

Demonstrate an understanding of buckling, bracing, and resilience and how to observe these concepts and how to provide feedback about them, including defining all three concepts and explain how they might interact and manifest in students and teachers in all koshas

Evaluation Method for Learning Objective #4

- observe and provide reinforcing and formative feedback about how buckling may manifest in teacher demonstrations, offers of variations, and – if applicable – hands-on adjustments
- observe and provide reinforcing and formative feedback about how bracing or gripping may manifest in teacher demonstrations, offers of variations, and – if applicable – hands-on adjustments
- observe and provide reinforcing and formative feedback about how resilience may manifest in teacher demonstrations, offers of variations, and – if applicable – hands-on adjustments

Learning Objective #5

Demonstrate an understanding of other important teaching strategies, including but not limited to, establishing relationships and environments of safety and trust, scaffolding approaches to teaching, balancing effort and ease as well as commitment or discipline and non-attachment or striving, working with lines of energy, cuing mindfulness, attunement, and awareness (the 4 -ceptions), embracing trauma sensitivity and informedness when relevant and appropriate, making skillful language choices, and making skillful choices about demonstration

Evaluation Method for Learning Objective #5

- observe the presence of all relevant teaching strategies and delineate which ones were not attended to but could or should have been
- provide feedback about relevant teaching strategies that were applied, giving reinforcing and constructive (or formative) feedback
- provide feedback about missed teaching strategies that would have been relevant but were overlooked

Schedule and Continuing Education Hours by IAYT Category

### Didactic Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>TTP</th>
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<th>AP</th>
<th>YH</th>
<th>Prc</th>
<th>Spc</th>
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<tr>
<td>F 6/30</td>
<td>4p – 6p</td>
<td>Principles of integrated holistic observation, consultation, and supervision</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>F 7/14</td>
<td>4p – 5p</td>
<td>Principles of feedback – the sandwich method</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 7/26</td>
<td>4p – 6p</td>
<td>Debrief of observation experiences and reflections on feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th 9/28</td>
<td>4p – 6p</td>
<td>Wrap-up and final debrief</td>
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<tr>
<td>various</td>
<td>See feedback schedule</td>
<td>9 Observation and feedback sessions – 2 to 3 hours each</td>
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<td>30 hours of YA CE or YTT300 in the following categories:</td>
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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
## Observation and Feedback Schedule

### Small Group 1 Mentor: Shari

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Homework</th>
<th>Jane</th>
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<th>Naomi</th>
<th>Sara</th>
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<td>14 Jul</td>
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<th>Koteha</th>
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<th>Khet</th>
<th>Adni</th>
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<th>Zoe</th>
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Materials To Be Provided

Several handouts and two manuals will be provided to registered and paid enrollees. 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:

- Content Manual for the Training
- Content Manual for the 200-Hour YTT
- Guide to Observing and Assessing Yoga Professionals
- Various additional handouts with summaries of yoga philosophy

“Being present doesn’t mean being in a blank or thoughtless state. It means not needing to escape from where we are. Being present brings contentment. We don’t need to look for a better thought, a better emotion, or a better place to be. When we operate from ignorance – when we are daydreaming, carried away by thought, and unaware of our true nature – we have no presence of mind. We don’t even know such a state exists.”

Dzigar Kongtrul

Prerequisites, Readings, and More

Prerequisites

- Completion of a 200-hour YTT and registration as a yoga teacher with Yoga Alliance
- Completion of, or concurrent enrollment, in a 300-hour YTT from a YA-registered yoga school
- Prior attendance of a YogaX training event (minimum of 6 hours)
- Successful screening interview with the lead instructor

Readings and Practices

Required Readings – Texts


Required Readings – 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/innerlimbs)
- [https://www.yogaxteam.com/blog/physicallimbs](https://www.yogaxteam.com/blog/physicallimbs)
- [https://www.yogaxteam.com/blog/lifestylelimbs](https://www.yogaxteam.com/blog/lifestylelimbs)
- [https://www.yogaxteam.com/blog/koshas](https://www.yogaxteam.com/blog/koshas)
- [https://www.yogaxteam.com/blog/who-can-do-yoga](https://www.yogaxteam.com/blog/who-can-do-yoga)
Additional Readings

The following readings may be helpful as you deepen your journey.


Recommended Personal Practice

It will be helpful to have cultivated a regular yoga practice for at least 3 years, but it is not required. Also, peruse YogaX webpage resources and try out and evaluate some of the offered free practices (asana, pranayama, meditation, and more) at yogaXteam.com and on the YogaX Team YouTube channel at youtube.com/c/yogaxteam. Observation of YogaX teachers and others may be particularly helpful in preparing for observation skills in this course and in translating observation into feedback that is reinforcing positive skills, supportive of ongoing skill development, and formative with regard to areas of teaching in need of improvement.

Requirements for Module Completion

Successful completion of the module is contingent on successful engagement in several assignments, summarized here and described in detail below:

- Attendance and participation in the didactic sessions
- Active presence for all observation and feedback sessions
- Adherence to the principles of observation, consultation, supervision, and feedback covered in the didactics
- Adherence to yoga ethics and life choices for purposeful living
Attendance and Participation in the Didactic Sessions

Attendance of all didactic sessions is required. Unavoidable absences need to be excused prior to the didactic session to be missed and make-up work will be assigned as appropriate (typically consisting of watching the video of missed class time and writing a brief reflection about the material). Most helpfully, at least 72 hours prior notice would be given, though it is understood that emergencies may not make this possible. Online didactic sessions will be recorded and, in case of unavoidable absences, can be made up by viewing the video before the next observation and feedback session that occurs after the missed didactic session.

Trainees are strongly encouraged to attend all didactic sessions in person whenever possible as participation is essential to the consolidation of didactic learning. It will be helpful to be prepared for each didactic session with questions about theory and application. Debriefing of observation and feedback session is encouraged and crucial to applying theory to practice.

Please review the YogaX Policy and Procedures Manual for more information about attendance (and other) policies.

Active Presence for All Observation and Feedback Sessions

Attendance of all observation and feedback (O&F) sessions is essential and required. Absences need to be excused at least 72 hours prior to the O&F session to be missed, as a replacement observer will need to be arranged. Make-up work for missed O&F sessions will be assigned as appropriate (typically consisting of watching the video of the missed O&F and writing a brief feedback summary for each trainee who taught a yoga class). We do not typically record O&F sessions; we will only do so if an observer has to miss a session.

Although another observer will cover your missed session, you will still be asked to view the session and provide feedback for the teachers. You will have one week to view the O&F video. Trainee feedback (via a scheduled session or in writing) has to be provided before that individual is scheduled to teach again (see the Observation and Feedback schedule for this information).

Adherence to Integrated Holistic Principles of Observation, Consultation, Supervision, and Feedback

A guide for class observations is appended to the syllabus. The content manual for the course provides additional necessary guidance for observation and feedback. It will be helpful and is highly recommended to read the entire manual prior to embarking on the live observation and feedback sessions. To summarize, observation focuses minimally on:

- the level of integration and holism in the yoga class
- the appropriateness and atmosphere of the physical space
- their personal response to the attended practice

Within these three categories shown in the handout, pay attention and frame feedback and comments related along the eight aspects of the SANKALPA teaching methodology spiderweb. Minimally explore and comment on the following:

- Was attention paid to the koshas?
- Were student needs and resources carefully considered throughout? Was equity, accessibility, and inclusion evident?
Were all 8 limbs integrated? Which were implicit and which were explicit? Which were clearly omitted?
Were mindfulness and awareness strategies integrated? How were the four -ceptions evidenced?
Were yoga philosophy or psychology and yoga ethics integrated? Was this implicit or explicit?
Was an intention set or a theme woven through the class?
Was yoga-related science addressed? How so?
Which practice principles were employed? How well was this accomplished? (see below)

Observe and comment on how teachers demonstrated an understanding of important teaching strategies, including but not limited to the following:

- establishing relationships and environments of safety and trust
- scaffolding approaches to teaching
- balancing effort and ease as well as commitment or discipline and non-attachment or striving
- working with lines of energy
- cuing mindfulness, attunement, and awareness (the 4 -ceptions)
- embracing trauma sensitivity and informedness when relevant and appropriate
- making skillful language choices
- making skillful choices about demonstration

Adherence to Yoga Ethics and Life Choices for Purposeful Living

In addition to the above, all trainees are assessed on whether they demonstrate yoga values in their interpersonal relationships as noted during didactic and O&F sessions. Most relevant is adherence to the ethics and lifestyle disciplines of yoga philosophy (Limbs 1 and 2). Participants evidence success if they demonstrate the behavioral expression of the yoga yamas and niyamas:

1. **Nonharming** – nonviolence and peacefulness toward self, other, and everything
2. **Truthfulness** – honesty with oneself and in all relationships and contexts to create authenticity and integrity in day-to-day life
3. **Non-stealing** – not taking what is not freely offered
4. **Moderation** – wise use of personal life energy
5. **Non-possessiveness** – not being greedy about possessions, relationships, actions, and other aspects of life
6. **Purity** – simplicity and authenticity in action, speech, and thought
7. **Contentment** – meeting every moment from a peaceful center that allows for discernment about how to take calm, appropriate action
8. **Disciplined use of energy** – leading an impassioned life of determined effort and engaged practice
9. **Self-reflection** – exploring personal reactions, habits, motivations, and intentions to guide toward self-knowledge, insight, and growth
10. **Devotion to a greater good** – creating meaning for self and others through wise discernment

*Striving to be flawless ... easily can turn into striving to be faultless, and excessive self-criticism in the service of seeking the good can become converted into sanctimony or arrogance.*

Robert Rosenbaum (1998, Zen and the Heart of Psychotherapy, p. 98)
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 preferrable), 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 maintain 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 is the reason for a particular shape or movement, an alignment question, or a more healthful way of doing something – someone else is likely to be pondering 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.