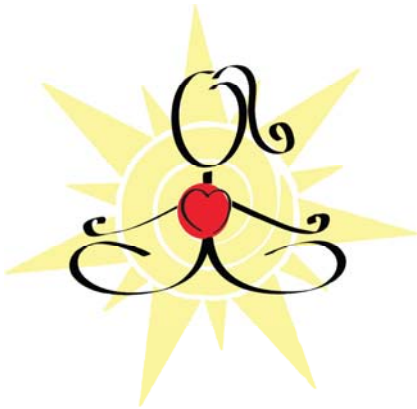


Yogis with Heart: Trauma Sensitive Yoga



What is Trauma Sensitive Yoga?

“Trauma is a disease of not being able to be present.”-Bessel van der Kolk, M.D.

All yogis have heart, but some yogis have had their hearts broken by events that they had no control over. Sometimes this psychological trauma can become chronic and complex. For these yogis, the practice of Yoga becomes a portrait in resiliency, strength, courage and self-compassion.

Trauma Sensitive Yoga provides an opportunity to practice being in the present moment, making mindful choices, taking effective action, and noticing the natural beginning and end of various yoga postures.

The language of choice, neutral environment, training and qualities of the yoga instructor, use of verbal rather than physical assists, and student composition of the class are all designed to provide a safe, comfortable space to learn the incredibly dynamic and self-empowering practice of yoga.

Trauma Sensitive Yoga was developed by Bessel van der Kolk, M.D. and Dave Emerson, E-RYT back in 2003 specifically for people who have experienced psychological trauma. From their website at www.traumacenter.org: “The main objectives are to help participants feel comfortable in their bodies, to learn self-regulation skills, and to improve their ability to direct attention away from ruminative thought processes.” I am honored to be one of the growing number of yoga therapists certified to teach Trauma Sensitive Yoga.

Here is a way to get to know Bessel van der Kolk's thinking behind treating trauma via somatic therapies. The first paper (<http://www.trauma-pages.com/a/vanderk4.php>) is a classic in the field of Trauma and sets the stage for the importance of engaging the body, the physical self, in the context of treatment.

The second paper (http://www.traumacenter.org/products/pdf_files/NYASF.pdf) is a very recent look at the neurobiology of trauma and also includes the first of its kind yoga study.

What to expect in a Trauma Sensitive Yoga class:

Participants will practice:

- Diaphragmatic breathing
- Easy movements that induce peacefulness
- Movements with options to practice effective use of strength

More specifically you can expect that:

- We offer a safe, supportive, non-judgmental environment
- The instructor is certified by the Yoga Alliance and in Trauma Sensitive Yoga, and is a member of the International Association of Yoga Therapists



- No experience is necessary. The classes are designed to be accessible to everybody, regardless of physical ability.
- The classes are separated by gender, with the exception of classes offered to veterans.
- All students must be in individual psychotherapy so that they have someone with whom they can process anything that might come up in class. That said, the protocol for these classes minimizes the possibility of triggering.
- The presentation of yoga is NOT religious
- We cultivate strength and flexibility but also encourage students to take care of themselves and not force through pain or strain
- We emphasize self-awareness and self-regulation by using yoga techniques such as deep, mindful breathing, a strong physical core and an upright, well supported spine
- The instructor will always be present at the front of the class, will not walk behind you and will not physically invade your space with physical assists
- We discourage competition and encourage each student's personal exploration of the postures and breathing practices for their own benefit
- Participants will not have to talk to other participants, making this class more comfortable for those individuals who find it difficult to be in groups.

Please Note: Prospective students must schedule a phone call with Crys Rivers for a screening/intake prior to the first class.

What class formats are available?



Group classes are offered on a "session" basis - students sign up for the entire 8-week session. There is no firm start date for the next session, but I plan to offer one this fall. (To ensure the privacy of the students, once a start date is set and the class is filled, the days and times will not be advertised.)

Private yoga sessions are available by appointment. Private yoga sessions are held at Namaste Yoga Center, located at 1003 High House Road, Suite 203, Cary, North Carolina 27513. The studio is tucked away in an office building right at the intersection of High House and Cary Parkway – look for the gas station and you have a landmark for the correct corner of the road!

If you would prefer another location for the private yoga session, please contact Crys Rivers by phone at (919) 357-8006 or by email at crys@groovyogi.com so that we may discuss the proposed venue.

Pilot Program: I am currently reviewing the possibility for an open enrollment, ongoing Trauma Sensitive Yoga class. If you are a student with interest, please email Crys Rivers, E-RYT at crys@groovyyogi.com with your thoughts on ideal times and locations.

If you are an organization interested in hosting a pilot program, please contact Crys Rivers, E-RYT by phone at (919) 357-8006 or by email at crys@groovyyogi.com with times that we might get together and discuss.

More Information



If you are a therapist and would like more information about what your client can expect, please contact Crys Rivers, E-RYT by phone at (919) 357-8006 or by email at crys@groovyyogi.com and I will be glad to answer any questions you have.

For all inquiries, please contact Crys Rivers, E-RYT at (919) 357-8006 or crys@groovyyogi.com.

For more information about Trauma Sensitive Yoga, go to the Trauma Center at JRI website (www.traumacenter.org).

For more information about Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), including articles by world-renowned experts in the field, go to the Trauma Information Pages website created by David Baldwin (www.trauma-pages.com).