

Global Consortium on Yoga Therapy Meeting Report

Date: May 12, 2019

Location: Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Time: 9:30am to 5:00pm

Number of Participants: 30 participants and 3 volunteer assistants from Japan

Report on Meeting Discussions

1. Brief explanation of the Global Consortium and self-introductions. See Annex 1 for Participation List.
2. Update on WHO and NY Accreditation in Higher Education meetings
In February 2019, the World Health Organization held meetings to draft benchmarks for training in yoga. In April 2019, a Global Yoga Accreditation Summit was held in New York on accreditation of yoga programs in higher education.
Global Consortium participants who attended the WHO meeting were Lisa Kaley-Isley, Vyasa Kalyanasundaram, John Kepner, and Keishin Kimura. Global Consortium participants at the NY meeting were: Lisa, John, and Lara Benusis. In Amsterdam, Lisa and Keishin both gave short presentations to provide some information and perspective on these two meetings, with input from Lara.
 - i) Lisa provided a brief explanation of both meetings. The WHO meeting discussed a variety of levels of yoga training and instruction, such as yoga teachers in healthcare, yoga therapists, and university degrees in yoga, with varying degrees of educational requirements. After the draft by the group of experts is finished, it will be distributed to 200 more people for feedback. After that, it will be finalized and published. One way the Global Consortium may be able to contribute is to recommend people who would be well qualified to input (for the 200 reviewers). Lisa asked for individuals who have experience in establishing training programs and standards, and who wish to be recommended as reviewers for the WHO process to let her know their interest. A list was circulated to sign up to express interest.
In regard to the NY meeting, a “New York-Bengaluru Statement” has been drafted. There was discussion on how yoga therapy can be integrated into university education, and the establishment of yoga universities.
 - ii) Keishin gave a presentation emphasizing the large numbers of people with various health issues going to yoga classes (not necessarily yoga therapy). He then reported on a recent study in Japan that showed yoga therapy techniques to be exceptionally effective in helping people with disorders in ordinary yoga classes improve their health. These are issues to be aware of when being involved in yoga/yoga therapy in health care and developing standards.

Discussion:

Q&A and discussion followed the two presentations. Some of the points included:

- Questions about the possible impact of WHO setting benchmarks for yoga teacher and therapist training and about the process being used to do this.
- the lack of a common understanding of what yoga therapy is, or what yoga therapists are
- the emphasis some countries place on protocols, which cannot necessarily be standardized in yoga therapy due to the need to look at individual conditions
- seeing yoga therapy as addressing physical, mental, psychological and spiritual aspects
- the need to know what not to do (contraindications)
- the need for employment opportunities for people who complete yoga therapist trainings

LUNCH BREAK

3. Group discussions and reporting back

We divided into 4 groups to discuss the “pillars” that make up the “house” called “Yoga Therapy.” Groups were asked to discuss, “if Yoga therapy were a house or building, what would be the pillars holding it up?” Two groups focused primarily on the definition of yoga therapy, while 2 groups focused primarily on the knowledge and skills needed in order to call oneself a “yoga therapist.” After the group discussions, all gathered together again to hear everyone’s reports.

This discussion was not to decide a common definition, but to share and exchange ideas, and see what we have in common or not. As we build on these discussions in the future, we hope to develop a common understanding of what is universal about yoga therapy, as well as what might be different due to cultural and national differences. See Annex 2 for details.

4. Logistics:

i. Structural issues of Global Consortium

a. Secretariat: Japan will continue to be the secretariat for the Global Consortium on Yoga Therapy for now. In the future, a rotating secretariat may be conceivable, but for now, to provide stability while the Global Consortium’s goals and roles are still being developed, the secretariat will remain in Japan.

b. Secretary General: Mori will step in to the Secretary General position, as Madoka is stepping down due to personal circumstances. Madoka will continue to assist with communication. The role of the Secretary General and the secretariat is one of facilitating and coordinating discussions and activities of the Global Consortium.

c. Participation requirements: During the discussion on changes in the Secretariat, with Madoka’s resignation as Secretary General, Ann Marie of Yoga Mate expressed interest in working as or with the Secretariat for the Global Consortium. This started some discussion on the appropriateness of a private business acting as secretariat, as well as private businesses being involved in the Global Consortium. No final decision was made, but the Secretariat provided clarification that we currently do not have any rules regarding who can and cannot attend the Global Consortium meetings.

d. Structure of Global Consortium: A proposal was made to form a working group to begin discussing an optimal structure for the Global Consortium. Some feel that it is better to wait until after the next meeting in Brazil to do this, in order to provide more time for organic growth. No final decision was made. (Considering the debate on who should/should not be invited to attend Global Consortium meetings, the Secretariat recommends the issue be taken to the original founding members, who have acted as the primary guides for the Consortium to date. Then the discussion can be continued at the meeting in Brazil and ideas from participants can be collected and discussed there.)

e. Finances: For the next meeting in Brazil, there will be a participation fee to attend the Global Consortium meeting to cover venue and other related costs.

5. Next Global Consortium on Yoga Therapy meeting

The next meeting will be in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Danilo gave a short presentation on plans and possible dates in early September for the Global Consortium meeting. We hope to have 2-days of meetings next year preceded by a 2-day yoga therapy conference. Danilo will notify everyone when the dates are finalized. He also mentioned the possibility of requesting some Global Consortium participants to offer workshops during the conference prior to the Global Consortium meeting, and that he would be in touch with those individuals in the near future. (*After the Amsterdam meeting, the dates for Sao Paulo were decided as Yoga Therapy Conference Sep 11-12, and Global Consortium on Yoga Therapy meeting Sep 13-14.*)

6. Global Yoga Therapy Day

This is an initiative started by Ann Marie of Yoga Mate. She invited everyone in the Global Consortium to participate. All profits to be used for yoga therapy research and promotion of yoga therapy internationally. There was some concern/confusion about how this relates to the International Yoga Therapy Day organized in Japan (last year and this year). They are 2 separate initiatives, but do not conflict. Members of the Japan Yoga Therapy Society is one of the sponsors for Global Yoga Therapy Day.

7. Asian Yoga Therapy Conference

Manoj explained that the Asian Yoga Therapy Association will hold their 4th conference on Sep 7-8 in Bali this year. All are welcome to attend.

8. Working groups:

The Sendai Declaration cited 4 Objectives for the Global Consortium on Yoga Therapy, namely 1) developing a theoretical framework for yoga therapy; 2) information sharing; 3) International cooperation for yoga therapy research; and 4) international cooperation to promote yoga therapy worldwide.

- 1) The small group discussions served as the discussion on theoretical frameworks.
- 2) There was a request for more frequent opportunities to exchange information and ideas. This might be possible on-line. More consideration needed about how this can be organized.
- 3) Marlysa has begun designing a research project to survey the situation of yoga therapy and yoga therapists around the world.
- 4)
 - a. Participants in the Global Consortium have been invited to participate in Yoga Mate's Global Yoga Therapy Day.
 - b. The Global Consortium will expand the website. Mori proposes that the four working groups could create their own page on the website to provide updates on their activities. Google translate may also be used for languages other than English.

ANNEX 1 Participant List

Founding Participants

Anneke Sips, Ms.	RN, C-IAYT. Founder, Network Yoga Therapy
Aryong Choi-Hantke, Ms.	Founder, Institute of Body and Mind
Danilo Forghieri Santaella, Mr.	Yoga Professor and Head of Research, CEPEUSP (Sports Center of Univeristy of Sao Paulo)
Felicity Molloy, Ms.	PhD MEd Dip Remedial Massage. Education Advisor (Mixed Mode). Wellpark College of Natural Therapies
Francois Lorin, Mr.	C0-founder, Institut Franais de Yoga. Vice-President, European Union of Yoga.
Hiroimi Mori, Mr.	Secretary General, Japan Yoga Therapy Society
Keishin Kimura, Mr.	President, Japan Yoga Therapy Society. Vice President, AYTA.
Lara Benusis, Ms.	EdM, Ma, C-IAYT, E-RYT500. Pre-doctoral student at Columbia University
Leigh Blashki, Mr.	C-IAYT, Cert iRest Teacher & Supervisor E-RYT-500, C-IAYT. Board Member, Yogacampus Yoga Therapy Diploma Course; IAYT Accreditation Committee member, Founder European Yoga Therapy Association.
Lisa Kaley-Isley, Ph.D.	Secretariat, Global Consortium on Yoga Therapy
Madoka Chase Onizuka, Ms.	Vyasa Yoga Singapore
Manoj Thakur, Mr.	PT, C-IAYT. Assistant Professor, Maryland University of Integrative Health
Marlysa Sullivan, Ms.	Chairman and Spiritual Founder, Yoga Bharati
NV Raghuram, Professor	YBT Dip, C-IAYT. Chair, British Council for Yoga Therapy
Penny Roberts, Ms.	

New Participants

Ana Gema Hayes, Ms.	Director, Associação Europeia de Terapias Orientais (A.E.T.O.) (Portugal)
André Riehl, Mr.	President of French Fédération des Yoga Traditionnels
Ann Marie, Ms.	Founder, YogaMate (Australia)
Barbara Dancer, Ms.	Committee member, British Council for Yoga Therapy
Benedetta Schiavetti, Ms.	Founder, Yoga in Healthcare (Belgium)
Christoph Garner, Dr.	KWA-Klinik Stift Rottal Bad Griesbach Germany
Heather Mason, Ms.	Yoga in Healthcare Alliance
Holle Black, Ms.	Centering Youth, Co-Founder, Director (USA)
Irina Simanova, Ms.	Network Yoga Therapy
Ruchica Patni, Ms.	Vyasa Singapore
Stephanie Lopez, Ms.	iRest / IAYT (certification committee)
Stefan Ilchev, M.D.	Member of the Board, Bulgarian Yoga Federation
Susan Tebb, Ms.	Member of the Board, IAYT
Tina Dombernowsky, Ms.	Yoga Therapist and RN at Therapy Yoga (Denmark)
Willemijn Noordhoff, Ms.	M.D., Psychiatry resident, yoga therapist, member of Network Yoga Therapy

ANNEX 2 Summaries of Small Group Discussions

Using the metaphor of yoga therapy as a house, each group discussed what they saw as the “pillars” of yoga therapy. After the discussions, it was decided that one reporter from each group would participate in an on-line meeting at a later date to sum up the discussions from each group and to examine the content for similarities and differences. The reporters were:

Group 1: Ann Marie Johnston

Group 2: Madoka Chase Onizuka

Group 3: Leigh Blashki

Group 4: Irina Sheftel

The result of the on-line summing-up meeting is as below:

Group 1:

We looked at the WHO as well as the current definitions as defined by Yoga Therapy Association around the world; and we then identified the components of what make Yoga Therapy different from other modalities.

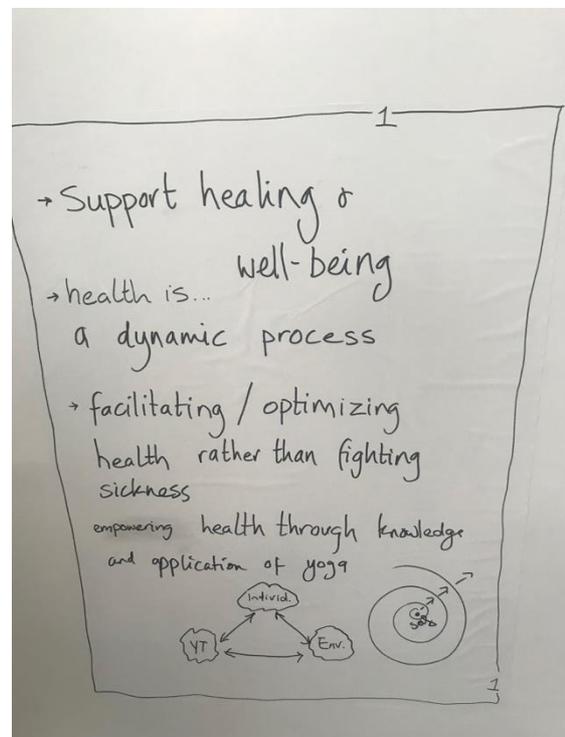
There was some discussion around creating a definition as understood by Yoga Therapists vs. a definition that can be understood by the world around us (the public / the people we are trying to help).

WHO – definition of Health: "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

- Helping individuals move towards optimal health
- Using yogic tools to help individuals move towards a state of physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being
- Self empowerment / agency
- Coming back to self / health - A dynamic process; self working on self
- Reducing suffering
- Health and healing power is within us – and as we move away from our self is when it manifests in sickness. Yoga helps bring us back to our self

Using Yoga’ principles and practices to help people come back to wholeness (Self)

- Support healing and well-being
- Health is a dynamic process
- Facilitating / optimizing health rather than fighting sickness
- **Empowering health** through knowledge and application of Yoga
- **Therapeutic Relationship**



Group 2:

We looked at different definitions of Yoga Therapy in different countries/organizations (Brazil, Denmark, France, IAYT, Japan, Korea, Portugal, Singapore).

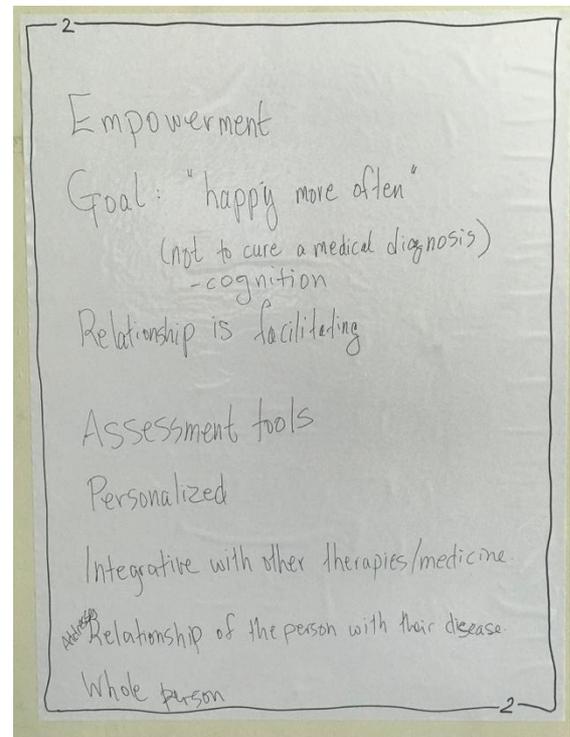
Only IAYT had a published working definition. We discussed various topics around what we saw as key elements that would be required to call something “Yoga Therapy.”

A few interesting opinions regarding this were:

1. It would be useful to have a working definition by an international body to help give the field credibility. In Denmark, it is often necessary to explain what yoga therapy is *not*, and sometimes “Personalized practice tailored to specific conditions” is used instead of the phrase “Yoga therapy.”
2. In France it is against the law to use the term “therapy” for yoga therapy, so there are legal issues to be aware of.
3. In Brazil, yoga has been included in national health policies, but only on paper. While yoga has been put into clinical care, it has not been called “therapy” yet.

Other points regarding what is necessary to call a practice “Yoga Therapy”:

- **Empowerment** of clients by educating them on how to use the tools of Yoga
- **Goal of Yoga Therapy** –
 - It is not to cure a medical diagnosis, but looks at the person’s relationship with “the problem.”
 - Autonomy and well-being
 - It goes beyond addressing illness
 - To examine and address the cognitive issues that create stress leading to manifestation of physical symptoms (medical diagnosis are often symptoms of a deeper-seeded illness of avidya)
 - Relief of suffering/growth in well-being
 - Prevention better than the cure
 - To be “happy more often”
- **Relationship** between therapist and client is facilitation
- It is a mind-body approach
- Yoga-based Assessment tools
- Scope of Practice is important
- **Personalized**
- **Addresses spiritual aspects (especially with terminal/hospice care)**
- Integrative with other therapies/medicine
- Addresses the relationship of the person with their disease
- **Individualized** and addresses the whole person



Group 3:

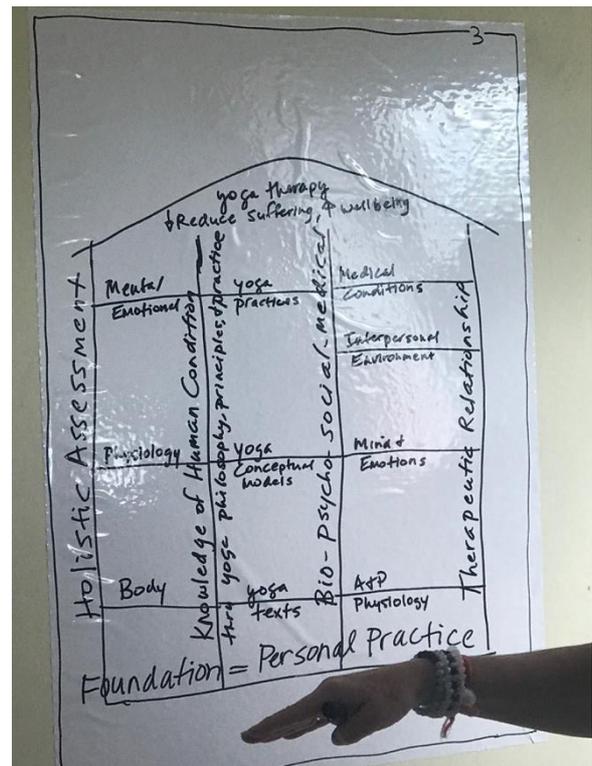
The intention of this group was to articulate what is regarded as the most important sets of skills and knowledge to develop a competent yoga therapist.

The bullet points represent core competencies of study that would be vital to develop those skills and knowledge. These points are broad headings and are not intended to indicate the depth or breadth required.

The metaphor of a building was used to help indicate certain key elements.

*There was some discussion in our group about whether or not to use the word 'medical'

- **Foundation** = Personal practice - all yoga therapy is founded upon the personal practice of the therapist and the practices to be undertaken by the student/client
- **Pillars:**
 - **Holistic assessment** (using the yoga framework, but also informed by contemporary health-science approaches as appropriate)
 - Body
 - Physiology
 - Mental / Emotional
 - Knowledge of human conditions through Yoga philosophy, principles and practices
 - Yoga Texts
 - Yoga conceptual models
 - Yoga practices
 - Bio, psycho social medical
 - A&P Physiology
 - Mind body connection
 - Interpersonal Environment
 - Medical Conditions
 - **Therapeutic Relationship**
 - Yoga Therapy – **reduction of suffering, increased well-being**

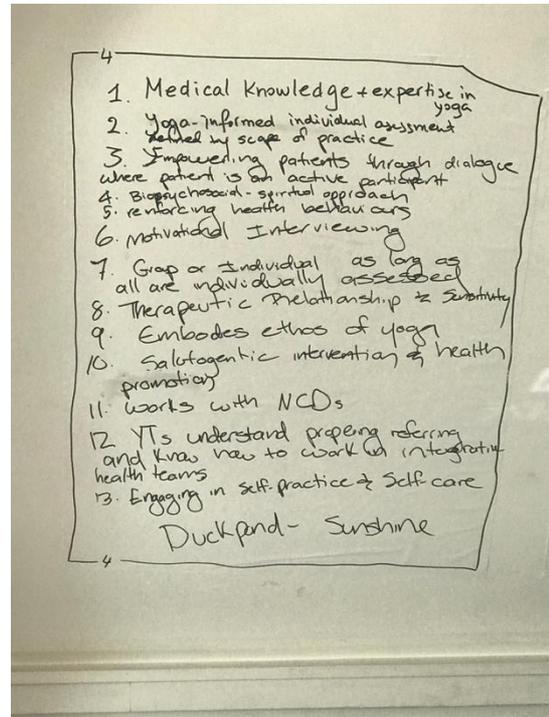


Group 4:

We worked on the list of competencies but also the components of Yoga Therapy that makes this therapeutic intervention different from other modalities.

We also talked about the scope of practice and where Yoga Therapy can be applied (i.e., when we say working with non-communicable diseases) and specialisation of yoga therapists.

- Medical knowledge + expertise in Yoga
- Yoga informed **individual assessment**
- **Empowering** patients through dialogue where patient is an active participant
- Biopsychosocial spiritual approach
- Reinforcing health behaviours
- Motivational interviewing
- Group or individual as long as all are **individually assessed**
- **Therapeutic relationship** & sensitivity
- Embodies ethos of yoga
- Salutogenetic intervention & health promotion
- Works with NCDs (non-communicable diseases)
- YT's understand proper referring and know how to work in integrative health teams
- Engaging in self-practice & self-care



Similarities (common themes) between the above 4 groups:

Key common themes

(This is not an exhaustive list of all of the skills /knowledge and definitions; but rather a thread of commonalities amongst the four groups. The Yellow = definitions; Blue = Skills; Green = both)

Therapeutic Relationship

- Empowerment / Empowering individuals / patients
 - Individual assessments
 - Personalized Approach
- Health / Promoting (optimizing) health (well-being)/ Salutogenesis
 - Not out to cure medical diagnosis
 - The student/client is an **active** participant in the therapy
 - Personal practice & Self-care as priority for the Therapist
 - Bio-psycho-social-spiritual knowledge
 - Goal = reduction of suffering / increasing well-being
 - Grounded in the philosophies and principles of Yoga

Definition (including Goals)

- Goal = reduction of suffering / increasing well-being (not out to cure medical diagnoses)
 - Grounded in the philosophies and principles of Yoga
- Health / Promoting (optimizing) health (well-being)/ Salutogenesis
 - Therapeutic Relationship
 - Empowerment / Empowering individuals / patients
 - Individual assessments
 - Personalized approach
 - The student/client is an **active** participant in the therapy

Skills and Knowledge for Yoga Therapists

- Personal practice & Self-care as priority for the Therapist
 - Bio-psycho-social-spiritual knowledge
 - Not out to cure medical diagnosis
- Knowledge to conduct individual assessments (based on Yoga philosophy and principles)

Definitions that currently exist and that came up in the small group discussions:

BCYT

Yoga Therapy is **Yoga** where there is a specific need or needs. **Yoga Therapy** views the person as a whole; an integrated system of mind, body, emotional and spiritual aspects.

AAYT

What is Yoga Therapy?

Yoga Therapy empowers and supports individuals to manage their own health using the principles of Yoga and applying a range of Yoga practices developed within a professional therapeutic relationship.

Ill health and chronic injury are often compounded by multiple contributing factors. For this reason Yoga Therapy engages in an holistic approach to assisting an individual's health, and will usually encompass the wellbeing of the whole person rather than focusing on a single condition.

IAYT

Yoga therapy is the process of empowering individuals to progress toward improved health and well-being through the application of the teachings and practices of Yoga.

<https://www.iayt.org/page/ContemporaryDefiniti>

Already published categories of competencies (skills and knowledge required to be a competent yoga therapist)

Current published categories:

IAYT, AAYT and Yoga Australia (all have virtually the same categories)

1. Yoga Foundations:
 - Knowledge of yoga teachings and philosophies
 - Knowledge of yoga and the mind
 - Knowledge of frameworks of health and disease
2. Biomedical and psychological foundations:
 - Knowledge of anatomy and physiology
 - Additional biomedical knowledge (eg terminology)
 - Basic knowledge of mental health and psychological concepts
 - Familiarity with concepts of human development and social structure
 - Knowledge of body mind integration
3. Yoga therapy tools and therapeutic skills
 - Knowledge of yoga therapy tools (practices etc)
 - Knowledge of principles of therapeutic relationship

- Knowledge of principles and skills for educating clients/students
- Knowledge of principles and skills for working with groups

4. Practicum

- Demonstrated ability to apply knowledge provide the yoga therapy, both in classroom setting and extensive, supervised practicum (this category represents a large part of the required training)

5. Professional practice

- Knowledge of ethics related to the practice of yoga therapy
- Basic knowledge of regulatory and business issues related to the practice of yoga therapy
- Knowledge of developing relationships with peers, mentors and yoga therapy organizations
- Knowledge of role of personal practice and professional development