

## British Wheel of Yoga Teacher Personal Development Module (30 hours)

### **“A Therapeutic Approach to Cancer Recovery”**

#### ***A practical application of yoga, mindfulness and self compassion***

#### **Course information**

For many a cancer diagnosis is a call for attention and an opportunity to reassess lives and priorities: the illness becomes a catalyst for healing, spiritual growth and transformation. Yoga, mindfulness and self-compassion practises can play a significant role in this transformative healing process, and those who share their knowledge of yoga with those who are going through it can help them move forward from this profoundly critical point in their lives to wherever their path may lead them.

This personal development module will provide insight into the experience of cancer, and into why people who have cancer come to yoga. We will look at the ways in which a yoga practice can support the person through the experience of cancer, physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. The course will consider the powerful and potentially overwhelming emotions a life-changing illness gives rise to; and the ways in which yoga practice can help people to acknowledge, accept, process, and ultimately release these emotions making the energy that has been held in them more available for healing.

The course days will be a mix of practical sessions featuring asana postures, breathing exercises, Yoga Nidra and meditation, talks and group discussions in which all are invited to participate whether teachers or therapists working with people living with cancer, those undergoing cancer treatments or recovering from cancer treatments, or perhaps someone who has lost a loved one to cancer. The approach offered on this course also includes a range of self-compassion and mindfulness practices.

#### **Kari Knight**

Kari trained with the British Wheel of Yoga under Viniyoga teacher Margaret Woodley, completing my 500-hour diploma in 2004. The breath-centred practice of the Viniyoga tradition has stayed strong in her teaching style which is also influenced by the teachings of Vanda Scaravelli and Insight founder Sarah Powers. Further training with Julie Friedeberger ‘Teaching Yoga to those Living with Cancer’ in 2010 led to teaching in this field, hosting the yoga programme at Maggie’s cancer charity in Cambridge for many years until the pandemic. Further training in the ‘Therapeutic Application of Mindfulness and Compassion’ with Mindfulness UK has brought more insights into how to support the individual physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually whilst undergoing a cancer diagnosis. Kari is a Diploma Course Tutor for the British Wheel of Yoga, qualifying in 2020, and since 2011 has regularly offered BWY Foundation courses 1 & 2, community

teaching, workshops and retreats in Sweden. This cancer module has been running since 2019 and moved to a successful online format during the pandemic.

**The aims of the course are to:**

1. explore the ways in which yoga can support and nurture people who have cancer in their efforts to cope with their disease and their treatment; and to consider how yoga can contribute generally to recovery and healing for those facing a life-challenging illness or for those involved in the difficulties surrounding cancer whether a carer or worker.
2. encourage appreciation of the effectiveness and power of simple movement, breathing, relaxation and meditation techniques.
3. introduce students to mindfulness and self-compassion practices which have proved useful for those undergoing a cancer diagnosis, particularly relating to the stress surrounding pain.
4. offer insights into the potentially overwhelming emotions a life-changing illness brings with it, and to examine the ways in which yoga can help us to acknowledge, accept, and process these emotions.
5. examine the lymphatic system and the extra cellular matrix and consider how we can keep our cell community healthy, happy and well coordinated in an effort to support the immune system and prevent cancer or the recurrence of cancer.
6. develop practices for home use over the study period with guidance and personal considerations. Some recordings of the practices will be available as audio files.

**The learning outcomes of the course**

By the end of this course the student will have :

1. a deeper trust in the role yoga, mindfulness and self-compassion practices can play in the healing process.
2. appreciate the profound physical and emotional changes, and the spiritual transformation, that a life-changing disease can bring about.
3. broadened their application and understanding of mindfulness and self-compassion practices and will find these useful tools for either teaching to others or for personal development.
4. practised a range of simple movement, breathing, relaxation and meditation techniques. Having experienced their effectiveness and power over a period of several months, you will have tools to help others, and yourself, through serious illness or any other major challenge.

5. gained knowledge relating to the importance of movement for the lymphatic system and the surrounding fluid nature of the extra cellular matrix and its role in the healing process.

## **Course content**

Each of the six course meetings will be a mixture of practical work, seated practices, talks and group discussion (sometimes in breakout rooms). Each aspect of yoga has its part to play in the overall healing process, and the specific ways in which each can be of help will be explored. Here is a summary of the practical content of the course:

### **Simple movement**

The focus will be on simple practices that are nurturing, calming and energising, and that help to renew the connection with and care for the body.

### **Breathing exercises**

Breath awareness and breath-movement co-ordination are at the heart of all yoga practice. Simple breathing exercises encourage healthy respiration and optimum performance of the organs and systems of the body. These simple practices replenish energy, relieve anxiety and stress, and restore balance, calm and inner harmony.

### **Meditation**

Cancer gives rise to painful thoughts and strong emotions: anxiety, terror, despair, anger and grief, to name only the most obvious. These feelings are natural, but because they can be so distressing, so overwhelming, they may be repressed. A breath-awareness meditation will be practised, in which thoughts and emotions are allowed to surface into consciousness so that they can be observed, acknowledged, and accepted; and ultimately let go of so that the energy trapped in holding them down can be released for healing.

### **Mindfulness and self-compassion**

Practices can be applied in every day situations to create vairagya, the necessary detachment, in order to reassess and respond to our needs. Discovering the duality of compassion and detachment we can find a loving connection with all beings and share in the suffering and compassion.

### **Lymphatic system and the extra cellular matrix**

At a cellular level can we encourage an immune system to be healthier, happier and well co-ordinated? The lymphatic system and the cellular matrix (an area of recent scientific study only in the last fifteen years), provide insight into how we can keep the fluid body efficient as it deals with changes in cellular activity which may lead to cancer.

## **Relaxation and Yoga Nidra**

Relaxation techniques relieve the anxiety and stress that depress immune function and creates the conditions that enhance it. Yoga Nidra, a structured practice of the Satyananda tradition, combines deep relaxation with visualisation and is a profoundly healing practice that can bring about transformation on a deep level. A group of key relaxation techniques combined with Yoga Nidra will support those coping with a life-changing illness.

## **Certification**

On successful completion of the course, students will be issued with an electronic certificate by the British Wheel of Yoga. There are no written assignments with this course and certification is based on a minimum attendance of 80% of the study hours. The study hours contained in this course are 30 guided learning hours with the tutor live online. Recordings of sessions will be available should you miss a session. If catching up with a recording, evidence of study is required by providing a summary of the learning or your notes.

## **Dates, time, and venue:**

Introductory session pre-recorded (1 hour).

## **Zoom**

08.30-13.30 Sundays

2024: 10th November 2024 proceeding 24th November, 8th December, 5th and 19th January 2025, ends 2nd February.

## **Fees**

The tutor fee for the course is £425. A deposit of £125 will be due upon your acceptance, which is fully refundable should you wish to withdraw, and the remaining fee is payable 6 weeks prior to the start of the course or can be paid in four instalments of £100 from the months of November to February. The only additional fee is the BWY registration fee payable which is £30. For those who are not current members of the BWY, a guest membership of £10 is available for the duration of the module. If you are under financial difficulty please enquire about concessionary rates.

## **Refund Policy**

If a student cancels within two weeks of the start date it is only reasonable that the deposit may be retained if a replacement student cannot be found. Once a student has

started the course, course fees are non-refundable and still need to be paid in full should a student subsequently withdraw.

### **Application procedure**

Please complete and return the application electronically to the tutor Kari Knight via email. Deposit and course fee payments can be made via BACs.

### **Complaints procedure modular courses**

In the event of a complaint being raised about the content or a tutor on a BWY modular course, in the first instance, it is desirable that the complainant raise the matter with the tutor and hopefully the matter can be resolved at this level.

If this is not possible, or this has been tried to no avail, the matter should be brought to the attention of the BWY Modules Officer, in writing. The Modules Officer will mediate in consultation with the Education Committee Chair. The complainant will be informed of the decision taken and any measures decided upon as soon as possible.

Written records of all data and correspondence involved in the complaint will be retained by the Modules Officer. The BWY Complaints Policy is available on the website [www.bwy.org.uk](http://www.bwy.org.uk).

### **For an application form please contact the tutor:**

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