

# Integrative Healing Group

For Adult Women who are Survivors of Sexual Abuse

An innovative 10-week support group serving and empowering survivors through the healing arts of yoga, music, and visual art



## **Group Format**

<i>Length</i>	10 sessions, 2.5 hours each
<i>Facilitators</i>	Therapist / Counselor (experience with adult survivors of sexual abuse) Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Teacher
<i>Group Components</i>	Support Group (psychoeducation and counseling) Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Practice Expression through Art Musical Expression through Mantra
<i>Participants</i>	6-8 Adult Survivors of Sexual Abuse
<i>Supplies</i>	Agency Forms and Health History Forms (Yoga Teacher should supply) Table Top Easel Pad and Markers <i>Emotional Yoga</i> by Bija Bennett OR Participant Workbook (1 copy per participant) Journals (1 per participant) Folders (1 per participant) Symptom Measure (3 per participant) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ACQ and/or</li><li>• PCL – 5 and MAIA</li></ul> Pens / Pencils Participant Handouts Yoga mats and props for participants Tissues Gemstones (1 per participant) – flat and smooth, easy to carry Quote Cards Index Cards – What worked, what didn't? First and Last Session: Canvas or Canvas Paper Acrylic Paints

Paint Brushes

Cups and Water (to rinse brushes)

Palettes or Palette Paper

Participant Survey

*Session Topics*

Session 1 – Introduction

Session 2 – Allowance / Intention

Session 3 – Allegiance / Safety

Session 4 – Will and Power / Mindfulness

Session 5 – Love / Boundaries

Session 6 – Harmony / Balance

Session 7 – Knowledge / Connection

Session 8 – Wisdom / Hope

Session 9 – Synergy / Integration

Session 10 – Closing

*Addition Prep.*

Print out information on the meaning/properties of each gemstone/crystal

Determine what you will use for the healing ritual. It should involve the participants' stones. Create a list of supplies needed.

Determine what you will use for the closing ceremony. It should involve the participants' stones. Create a list of supplies needed.

## Session Descriptions

<b>Session 1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	Welcome and Review of Group Format Read and Reflect on Quote Group Introduction and Ice Breaker Development of Community Agreements Healing from Sexual Abuse...Why Yoga? Administer Pre-Intervention Symptom Measure(s) Homework for Next Week Introduction to Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Pre-Intervention Art Expression Activity Brief Check In
<b>Session 2</b>	<b>Allowance <i>Intention</i></b>	Brief Check In Read and Reflect on Quote Review and Discuss Homework Group Discussion on Chapter in <i>Emotional Yoga</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Allowing yourself to connect with your feelings</li><li>- Telling your truth / creating space for healing</li></ul> Homework for Next Week Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Review Yamas</li></ul> Brief Check In
<b>Session 3</b>	<b>Allegiance <i>Safety</i></b>	Brief Check In Read and Reflect on Quote Review and Discuss Homework Group Discussion on Chapter in <i>Emotional Yoga</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Allegiance</li><li>- Honoring yourself and making a commitment to healing</li></ul> Homework for Next Week Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Review Niyamas</li></ul> Brief Check In
<b>Session 4</b>	<b>Will &amp; Power <i>Mindfulness</i></b>	Brief Check In Read and Reflect on Quote Review and Discuss Homework Group Discussion on Chapter in <i>Emotional Yoga</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Strengthening and rebuilding your will and power (how abuse affects will and power)</li><li>- Cooperating within</li><li>- Leaning into your emotions/moving through</li></ul> Homework for Next Week Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Practice Brief Check In

<b>Session 5</b>	<b>Love</b> <i>Boundaries</i>	<p>Brief Check In  Read and Reflect on Quote  Review and Discuss Homework  Group Discussion on Chapter in <i>Emotional Yoga</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discerning the differences</li> <li>- Honoring the self</li> <li>- Connecting to and opening your heart</li> <li>- Breathing</li> </ul> <p>Homework for Next Week  Administer Mid-Intervention Symptom Measure(s)  Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Practice  Brief Check In</p>
<b>Session 6</b>	<b>Harmony</b> <i>Balance</i>	<p>Brief Check In  Read and Reflect on Quote  Review and Discuss Homework  Group Discussion on Chapter in <i>Emotional Yoga</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Harmony</li> <li>- Directing your senses, developing perspective</li> <li>- Be Still and Know</li> </ul> <p>Homework for Next Week  Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Practice  Brief Check In</p>
<b>Session 7</b>	<b>Knowledge</b> <i>Connection</i>	<p>Brief Check In  Read and Reflect on Quote  Review and Discuss Homework  Group Discussion on Chapter in <i>Emotional Yoga</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Remembering the past / Building connections</li> <li>- Acknowledging and releasing negative beliefs</li> <li>- Self talk and building inner strength</li> </ul> <p>Homework for Next Week  Healing Ritual  Brief Check In</p>
<b>Session 8</b>	<b>Wisdom</b> <i>Hope</i>	<p>Brief Check In  Read and Reflect on Quote  Review and Discuss Homework  Group Discussion on Chapter in <i>Emotional Yoga</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expanding what's possible / Opening up to the future</li> <li>- Accepting the present</li> <li>- Learning to trust yourself</li> <li>- Meditation</li> </ul> <p>Homework for Next Week  Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Practice  Brief Check In</p>

**Session 9**

**Synergy**  
*Integration*

Brief Check In  
Read and Reflect on Quote  
Review and Discuss Homework  
Group Discussion on Chapter in *Emotional Yoga*  
- Returning to wholeness  
- Moving through chaos  
- Making life whole  
Homework for Next Week  
Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Practice  
Brief Check In

**Session 10**

**Closing**

Brief Check In  
Read and Reflect on Quote  
Review and Discuss Homework  
Reflection  
Administer Post-Intervention Symptom Measure(s)  
Group Closing Ceremony  
Post-Intervention Art Expression Activity  
Brief Check In  
Administer Participant Survey

## Session 1 – Introduction

### *Supplies*

Agency Forms / Paperwork

Medical Forms (Yoga Teacher should supply)

Easel and Easel Pad

Markers

*Emotional Yoga* by Bija Bennett OR Participant Workbook (1 copy per participant)

Journals (1 per participant)

Folders (1 per participant)

Symptom Measure(s) (1 per participant)

Pens / Pencils

Participant Handouts

Eight Limbs of Emotional Yoga

The Rope

What is Trauma Sensitive Yoga?

Yoga mats and props for participants

Tissues

Quote Cards

Index Cards – What worked, what didn't?

Canvas or Canvas Paper

Acrylic Paints

Paint Brushes

Cups and Water (to rinse brushes)

Palettes or Palette Paper

## Session 1 – Introduction

### *Welcome and Review of Group Format*

Welcome participants and introduction of facilitators

#### Review Quote:

"I ask you right here please to agree with me that a scar is never ugly. That is what the scar makers want us to think. But you and I, we must make an agreement to defy them. We must see all scars as beauty. Okay? This will be our secret. Because take it from me, a scar does not form on the dying. A scar means, I survived." Chris Cleave

#### Group Format:

- 10 weeks
  - Discuss any breaks in sessions due to holidays, etc.
- Each session will be 2.5 hours in length
  - 10 minutes – Getting settled and check in
  - 60 minutes – Group discussion
  - 10 minutes – Break, move into yoga practice
  - 60 minutes – Trauma-Sensitive Yoga practice
  - 10 minutes – Check in and closing
- Measures
  - Symptom Measure
    - Explain the brief symptom measure(s) you've chosen to administer
    - Measure will be given three times (Session 1, Session 5, and Session 10)
  - Art Activity (Acrylic Painting)
    - At the end of the first and last session
    - No artistic talent necessary...this can be abstract in every way

#### Housekeeping:

- Provide information on where to find restrooms, water, etc.
- Provide any other location specific information for participants
- Introduce the role of therapist as support person
  - Let the participants know that if they feel overwhelmed during the discussion or during the yoga practice they can feel free to step out without asking or saying a word.
  - If the participant steps out, the therapist will check in with them to make sure they are okay to continue

#### Important points to review:

- You do not have to be perfect here
  - Release expectations and allow yourself to be where you are
  - You've already done all you need to do by getting yourself here
  - This is a place of no judgment, only compassion
- Take things at your own pace
  - If something feels uncomfortable allow yourself to follow that guidance
  - Find your edge and experiment with stretching
- Creativity and experimentation



- Provides practice experimenting with tolerating sensation within a safe container
- Group support coupled with a powerfully personal practice
  - This is also an experiment in relationship: with us, with each other, with yourself
- Freedom to feel however you feel
  - If you have emotions that come up for you during the discussion or during yoga practice, that's okay, your feelings are welcome here
  - Be who you are in this moment and know that you're accepted just as you are
- Healing is portable
  - Yoga and self-compassion are not just practiced in this room and on your mats, your healing isn't tied to this group or to us. You carry your healing with you
  - As part of this group, you will be asked to complete certain readings, activities, etc. during the time between group sessions

#### Overview of Group Components

This group is made up of four components:

- Support Group
  - Psychoeducation – provide information for participants on the effects of sexual abuse and the healing process, provide information on other topics as they arise (relationships, self-esteem, etc.)
  - Counseling – provide a safe and supportive environment and guide participants through exploration of how sexual abuse has affected their lives; facilitate healing through empowerment, community, and processing
- Yoga Practice
- Expression through Music
- Expression through Art
  - At the end of the first and last session the participants will be guided in an activity of expression through art. Participants will create, in essence, before and after paintings of where they feel they are in their healing process.
  - Participants' artwork can be displayed and can be offered as a travel exhibit (with permission of the participants)

#### *Group Introduction and Ice Breaker*

Each group member introduces herself by name and tells the group a little about herself at her level of comfort. This is a time to get to know one another and the focus should be in the present. We will briefly discuss abuse history in the next session but now is not the time for that.

***I invite you to introduce yourself to the group and tell us a little about who you are. Give us your name and tell us about your life. Maybe you'd like to share about your work, your family, your likes and dislikes. Just a little bit of information so we can get to know each other. We won't talk about what brings us to this group until next week. Today we just want to get to know each other.***

Once all of the participants have introduced themselves the facilitator will invite each person to complete the following prompts. Again, this is not a time to discuss the abuse, just a time to begin opening up to the group and getting to know each other.

***Now, let's talk a little about how you're feeling toward this group experience. Undoubtedly, we all have things that we're excited about or looking forward to over the next ten weeks. We also have things that we're nervous about. As we go around the group, I invite you to tell us at least one thing that you're excited for and one thing that you're nervous about.***

#### *Development and Review of Community Agreements*

The facilitator introduces the concept of community agreements and explains the importance of developing agreements together, emphasizing that this group belongs to the participants. Creating agreements together helps to make the environment safe and secure and allows the group to have control over their experience.

As the group decides on community agreements, the facilitator writes them on the easel pad. The community agreements are kept visible at every group session.

***I'd like to take the next few minutes to create some community agreements for our group. It's important to remember that this is your group and we want you to be the ones to decide on what these agreements will be. I invite you to take a moment to consider what you need to feel safe in this group.***

***It's important to have community agreements to follow because we want this to be a safe and confidential space for everyone. To get started, let's talk about some topics that we definitely want to address in the agreements and we'll decide on the specifics together. Then we can open it up to see if there are other areas that you value as a group and create some agreements around those as well.***

***The important topics we want to create agreements for are:***

- ***Confidentiality – we want to make sure that everyone feels safe to share what they're experiencing***
- ***Attendance and Commitment***
- ***Respect / Non-judgment***
- ***Timeliness***
- ***Cell Phones***
- ***Support and Contact Outside the Group***
- ***Touch***

The group will then add any additional agreements that they feel to be appropriate.

***What else do you need to feel safe?***

#### *Healing from Sexual Abuse...Why Yoga?*

- Freezing, Muscle Memory and Body Armor in Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- How the body holds itself does not just influence, it determines how much we can feel.
- Traumatized bodies may get frozen over time into postures that seem protective. The defeated posture that sometimes accompanies trauma includes dropped head, shoulders rounded forward.
- The reaction to trauma excludes us from having new experiences reach our inner world. The perception is that, “Anything that’s new will hurt me.”
- Effects of yoga:
  - Yoga opens us up to new possibilities – in essence, brings us back to life.
  - Over time, yoga helps us unlock the body, tolerate new experiences, and befriend the body.
- **Neurobiology and Neuroimaging of the Traumatized Brain**
  - When people are in their traumatized state, the language area of the brain (Broca’s area) shuts down and they can’t verbally process in a helpful way.
  - The brain areas associated with planning and self-regulation are also compromised.
  - Brain responses lose synchrony with their environment and are not fully engaged with present reality/new information (and all kinds of rhythms are thrown off – social rhythms, sleep, feeding).
  - The fundamental experience of trauma is not being able to be here, fully in the present. The experience of trauma is not feeling able to “be here” because in the neurobiology of the traumatized brain, the present moment is intolerable. The brain function for future planning is offline. The past is now the dominant reality.
  - While talking is important because it relieves isolation and provides connection, it does not address the need for re-wiring the brain.
  - Trauma survivors have to process their trauma, but the moment they start talking about it, their bodies go right back to a traumatized state. We can’t talk our way out of emotions – there is no pathway from the “executive” function of the brain (planning, higher order thinking in the pre-frontal cortex) to the “primitive” region of the brain (emotion circuits in the limbic system). The Anterior Cingulate Cortex (ACC) is the filter between the executive and the primitive and is essential for self-regulation of emotional states; it determines how upset we are by a particular stimulus.
  - The brain’s limbic system keeps replaying the trauma response – via an over-reactive fight-flight-or-freeze response – even without being consciously focused on the initial trauma.
  - Effects of yoga:
    - It is important that trauma treatment includes something that helps survivors to be here now, like yoga practice.
    - We must develop a strong frontal cortex to modulate the limbic system feelings. Yoga changes brain rhythms and allows survivors to reclaim some mastery over their brain’s arousal system.
- **HANDOUT: The Eight Limbs of Emotional Yoga**
- Read “The Rope”
- **HANDOUT: The Rope**

*Administer Pre-Intervention Symptom Measure(s)*

*Homework for Next Week*

- Read the “Limb One” in *Emotional Yoga* and practice the activities during the week
- Journal a response to the following prompt: (instruct participants to write the prompt in their journals)
  - **Over the next ten weeks I hope to transform...**
- Journal about the reading and your experiences with the activities
- Bring an object with you that symbolizes your healing. This could be a stone, a stuffed animal, a picture, a piece of jewelry...anything that feels right to you.

*Introduction to Yoga*

**HANDOUT: What is Trauma Sensitive Yoga?**

*Pre-Intervention Art Expression Activity*

Be sure that each participant has a private space to work on their painting. It is essential to provide safety.

Prompt

- Explain to the participants that during this exercise you would like them to keep their awareness in the present but connect back to their past.

**Think for a moment about your childhood and the abuse that brings you to this group today. Consider how the abuse has affected your life in the present. Allow yourself to acknowledge any of those effects that come into your awareness. Then, think about where you are in your healing process today.**

**Healing is not a destination or a straight line, healing is a continuum, a wave. Healing moves and changes constantly. Allow yourself to see what your healing looks like today. What colors...what shapes...what words come to mind? Using your canvas and paints create a picture of what you’re seeing. This painting will be a reflection of you, today, wherever you are in your healing. Choose colors that represent what you’re feeling, what you believe, etc. This is your “before” picture. Feel free to use colors, words, shapes, anything that feels right for you. Take all the time you need and when we’re all finished we’ll come back together and check in before we close for the day.**

*Brief Check In*

- Allow participants to express any thoughts or feelings that came up for them during the group
- Review homework again
- Close with a reading of the quote

## Session 2 – Allowance / Intention

### *Supplies*

Community Agreements / Easel Pad

Pens / Pencils

Participant Handouts

Yamas and Niyamas

Creating Safety

Yoga mats and props for participants

Tissues

Quote Cards

Index Cards – What worked, what didn't?

## Session 2 – Allowance / Intention

### *Brief Check In*

#### *Read and Reflect on Quote*

“Many of us spend our whole lives running from feeling with the mistaken belief that you cannot bear the pain. But you have already borne the pain. What you have not done is feel all you are beyond that pain.” Kahlil Gibran

#### *Review and Discuss Homework*

Journal a response to the following prompt: **Over the next ten weeks I hope to transform...**

- Invite each participant to share one or more of their goals for the group. Reassure the participants that they don't have to share if they would prefer to keep their goals confidential

#### *Group Discussion on Chapter in Emotional Yoga*

##### *Allowing yourself to connect with your feelings*

- Allowance – Bringing your emotional experience into conscious awareness
  - Only when you know what you feel can you heal what you feel
  - This means deliberately reaching out with your attention and bringing into focus an unclear feeling
    - This shift to intentional feeling allows you define yourself as something separate from others and allows you to create and explore your individual boundaries
- Witnessing – being aware of the one who feels
  - Only when you feel your roots can you begin to feel your growing
- Fear of Painful Emotions
  - Emotional energy is powerful and dealing with it can be scary
  - Instead of feeling we decide its safer to hold them in, block them out, or push them away
    - **DISCUSSION: What's your “go to” strategy for dealing with painful emotions?**
  - But how much more energy are we using to keep those feelings out of our awareness?
  - “Deliberately feeling your emotions is an act of faith. It takes grace and courage to deal with them. Sure, it's a risk to feel them. They're unfamiliar. But the point is, if you really want to heal, you have to use your feelings as fuel and stop wasting valuable energy controlling, suppressing, or blocking them out.” (pg. 25)
- **OPTIONAL EXERCISE: Feeling Your Body**

*This exercise should only take a moment. Asking survivors to stay in their body for an extended period of time can be frightening and triggering. Let the participants know that this exercise will be brief.*

  - Settle into a comfortable position. You may keep your eyes open or closed. Become aware of your natural breathing.
  - Observe any sensations you are feeling. Try not to lose yourself to your thinking mind or to outside distractions. Be fully present in your body and direct your attention to it as much as possible.

- Now notice where you have your attention at this moment. Surely, you're listening to these words and you are also aware of your surroundings. See if you can be aware of your inner body at the same time. Keep your attention within. Pull it into focus.
- Stay aware of yourself in your body. Let yourself become aware of your breathing for a moment and notice any feelings of discomfort in your body. At the same time, notice that the sun is shining, the dog is barking, and the people in the next room are talking. Keep breathing and notice that all this is happening in a remarkable inter-relationship between you, your breathing, and all you are observing. This effortless maneuver is both spontaneous and extraordinary. In this state, there is total acceptance. You are simply observing what is already occurring in your natural ordinary awareness.
- Healing your emotions requires making active and conscious choices
  - In doing so, you'll learn how to take your power back and have control over your feelings
  - Let's you recover your emotional autonomy and strength

#### *Telling your truth / Creating space for healing*

Invite participants to speak about the symbolic object they brought with them and then share their story with the group.

- Explain that the participants do not need to go into detail about their abuse. This is simply an exercise in building community, in truth-telling and in creating space for their own healing. Allow them to share as little as they're comfortable sharing. The important part is that they own their story and begin to take back their voice
- Explain that hearing the stories of other participants may be triggering. Invite participants to share any strong emotions with the group and reaffirm that their feelings are welcome here

#### *Homework for Next Week*

- Read the "Limb Two" in *Emotional Yoga* and practice the activities during the week
- Journal about the reading and your experiences with the activities
- **WORKSHEET: Creating Safety.** Let the participants know that it's okay if they don't have answers for some of the questions. We'll be working on them together during the next session.

#### *Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Practice*

##### *Review Yamas and Sutras*

- **HANDOUT: Yamas and Niyamas**
- Tools for creating a healthy emotional self
- *Ahimsa / Nonviolence*
  - "When one perseveres in non-violence, hostility vanishes in their presence."
  - Non-violence as an emotional practice: the ability to deal with feelings of anger
  - Not being violent with yourself
  - Come face to face with negative intentions. Be conscious of them so you can deal with them and let them go.

- Energy you put into yourself and into the world.
- Find inner quiet and peace in the most challenging moments.
- *Satya* / Truthfulness
  - *“When Truth is established, all acts will achieve their desired results.”*
  - You first have to notice the truth in your life and understand that it requires your constant attention.
  - Finding your authentic self is like medicine. It becomes an act of healing, an antidote to fear, hurt, anger, and confusion.
  - All of the answers ultimately lie within you.
- *Asteya* / Noncoveting
  - *“When one does not covet, one attains prosperity.”*
  - To covet means to be attached to a particular outcome.
  - This yama focuses on letting go of feelings such as jealousy, envy, control.
  - Find connection to yourself instead of that particular desire.
- *Brahmacharya* / Harmonizing Your Desires
  - *“With the highest desires, one obtains vital energy.”*
  - Refers to the growth or expansion of the self.
  - Specifically discusses how being in touch with your own sexuality can **safely** take you into a world of higher passion, refined touch, and subtle emotion
- *Aparigraha* / Nonattachment
  - *“One who is not attached or possessive is secure.”*
  - Nonattachment does not mean you can’t be emotional. Think of nonattachment as not holding on to something.
  - Attachment becomes harmful when what you are attached to seems to be taking over your life or controlling your thoughts.

#### *Brief Check In*

- Allow participants to express any thoughts or feelings that came up for them during the group
- Review homework again
- Close with a reading of the quote



### **Session 3 – Allegiance / Safety**

#### *Supplies*

Community Agreements / Easel Pad

Pens / Pencils

Participant Handouts

Creating Safe Spaces for Healing

Yoga mats and props for participants

Gemstones (1 per participant) – flat and smooth, easy to carry

Tissues

Quote Cards

Index Cards – What worked, what didn't?

## Session 3 – Allegiance / Safety

### *Brief Check In*

#### *Read and Reflect on Quote*

“The work of healing is in peeling away the barriers of fear and past conditioning that keep us unaware of our true nature of wholeness and love.” Joan Borysenko

#### *Review and Discuss Homework*

##### Creating Safety worksheet

Invite participants to share examples of coping skills and self-care strategies. This will help other participants come up with some new ideas to try for themselves.

#### *Group Discussion on Chapter in Emotional Yoga*

##### *Creating safe spaces for your healing work*

- **WORKSHEET: Creating Safety**

#### *Allegiance*

- Allegiance is the act of joining together with something
  - In Emotional Yoga – joining yourself with an emotional experience (getting in touch with an emotion in order to examine it)
  - Gets you involved in your emotional self
- Yoga is about relationship...although you can practice it alone, its purpose is to connect you to something (your body, your breath, your emotions, etc.)
- Create a space for communication with your emotions, open up to inquiry without judgment.
  - Create a dialogue
  - Ask, don't analyze or make judgments on what you “should” or “should not” be feeling
- Acknowledgment and understanding of emotions leads to action and dialogue/involvement of self
- Yoga is a relationship...with your emotions, with your body, with your mind, etc.

#### *Honoring yourself and making a commitment to healing*

- Pledge allegiance to yourself, join with your purpose
- **ACTIVITY: Intention Stones**
  - Give each participant a stone and allow for time to explore the meaning behind their stone (provide information as needed)
  - Allow time for each participant to develop a statement of allegiance to their healing in their journals
  - Invite participants to share their statement with the group while holding the stones
  - Ask the participants to bring the stones with them to each group from this point forward. We will use them in other activities as the weeks go on.

#### *Homework for Next Week*

- Read the “Limb Three” in *Emotional Yoga* and practice the activities during the week
- Journal about the reading and your experiences with the activities

- **WORKSHEET: Creating Safe Spaces for Healing.** Let the participants know that it's okay if they don't have answers for some of the questions. We'll be working on them together during the next session.
- Practice having a dialogue with your emotional self

### *Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Practice*

#### *Review Niyamas and Sutras*

- Tools for creating a healthy lifestyle
- *Sauca* / Cleanliness or Purity
  - *"Cleanliness or purity reveals what needs to be maintained and protected; what decays is external, what does not, is deep within."*
  - An act of clarifying your emotional perceptions and projections and eliminating ambiguity.
  - The act of being honest and kind to yourself every single day.
  - Clarifying your emotions and reviewing your daily habits on a regular basis brings purity
- *Santosa* / Contentment
  - *"Contentment results in total happiness."*
  - Contentment is a choice you can make. If you give yourself permission to be content you're well on your way
  - Don't wait for someone to give happiness to you
  - Doesn't come from immediate satisfaction of a specific desire
    - Arises when you are not anxious about the past and when you have no worries about the future
    - Once you develop a strong enough sense of contentment, the external circumstances of your life don't matter, you're still content from within.
  - Trying to be happy all the time is not the answer
    - You can't be emotionally perfect
    - It's okay to get messy...you get messy anyway, why not learn to play in the mess?
    - If you accept your untidy, imperfect emotions, you'll find they have tremendous value
- *Tapas* / Purification
  - *"Removing impurities allows the body and mind to function more efficiently."*
  - Good health depends upon your ability to metabolize the nutritional, emotional, and sensory information you ingest.
    - When not metabolized properly you accumulate toxic residue
  - Toxic accumulation can be caused by a variety of situations
  - Food analogy: Emotions that are repressed, denied, unresolved (undigested) have toxic effects similar to those of unhealthy and undigested food. Your emotional pathways get blocked and the vital feel-good chemicals in your body stop flowing. You experience mood disorders, your energies are weakened, you feel dull, weak, distressed, depressed, or fatigued. Eventually you get sick
  - Purification, Rejuvenation, Prevention

- Changing your lifestyle can make a big difference in helping you lead a happier and healthier life
- *Svadyaya / Self-Study*
  - *“Self-study leads to awareness, communication, and union with spirit.”*
  - Needs an integral approach and doesn’t come from simply reading a book, listening to a lecture, or taking a kick boxing class
    - Can’t be compartmentalized
  - Comes from personal experience – knowing what your mind is doing, feeling what your body is feeling – every single day.
  - Self-study is when you examine what is inside you
- *Isvara-pranidhana / Communion with a Higher Power*
  - *“Perfection and liberation come from aligning one’s self with the highest intelligence. The powers of contemplation are attained through one’s relationship and devotion to God.”*
  - When you have an emotional crisis its natural to want to call out to someone for help
    - Longing to find comfort and search for a higher reason or power
  - Healing begins in silence...when you look deeply within and have trust in the highest, the “within” becomes the “beyond”
  - Not the same as religious faith. In yoga faith comes directly from the trust you have in your own highest self.

*Brief Check In*

- Allow participants to express any thoughts or feelings that came up for them during the group
- Review homework again
- Close with a reading of the quote

#### **Session 4 – Will and Power / Mindfulness**

##### *Supplies*

Community Agreements / Easel Pad

Pens / Pencils

Yoga mats and props for participants

Tissues

Quote Cards

Index Cards – What worked, what didn't?

## **Session 4 – Will and Power / Mindfulness**

### *Brief Check In*

#### *Read and Reflect on Quote*

“Be like the single blade of grass. For she too, has been trampled on, mowed down, and hit with such bitterly cold stretches that she had to shut down to survive. Yet still she stands upright with dignity. Knowing that she endures, and still she dances with the wind.” Sandra Kring

#### *Review and Discuss Homework*

Practice having a dialogue with your emotional self

#### **WORKSHEET: Creating Safe Spaces for Healing**

### *Group Discussion on Chapter in Emotional Yoga*

#### *Strengthening and rebuilding your will and power (how abuse affects will and power)*

- How does abuse affect will and power?
  - During the abuse, your right to choose was taken from you
    - **DISCUSSION: How has this impacted your life to this point?**
  - Most survivors exert control over other areas of their lives to make up for the control that was lost (relationships, eating, perfectionism, etc.)
    - **DISCUSSION: Where do you see this manifesting in your life today?**
- Take responsibility and commit to what you choose
- Willful cooperation is what gives you the freedom to change
- Will and power also incorporates your desire to seek and metabolize uncomfortable emotions and to digest and move them through
  - Both emotional and physical
- Nothing about you is faulty

#### *Cooperating Within*

- The combination of will and power is the act of cooperation
- Involves choosing to cooperate with an emotional experience through deliberate intention.
  - Instead of worrying about a situation or suffering because of it, you learn to focus on it, join with it, and then cooperate with it.
  - You can't choose what happened in the past but you can choose to move forward
- Every conscious idea or feeling is connected to a particular act of will
  - Nothing is arbitrary
- When you cooperate with yourself you give yourself the ability to be who you are.
- The use of true will and power gives you the intention and energy to act on what you want

#### *Leaning into your emotions and moving through them*

- *Asana* comes from the Sanskrit word which means “to sit”
  - Being steady and sitting with your emotions
  - Build a physical platform for responding to your emotional needs

- “Riding the wave”
- As you practice asanas you become aware that your emotions are inside your body
  - Deeper messages and memories are stored in your somatic experiences
    - Body memories
    - Muscle memory can trigger flashbacks
  - Healing occurs in those deeper areas
- Use your body as a vehicle for emotional self-healing and balance
- They become emotional tools for deep transformation and change
- You are always in a physical and an emotional posture
- Whenever you move you transform things
- The intelligence of muscles is extraordinary
  - Triggers and fight/flight/freeze

**ACTIVITY: Guide the participants through a mindful exploration of their stones**

- Feel the weight of the stone on your hand
- Feel the texture of the stone
- Notice the colors and markings
- Feel the temperature of the stone

*Homework for Next Week*

- Read the “Limb Four” in *Emotional Yoga* and practice the activities during the week
- Journal about the reading and your experiences with the activities
- **JOURNALING EXERCISE: Take a few moments to get in touch with yourself and answer the following questions in your journal... (Page 59)**
  - What I want is...
  - What I want and I am allowing is...
  - What I want and I am *not* allowing is...
  - What I do *not* want is...
  - What I do *not* want and I am allowing is...
  - What do *not want* and I am *not* allowing is...
- **Thank You Note** - write a thank you note to your body. Find something about it that you’re grateful for. It could be as simple as being thankful to your feet for carrying you around every day or being thankful for carrying and giving birth to your children, etc.

*Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Practice*

*Read and Reflect on Sutra*

Asana – Posture or Bodily Exercise

*“Asana or posture is that which is stable and comfortable. When properly practiced, one is both alert and relaxed.”*

*Brief Check In*

- Allow participants to express any thoughts or feelings that came up for them during the group
- Review homework again
- Close with a reading of the quote

## **Session 5 – Love / Boundaries**

### *Supplies*

Community Agreements / Easel Pad

Pens / Pencils

Participant Handouts

Boundaries

Symptom Measure(S) (1 per participant)

Yoga mats and props for participants

Tissues

Quote Cards

Index Cards – What worked, what didn't?



## Session 5 – Love / Boundaries

### *Brief Check In*

#### *Read and Reflect on Quote*

“To believe that we can and must hide the parts of us that are broken, out of fear that others are incapable of loving the parts of us that we cannot love ourselves, is to believe that sunshine is incapable of entering a broken window and warming an empty room.” Sandra Kring

#### *Review and Discuss Homework*

Journaling Exercise (Page 59): Invite Participants to share some of their answers from this activity

Thank You Note to your body – invite participants to share about this experience. They can share what they wrote if they would like

#### *Group Discussion on Chapter in Emotional Yoga*

##### *Discerning the differences*

- Love holds things together as well as defines our boundaries
  - No matter how close you are there’s always something separating and no matter how distant you are there’s always something connecting
- In our relationships, we discern our differences so that we may know both ourselves and one another
- Love is the ability to perceive yourself as the one who is discerning your emotions

##### *Honoring the self*

- When you discern your emotions you becomes more aware of who you are
- **DISCUSSION: If there was nothing you needed to do, create, add to, or separate yourself from who you are right now, who would you be?**
- Love says: You don’t need to find yourself, you need to discover or perhaps uncover yourself.
- You are not your emotions/thoughts/fears, etc.
  - Emotion is just having a powerful energy move through you

##### *Connecting to and opening your heart*

- It takes commitment to live from your heart. It takes patience to come back to yourself, to believe in yourself.
- Awareness of yourself opens your feelings, awareness of feelings opens your heart
- Even the minor pains and anxieties flowing through you are opportunities to sense, touch, and be touched by your own heart when it’s heavy with disappointment, loneliness, or fear
- The emotion connected to the heart of love is courage
  - Courage comes when you are honest with your fear, when you allow yourself to notice it and keenly observe whatever’s there
- It takes heart to go into your own pain
- **DISCUSSION: Balancing openness with boundaries**
  - Why do you think setting boundaries is difficult?

- Why is it important to set boundaries?

### *Breathing*

- *Pranayama* – extending your vital energy or life force by regulating the natural flow of your breath
- By deliberately changing the pattern of your breathing you can affect change on all levels...physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual
- Limb four teaches us to use breath as a vehicle for emotional healing and balance
- Trauma and the breath
  - Trauma affects how we breathe
    - Open mouth breathing
    - Shallow breathing
    - Holding breath
- Crying (like laughing) is the most powerful and genuine emotional breathing release in your system, it frees and cleanses you.
  - It does not mean you're weak...it means you're strong enough to take the risk of letting go

### **ACTIVITY: Affirmations**

- Holding the stones have all participants say in unison:  
"I am more than just my body. I am more than my mind. I am more than the emotions I see and feel. I am the one who sees, perceives, and feels. I am the one who observes."
- Have each participant pass around her stone one at a time
- As each group member receives the stone, invite them to say something loving, affirming, and positive to the stone's owner, focusing on sending loving energy into the stone

### *Homework for Next Week*

- Read the "Limb Five" in *Emotional Yoga* and practice the activities during the week
- Journal about the reading and your experiences with the activities
- **WORKSHEET: Boundaries**

### ***Administer Mid-Intervention Symptom Measure(s)***

#### *Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Practice*

##### *Read and Reflect on Sutra*

Pranayama – Conscious Breathing

*"Conscious breathing is the awareness, regulation, and modification of the various components of breathing."*

#### *Brief Check In*

- Allow participants to express any thoughts or feelings that came up for them during the group
- Review homework again
- Close with a reading of the quote

**Session 6 – Harmony / Balance**

*Supplies*

Community Agreements / Easel Pad

Pens / Pencils

Yoga mats and props for participants

Tissues

Quote Cards

Index Cards – What worked, what didn't?

## Session 6 – Harmony / Balance

### *Brief Check In*

#### *Read and Reflect on Quote*

“When you look upon another human being and feel great love toward them, or when you contemplate beauty in nature and something within you responds deeply to it, close your eyes for a moment and feel the essence of that love or that beauty within you, inseparable from who you are, your true nature. The outer form is a temporary reflection of what you are within, in your essence.” Eckhart Tolle

#### *Review and Discuss Homework*

Boundaries worksheet

#### *Group Discussion on Chapter in Emotional Yoga*

##### *Harmony*

- The action of bringing into balance and putting a problem into perspective
  - Seeing the larger internal landscape
- Painful emotions indicate something is out of harmony, it's up to you to find out what's causing it.
- Learn how to listen to what you need – YOU have to check in
  - Do an internal inventory...see what parts are present and find space for all of them
- Can't be in perfect harmony all the time

##### *Directing your senses, developing perspective*

- Pratyahara is a process by which your senses progressively withdraw from external stimuli, settle in their source, and come alive in the inner environment of your mind
- Withdrawing your senses does not mean controlling your senses or deadening them
- Meditation – create space so something new can come in
  - Once you empty the cup, if you don't consciously refill it, it will get filled up with something else (distracting thoughts, old habits, memories)
  - Practice, inquiry, and attitude

##### *Be Still and Know*

- We live in a fast paced world but does making things go faster really add meaning to our lives?
- The truth is, our work is never done, it will never be done
- Without some form of rest we go into survival mode where everything we meet assumes prominence
- Learn to leave the external situation and direct your attention inside
- Jewish tradition of Sabbath
  - Sabbath is not dependent upon our readiness to stop. We do not stop when we are finished. We do not stop when we complete our phone calls, finish our project, get through this stack of messages, or get out this report tomorrow. We stop because it is time to stop.
- **DISCUSSION: What prevents you from stopping?**

- Have participants hold on to stones during this discussion.
- During the week use the stones as a reminder to be still.

#### *Homework for Next Week*

- Read the “Limb Six” in *Emotional Yoga* and practice the activities during the week
- Journal about the reading and your experiences with the activities
- Be Still and Know: Every time you see or hold your stone, practice being still (even for a moment) and journal about your experiences.

#### *Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Practice*

##### *Read and Reflect on Sutra*

Pratyahara – Withdrawal of the Senses

*“When the senses disregard everything but the nature of the mind, one has complete control over sensory awareness.”*

#### *Brief Check In*

- Allow participants to express any thoughts or feelings that came up for them during the group
- Review homework again
- Close with a reading of the quote

## **Session 7 – Knowledge / Connection**

### *Supplies*

Community Agreements / Easel Pad

Pens / Pencils

Participant Handouts

Emptying the Archives

Yoga mats and props for participants

Tissues

Supplies for Healing Ritual

Quote Cards

Index Cards – What worked, what didn't?

## Session 7 – Knowledge / Connection

### *Brief Check In*

#### *Read and Reflect on Quote*

"Healing may not be so much about getting better, as about letting go of everything that isn't you - all of the expectations, all of the beliefs - and becoming who you are." Rachel Naomi Remen

#### *Review and Discuss Homework*

Be Still and Know – discuss what it was like for participants to practice stillness

#### *Read and Reflect on Sutra*

Dharana – Focusing Attention

*"Focused attention directs one to a specific area."*

#### *Group Discussion on Chapter in Emotional Yoga*

##### *Remembering the Past / Building Connections*

- Knowledge exists only in the context of memory
  - We view every experience through the lens of our past impressions
  - We can't change the past but we can change our interpretation of it and adjust our filters
- Emotional Yoga teaches us to look at our emotional facts and study the painful, gathered memories. We look at what we have been building our lives upon.
  - Knowledge lets us see the influence of our emotional memories and helps us release ourselves from their influence
  - Is what we believe serving us now? We look for other options
- By recognizing the differences between the present and the past, we can actively choose to respond deliberately rather than to react automatically to situations as they arise
  - Reptilian brain and the fight/flight/freeze response
  - Reality is a reflection of what you believe is real
- Dharana is when something supports your attention
  - The more you encourage your mind to go toward one object only and place your attention there, the stronger that connection becomes, as all other objects or distractions fall away
  - Teaches you how to link your mind with something and maintain that connection
    - Focus on emotions to uncover their meanings
  - We can become so absorbed in a situation, emotion, or experience that we lose ourselves – Dharana prevents this and keeps us on track

##### *Acknowledging and releasing negative beliefs*

- **DISCUSSION: What negative beliefs do you carry with you because of the abuse?**

##### *Self-talk and building inner strength*

- Our self talk is a reflection of our mental filters...we are constantly in dialogue with ourselves

- What does your internal dialogue sound like?
- Your self-talk can **charge** your strength or **drain** your strength
- **DISCUSSION: Becoming aware of your self-talk allows you to make changes**
  - What are some examples of negative self talk?
  - How can you change it to be positive or affirming?

#### *Healing rituals*

- Can be simple or elaborate
- **ACTIVITY: Healing ritual**
  - Stones should be used during the ritual

#### *Homework for Next Week*

- Read the “Limb Seven” in *Emotional Yoga* and practice the activities during the week
- Journal about the reading and your experiences with the activities
- **ACTIVITY: Invite participants to begin to think about their own healing ritual.**
  - What would your healing ritual look like?
  - What would you need to do to make it happen?
- Bring a picture of yourself from the time in your life when the abuse was happening.
- **WORKSHEET: Emptying the Archives**  
Answer the following about the abuse:
  - Awareness
    - What aspect of the abuse still hurts?
    - Why does it still hurt me?
    - What would I have to believe about the abuse in order for me to feel this way?
    - Is this a past belief or judgment? Is it a fact? And is it still true?
    - What is the real truth now?
  - Action
    - What do I desire for the future, based on this experience from the past?
    - What are the steps I need to take to accomplish this?
    - How can I encourage myself to do this?
    - How can I love or join with these actions?
    - How can I bring balance and closure to this situation?
  - Vision
    - What are the possibilities for the future if I follow these actions or steps?
    - What other fears, hurts, or beliefs should I free myself of?
    - Who will I be when I am free from of the past?

#### *Brief Check In*

- Allow participants to express any thoughts or feelings that came up for them during the group
- Review homework again
- Close with a reading of the quote



## **Session 8 – Wisdom / Hope**

### *Supplies*

Community Agreements / Easel Pad

Pens / Pencils

Yoga mats and props for participants

Tissues

Participants should bring photos of themselves at the age when the abuse was occurring

Quote Cards

Index Cards – What worked, what didn't?

## Session 8 – Wisdom / Hope

### *Brief Check In*

#### *Read and Reflect on Quote*

“I have always believed that hope is that stubborn thing inside us that insists, despite all the evidence to the contrary, that something better awaits us so long as we have the courage to keep reaching, to keep working, to keep fighting.” Barack Obama

#### *Review and Discuss Homework*

Healing Rituals (if anyone wants to share)

Emptying the Archives Worksheets – discuss the experience of completing this activity

#### *Group Discussion on Chapter in Emotional Yoga*

##### *Expanding what’s possible / Opening up to the future*

- Wisdom shows you a piece of the future, allows you to see new possibilities and encourages you to bring up any deeper fears or problems lying beneath the surface
- Wisdom keeps you trusting and accepting rather than controlling or avoiding
- Wisdom tells us that nothing in the future can be controlled or pushed

##### *Accepting the present*

- Acceptance is not avoidance
- Acceptance is a dynamic exploration that lays the foundation for a new creation
- Acceptance is an act of love and when you do it consciously, you reach a deeper level
- Accept the circumstances and events happening around you but continue to move ahead
- You are never in the perfect flow. You are in your flow.

##### *Learning to trust yourself*

- Abuse makes it hard to trust on the outside but also on the inside
  - This is particularly true if we carry shame and guilt about the abuse
  - It is important to have self compassion
- We must also adjust our filter when we think about the abuse
  - **ACTIVITY: Getting in touch with the child**
    - Have participants look at the picture of themselves at the age of the abuse
    - Identify qualities about the child in the picture using the third person
    - Invite each participant to share something (not abuse related) about the child in the photo (her favorite food, color, activity, etc.)
    - Guide the participants through understanding that the child in the picture had limited knowledge, resources, and outlets. The child was just a child and could not stop the abuse, etc.
- If you engage with as much clarity and presence as possible you will intuitively know what you need to help yourself

##### *Meditation*

- Meditation is the process of intentionally directing your mind in a certain way for a period of time. You establish contact with an idea, emotion, or object and prolong that contact.
- Emotional flow is the balance between your heart and mind. It's the process of directing your mind away from what you feel is undesirable and linking it to what is desirable. It's the ability to think from your heart.
- Meditation does not have to be complicated....you are the goal of meditation
  - Don't have to find the perfect place and the perfect time
  - Simply turn your attention to what is really there and sustain it even for a few minutes you are meditating
- **ACTIVITY: Hope Stones**
  - Have participants pass their stones around again like we did in the session on Love/Boundaries
  - As you receive the person's stone, silently think of what you hope for that person and send the energy and light of that message into the stone
    - If it feels more appropriate to have participants speak their messages out loud, invite them to do so

#### *Homework for Next Week*

- Read the "Limb Eight" in *Emotional Yoga* and practice the activities during the week
- Journal about the reading and your experiences with the activities
- **ACTIVITY: Letter to Myself** - Write a letter to the child in the photo about what you learned about her today and what she needs to hear about the abuse, herself, her future, etc.

#### *Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Practice*

##### *Read and Reflect on Sutra*

Dhyana – Sustaining Attention

*"Continuing the state of attention causes an uninterrupted creative flow in relation to the idea or object."*

#### *Brief Check In*

- Allow participants to express any thoughts or feelings that came up for them during the group
- Review homework again
- Close with a reading of the quote

**Session 9 – Synergy / Integration**

*Supplies*

Community Agreements / Easel Pad

Pens / Pencils

Yoga mats and props for participants

Tissues

Quote Cards

Index Cards – What worked, what didn't?

## Session 9 – Synergy / Integration

### *Brief Check In*

#### *Read and Reflect on Quote*

"When the Japanese mend broken objects, they aggrandize the damage by filling the cracks with gold. They believe that when something's suffered damage and has a history it becomes more beautiful." Barbara Bloom

#### *Review and Discuss Homework*

Letter to Myself – Invite the participants to share their letters or to share about their letters

#### *Group Discussion on Chapter in Emotional Yoga*

##### *Returning to wholeness*

- Synergy is the togetherness of all elements and contains a piece of each of the parts, because it is both a part and a whole.
- Simultaneous order and chaos – the one and the many
- From synergy you begin to see the situation from a new perspective
  - Like climbing a mountain, suddenly the air shifts
- Can be a form of meditation but more a way of living life with a fresh, new, unbounded energy
- We are whole within ourselves and we are also part of a greater whole
- We have an amazing capacity to transcend – to incorporate what went before with fresh components to create something new
- We have two needs: maintaining our whole and maintaining our part
- Oneness will bring you everything you have ever really wanted. It will bring you home

##### *Moving through chaos*

- Although we would prefer order, chaos is inevitable
- Chaos seems ominous and we're taught to avoid it but it has a purpose
- Chaos is just the motion of your system organizing itself into a new focus
- Trusting in chaos is a learned behavior
- Cycle of chaos
  - Feeling of turbulence or disturbance
  - Swinging between what you feel and what you think
  - Feeling like you're in limbo – a place of total unpredictability
  - Open yourself to allow it in
  - When everything seems to have fallen apart a new force enters
  - Everything falls back into place
- Process of moving through chaos
  - Trust in yourself
  - Have faith in a higher order
  - Know that sanity lies in the meaning of it all
  - Be gentle with whatever you're going through
    - Pulling back does not take you through
  - Look in the direction in which you want to go

- You may feel like a ship at sea being tossed around but keep the ship pointed toward the shore
  - Allow yourself to grow, but be willing to be disturbed
    - Get comfortable with being uncomfortable
  - Keep moving

#### *Making life whole*

- Samadhi – placing or putting together into oneness
- Putting together the various parts of yourself in order to make you whole
- Let your feelings teach you about life and let life teach you about your feelings
- You experience emotion, the day, the sun...this is discipline but actually freedom
- Samadhi is not about getting lost, it's about integration, to be here and integrated with whatever is there in front of you – now.
- **ACTIVITY: Guided Imagery**
  - Think about the little girl in the picture from last week and create a safe and loving space for her in your heart.

#### *Homework for Next Week*

- Check in with the little girl as often as it feels necessary
- **JOURNAL ACTIVITY: How will you integrate your past into who you are today?**

#### *Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Practice*

##### *Read and Reflect on Sutra*

Samadhi – Making Life Whole

*“As one continues the state of attention and becomes deeply involved, the object of meditation stands by itself and nothing but comprehension of the object is know.”*

#### *Brief Check In*

- Allow participants to express any thoughts or feelings that came up for them during the group
- Review homework again
- Close with a reading of the quote

## **Session 10 – Closing**

### *Supplies*

Community Agreements / Easel Pad

Pens / Pencils

Tissues

Quote Cards

Index Cards – What worked, what didn't?

Supplies for Closing Ceremony

Symptom Measure(S) (1 per participant)

Participant Survey (1 per participant)

Canvas or Canvas Paper

Acrylic Paints

Paint Brushes

Cups and Water (to rinse brushes)

Palettes or Palette Paper

## **Session 10 – Closing**

### *Brief Check In*

#### *Read and Reflect on Quote*

“We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves.” Dalai Lama

#### *Review and Discuss Homework*

How will you integrate your past into who you are today? – review participants experiences in completing this prompt. Invite them to share their responses with the group

#### *Reflection*

- **DISCUSSION: What will you take with you?**
- Holding on to your peace
  - Water the root and the tree inside you grows
  - Untie the knots and remove the obstacles preventing your from growing
  - Remember that your peace is inside of you and is not part of the external world (over which you have no control)

### ***Administer Post-Intervention Symptom Measure(s)***

#### ***ACTIVITY: Group Closing Ceremony***

##### *Post-Intervention Art Expression Activity*

- Explain to the participants that during this exercise you would like them to keep their awareness in the present but connect back to their past.

**Think for a moment about your childhood and the abuse that brings you to this group today. Consider how the abuse has affected your life in the present. Allow yourself to acknowledge any of those effects that come into your awareness. Then, think about where you are in your healing process today.**

**Healing is not a destination or a straight line, healing is a continuum, a wave. Healing moves and changes constantly. Allow yourself to see what your healing looks like today. What colors...what shapes...what words come to mind? Using your canvas and paints create a picture of what you're seeing. This painting will be a reflection of you, today, wherever you are in your healing. Choose colors that represent what you're feeling, what you believe, etc. This is your "after" picture. Feel free to use colors, words, shapes, anything that feels right for you. Take all the time you need and when we're all finished we'll come back together and check in before we close for the day.**

### *Brief Check In*

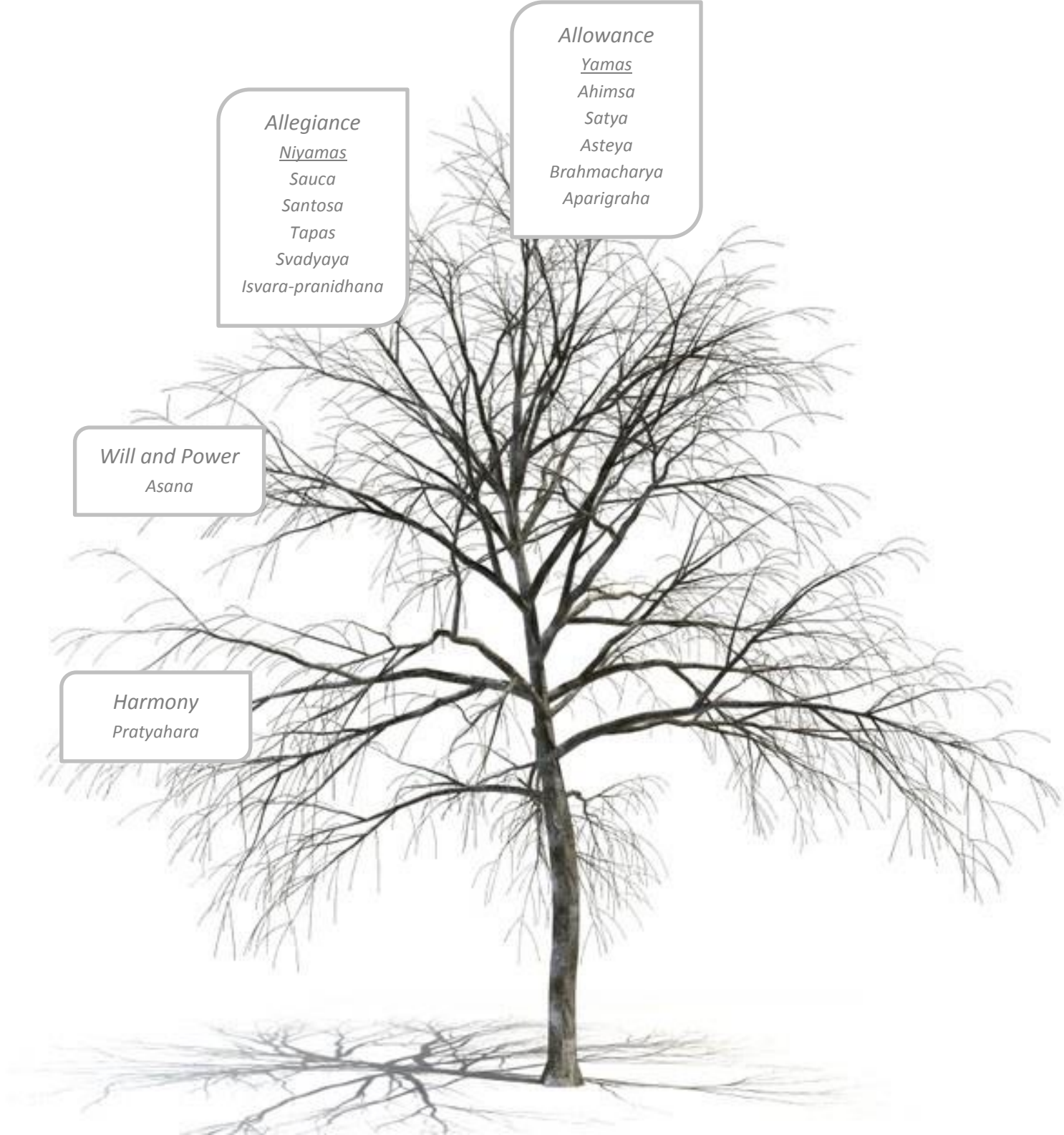
- Allow participants to express any thoughts or feelings that came up for them during the group
- Close with a reading of the quote

### ***Administer Participant Survey***



# Appendix

# Eight Limbs of Emotional Yoga



*Allegiance*  
Niyamas  
Sauca  
Santosa  
Tapas  
Svadyaya  
Isvara-pranidhana

*Allowance*  
Yamas  
Ahimsa  
Satya  
Asteya  
Brahmacharya  
Aparigraha

*Will and Power*  
Asana

*Harmony*  
Pratyahara

## The Rope

There have been times when I have questioned the process of healing. Sometimes the work survivors do is so demanding and difficult that I begin to wonder whether or not it is worth the pain. It is during those times that I have had to step back and gain perspective on what “healing” from childhood sexual abuse is really like. I have come to understand that the process of healing is a lot like untwisting a rope.

You see, our childhood development is made up of strands of thread. For a few, the threads have remained relatively straight and free from interruption. For others, however, the developmental threads of childhood have become twisted. For the sexually abused child, energy is spent trying to survive abuse and none is left to develop freely. Their threads twist...and twist...and become a rope. The secrecy and falsehoods surrounding sexual abuse twist the rope tighter. For some, the rope is thicker because abuse impacted many areas of development and more threads twisted. And for some, the rope is longer because abuse occurred over a longer period of time.

Healing, then, becomes the process of untwisting the rope. I have discovered many things about this process. As I held a rope with one end in each hand, the task seemed overwhelming. But with each turn the rope loosened, freeing the threads slightly. So I continued...in small yet progressive steps. But I soon noticed that whenever I let go of the rope to get a new grip, it twisted back up...oh, not as tight as before, but twisted none the less. I’ve learned that healing is a lot like that. There are moments when great strides forward are made and the threads untwist. But there are other times when new memories or feelings might emerge that toss you two steps back...and the threads twist back up. Yes, healing is a lot like untwisting a rope.

I also discovered that I could manage the untwisting much better if I could somehow anchor one end so that I had two hands free to do the work. In your healing process the anchor might be the hands of a support person, the members of this group, your higher power, a therapist –the choice is yours. You still do the untwisting, but now you have two hands free to do the work while your support people simply stand by and hold one end.

As I continued untwisting the strands of the rope I noticed one very disturbing thing. As I got further in the process there were times when I felt overwhelmed by the wild nature of these curly strands. This characteristic was new and kind of scary. I wasn’t sure that I wouldn’t know what to do with all the loose strands after it was untwisted. I paused and thought how healing is a lot like this. Sometimes the journey takes you to foreign places which are unfamiliar and somewhat unpredictable. You begin to wonder if you will know what to do in these new places. It troubled me to think about this -- there had to be a way to make this part manageable.

What I realized was that if the rope is put in a bath of warm water which is kept constantly warm then it almost untwists by itself. And once untwisted the strands are perfectly straight, not curly and wild like rope that is untwisted outside of warm water. You see, healing is made more manageable when you are bathed in the warmth of support.

Yes, healing is a lot like untwisting a rope. And the most exciting part about the process is that when you untwist the rope thread by thread, you can then reweave it into any tapestry or shape that you desire. It is in your control to create whatever you would like with the threads of your life.

*Adapted from A Healing Celebration (Yamamoto-Nading & Stringer)*

## What is Trauma Sensitive Yoga?

Invitational Language

Focus on Choices

No Physical Assists

Safe, Supportive, Non-judgmental

A Way of Becoming Friendlier With Your Body

Cultivates Strength and Flexibly Without Force

Emphasizes Self-Awareness and Self-Regulation

Personal Exploration of the Postures

Natural Breathing

## Yamas

- I. *Ahimsa* – Nonviolence  
*“When one perseveres in non-violence, hostility vanishes in their presence.”*
- II. *Satya* – Truthfulness  
*“When truth is established, all acts will achieve their desired results.”*
- III. *Asteya* – Noncoveting  
*“When one does not covet, one attains prosperity.”*
- IV. *Brahmacharya* – Harmonizing Your Desires  
*“With the highest desires, one obtains vital energy.”*
- V. *Aparigraha* – Nonattachment  
*“One who is not attached or possessive is secure.”*

## Niyamas

- I. *Sauca* / Cleanliness or Purity  
*“Cleanliness or purity reveals what needs to be maintained and protected; what decays is external, what does not, is deep within.”*
- II. *Santosa* / Contentment  
*“Contentment results in total happiness.”*
- III. *Tapas* / Purification  
*“Removing impurities allows the body and mind to function more efficiently.”*
- IV. *Svadyaya* / Self-Study  
*“Self-study leads to awareness, communication, and union with spirit.”*
- V. *Isvara-pranidhana* / Communion with a Higher Power  
*“Perfection and liberation come from aligning one’s self with the highest intelligence. The powers of contemplation are attained through one’s relationship and devotion to God.”*

## Creating Safety

These are the names of some people I can call if I'm feeling overwhelmed. I don't necessarily have to talk to them about what I'm feeling, but if I want to I know they'll be there to support me. If I don't want to, I know they'll be willing to help me by making me laugh, etc.

*Name*

*Phone Number*

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These are the things I can do to make me feel better if I'm feeling overwhelmed (ex. read, go for a run, call a friend, go to sleep, etc.):

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These are the ways I can take care of myself while I'm doing this work (ex. only work on this for an hour a day, go out with friends once a week, etc.)

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# Creating Safe Spaces for Healing

I commit to doing my healing work in safe spaces.

These are the qualities that my safe spaces must have:

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These are the spaces in my life that have those qualities. These are the spaces I feel safe in:

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These are the steps I will take to make sure these spaces stay safe.

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## Boundaries

1. What type of relationship is this?

2. Who initiates contact?

3. What is the time frame for this relationship?

4. Is sharing equal in this relationship?

5. Are there things that you would like to say in this relationship, but don't or can't?

What are they?

6. Do you feel that your own boundaries are respected in this relationship?

Explain:

7. What changes would you like to make in this relationship?



## Emptying the Archives

Answer the following about the abuse in your journal:

### *Awareness*

- What aspect of the abuse still hurts?
- Why does it still hurt me?
- What would I have to believe about the abuse in order for me to feel this way?
- Is this a past belief or judgment? Is it a fact? And is it still true?
- What is the real truth now?

### *Action*

- What do I desire for the future, based on this experience from the past?
- What are the steps I need to take to accomplish this?
- How can I encourage myself to do this?
- How can I love or join with these actions?
- How can I bring balance and closure to this situation?

### *Vision*

- What are the possibilities for the future if I follow these actions or steps?
- What other fears, hurts, or beliefs should I free myself of?
- Who will I be when I am free from of the past?







10. Please rate the effectiveness of the length of this program:

1

2

3

4

5

Very Ineffective

Very Effective

Comments:

**Overall:**

What did you learn from this program?

What did you enjoy about this program?

What could be improved about this program?

Any additional feedback/comments you would like to share:

**Support Group/Discussion:**

Were there any activities that you really enjoyed or that were particularly helpful for you?

Were there any activities that were not helpful for you?

Do you have any suggestions to improve the support group/discussion portion?

**Yoga Class:**

Were there any activities/postures that you really enjoyed or that were particularly helpful for you?

Were there any activities that were not helpful for you? Were any activities/postures triggering or uncomfortable?

Do you have any suggestions to improve the yoga class portion?

# Integrative Healing Group

For Adult Women who are Survivors of Sexual Abuse

A collaboration between Victim Services Inc., Yoga Song, and the Bottle Works Arts on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

Developed by:

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Yoga Song

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*“For the first time I have found that I am not alone. That the events that changed my life no longer control me. I have a new found freedom, which is full of peace, joy, love and hope.” ~ Survivor and Group Member*



*Made possible by a grant from Lee Initiatives*