

Yoga for Cancer Course Prospectus

Course leader and principal teacher:
Morven Hamilton SYT

An 8 module course
40 hours Vocational Teacher Training (35 hours contact time)

A mindful, whole-person approach to yoga for groups and individuals on the cancer journey

If you are a yoga teacher who wants to help people coping with cancer to live better, a student of yoga or a professional in another field such as nursing, physiotherapy, or psychotherapy this course will give you a grounding in the diverse aspects of working with those on the cancer journey.

Cancer affects nearly all of us in some way. A diagnosis has a huge impact on one's life and those of our loved ones, and the repercussions extend well beyond the physical body and the duration of treatment.

Just as no two people experience a yoga pose in the same way, no two people experience cancer in the same way. Pain and suffering are not always proportionate to the trauma on the body and are felt in a subjective and deeply personal way. This course aims to give you a grounding in the psychological, emotional and physical reality of cancer so that you can share yoga in a way that is physically and emotionally safe for the attendees. You will also learn specialised therapeutic movement for common physical limitations caused by the illness or by the treatment, and learn therapeutic applications of other facets of yoga practice in order to serve the whole person - body, mind, spirit and relationships.

Yoga and Mindfulness have been shown to:

- Improve the immune system
- Help people to cope with the effects of treatment
- Accelerate healing of the scar tissue
- Recover mobility more quickly following surgery
- Improve body image
- Help with sleep issues, depression, stress and anxiety following a diagnosis

People who have had a cancer diagnosis will reduce the likelihood of a recurrence by 25% if they take up regular physical exercise (please see links to the research below). Furthermore, those who are no longer mobile can still benefit from increased circulation and improved lymph flow through pranayama, and reduced inflammation thanks to the stress-reducing effects of relaxation, yoga nidra, visualisation, mindfulness and meditation.

Loved ones and support persons can find a sense of calm and alter their perspective through yoga,

making it possible to cope with the trauma of diagnosis and the caring work which follows.

This five day course covers the cancer journey throughout diagnosis, treatment (or not), recovery, remission and what comes next. We will also explore working with people at end of life. The loved ones and support persons of those with a diagnosis are considered in this course, as they are coping with cancer too.

The course includes practical application of asana and sequencing, mindfulness and mindful movement, restorative yoga, yoga nidra, breathwork and meditation. Trainees are encouraged to explore their own responses to life-threatening illness including their own preconceptions and fears.

There will be plenty of space for Q&A, discussion and practice, enabling participants to be grounded in their own unique process.

You will receive a course manual written by Morven Hamilton. It is both an accompaniment to the course and an ongoing support for your reference.

Additional to the 35 contact hours is a mentoring programme. You will complete a case study or an assignment and receive a one to one Skype/ phone consultation with Morven. You will also have access to unlimited ongoing support via email.

Description:

The course will include the following areas of study:

- The cancer journey
- Yoga as medicine - therapeutic applications of yoga
- Ethics, compassion and the whole person
- Designing your course for people on the cancer journey and inclusion
- Business - setting up a specialist class
- Mindfulness and yoga

This training will allow you to confidently and compassionately design and run mindful yoga courses for people on the cancer journey. You will also learn how to work one to one and include people affected by cancer in your class.

Course Objectives:

- Trainees will become knowledgeable in the basic anatomy and physiology of cancer
- Trainees will understand the “whole-person” ethos
- Trainees will learn therapeutic applications of yoga for cancer
- Trainees will become knowledgeable and skilled in restorative yoga and special

modifications

- Trainees will understand the pedagogy of yoga and mindfulness for health
- Trainees will learn the art of holding space competently and compassionately
- Trainees will learn how and when to include people on the cancer journey into their mainstream class
- Trainees will become knowledgeable on business and marketing considerations in setting up a specialist class for people with cancer

The Syllabus

<p>The cancer journey</p> <p>Anatomy and physiology of cancer. The most common types of cancer. Lymphoedema - what causes it and how it shows up in yoga class. Types of treatment and their effects. Wider repercussions of cancer on the whole person – body, mind, spirit and relationships. How trauma can change us and how it can be transformed.</p> <p>5 hours</p>	<p>Yoga as medicine</p> <p>The benefits of yoga and meditation to people with cancer and their loved ones. Application of therapeutic asana for common effects of cancer in the body. Restorative yoga - key poses, modifications. How to plan it into your class. Pranayama, relaxation, mantra, visualisation adapted for cancer Yoga Nidra as a therapeutic practice.</p> <p>13 hours</p>
<p>Ethics, compassion and the whole person</p> <p>Exploring personal responses to disease and death. Working holistically with people with life threatening illness. Dealing with loss. Creating a safe environment - practicalities.</p> <p>3 hours</p>	<p>Designing your course</p> <p>Putting together a programme – things to consider and what to include. Using themes – how to choose a theme and develop it in your class. Including people with cancer in your mainstream class.</p> <p>3 hours</p>
<p>Teaching preparation and practice</p> <p>Peer to peer teaching. Trainees will be assigned a themed class and co-teach. Trainees choose an area or areas they wish to focus on for their subsequent practicums eg. Mindfulness meditation, visualisation, restorative yoga, yoga nidra etc</p> <p>3 hours</p>	<p>Mindfulness and yoga</p> <p>Introduction to Mindfulness for Health. How to incorporate mindfulness into your yoga class. Mindfulness techniques for pain and illness. Mindful movement. Language and metaphor – creating an attitude and directing attention with words. Music and poetry, how to use it in your yoga class.</p>

	8 hours
<p>Business</p> <p>Starting up a course for cancer. Inclusion techniques. Resources.</p> <p>2 hours</p>	<p>Homework</p> <p>Case study: You will work with someone on the cancer journey and prepare a case study of your work with them. Or Assignment: Morven will work with you on choosing an appropriate subject for your assignment.</p>

Resources:

A comprehensive course manual written by Morven which will be an accompaniment to contact hours and an ongoing resource for your reference.

Video, podcasts, publications from cancer support organisations.

Recommended reading:

Living Well with Pain and Illness by Vidyamala Burch

Relax and Renew by Judith Lasater

The Body Keeps the Score by Bessel van der Kolk

The Healing Journey by Alastair Cunningham

General resources:

Cancer research UK

Macmillan

Penny Brohn Complementary Cancer Care

Maggies Centres

M D Anderson

My name is not cancer

Life in extremis