

Creating the Safe and Sacred Container

SYTAR 2016



Amy Weintraub, MFA, ERYT 500
LifeForce Yoga Healing Institute

www.yogafordepression.com

Why the Safe Container is Important

- ⊕ Mind – Body connection tells us that where there is constriction in one sheath (*anamayakosha*) body, it is reflected in all the koshas. There is emotion woven into the physical pain.
- ⊕ It is vital then that, even if your student is there strictly for back pain, you create and sustain the Safe Container.

Therapeutic Bond

- ⊕ Meta-analysis of over 400 manualized treatments for depression, the greatest predictor of a beneficial outcome was not the therapeutic modality utilized, but the relationship between client and therapist.
(Wampold, 2001)

The Safe Container

We offer the 4 great attitudes when we approach our clients:

maitri karuna mudita upeksanam

maitri (friendliness), karuna (compassion), mudita (delight), and upeksanam (disregard/equanimity)

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras: I:33

The Safe Container

- ⊕ Being there ~ Meet & Greet
- ⊕ Creating Ritual
- ⊕ Permission
- ⊕ Cuing to Sensation
- ⊕ Grounding
- ⊕ Co-creating Take Home Practice

Centering Meditation

- ⊕ Imagery (*Bhavana*)
- ⊕ Toning (*Nada Yoga*)
- ⊕ Pranayama
- ⊕ Intention (*Sankalpa*)
- ⊕ Smile Yoga

Therapeutic Bond – Rituals & Practices

- ⊕ Lighting of a candle
- ⊕ A hand gesture (*mudra*)
- ⊕ A simple yoga breath (*pranayama*)
- ⊕ A soothing image of sanctuary or peace (*bhavana*)
- ⊕ A soothing universal tone (*mantra*)
- ⊕ A cleansing breath (*kriya*)
- ⊕ Client’s intention reveals itself (*sankalpa*)

Permission

- ⊕ Permission (from the student)– Ask before hands-on adjustments.
- ⊕ Permission (from you) is granted – to stop the process, be it a pose or an inquiry.
- ⊕ Permission (from you) is granted – for feelings to flow on the yoga mat.

©2015 Amy Weintraub
www.yogafordpression.com



*The Safe Container
Permission*

“Crying is one of the highest spiritual practices.
One who knows crying knows yoga.”

~Swami Kripalu

Cueing to Sensation

- ✧ Guided practice with sensory details
 - ✧ Cues to feel sensation are specific and direct, not global
 - ✧ When incorporated into vinyasa or stronger practice, cue between sequences
- ~Practice*

(C)2015 Amy Weintraub
www.yogafordepression.com

Safely Embodied

Body awareness, body scanning exercises, and body-sensing, where ***movement is accompanied by mindful attention to direct sensation and breath***, are vital core practices for those suffering depression, anxiety and PTSD.

(C)2015 Amy Weintraub
www.yogafordepression.com

Grounding

- ✧ Root chakra practices, including sitting and standing poses.
- ✧ Mantra tone: Lum; So-hum
- ✧ Inhale: “I am” to the crown; Exhale: “Here,” to the feet.

(C)2015 Amy Weintraub
www.yogafordepression.com

*Yoga in Psychotherapy ~
Safe Container*

Psychotherapist and LifeForce Yoga Practitioner
Level 2 Joe Walter, LICSW, working with a
client, in "Seated Mountain with Integrity."
Inhale: "I am" through the crown; exhale:
"Here," grounding through the feet.



Yoga and Psychotherapy

Self-Study (Svadhyaya)
Compassion (Karuna)

*"The highest spiritual practice is self-
observation with compassion."*

~Krishnamurti

Co-Creating Home Practice

- ⊕ Research shows that when the client feels "in control," depression is reduced and feelings of self-efficacy are increased.
 - ⊕ In our culture, empowering the client to co-create a home practice, based on the practices you have offered, is better than prescribing.
 - ⊕ Guided visualization of home practice
- ~Practice

A client who returned said, "When I came before, you helped me understand and get where I wanted to go. Now you show me yoga practices I use to help myself understand and get where I want to go."

~Sherry Rubin, LCSW, BCD, LFYP-2,
Downingtown, PA
