

# YTF - E-Magazine

## From The Editor

I am continuing to love receiving stories about how you are bringing yoga into communities that are in need. This time we have a focus on the teaching community and how yoga is being brought into schools at a time when teachers are facing unprecedented challenges. What I love about this article is that it comes from a teacher who has been working in schools for many years and really understands what is needed and what will work in terms of yoga for teachers. We love to hear your stories so please do contact me if you have a story you would like to share.

The articles in this magazine remind me why I choose to roll out my mat and hopefully it will do the same for you.

Julia Davis, Editor, YTF Magazine

## Yoga in Schools; don't forget about the teachers!

Patricia Onderdonck-Young

My yoga journey began in 1992 – I was 19 at the time – and since that time yoga has been integral to my life. After moving to Cornwall in 2002, I developed my personal practice and completed a Yoga Teacher Diploma in 2006.

One of the first yoga groups that I taught was made up of school staff and sixth form students – I was a Sixth Form Teaching Assistant at the time – and I look back with real fondness at the dynamic of that group. The shared learning experience broke down artificial barriers and facilitated a willingness to share both vulnerabilities and successes. I feel blessed that several members of that group – both from the staff and student bodies – still practice with me today.

In 2009 I gained Qualified Teacher Status – with a Religious



In this issue:

Page 1: Yoga In Schools

Page 3: Following the Call To teach Yoga for Cancer

Page 7: It All Started with Veganuary!

Page 9: Making Space for People with Dementia & Their Carers: The Yoga Perspective

Page 12: Upcoming Trainings

If you would like to be featured in the next issue of YTF please contact [info@yogateachersforum.org](mailto:info@yogateachersforum.org) with your story.



Education Specialism – and in 2013 took up a pastoral leadership role. It was a role that came with the reputation, in terms of burnout, of being a ‘poison chalice’ – needless to say my yoga practice became increasingly relevant.

Having recently completed a Postgraduate Yoga Therapy Qualification, and with my daughter soon to finish university, I am planning to leave secondary school teaching in the not so distant future but I am going to remain, if not become more, committed to spreading the word that ‘Teachers Need Yoga!’.

It is near to impossible to explain how demanding teaching can be although it might be enlightening to know that a health care professional, who recently gained her first insight into a typical term in a secondary school, recently commented to me, “it’s a wonder they [staff] don’t all have PTSD!”. It has always been a physically, mentally and emotionally demanding job but with the crisis in teenage mental health and wellbeing, that has been exasperated by the pandemic and often presents in extremely challenging behaviour, it has become more demanding than ever and without teacher’s mental health and well-being being prioritised, children and young people will suffer.

**In order to teach – and I mean that in a holistic sense - teachers need to nurture but in order to nurture they need to be nurtured and the best way I know to enable this is through yoga.**

Very recently, a teacher came to me for some yoga therapy sessions to release her tight shoulders. Her journey led her to see that she had learnt to cope with the demands of teaching by projecting a ‘hardness’ that had led her to ‘close off the fullness of her heart’. She

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was able to see how this form of ‘self-preservation’ was affecting her physical and mental health as well as her relationships. I’m pleased to report that her shoulders, whilst a work in progress, are much freer....as is she!

Teachers are told that they need to adopt a trauma-informed response to challenging behaviour and it is true that ‘teachers are the grown ups’ and have a responsibility. My concern, and I am increasingly seeing this, is that without being grounded and centred themselves, teachers are in no position to do this. It is also true that without time for ‘proper relaxation’ and ‘letting go’ an increase in challenging behaviour is going to have a detrimental effect on teacher’s mental health and wellbeing.

In my determination to spread the word that ‘teachers need yoga’, I don’t for one minute want to suggest that yoga for students isn’t valuable, indeed I have seen for myself the impact it can have on reducing stress levels and providing a sense of empowerment, but if we

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remember that a teacher’s mental health and wellbeing directly impacts on children’s and young people’s mental health and wellbeing, it seems obvious that ensuring yoga in schools is directed at teachers as well as students is a ‘win-win’ situation. In fact not so long ago, after a morning yoga session for staff, a colleague commented to me that, “the whole school just feels like a nicer place after yoga; she was ready to nurture because she had been nurtured.

Simple techniques like modifying posture, giving muscles a moment to transition between an hour at a computer and a sprint across school to teach a class or ‘deal with an issue’, conscious breathing and processing anger - and sometimes even fear - as they arise, all have the power to assist teachers in keeping healthy and that’s before we begin to explore the gift of discernment and sense of belonging that yoga can provide.

If you know a teacher, reach out and let them know that you how tough their job can be and whilst you’re there....ask them if they would like to practice some yoga ;)

Trish is a secondary school teacher, yoga teacher and yoga therapist. She has taught Ethics, Philosophy and Religion since 2008 and has been a pastoral leader since 2013. She has been teaching yoga to school teachers, and students, since 2006. She has a MEd in Professional Development and has a Postgraduate Diploma in Pastoral Leadership. She is dedicated to highlighting the issues faced by teachers and how a regular yoga practice – especially when promoted by schools - can be an antidote to these.

## **Following the Call to Teach Yoga for Cancer:**

**By Jenni Stone**

We have been blown away by the positive response to our teaching Yoga for Cancer offerings. What started as a half day workshop has developed over the years into a module to a full 7 week course.

### **HOW IT ALL CAME ABOUT**

The motivation for the training came from a discussion with a colleague about my work teaching people with cancer at Maggie’s. I was explaining how much I enjoyed teaching these classes and how beneficial the students found it, and that I wished all cancer patients had the opportunity to access yoga during and beyond their treatment.



The concern I had was that with the increase in cancer diagnosis and the recommendation of yoga by medical staff to cancer patients, I wasn't sure if there were enough teachers and classes available to support all these people.

My colleague promptly replied, you've been doing this for years, why don't you train other teachers? And so the YTF Yoga for Cancer training was born!

**My dream would be for all yoga teachers to have a basic grounding in teaching people with cancer, knowing when and how to include them in classes and when to refer on.**

It is likely that you have been affected by cancer in some way in your life, whether it be a relative, friend, colleague or student or your own diagnosis. Nearly half of us will have a diagnosis of some kind at some point in our lives and so the likelihood of it showing up in your classes at some point is pretty high. I would love for all teachers to feel prepared for the time when one of your students tells you of their cancer diagnosis.

Whether or not cancer is an area you want to specialise in, I feel quite passionate that all teachers have some basic training to help you understand what a student with cancer may be going through and offer appropriate support.

#### **WHAT TRAINING SHOULD I DO?**

With several trainings available you may not be sure where to start. Maybe you have had some training in this area already and would like to take it further, perhaps you are at the beginning of working in with people who have cancer.

In any case, if this is an area you'd like to do some training in I believe there is something on offer that will meet your needs.

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#### **Online Introductory Module -**

this very affordable module can be a great place to start. You can work through the content in your own time and gain an overview of the key areas needed to support people with cancer. This is also useful if you don't intend to teach people with cancer but would like to be better informed about how to support a student who shares their diagnosis with you.



### **Essentials Workshop -**

this half day live online workshop expands the information from the online module and give a solid foundation in the 4 key areas needed to teach people with cancer. This is suitable for working one to one with private clients or incorporating someone with cancer into a mixed yoga class.

### **Breast Cancer Workshop -**

This additional workshop specifically focuses on asana practise for recovery and rehabilitation from breast cancer surgery, from early days to long term recovery. This is not intended to be a stand-alone workshop so is recommended that you do some general yoga for cancer training in addition.

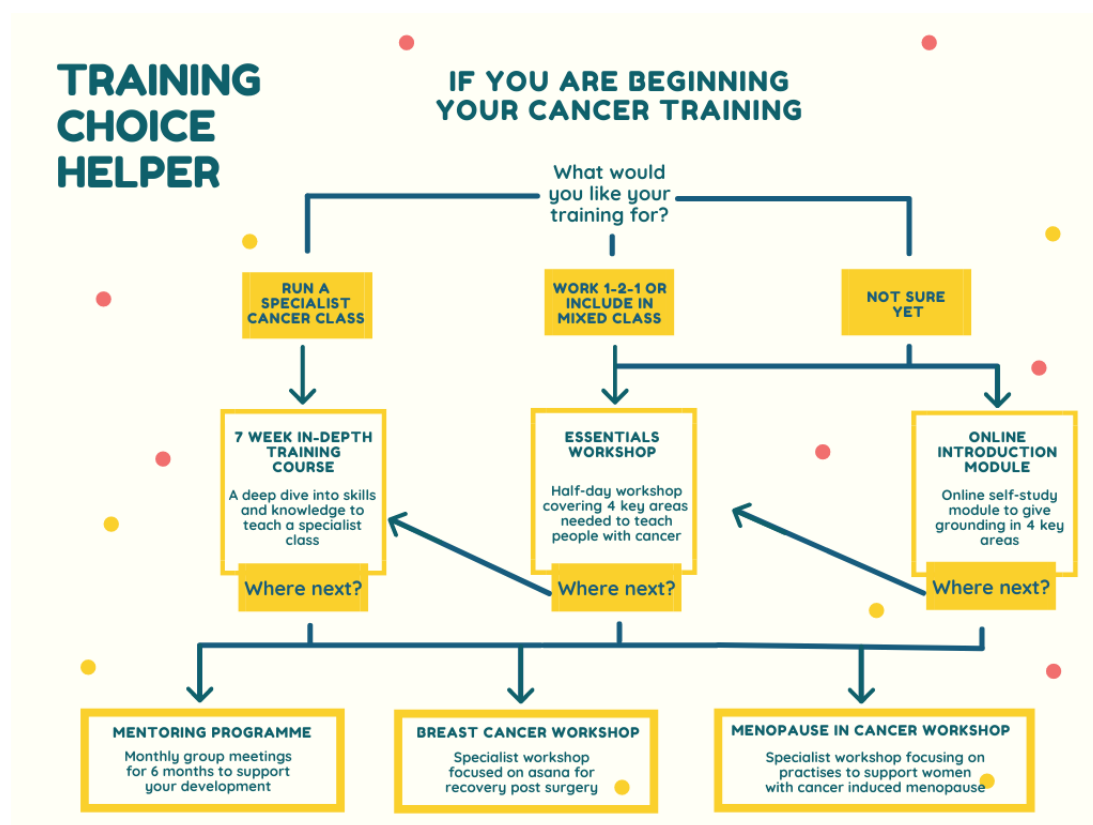
### **In Depth Training -**

The big one! This 7 week course goes into greater depth and includes much more practical and theoretical work for lesson planning. There is opportunity for group work and personal development and the course homework prepares you for setting up your own specialist cancer class. I give detailed personal feedback on all homework to help you get the most of your training. Teachers who have completed the in-depth training have gone on to do some diverse and exciting work.

### **Cancer Induced Menopause Workshop -**

This is my newest offering and focuses on yoga practises to support women who are experiencing menopause caused by their cancer treatment. It is more common than is often realised and an area I feel is important to include in training. Again, this is not intended to be a stand-alone workshop and I recommend you do additional general yoga for cancer training.

For those of you who are, like me, quite visual - I thought it might be useful also to have a flowchart to help you choose the training that is right for you. If you have not done any training in this area yet, the following chart can help you find the course that's right for you.



If you have done some kind of training in yoga for cancer, the following chart can help you find what you might like to do next.



We have a full schedule coming up this year and I am so looking forward to meeting faces old and new for more training. Every time I run a training it is slightly different, partly because of the vastness of the topic but mostly because of you, the teachers who attend.

Everyone has been so generous with sharing their stories and knowledge, brave in asking questions (there is no such thing as stupid question!) and I always learn something new each time. The interaction I have with the group and that the group has with each other is what makes the live training special. There is a sense of support and camaraderie that is building an international community of teachers of yoga for cancer that I'm really proud to be part of.

Come and join us! You can find details of all of Jenni's cancer trainings here:

YTF Yoga For Cancer Charity Partner is Maggie's and we donate to this charity.

- **Breast Cancer Workshop, live on Zoom - 23 April, 1000-12:30 BST (£40)**
- **Free Talk: Cancer and Trauma, a New Perspective** with Aneta Idczak - 19th Jan, 13:00 GMT (FREE)
- **Online Self-Study Module: Introduction to Teaching Yoga for Cancer (£19.95)**
- **Yoga For Cancer - Essentials Workshop, live on Zoom - 5th March 2022, 10:30 - 14:00 GMT (£65)**
- **7 Week In-Depth Training Course, live on Zoom - starts 7th May 2022, 10:30-13:30 BST (£345)**

Jenni teaches yoga for cancer at Maggie's Royal Free, Hampstead, London. All Maggie's centres offer free drop-in yoga classes to people with cancer and their families or carers. No referral is needed. They also offer many other support services. <https://www.maggiescentres.org/>

Information and support is also offered by Macmillan <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/>

You can find out more about Jenni's work at [Yoga for Cancer Training – Jennitherapy](#)

## And it all Started with Veganuary!: A Yoga Teacher Story

By Amy Fergus-Fuller



**Vegan Birthday Cake!**

4 years ago I made a decision that I wanted to try being vegetarian. I was a full on carnivore but something inside me was telling me that the idea of eating an animal felt wrong. Somehow the internet knew this was my plan (that crazy algorithm) and started showing me Veganuary, a 30 day vegan trial. So, I thought why not, it's only 30 days I'll give it a go. Those 30 days have since turned into 4 years and the changes I've felt and seen have been incredible and this is what I wanted to tell you about.

About 2 weeks into being vegan that I noticed more freedom in my body and movement. I had always been pretty flexible but this was different, I just felt like I could move so much more easily. I thought this was very bizarre and wondered if it had anything to do with changing my diet. So, I looked into it. I can't say for certain of course, but I did discover that it makes sense that my change of diet could have made this happen. Eating meat and dairy is really not great for us, especially in the amount most people eat it these days. It causes inflammation in our joints and blood vessels so it would make sense that cutting this stuff out removed the inflammation I may have had and allowed me to move more freely. Also, as an add on, did you know that dairy actually increases your likelihood of getting osteoporosis?!



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Fast forward to about a year later. I had struggled with acid reflux basically all my life, I'd get regular bloating, metal tastes in my mouth upon waking, constant coughing, burping and umm other gases... and then I suddenly noticed these things lessening A LOT! I can't say it's gone completely, but it's far far better than it was and I now don't need to worry about what I eat.

2 years later I became pregnant. Where most pregnant women have to worry about what they eat, I didn't have to worry about anything. Needless to say I felt very smug about this. Most of all though, I had a wonderful pregnancy overall, no

swelling whatsoever, mild

nausea in the beginning, and continual energy right up to the end (this was not the case in the first 12 weeks though) again there's no way I can say for certain that my diet helped all this, but I find it hard to believe it didn't have some part to play. Before you ask, yes my son is vegan and for sure the better for it. He is ridiculously strong and healthy, yes of course he gets colds but compared to other children his age he definitely gets less than others and recovers from them faster. I'm sure breastfeeding him for 20 months helped him with that too.



**My little boy enjoying his vegan dinner**



**Vegan Omlette**

And now.... As someone who has practiced Yoga since 2005 and taught it since 2011 I think my physiological awareness has got very heightened. We practice Yoga as a form of self love don't we? And we teach it because we want others to experience what we have. So, we are already demonstrating a certain amount of compassion in our lives as a whole. Being vegan takes that compassion to a whole new level for me. I've realised over these 4 years that being compassionate to animals is as, if not more important to me than being compassionate to humans because we have, in the majority of cases, a voice, where animals, also sentient beings, have none. By not eating, wearing or



using animals for my own self desire I feel much more aligned with my place here on this earth. I have felt more grounded and at peace.

Amy Runs Shoulder, Ab & Knee Rehab and C-Section Recovery for YTF.

## Creating a Space for People with Dementia & Their Carers: A Yoga Story



By Cllr. Lisa Rutter

I am the founder and Chairman of Dementia Club UK, a registered charity which she started in 2015. However, as local Councillor for Barnet, I started this charity in 2012 when as Mayor of the London Borough of Barnet she selected the Alzheimer's Society as one of her charities for my year as Mayor because my mum was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2010. I experienced many difficulties looking after my mum and although there are leaflets about Alzheimer's disease which is one type of dementia, there are no tailored instructions explaining how to deal with the various challenges. One person every 3 seconds is diagnosed with dementia which is now more feared than cancer.

I decided I wanted to learn more about this terrible disease and set up the first dementia club at Finchley Memorial Hospital in 2013 and over the years as demand grew for more dementia clubs, I opened 12 dementia clubs in various locations in the Borough of Barnet and one in Camden.

I created a Dementia Club UK Model which has been academically researched by Middlesex University and confirms that the techniques used not only has a positive impact on those living with Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia but also a positive impact for the carers and for those who have lost someone with dementia and are now lonely.

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### What is A Dementia Club?

A dementia club is a 2-hour session from 2pm to 4pm. It provides respite for those living with dementia and the carers can relax and socialise and make friends with other carers whilst enjoying tea/coffee and lovely cakes.



**Part 1:** I welcomes everyone and provides quizzes, colouring/ painting, singing, poetry reading and Bingo.

**Part 2:** The second part of the session is chair exercises with professional instructors. Chair Yoga is a favourite with members which is provided weekly by Richard Kravetz. Richard makes exercises fun and combines it with some funny stories and jokes. Members just look forward to their Yoga sessions with Richard.

**Part 3:** The third part of the session is music entertainment which members again really love and every person participates in their

own way and also enjoy to dance. Music is very powerful as the last part of the brain which remains is the part which understands and enjoys music.

**Part 4:** The fourth part of the session is the social activities where members enjoy indoor Putting golf, table tennis, bowls, skittles, board games and much more. I finishes off the session with a few jokes also. Everyone participates and everyone always leaves with a smile. Dementia Club UK also does a few outings every year.

When the Covid -19 pandemic started, I had to suspend all the dementia clubs on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020. This was devastating for members as Dementia Club UK is their lifeline. I kept in contact with members during the pandemic by phone and email and took food parcels to some of the most vulnerable members who had no one to help them. I also made sure that Barnet Council were able to continue providing help to those vulnerable members.





Although I kept regular contact, I was still getting calls from some members saying how they felt so depressed and isolated, missing the dementia clubs.

I then decided to start four Zoom sessions every week. Each zoom session was 2 hours and included quizzes, chair exercises, music entertainment and Bingo. People were joining from around the country. One of the Zoom sessions every week on Tuesday evening was a Carers group session from 7pm to 8.30pm which proved very popular.

As restrictions are slowly lifting, people are desperate to get back to some normality. Dementia Club UK has re-opened a few dementia clubs which includes the popular Finchley Memorial Hospital. People are delighted that I achieved after a long campaign in getting the 383 Bus to stop at Finchley Memorial Hospital so the sessions there are easier to attend.

Our new 2022 programme has 6 dementia clubs opened in various venues in Barnet and continues to also keep one afternoon zoom session every week on Tuesday and the evening carers group session.

The carers group sessions are very valuable to the carers as the charity provides interesting speakers to talk about topics which are helpful. One of our Trustees, a doctor, also joins the sessions to answer any medical concerns raised by the carers.



Whilst some of our members have sadly passed away after contracting Covid-19 which also included my mum, Dementia Club UK aims to continue helping as many people as possible.

Dementia Club UK is also now offering training to organisations about dementia. Whilst there is still no cure for dementia, it is important to raise more awareness to stamp out any stigma about dementia and deliver a better understanding about dementia which is essential.

You can visit our website <https://dementiaclubuk.org.uk/> for more information and download details about our dementia club sessions and contact details. Volunteers always welcome.

Richard Kravetz runs the Chair Yoga & Dementia Friendly Yoga training for Yoga Teachers Forum. These help us to support the charity Dementia Club UK.

Teaching Chair Yoga - Sun 13 March 1000-1600 <https://yogateachersforum.org/chair>

Teaching Yoga for Dementia - Sun 16 Oct 1000-1300 <https://yogateachersforum.org/dementia>

## **COURSES & TRAININGS IN JANUARY & FEBRUARY WITH YOGA TEACHERS FORUM**

**Maternity Chakras: The Teachers Pathway - Start Date Sun 6 Feb**

**FULL COURSE:** <https://yogateachersforum.org/maternity-chakras-course>

**INTRODUCTION:** <https://yogateachersforum.org/maternity-chakras>

**6 Month Mentoring Programme with Jane Dancey & Julia Davis**

<https://yogateachersforum.org/mentoringwithjaneandjulia> (4 spaces left)

**February Mentoring Session with Jane Dancey & Julia Davis 9th Feb**

<https://yogateachersforum.org/februarymentoring>

**Welcoming LGBT+ People in Yoga & Pregnancy Yoga with Gabi Parkham**

<https://yogateachersforum.org/lgbt>

**Hysterectomy & The Female Pelvis 23 Feb**

<https://yogateachersforum.org/hysterectomy>

**Power Dynamics, Consent & Trauma 24 Feb**

<https://yogateachersforum.org/consent>

**Teaching Yoga for Parkinsons 26 Feb**

<https://yogateachersforum.org/parkinsons>

### **FREE TALKS & TASTER SESSIONS**

**Mentoring Taster Session: 1230 Wed 26 Jan**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUscE-spzIuEtXXC\\_To7OYcbjpLLhWTOMVm](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUscE-spzIuEtXXC_To7OYcbjpLLhWTOMVm)

**Yoga Fertility & Birth in the LGBT+ Community: 1800 GMT Tue 25 Jan**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZArc-GgqTIqEte2wa34r1srZgQUOjhTpfTO>

**Sitting in Circle with Women - Stories of Hormonal Health - Mon 7 Feb 1200 GMT**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYqcO-qgzouGdf\\_Exboip5IyDVRgQ7jGSA4](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYqcO-qgzouGdf_Exboip5IyDVRgQ7jGSA4)

**Yoga for Parkinsons FREE TALK - Thu 3 Feb 1900-2000**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEkcOihqToiE9PmROBOKhBWN09gGm1DMv2A>

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