

YOGA AS HEALING

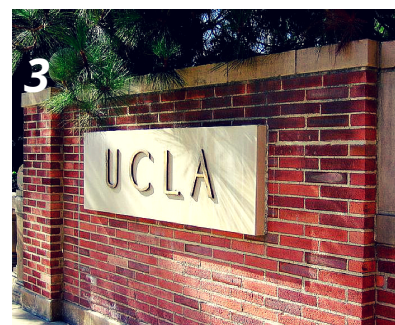
EMPOWERING SURVIVORS TO HEAL THROUGH THE PRACTICE OF YOGA.



The development of a University of California systemwide network of trauma-informed Yoga as Healing programs creates a unique opportunity to empower survivors to connect with their inner capacity to heal through the holistic practice of yoga. Because of the impact that trauma has on the body's physiology, it is essential to offer body based interventions for survivors. Due to factors such as stigma around help-seeking and cultural barriers, it is critical to offer multiple modalities to heal. As many of us know and deeply understand in this work: not every survivor will heal in the same way. This program provides a venue for survivors to become acquainted with and reclaim their bodies, helps them become grounded in the present moment, and allows them to explore the benefits of mindfulness as they flow breath-to-movement in guided trauma-informed practice and meditation. Classes are offered in an 8-week format and focus on intentional themes tailored to the needs of survivors, encompass various restorative postures, and most importantly facilitate healing off of the yoga mat. Classes are also coupled with guided activities including debriefing exercises, journaling, drumming, and art therapy.

Currently, UCI, UCLA, and UCSB are the three campuses offering trauma-informed yoga programs for survivors. These programs have proven to be safe and accessible ways for survivors to explore their healing. These inward experiences of healing on the yoga mat have created positive outcomes and tangible skills, which include the proven key benefits illustrated on the right.

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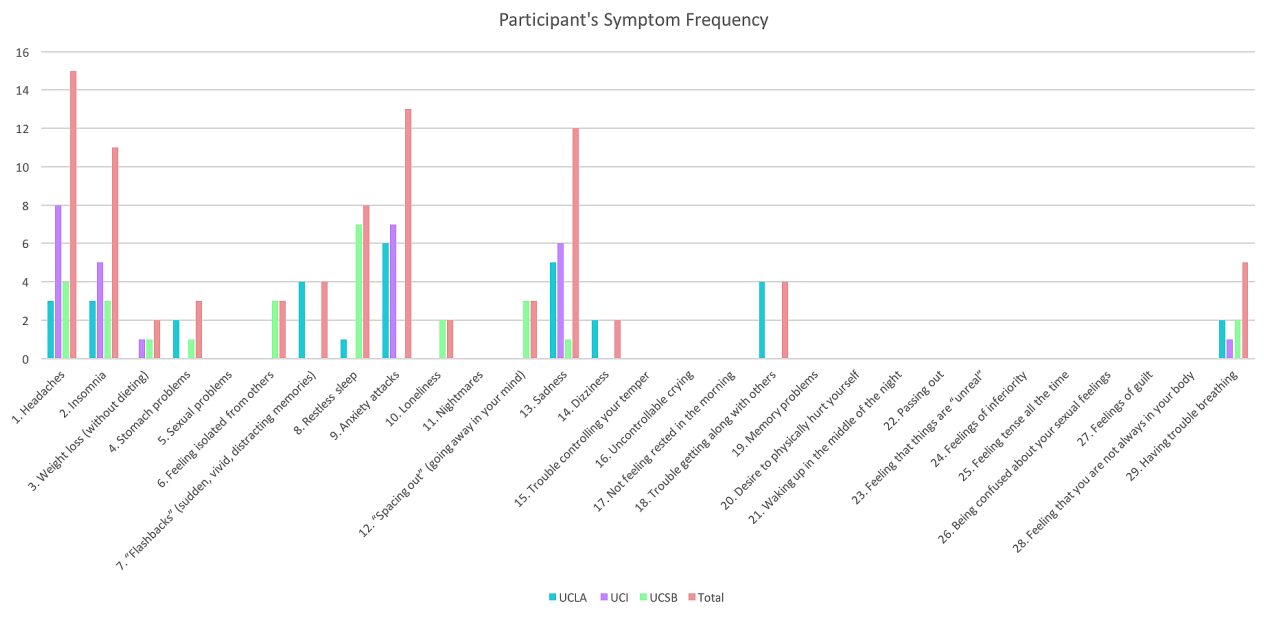


PROVEN KEY BENEFITS:

- the recognition of choices
- feelings of safety and strength
- ability to be expressive in therapy
- developed positive coping skills
- learned self care strategies
- trust in self & others
- strong sense of community
- the establishment of boundaries and how to be assertive
- the ability to be intimate again
- decreased feelings of depression, stress, and anxiety
- empowerment to seek other resources such as counseling, medical support, and/or the gaining of confidence to report the assault to police or Title IX
- increased confidence
- key themes: assertiveness, courage, groundedness, balance
- emotional, physical, mental, and interpersonal skills

WHAT IS TRAUMA-INFORMED YOGA?

This chart illustrates the impact trauma has on the body's physiology of current Yoga as Healing participants.



According to the chart above, the most common symptoms reported (5 participants or more), included:

Headaches, Insomnia, Stomach Problems, Flashbacks, Restless Sleep, Anxiety Attacks, Sadness, Having Trouble Breathing

Regardless of the nature of the traumatic incident, survivors may suffer from physical pain and emotional unrest after experiencing a trigger, or as a chronic underpinning of their daily activities. There is no doubt that trauma impacts brain functioning. After experiencing trauma, the amygdala goes into over-drive and anticipates danger even when there is none. Trauma can leave the body feeling dis-regulated and unsafe. Trauma-informed yoga is an empowering yoga practice that prioritizes the lived experience and healing of the survivor. Trust, safety, choice, and control are central to the practice.

Below is a list of the core components of trauma-informed yoga:

1. Empowerment-based language
2. No physical assists
3. Natural breathing
4. Giving students space to explore the postures
5. Themes to aid in healing
6. Create a safe experience
7. Providing a supportive presence

EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH

Research supported by NIH shows that ten weeks of trauma informed yoga markedly reduced PTSD symptoms of clients who had failed to respond to any medication or any other treatment.

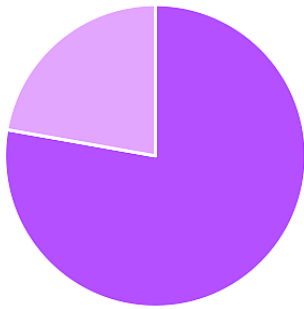
Research from Harvard shows that practicing mindfulness decreases the activity in the amygdala. Doing so can help survivors decrease reactivity to potential triggers.

Many programs have found that survivors who are uncomfortable with or express a lack of interest in talk therapy have flourished in art or movement-based formats (Holistic Healing Services for Survivors, Poore, T., Shulruff, T., & Bein, K., 2013).

YOGA AS POST TRAUMATIC

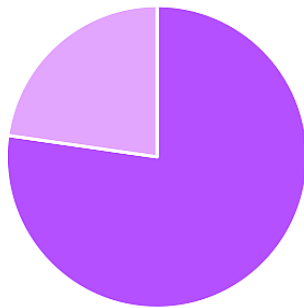
HEALING & STRESS DISORDER

Likelihood of PTSD-UC Irvine



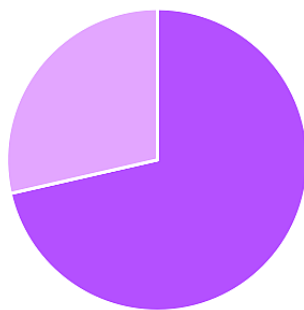
■ Likelihood of PTSD ■ Little Likelihood of PTSD

Likelihood of PTSD-UC Los Angeles



■ Likelihood of PTSD ■ Little Likelihood of PTSD

Likelihood of PTSD-UC Santa Barbara



■ Likelihood of PTSD ■ Little Likelihood of PTSD

PTSD SUMMARIES

UCI | UCLA | UCSB

UCI - 7 participants show likelihood of PTSD with an average score of 33.86. Lowest score for a participant with a high likelihood of PTSD is 19 and the highest score is 42 (very high). Median score, among participants with a high likelihood of PTSD, is 37.

UCLA - 17 participants show likelihood of PTSD with an average score of 30.17. Lowest score for a participant with a high likelihood of PTSD is 15 and the highest score is 50 (very high). Median score, among participants with a high likelihood of PTSD, is 30.

UCSB - 5 documented participants show likelihood of PTSD with an average score of 29. Lowest score for a participant with a high likelihood of PTSD is 25 and the highest score is 40 (very high). Median score, among participants with a high likelihood of PTSD, is 26.

Highest score is a 51, a score of at least 13 indicates likelihood of PTSD. Measures three things: re-experience, avoidance, and arousal

Important Note: Of the 38 survivors participating in Yoga as Healing at each of the 3 campuses, 29 show a likelihood for PTSD. Due to the frequency of survivors experiencing dysregulation, heightened physiological states, and dissociation; body-based work, such as yoga, can help students increase a sense of awareness, safety, and mastery over their bodies (The Trauma Center, Justice Resource Institute).

These charts illustrate UCI, UCLA, and UCSB Yoga as Healing participant physical and emotional baselines over the course of the first 4 weeks of the Winter 2016 program. These baselines are filled out by each participant before and after each class in order to provide the opportunity for participants to recognize their own growth and provide feedback on a weekly basis.

As demonstrated by these charts, participants demonstrate an overall increased physical and emotional energy after participating in each class session.

PARTICIPANTS

SAID AFTER EACH CLASS...

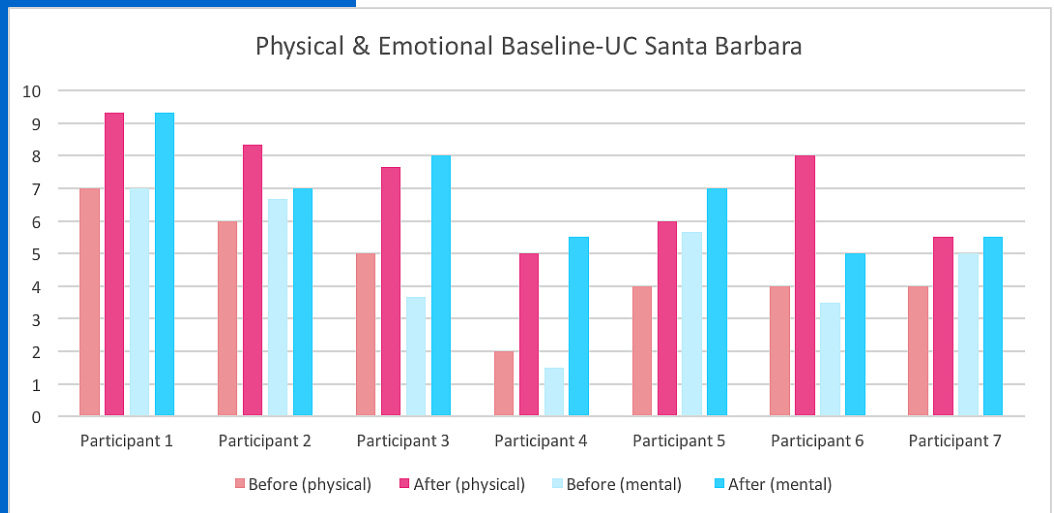
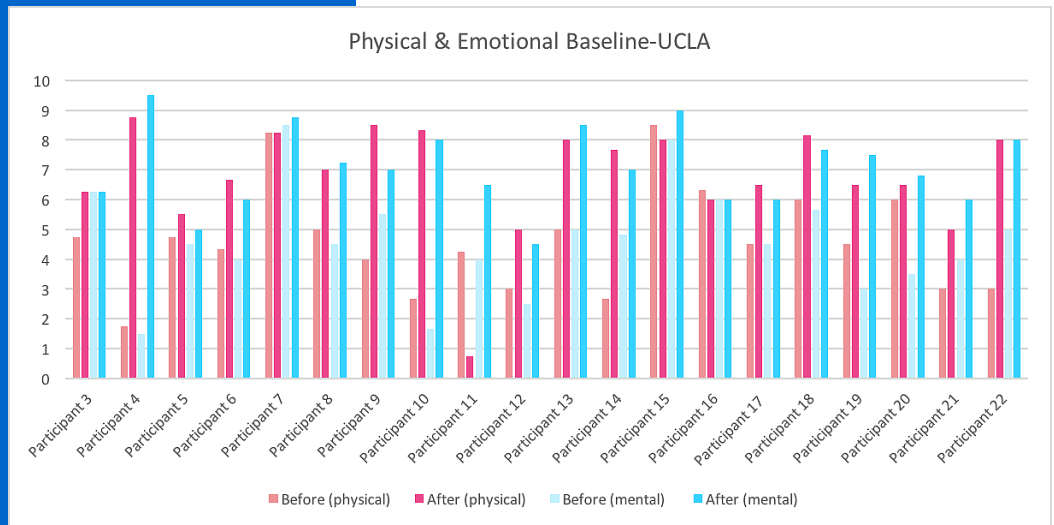
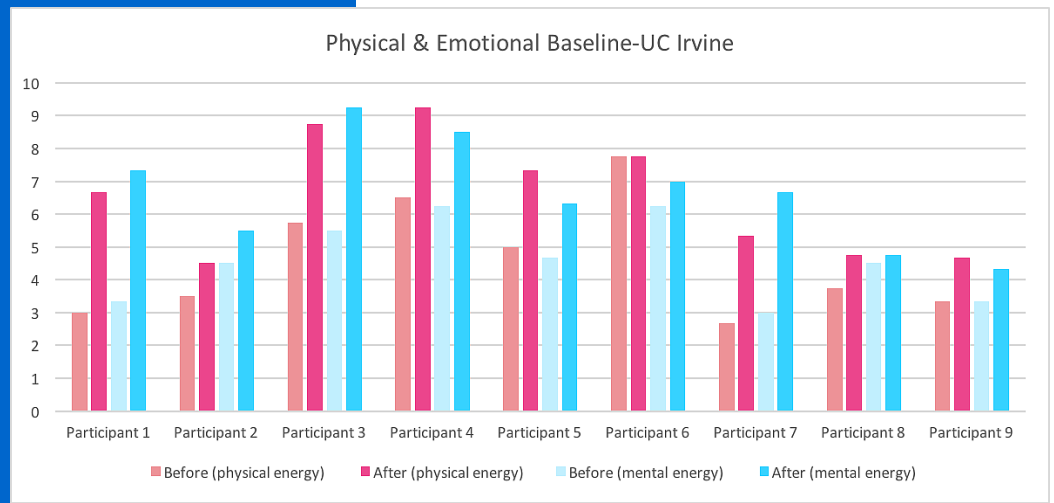
“Mentally: I am feeling more awake and clear. Physically: I am feeling less tense, warmer, and more relaxed.”

“I feel relaxed and balanced. Feeling more in tune with myself and focusing on what my body does and wants.”

“I feel empowered and amazing.”

“I feel much better after practice. I feel very mentally calm and relieved and my body feels less tense and very stretched out.”

“[I learned] breathing and mindfulness in each moment. Implementing emotional ritual. Focusing on my own balance and letting my body speak.”



“I feel like for the first time in a very very long time- my body is mine and for the past hour it spoke and I actually listened.”

Current Winter 2016

DATA ANALYSIS



SURVIVOR TESTIMONIALS



"Since the assault, I've regarded my body as something almost like a traitor or foreign. This program has helped me feel more comfortable in my skin. I feel strong and beautiful. I feel like I'm in control of my body again."

"I gained my body, spirit, and mind back. I gained confidence, openness, and courage. I gained strength, assertiveness, and knowledge to carry me for a lifetime. I gained myself back."

"This program helped me find my inner voice. Peace. Some courage to be myself and communicate my needs/wants to others. I'm learning how to speak up for myself. This yoga class has changed my life."

"Prior to the program, I was having difficulty with eating. When I would get stressed, either emotionally or with school, I would have a panic attack and eat until I 'felt better.' I felt that the satisfaction from eating, as if I was hungry, calmed me down. I have gained 30 pounds since I was raped, but I am proud to say that since the beginning of yoga, I have been able to control my emotions way better and have stopped eating/binging. "

"I learned that being who I am is enough."

"Because of this yoga program, I was able to become intimate with my boyfriend again. Because of this yoga program, I was able to feel like I was whole again in a way I could not recognize. Because of this yoga program, I was able to move from a place of anger to a place of forgiveness and inner-peace."

"Along with yoga, I am also attending counseling in which, because of yoga, I have been able to open up more when it comes to talking and expressing myself."

"It really helped me heal; each session would make me feel lighter and happy with myself, something that I never allowed myself to be."

"I can now manage painful experiences well without breaking apart."

"I learned that I am important, my feelings matter, and that I am beautiful the way I am. I learned how to take time for myself and set boundaries. I feel so grateful that I was able to take part in this."