

Editorial

Yoga Therapy: Conquering a Brave New World

B. Grace Marie Bullock, PhD, E-RYT 200, RYT-500

Editor in Chief



These are exciting times for the field of yoga therapy. Interest in yoga as therapy is rapidly growing among health care systems, and institutions of higher learning are beginning to offer graduate-level yoga therapy programs. In 2012 the International Association of Yoga Therapists (IAYT) published Recommended Standards for the Education of Yoga Therapists, and

in 2013 IAYT will begin the process of accrediting yoga therapy programs that meet these standards. The bridges between yoga therapy, scientific research, and modern health care are being constructed at an astonishing rate, and the mission of establishing yoga as a recognized and respected therapy is manifesting.

This issue of the *International Journal of Yoga Therapy* is devoted to innovation in yoga therapy. It highlights creative solutions for addressing the demands of modern health care superimposed upon traditional yoga philosophy and practice. The Perspectives in this issue include a commentary on competencies as the cornerstone of educational standards for the training of yoga therapists, followed by a discussion of the importance of assessment in yoga therapist education and the ways in which yoga philosophy guides this effort. The dynamic and creative process that one university used to create a graduate-level training program in yoga therapy that meets IAYT's educational standards, as well as the university's academic requirements, is then presented. Each of these contributions details novel approaches to establishing yoga therapy as a credible profession in the Western world.

This year the journal has received an unprecedented number of high-quality manuscripts and will publish two issues for the first time in its history. More individuals are becoming interested in yoga therapy research and practice, which is reflected in the diversity of structural, physiological, and psychological conditions being studied and the populations being served by yoga therapists. Parker et al. offer an operational definition of *yoga-nidra* based on traditional descriptions of the practice and physiologically testable hypotheses regarding its

effects. This proposal sets the stage for potentially groundbreaking research regarding the neurophysiological changes that may be associated with a particular yoga practice. Norlyk Smith and Boser address the critical issue of risks and benefits of particular types of movement for individuals with osteoporosis. Their literature review and recommendations could serve as an important reference for therapists interested in working with individuals with reduced bone density. Jeter and colleagues provide preliminary evidence in support of the use of a pioneering Kripalu yoga program geared toward reducing stress and improving mood and mindful awareness for a sample of police academy trainees.

The SYR poster abstracts and SYTAR common interest community (CIC) proposals published in this issue speak to the brilliant advances occurring in yoga therapy. Studies have examined the benefits of yoga for a broad spectrum of conditions, including anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, eating disorders, multiple sclerosis, hypertension, atrial fibrillation, obesity, stress, and smoking cessation, among others. CIC proposals cover a breadth of topics related to the use of yoga therapy technologies for rehabilitation and mental health.

The *Journal* has undergone some dramatic changes to meet the call for innovation in our field. The interior has been redesigned to provide a greater amount of content in fewer pages, in response to the need to provide environmentally sustainable, cost-efficient materials to IAYT members. Ken Wilson's spectacular cover design is also symbolic of the creative prowess of our field as we blaze new trails in health care, technology, practice, and research. Of course none of this would be possible without the painstaking efforts of editorial board members and peer reviewers, who are the backbone of this publication. We also owe a debt of gratitude to the many authors who submit original and inventive materials to the journal, and who engage in the process of multiple revisions to hone and refine their manuscripts. You continue to elevate this publication and the field of yoga therapy to new heights. We are grateful for your efforts as we face this brave new world together.

grace@iayt.org