

# Yoga Therapy in Practice

## The Art of Yoga Project: A Gender-Responsive Yoga and Creative Arts Curriculum for Girls in the California Juvenile Justice System

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**Abstract:** *As girls enter the juvenile justice system, they stand on the precipice of a lifelong cycle of crime and incarceration, yet still have the opportunity to turn toward healing and rehabilitation. With this in mind, The Art of Yoga Project (AYP) has designed a gender-specific intervention that combines Yoga, visual arts, and creative writing to help girls learn how to create a positive future for themselves. This article introduces AYP and shares the goals, objectives, and experiences of the program. A thorough description of AYP's comprehensive Yoga and Creative Arts Curriculum is provided, including a sample class plan and overview of the entire course. Eight principles of best practices are presented and discussed. We hope that this blueprint will inspire and empower other Yoga therapists to develop similar programs that serve this important and underserved population.*

**Keywords:** *Yoga, art, writing, mindfulness, juvenile detention, rehabilitation, trauma, adolescents*

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“Before I participated in the Yoga program, I didn’t care about my life, I just wanted to have fun and do what I wanted—not listen to anybody. It made me realize I am fifteen, and I am doing all this stuff, and I could end up dying from it ... It showed me how to care about my life.” —AYP participant

“It relieves their stress. It centers them, gives them an inner peace. It gives them an opportunity to think outside the box. They become more aware of others; they’re not the center of the universe anymore. They learn by watching in Yoga that everyone struggles just like them.” —Probation Counselor, San Francisco Juvenile Justice Center

As girls enter the juvenile justice system, they stand on the precipice of a lifelong cycle of crime and incarceration, yet still have the opportunity to turn toward healing and rehabilitation. With this in mind, The Art of Yoga Project (AYP) has designed a gender-specific intervention that combines Yoga, visual arts, and creative writing to help girls

learn how to create a positive future for themselves. AYP meets these girls where they are, physically and emotionally, by sending specially trained Yoga teachers into local juvenile detention centers. The mission of AYP is to lead teen girls in the California juvenile justice system toward accountability to self, others, and community by providing

practical tools for behavior change, decision making, and lifelong wellness.

The purpose of this article is threefold. First, we will introduce the AYP and share the goals, objectives, and experiences of the program. This work will be especially valuable for experienced Yoga teachers, particularly those working with at-risk youth. It is also relevant for psychologists, educators, service providers, and staff who are employed in the criminal justice system. Second, we will provide a thorough description of the current curriculum and give a detailed example of an actual class. Finally, AYP's eight principles of best practices will be presented and discussed. We hope that this blueprint will inspire and empower others to develop similar programs. To that end, we focus specifically on providing interested Yoga therapists with the tools and motivation necessary to get involved.

## History and Development of The Art of Yoga Project

The Art of Yoga Project (AYP) was founded by nurse practitioner and Yoga instructor Mary Lynn Fitton. While in clinical practice, she saw first-hand the challenges facing many adolescent girls, especially those with little support at home. As she treated these girls for anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and unhealthy behaviors (including drug abuse, self-mutilation, and unsafe sex), she realized that health education could only go so far. Many of the young women she treated lacked a fundamental awareness of, and connection to, their own physical and emotional needs. Without this core self-awareness and a sense of respect for their bodies, the girls had little chance of ending their high-risk behaviors and seeking healthy alternatives.

AYP began as a pilot program in 2003 in a girls' residential treatment center. AYP now serves over 500 incarcerated girls annually in three San Francisco Bay Area Counties<sup>a</sup> and is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Minority groups tend to be overrepresented in samples of at-risk youth. The population served by AYP is no exception. African Americans are extremely overrepresented (95%) in San Francisco, and Santa Clara is composed mostly of Latinas (80%). By comparison, there has been more ethnic and racial diversity in San Mateo, with 50% Latina,

20% Caucasian, 15% Asian and Pacific Islander, and 15% African American.

The cornerstone of AYP is a year-long comprehensive Yoga and Creative Arts Curriculum (YCAC) offered in partnership with the juvenile facilities. The YCAC is an integral part of the girls' rehabilitation and a mandatory program offered during school hours (sometimes up to four days a week). The girls receive school credit for their participation. This curriculum has been referred to as the "missing link" in a girl's rehabilitation by those working within the juvenile justice system.<sup>1</sup> In addition, AYP provides an After-Care Mentoring Program that continues girls' access to support services and role models as they make the difficult transition out of custody and into their community.

## The Need for Gender-Responsive Treatment

Teen girls are the fastest growing segment of the incarcerated population in the United States.<sup>2-4</sup> Both theory and practice are trying to catch up with this shift and discover the best way to cater to this group. Adult men have traditionally been the standard population managed by the criminal justice system. Men are also overrepresented at all levels of the criminal justice system, including service providers and management. For this reason, there is an acute male bias in existing juvenile justice programs. Many existing programs are based on a male model,<sup>5</sup> and although boys and girls face some similar risks, they do so at different rates and with different sensibilities.<sup>6</sup> Juvenile girls warrant age-appropriate, gender-responsive, and culturally sensitive services, and a substantial shift is required to attend to the needs of offending girls.

A gender-responsive approach comprehensively addresses the unique and specific needs of girls, creates an environment that reflects the realities of girls' lives, and acknowledges their unique developmental experiences and pathways to problem behaviors.<sup>7</sup> Girls entering the Juvenile Justice System (JJS) are at a difficult developmental period, in which they are treated like children for the commission of mostly adult offenses. Further, many of them are forced to cope with adult life circumstances (such as unsupported living or pregnancy) with a child's abilities and limited resources. The vast majority of offending girls have been sexually abused,<sup>8</sup> come from violent and dysfunctional households,<sup>9</sup> and are gang-affiliated.<sup>9</sup> Thus, these girls are in considerable need of adult support.

Research also now indicates that there are many important differences between the emotional and cognitive devel-

a. Current sites: Margaret J. Kemp Camp for Girls (Camp Kemp) and Youth Services Center in San Mateo County; San Francisco Youth Guidance Center in San Francisco County; Muriel Wright Residential Center in Santa Clara County.

opment of boys and girls. For example, when compared to their male counterparts, girls are more empathic and better able to understand consequences; have stronger verbal skills; are better at recognizing and responding to facial expressions and emotions; tend to look to external sources for self-esteem; and are more susceptible to media influence.<sup>10-12</sup> Girls entering the JJS (as victims or offenders) are more likely than their male counterparts to have experienced physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. Further, while boys tend to experience physical trauma at the hands of enemies or strangers, girls tend to experience psychological, sexual, or emotional abuse at the hands of acquaintances, family members, or caregivers.<sup>13</sup>

The JJS originally emerged to be distinct from the criminal justice system and emphasized accountability, rehabilitation, and the unique experiences of youth.<sup>14</sup> And, as the female correctional population has grown, the gender-specific needs that spring from the unique circumstances of girls has been acknowledged. However, their placement in institutions (many of which were originally designed for boys) too often fails to meet their unique rehabilitative, treatment, and management needs. Further, in the event that they are recognized as distinct from males, they are subject to institutional bias at almost every level of the system. This underscores the importance of understanding the individual needs of girls in the JJS and developing gender-responsive services for those who are incarcerated.

## The AYP Curriculum

The Yoga and Creative Arts Curriculum (YCAC) is designed to help the girls learn self-awareness, self-respect, and self-control so that they can ultimately make better choices and be good to themselves and others. AYP uses a nonreligious curriculum based on Patanjali's eight limbs of Yoga that teaches the tenets of nonviolence, integrity, truthfulness, self-discipline, and contentment. This includes group discussion, Yoga *asana* (poses) practice and theory, meditation, and creative arts. Specific details of the curriculum components are contained in Appendix 1.

The marriage of Yoga and creative arts was chosen to create a safe space where authentic sharing is possible. The Yoga serves to ground and center the girls, allowing them to connect with the best parts of themselves and each other. The creative arts project follows the centering Yoga practice. Here they can write, paint, or draw about their feelings instead of acting out with high-risk behaviors. In this way, art provides a vehicle for expression and a context for process-

ing thoughts and emotions, all in the company of peers, teachers, and support staff.

Each session of the YCAC is six to ten weeks long and is accompanied by additional ongoing weekly one-hour Yoga classes that reinforce the ongoing curriculum. Sessions are designed to be cotaught by a certified Yoga instructor and a creative arts or writing educator. In addition, teaching assistants are present in each class. Each specific class, practice session, and reflective writing workshop is designed as an independent unit. This format allows girls to enter or exit the program at any time, while still providing the chance for them to benefit from a single day's or week's participation. This is especially important given the vast range in the girls' sentence lengths.

## A Sample Class

Each class begins with a strengthening Yoga practice, including meditation and breathing exercises, and transitions into a creative art experience and discussion. By way of example, the lesson plan of the first class is provided here. Interested readers should refer to the full AYP curriculum for more information.<sup>15</sup>

This particular class includes an introduction to Yoga, and the art project is a sewing meditation (making flax and lavender eye-pillows with personal intentions inside). The classroom space is set with flowers, a centerpiece, chimes, meditative music, and sample eye-pillows.

### Goals

The core goals of this session include that students

- Begin to understand the history, philosophy, purpose, and benefits of Yoga.
- Experience a strengthening and energizing Vinyasa (Flow) Yoga practice.
- Experience the benefits of relaxation, including a guided journey with healing imagery.
- Begin to cultivate a sense of quieting the "chatter of the mind" and listening to their inner wisdom and intuition.

The more specific objectives of this session include that students

- Be able to name two benefits of a Yoga practice.
- Practice basic beginner Yoga postures.
- Learn the meaning of the word *intention*.
- Create an intention for their Yoga practice.
- Participate in a sewing meditation as they create a personal relaxation tool.

## Materials

Materials required for this class include Yoga mats, blocks, and straps; a selection of handouts illustrating Vinyasa Yoga practice guidelines and basic postures; flax and lavender; partially sewn eye-pillows; colored card stock; needles and thread or fabric glue (if needles are prohibited); decorative beads; and pens.

## Outline

The class begins with the girls seated in a circle. Support staff are intentionally spread throughout the group. An approximate timeline of the class is provided below.

1. **“Check in” (5 minutes).** The girls take turns saying their name and something about their name, or sharing how they feel today.
2. **Inspirational reading (1 minute).** A passage is read and girls are invited to share any reflections or thoughts on the reading (5 minutes).
3. **“What is Yoga?” (3–5 minutes).** Girls are asked to give their own definition. The instructor then presents the meaning and purpose of Yoga.
4. **Discussion of Yoga theory (20 minutes).** This discussion includes the philosophy and history of Yoga, the health benefits of Yoga, and the definitions of *namaste*, *vinyasa*, and *intention*.
5. **Brainstorm (3 minutes).** Girls brainstorm ways to make Yoga practice effective and enjoyable. Their responses are recorded and become a poster to display each week.
6. **Yoga practice (30 minutes).** Basic practice focuses on the building blocks of sun salutations (including warrior 1 and 2, lunge, cobra, plank, child’s pose, classic sun salutation with modifications for beginners, and relaxation in *savasana*). While the girls are in *savasana*, the staff begins to set up the art activity. Girls are brought out of *savasana* with a guided meditation, which might include soothing music. This serves as a transition to the art activity and is an important strategy for preventing retriggering of trauma.
7. **Art activity (20 minutes).** Girls write a personal intention on a piece of card stock (“My intention is...”). Then, in ceremony, each girl steps forward, states her intention aloud, and listens as the group repeats it back to her as an affirmation (“Your intention is...”). She then chooses decorations (beads and fabric), places her intention inside the pillow, fills it with flax and lavender, and sews up the final corner (under supervision).
8. **Group circle (15 minutes).** If time allows, the class concludes with a group circle. The instructor establishes confidentiality in the group and discusses the importance of listening, nonjudgment, and the value of sharing. This is also an opportunity for girls to suggest ways to make the circle effective and nurturing.

9. **Class evaluation (5 minutes).** Girls are asked to answer the following questions at the end of the class: What are two reasons to practice Yoga? What is the meaning of “intention?” How did you feel before class? How do you feel now?

## AYP Best Practices

AYP is guided by eight principles of best practices. Developed over seven years, these guidelines have evolved through the shared experiences of over 75 Yoga instructors, artists, art therapists, counselors, and administrators. This section details AYP’s principles of best practices and discusses their importance in the context of gender-responsivity, juvenile justice, and rehabilitation.

Many of the best practices presented here are drawn from AYP’s experiences at the Margaret J. Kemp Camp for Girls in San Mateo, CA. Since 2006, AYP has been included in trainings and multidisciplinary team meetings for the facility’s staff. These experiences have contributed enormously to the development and sophistication of understanding how best to serve this population.<sup>b</sup> It is our hope that other organizations will benefit from this collective work in the spirit of transparency, mutual respect, and professional support.

***Provide a comprehensive continuum of care for at-risk teen girls in the Juvenile Justice System, to guide them toward self-awareness, self-respect, and self-control.***

“I learned I need to get out of the system. I’m still in middle school. I’m thirteen. I’m trying to turn my life around.” —AYP participant

Our goal is to provide comprehensive services both during and beyond incarceration. A comprehensive care approach begins with a community assessment. It also requires

b. Specifically, we wish to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the Honorable Marta Diaz, Sharon Jones, Glenda Miller, Larry Silver, and Rod Moore of the San Mateo County Probation Department, Toni Demarco, Scott Peyton, and Linda Johnson-Reitz of Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, School Instructor Deborah Budesa, Clarise Blanchard and Tonia Chen of Youth and Family Enrichment Services, Beth Nolan of CASA, and Sarah Jarvis and Jessica Hollander of Rape Trauma Services. In addition, we offer gratitude to the Honorable Margaret S. Johnson, The Honorable Catherine A. Gallagher and Laura Wegl of the San Jose Wright Center, and Brittany Heinrich of San Francisco’s City Youth Now. We also acknowledge the invaluable contributions of all AYP’s dedicated teachers and artists.

collaboration on many levels between the custodial staff and community-based programs as potential partners in after-care. It is especially important to assist girls as they transition back into their communities by providing resources that reinforce what they have learned in the program.

It has been AYP's experience that girls will often violate probation in order to reestablish the connections they had developed with counselors and probation staff. The After Care and Mentoring Programs provide consistent, caring, and healthy individuals as role models to fill this gap. This part of the program strengthens AYP's vision to reduce juvenile recidivism and to prevent adult offending.

### *Provide gender-responsive programs.*

The YCAC was written by women specifically for teen girls. Inherent in AYP's approach is an awareness of the challenges facing girls today, such as eating disorders, body-image issues, substance abuse, unsafe sex, depression, and anxiety. AYP programs are staffed by women, celebrate the experience of being a woman, and affirm the individual and collective power of women. In addition, the program builds trust in a circle of supportive peers and women elders, which is especially effective for young women with histories of physical and emotional abuse. This approach has largely been guided by experiences over the last seven years where teachers have witnessed many girls express dissatisfaction with being female and attempt to emulate male behaviors as a way to gain legitimacy over their lives and circumstances.

A gender-responsive approach must also recognize "within-girl" differences, particularly with regard to cultural and sexual identity. Staff should attend trainings on working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, or intersexed youth. For example, when sexuality is discussed (such as during the *brahmacharya* lesson on sexual mindfulness), it should be done with an awareness of and sensitivity to the range of beliefs and behaviors of the girls.

### *Provide strengths-based programs.*

"I feel like Yoga really helps me gain more physical strength and control my emotions and anger. I use my breathing technique when I am mad or sad. When I'm in a bad situation I use meditation."

—AYP participant

Treatment and corrections models traditionally focus on what's missing, lacking, or "wrong" in an individual.<sup>16</sup>

A strength-based perspective focuses instead on the positive elements of a girl's nature. The tenets of strength-based programming come from social work and describe a perspective that assumes the following:<sup>17</sup>

- People are active participants in the helping process.
- All people have strengths, often untapped or unrecognized.
- Strengths foster motivation for growth.
- Strengths are internal and environmental.

Our approach is to meet the girl where she is today and reinforce her existing skills and strengths, viewing them as assets in her healing. Emphasis is placed on acknowledging and honoring her mentors, her own innate wisdom, and her recent good choices or successes, however small.

### *Provide trauma-informed programs.*

"Yoga is a safe environment. The teachers create this." —AYP participant

Given the high incidence of trauma history among incarcerated teen girls, any intervention must include trauma-informed services.<sup>18</sup> Being "trauma-informed" means acknowledging the traumatic histories of the girls in every element of the program. For example, trauma specialists are invited to collaborate with AYP whenever possible,<sup>c</sup> and AYP invests in comprehensive and continuing education about the developmental impact of trauma and self-harming behaviors for its staff and volunteers. In addition, AYP staff is trained to create physical and emotional safety for all participants during and beyond every class session. In an effort to avoid secondary trauma or triggering of a traumatic event, staff should also learn how to create and maintain appropriate boundaries with the girls. For example, teachers always ask permission for any physical contact and respect the personal space of everyone present. Finally, staff should be trained to recognize the manifestation of various coping mechanisms (such as dissociation) in a Yoga practice and learn supportive techniques to address them individually.

### *Provide evidence-based programs.*

It is important to provide evidence-based programming wherever possible. To this end, AYP conducts

c. We would like to acknowledge the assistance and involvement of Toni Demarco and Hala Khouri.

ongoing research and collaborates with other organizations in the field. The most recent of these partnerships has been the development of the Yoga Service Council, whose mission is to support individuals and organizations to best serve and empower their communities through Yoga.

Each site of AYP has so far been evaluated internally each quarter. These assessments have mostly been conducted to meet the specific requirements of various funding agencies and focus on the key outcomes of self-awareness, self-respect, and self-control. We have found that girls feel better both emotionally and physically after participating in the program. They learn to self-regulate, using their breathing to create an important pause in which to make better decisions. We also found that Yoga helps the girls open up and speak to their therapists with more awareness. Using the results from regular program evaluations, we have adjusted the length and content of our curriculum components to maintain the girls' active engagement.

The first author (in the capacity of research consultant) is currently working with site directors and volunteers to improve existing evaluation materials and analyze data from recently administered pre- and post-intervention surveys. An extensive evaluation of AYP is slated to begin in fall 2010, to be conducted by Dr. Harris and the Center for Justice Research, Policy, and Training at San Jose State University. This information will allow AYP to improve its services and also better communicate with institutions, funding agencies, and others interested in providing similar programs.

### *Ensure staff are screened, trained, and qualified to work with this population.*

“I’ve become more flexible and peaceful with myself... we learn a lot by being with nice and positive people who care for us.” —AYP participant

“I feel safe and comfortable with the staff—they are all great.” —AYP participant

Teachers working with at-risk youth should be certified Yoga instructors with at least twelve months of teaching experience. Teachers at AYP, for example, need to have attended a specific training regarding at-risk youth (either with AYP or another recommended train-

ing program).<sup>d</sup> They are also required to attend mandated reporter trainings, pass background checks, and be fingerprinted.

### *Fully integrate programming into the Juvenile Justice System.*

“The Art of Yoga Project’s multi-dimensional technique is particularly effective for the girls in the juvenile justice system that have had histories of juvenile crime, substance abuse, severe physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect...I could not be more pleased with the leadership...and the impact on the girls.” —Supervising Juvenile Judge **Marta Diaz**

“Yoga offers the girls at the camp an opportunity to focus on a much needed inward and positive direction. This also augments the impact of all the treatment services that the girls receive at the Camp. Ultimately, I believe it helps them break the cycle of unhealthy behaviors that led them to the Camp.” —Chief Probation Officer **Loren Buddress**

For long-term success and sustainability, it is essential to work collaboratively with facility staff at all levels of the JJS. Our goal is to fully integrate and institutionalize mindfulness-based practices as prevention and intervention for at-risk and incarcerated girls. AYP trains its own staff about the specific functions of the JJS, as well as the importance of providing programs in collaboration with rehabilitation teams. In San Mateo, AYP meets weekly with the facility's multidisciplinary team (which includes Mental Health and Probation) to discuss each girl's case in order to best serve her as an individual. This provides an opportunity to educate the team about the role that mindfulness and creative arts

d. Training topics include: Working with Teen Girls in the Juvenile Justice System—Integrative Care; Gender-Responsive Programming for Teen Girls; Trauma and Mental Health Disorders in Teen Girls including Self-harming behaviors; Teen Girls in Gangs and Drug Trafficking; Addiction and Recovery in Teen Girls; Eating Disorders and Body Image Issues in Teen Girls; Working with the Yoga and Creative Arts Curriculum—Integrating Creative Expression into Yoga Classes with At-Risk Teen Girls; Prenatal Yoga Refresher—Working with Pregnant and Parenting Teen Girls; The Role of the Assist: How to perform SAFE adjustments and support the lead teacher—Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning or Intersexed Youth.

can play and enables the development of shared language and mutual respect.

### *Provide participants with opportunities for creative expression.*

“As a teacher up at Juvenile Hall, I am there first-hand to see the transformation of the students who may come in sad, depressed, and angry, and, after a class of Yoga and reflective writing, leave with a smile on their face, and a piece of artwork that can later remind them of their inner power.”

—Matthew Lacques, Instructor, WLC, JJCO

“Yoga helps center, relax, and empower the girls so they feel safe, open, and prepared for creative writing activities. Creative writing helps the girls understand better their emotions, their world, and their place in it.” —Terri Lobdell, AYP Creative Writing Educator

Artistic expression is important for at-risk teen girls and can serve as an alternative to self-destructive behaviors. AYP’s creative arts curriculum includes a range of artistic endeavors to interest and engage participants. Additionally, the discipline of daily journaling is encouraged as a way to self-reflect and revisit themes that have been taught in class.

## Lessons Learned

The employees and staff at AYP have learned much over the years since the program’s inception. In closing this article, we share the most significant lessons from our experience in three key areas: the selection of teachers, classroom management skills, and how to work most effectively within the juvenile justice system.

### *The Ideal Teacher*

AYP teachers vary in age, background, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and personality. But in our experience, the most effective teachers do share certain traits. They are mature, self-aware professionals who teach with enthusiasm. They are able to maintain appropriate boundaries with the girls and have a keen awareness of their own challenges (such as those regarding authority) and prejudice. They are inherently drawn to working with teen girls (rather than exploring whether they like it or not). They have knowledge

and sensitivity about the backgrounds of their students and work hard to not take things personally. They forge ahead with confidence in even the most difficult environments, but balance this determination with humility. They are not afraid to admit that they don’t know something and ask for help when they need it. Although they may experience moments of hopelessness while serving this challenging population, they are renewed by the triumphs and breakthroughs that they witness in the girls. AYP teachers are team-players who are dedicated to our mission and care deeply for the girls’ welfare. At the same time, they know their own limits and are aware of the dangers of trying to “save” the girls, and the consequences of inappropriate behaviors.

### *The Ideal Class*

Our experience has shown that the most effective AYP classes are taught by at least three women: one qualified art educator, one in the role of teacher, who leads the class, and one in the role of assistant, who participates in the class, actively performs adjustments, and manages behavioral issues. Having a team of at least three instructors provides necessary structure and safety to the class, as well as support for each other. Each of the facilitators encourage the girls to participate by practicing respect, smiling frequently, giving genuine praise, providing modifications when necessary, and using appropriate humor.

Teachers also have mindful, creative, and appropriate responses to any behavioral situations that arise. AYP sets clear guidelines and expectations for the girls, and discourages commentaries and side conversations, but avoids any overt disciplinary action. We have found it valuable to give more attention to the girls who are doing their best to participate than to those attempting to disrupt the class. We model appropriate behavior and constantly explore new, fun, and interesting ways to engage the girls through art and Yoga.

### *The Opportunity*

Entering the field of Yoga service means joining an important movement toward integrating mindfulness-based practices into mainstream, institutional settings. It is imperative that these environments are perceived not as obstacles to overcome, but as opportunities for innovative, meaningful, and valuable partnerships.

AYP treats all individuals at every level of the JJS with due honor and respect. We recognize that their wisdom and experience is critical to our success, and we are receptive to their knowledge and perspectives. We have sought an ongoing dialogue with major players in the JJS and have a strong desire to learn as much as possible from their experiences.

We see juvenile system staff not as “gate-keepers” but as important partners in each girl’s rehabilitation. Just as the JJS can teach us much about this population, we, in turn, can teach them new ways of living more mindfully. When engaging in this exchange, it is necessary that we tailor our message to our specific audience, ensuring that our work is grounded, practical, and evidence-based.

## Conclusion

We hope that this introduction to The Art of Yoga Project will inspire other interested members of the international Yoga community to work with at-risk and incarcerated girls and to provide gender-responsive programming consistent with what AYP has learned through its work with adolescent girls in California’s juvenile justice system. It is our firm belief that the discipline of Yoga and the freedom of creative arts can be shared with at-risk teenage girls in a meaningful, effective manner. Yoga therapists are especially well-suited to serve this often overlooked population of young women who are so desperately in need of guidance. Those who choose to participate in this valuable endeavor join others in the growing momentum of Yoga service.

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## Appendix 1. AYP Curriculum

Term	Goals	Yoga Component	Art Component	Additional Information
Fall: <i>Introduction</i>	Build strength and flexibility Develop self-awareness Attention to inner dialogue	Introduce Patanjali's eight-limbed path Basic Yoga <i>asanas</i> Yoga theory & history Purpose & benefits of Yoga	Self-portraiture Collage Sculpture Life-size body mapping Mosaic & mixed media [All individual projects]	Media awareness Body image Health and nutrition education
Winter: <i>Introspection</i>	Develop self-reflection and accountability	<i>Yamas &amp; Niyamas</i> (including non-stealing, non-violence, personal hygiene, integrity of word & action, sexual mindfulness)	Creative writing Journaling Poetry [All writing projects]	Poetry Slam (poetry reading event performed by the girls and attended by staff and families)
Spring: <i>Integration</i>	Unity in diversity Focus on self-calming and impulse control Tolerance and teamwork	More sophisticated breathing practices, concentration, and meditation More esoteric limbs of Yoga ( <i>pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, samadhi</i> ) Partner work (where appropriate)	Murals Mandalas Group sculpture Improvisational theater Quilting Collective poetry [All group projects]	Celebration and Art Show featuring the girls' work
Summer: <i>Inspiration</i>	Creative discovery Cooperation	Learn how to cope more positively with mistakes, leading to a more resilient and responsive engagement with life	Movement and spoken word activities Improvisational theater Performance art	Multi-media piece performed for families and staff