Program Facilitation Guidelines

"The more we care for the happiness of others, the greater our own sense of well-being becomes. Cultivating a close, warm-hearted feeling for others automatically puts the mind at ease. This helps remove whatever fears or insecurities we may have and gives us the strength to cope with any obstacles we encounter. It is the ultimate source of success in life."

-- H.H. Dalai Lama

Post-Lineage, Client-Center, and Trauma-Informed

Over the millennia that yoga has been practiced, sharing the practice has often taken place within a lineage founded by a guru, featuring a hierarchical relationship between teacher and student.

Prison Yoga Project favors a "post-lineage" approach. Theodora Wildcroft, an ethnographer, scholar, and yoga practitioner who coined the term, defines "post-lineage yoga" in the following way:

> *[Post-lineage yoga] rejects the idea that any individual yogic text or modern alignment paradigm can hold complete universal truth, and rejects unquestioning allegiance to a single deity in the form of a living or historical figure. It rejects the common practice of attributing any harm caused within the practice to defects in the practitioner, and seeks to re-situate the practice in community, and socio-political contexts. Post-lineage yoga is a re-evaluation of the authority to determine practice, and a privileging of peer networks over pedagogical hierarchies, or saṃghas (communities) over guru-śiṣya (teacher-adept) relationships.*[1]

In the context of a prison or jails, where social hierarchies are explicit, fraught with power dynamics, and often traumatizing, we feel this approach is essential. A post-lineage approach makes space for a trauma-informed methodology, shifting control away from the teacher and empowering the practitioner to discover the truth of yoga as it is revealed to them through their own experience.

Without a specific lineage with prescribed practices, we need to consider the needs and circumstances of the people with whom we will be practicing..

[1] Wildcroft, Theodora R. (2018). *Patterns of authority and practice relationships in 'post-lineage yoga'*. The Open University (PhD Thesis).

A common factor in the lives of incarcerated people is trauma. Many incarcerated people have, since childhood, experienced significant chronic interpersonal trauma. Social factors such as race, gender, or economic class also contribute to trauma, and the incarceration environment itself compounds the trauma. To cope with this trauma, many have turned to substances, leading to addiction.

Our prisons and jails are the de facto providers for those who do not have reliable access to mental health care. Anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia are overrepresented in our prisons and, especially, in our jails.

Recognizing the prevalence of trauma, addiction, and mental health concerns among the incarcerated, Prison Yoga Project adopts a trauma-informed, mindfulness-based approach adapted for prisons and jails based on our experience working in this context. This document provides guidelines for offering yoga according to this approach.

The goal of this approach is to offer an immersive somatic experience with the objectives of:

- Awakening and strengthening embodiment through interoception
- Discharging accumulated tension
- Developing resilience to stress and trauma
- Cultivating tools for self-regulation; managing states of hyper-/hypo-arousal
- Experiencing the present moment and the passage of time
- Practicing personal empowerment; taking effective action and making choices
- Strengthening self-awareness and the capacity for insight
- Building relationships and community; empathy and compassion

Facilitator Requirements

Before attempting to lead groups in a prison or jail, you should have experience leading groups through yoga practices. If you're nervous because you lack experience, this can be communicated to the group and diminish potential benefits. And while experience may bring confidence and poise, it can also make it challenging to adopt a new approach. Having extensive experience in a particular yoga tradition can sometimes pose a challenge to adapting to a trauma-informed methodology.

Beyond your prior experience facilitating yoga practices, you must have a close relationship with your own embodied experience. You must be able to meet challenging circumstances with an informed response rather than a triggered reaction. You must be able to feel compassion for people who may have caused significant harm to others through acts such as murder or rape.

Minimum requirements for becoming a Prison Yoga Project facilitator are:

- A dedicated personal practice that includes somatic mindfulness

- RYT-200 (or similar) certification
- Completion of PYP's *Foundational Training*
- Experience facilitating trauma-informed yoga and mindfulness practices

Preferred candidates will have the above plus yoga therapy certification (C-IAYT), Somatic Experiencing Practitioner (SEP), or mental health provider training with an emphasis on body-based therapies. Additional training for working with specific populations, e.g., youth, seniors, addiction recovery, chair yoga, accessible yoga and so on, is extremely valuable.

Reading

The following books are required reading for all PYP Facilitators:

- *Yoga: A Path for Healing and Recovery*, by James Fox
- *Freedom from the Inside*, by Josefin Wikstrom and James Fox
- *Best Practices for Teaching Yoga in the Criminal Justice System*, Yoga Service Council
- *Teaching Trauma Sensitive Yoga: a Practical Guide,* by Brendon Abram
- *The Body Keeps the Score,* by Bessel van der Kolk

While there are many books and other sources you might turn to in your self-study to gain more skill and understanding in facilitating a trauma-informed yoga practice, here are a few that we highly-recommended:

- *Accessible Yoga,* by Jivana Heyman
- *Trauma and Memory*, by Peter Levine
- *Overcoming Trauma through Yoga*, by David Emerson and Elizabeth Hopper, PhD
- *Trauma-Sensitive Yoga in Therapy*, by David Emerson
- *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts*, by Gabor Mate
- *Befriending the Body*, by Ann Saffi Biasetti

Note that you may find recommendations in these resources that contradict guidelines offered in this document. You may also find yourself working in an environment or with a group that requires deviation from these guidelines. In such a case, adapt based on an informed perspective.

Establishing a Program

A *program* refers to a recurring meeting at a facility. A program may be ongoing (without a defined begin or end date) or close-ended. A program might recur according to a variety of schedules: daily, twice-weekly, weekly, monthly, and so on. A program might follow a structured curriculum or follow an

ad-hoc practice-focused path. The group participants may be consistent or may come and go depending on the nature of the facility.

When establishing a program be aware of the following considerations:

- **Group size** – The preferred group size is 15 participants; with additional facilitators, up to 25 participants can be accommodated. Consider the size and configuration of the practice space when determining group size and vice versa. There are other factors you might need to consider; for example, when working with groups who have a serious mental illness, you might opt for a smaller group.
- **Team size** – We recommend a team of three facilitators per program (two per session and one sub/rotating facilitator). Ideally, two facilitators will be present per session; although a session may be facilitated by a single person unless it creates a safety concern. Having a team of three available allows for greater flexibility in scheduling and lessens the chance a session will have to be cancelled while preserving consistency of facilitators. Consistency of facilitators is essential for building trust in relationships.
- **Gender** - We recommend that men not facilitate programs in women's facilities. Many incarcerated women have experienced significant trauma at the hands of men. While developing trusting relationships with men is essential in the long-run, an incarceration setting is not the ideal space for this healing work.
- **Ability** – Ideally, participants within a group will have a similar level of physical ability. This is not always possible. Where participants have differing levels of ability, it's helpful to have more than one facilitator present to model variations to accommodate differing abilities. Seek out additional training in offering accessible yoga if you are working with groups who have a broad range of abilities.
- **Frequency** – Programs are typically held on a weekly basis; research into effective dosage for yoga suggests 2-3 sessions per week is preferred. Frequency will often be influenced by the space availability in the facility and the availability of facilitators. Consider how you can encourage and support self-practice in between sessions.
- **Duration** – 1½ to 2-hour practice sessions are preferred; 45-minutes to 1-hour for youth programs. This allows for ample time for set-up, participant check-in, practice, closing, and clean-up. Additionally, you will need to consider the time you spend getting into and out of the facility through security checkpoints and, possibly, waiting on escorts who may be delayed.
- **Allowing people to "opt out"** – It goes against trauma-informed principles to require that someone participate. For people with significant trauma, being forced to come into awareness of embodied experience can itself be triggering or re-traumatizing. If an institution insists on participation (i.e., requires someone to be in the room), give the participants options as to whether and how they engage with the practice. For example, "I understand that you are required to be here, but I do not require you to participate. I encourage you to do so, but if you would rather sit or lie on your mat, you're welcome to do so, as long as you are not disturbing or

interfering with someone else's practice." Staff at the facility might interpret non-participation as a sign of disobedience or disrespect and order participants to practice. It's best not to confront correctional staff in front of participants. Work with the coordinator at the facility to explain the potential for re-traumatization and the importance of allowing participants to make a personal choice to engage in positive, pro-social group activity. They can help you communicate this with the correctional staff.

- **Yoga as a reward** - It is worth noting that some facilities seek to establish programs as a reward for good behavior. A yoga program offered as a reward is contradictory to yoga as a Restorative Justice practice. Only granting access to the “best behaved” may also prevent the people who need it the most from having access. Therefore we discourage facilities from offering yoga programs as a system of reward. Similarly, we discourage facilities from revoking access to yoga as a punishment. Rewards or incentives for participation in a yoga program, such as "time off sentence" credits, are entirely acceptable.

Facilitator Presence

We use the term ‘facilitator’ rather than ‘teacher’ intentionally. We also use the word ‘participant’ rather than ‘student.’ There is a strong hierarchical relationship implied by teacher/student that is not as explicitly present in facilitator/participant.

Each participant is his/her/their own authority on their experience; they are their own best teacher. The role of the facilitator is to create a space and guide an experience that allows participants the opportunity to connect with their embodied experience and develop their internal resources. Ultimately, the benefits of the practice shouldn’t depend on the facilitator’s presence or availability.

Your presence, how you show up, in this work has a significant influence on the outcome:

- **Create belonging** – Show up in a spirit of equality, with “a warm-hearted feeling” for all who you interact with, each participant and every staff member.
- **Be consistent** – Commit to whatever length of time the program will run – 12 weeks, 16 weeks, six months, and so on. Show up on time for each session and try to end consistently at the same time. If you will not be able to conduct a future class, let participants know ahead of time and tell them who your sub will be, if you have one. Remember you are modeling a relationship with others that many (if not most) incarcerated people have not experienced in their lives.
- **Strive to be calm** – When you are relaxed, others around will be able to relax; the principle of co-regulation in Polyvagal Theory. When you are agitated, others may become agitated. Our energies resonate. Prisons and jails can be chaotic and intense environments. Your long-standing practice supports you in meeting this energy with equanimity.
- **Be authentic** – Show up as yourself, don’t try to put on a front. You will not build trust by trying to seem like something or someone who you are not.
- **Maintain professional boundaries** – Your personal experience with the practice and how it has helped you in your life is relevant and should be shared. Details of your personal life are not, and

should not be shared. Intimate relationships of any sort, even consensual, are prohibited by law because the incarceration setting confuses issues of consent. Notice what motivates you in this work? Do you consciously or unconsciously need something from the relationship? Are you trying to save? Or to be saved? These needs and motivations can create porous boundaries, and lead to more harm than good.

- **Know the limits of your scope of practice** – Your role is to facilitate a yoga experience, not to be a therapist. Even if you are a licensed mental health care provider, this is not your role in this context.
- **Let go of attachment to an outcome** – Check your agenda at the door. Trust the student's pace at which they are ready to reconnect to the body. Trust that the poses they are in/the modifications they are choosing are the right ones for them.
- **Practice unconditional positive regard** – This means that we respect our participants in their wholeness as human beings with agency to choose how they respond to their situation.
- **Acknowledge your mistakes** – If you do something that harms another, make amends. If you violate a rule of the institution let your program coordinator know.
- **Keep it non-denominational** – Yoga has its roots in ancient Vedic texts and is closely associated with Hinduism. Buddhism lists mindfulness of the body as the first of the four foundations of mindfulness. We are not, however, a Hindu or Buddhist organization. There are abundant teachings from Christianity, Islam, indigenous cultures, and other faiths that can inform how we care for ourselves and how we treat others. We don't promote one faith over another. Many feel yogic practices open them to divinity and spiritual experience. Others prefer a secular approach. There is ample scientific evidence illuminating and invigorating our practice. We share that science alongside the illuminating and invigorating teachings from a variety of traditions. We strive to create as inclusive practice as possible. We respect the right of our participants to identify the knowledge, wisdom, and insight which verifiably reduces their suffering and increases their joy. What we share with others is only a pointer. Personal truth is grounded in the intimacy of one's own experience.

And some more practical considerations:

- **Be respectful of staff** – Use proper address according to rank if possible. Don't use first names. Don't contradict staff in front of participants. Avoid getting caught up in an "us vs. them" mentality.
- **Dress appropriately** – Don't wear tight-fitting or revealing clothes. Know the rules for the dress code of the institution(s) where you are working and follow them.
- **Avoid wearing strong scents, excessive make-up or jewelry** – Scents and excessive make-up or jewelry can be a distraction from practice in an environment where these things are not typically present.

Language

Aside from your warm, authentic, and calm presence, your primary tool for communication will be language. Example cues below are imagining guiding participants in “chair” or “fierce” pose.

- **Use simple, direct physical cueing** – Prefer phrasing of direct physical cues that are simple and direct, such as “Extend your arms in front of you at shoulder height.”
- **Emphasize mindful interoceptive awareness** – Dissociation from the body is a common feature of trauma. Interoception means "inward seeing," mindful awareness of the sensations arising from within the body. Offering poses that create a noticeable sensation, such as "chair pose," allows participants to connect to these sensations. An example of a guide to interception is, "What sensations do you feel in your legs as you hold this position?" Note for people with trauma accompanied by strong dissociation, feeling into the body can be a potential trigger. Therefore, always allow participants to titrate, moving in or out of an experience to remain within the window of tolerance.
- **Include a complete range of mindful sensory awareness** – While interoceptive awareness maybe emphasized in our approach, over the course of a practice there will be moments where it is appropriate to guide mindful awareness of a complete sensory experience: touch, taste, smell, sight, sound, sensations arising from within, awareness of thoughts and emotions, and sense of connection to others and the environment. “Notice the sounds coming from outside the room. Notice the sounds coming from within the room.”
- **Use language of active self-inquiry and participation** – Use language that encourages participants to explore their experience – “be curious about,” “experiment with.” Encourage participants to try different variations of poses and movements with attention to how embodied awareness guides their choices.
- **Normalize a range of experience** – Provide cues that normalize a range of experience, including having no experience at all. For example, “You might notice that your legs feel cool or warm, or you might not notice a sense of temperature, and that’s ok too.”
- **Report your experience** – Rather than creating an experience for a participant by telling them how to feel, report your experience while allowing participants to have their own unique experience. “For me, I feel that my heart rate increases as I hold the pose. You might have a similar experience, or you might notice something different.”
- **Choice/personal agency** – Use language that allows participants to be in control of the choices they make in their practice. “You can choose to continue to hold this pose or exit the pose when you’re ready. We’ll meet in a forward fold.”
- **Personal reflection** – Give participants opportunities to reflect on their experience during practice to allow them to connect to their personal insights. “Notice what informs your choice to stay in this pose or exit. Is there a story that informs the choice you make?”

- **“Your” vs “the”** – Because our intention is to help people to reconnect with their body, use “your” instead of “the” to emphasize participant’s ownership of their body. “Extend your arms in front of you at shoulder height,” rather than, “Extend the arms….”

Some language to avoid:

- **Do not take control of another person’s breath** - It might be necessary to direct inhalation and exhalation occasionally in concert with a movement, such as guiding people through a standing sun salutation. However, once the sequence is established do not over-cue the breath. When moving with the breath use a phrase like, “Follow your breath” or “Moving with your breath,” rather than cueing each inhalation/exhalation. Never ask participants to breathe or hold their breath according to a count you establish.
- **Do not direct people to close their eyes** – When inviting a person to close their eyes, begin with the option to remain with their eyes open, the default position. “You can leave your eyes open, or you may choose to close your eyes.” Closed eyes can cause a person to feel unsafe in their environment.
- **Avoid value judgments** – Avoid language that indicates a value judgment, like “good,” “bad,” “right,” “wrong,” or “more advanced.” Avoid creating hierarchies of variations, for example, “If you can’t bring your foot to the inside of your thigh, keep your foot on your calf.”
- **Avoid flowery language** – For example, “Raise your arms skyward embracing the abundance of spacious creation.” Instead: “Extend your arms above your head.”
- **Avoid suggesting an experience** – For example: “Allow yourself to surrender and relax in this posture (child's pose).” Your participant’s experience may be different; some find child’s pose claustrophobic. You can normalize a variety of experience suggesting, “Some find this pose restful and some find this pose confining. What’s your experience?”
- **Avoid triggering language** – This will be influenced by the group you are working with. For instance, working with a group of veterans or people from a community where there was violence, you might not want to use the term “corpse pose.” When referring to body parts, it is good to be relatable (avoiding complicated anatomical terms), but not too informal or inappropriate. For example, you can say“back of your legs” versus “hamstrings.”
- **Avoid calling attention to a single participant** – Don’t call out a student by name during practice, even if it is to offer praise. Provide feedback after the practice, one-on-one. Some people may feel comfortable being singled out and those who are not singled out may feel neglected.

Space Set-up/Environment

- **Practice in a circle** – This creates equality among participants and with the facilitator(s). It ensures everyone can see each other and no one will have anybody behind them. Occasionally, the size and shape of the room will not allow for this.

- **Maintain consistent lighting** – Lighting should not be changed during the class, even in the final resting pose. The lighting should allow participants to see clearly; lights may be dimmed at the start of class but the room should remain well lit. Often, it is not possible to adjust the light in the facilities where our practices are held.
- **Avoid music** – Music can become a distraction or a hook for dissociation/loss of embodiment. Additionally, we hope participants will develop internal resources so that the benefits of practice do not depend on an external component. That being said, if there are times when music feels appropriate, consider how to integrate it into the practice while still encouraging mindfulness, interoception and embodiment.
- **Avoid scents or aromas** – In some studio classes teachers use essential oils or scents to create a relaxing environment. Again, as with music, we hope to connect participants to internal resources they can call on outside of the practice space. Further, a scent may be associated with a traumatic memory and may be triggering for some.
- **Props** – Depending on the facility, you may only have yoga mats available. Often you will also have one or two foam blocks per participant. If possible, mats and blocks should be uniform to avoid participants becoming attached to preferred props and to avoid a political conflict resulting from those preferences. Bolsters and blankets are difficult to store and clean in an institutional environment and are not usually available. Straps are not typically permitted in facilities due to safety concerns.

Before Practice

- **Welcome each participant** – Learn participant's names and address them by their first name. If you don't know how a person prefers to be called, ask them. Don't assume a particular pronoun or salutation is appropriate.
- **Allow personal agency in set-up** – Participants should be allowed to choose their props and where they position themselves in the circle. There may be a good reason two people are not positioning themselves close together that you are not aware of, so allow them to choose. Allow participants to spread out if space is available; personal space may be limited outside the practice space.
- **Be available** – Make yourself available to participants to check-in with you. Allow them to ask questions, share concerns, provide feedback, and so on. Be positive and encouraging while maintaining a grounded awareness of the reality of the situation. It's worth restating that it's not our role to offer unsolicited advice or fix anything. We are there primarily to listen.

Beginning Practice

- **Establish personal agency** – Remind participants that they can choose how (and if) they wish to participate in the practice. Encourage participants to listen to their body, to not push past what

feels safe, to stay in any pose for as long as it feels right for them (even if that means staying in one pose for the entire class), to stop doing a pose or practice if it feels unsettling.

- **Begin with movement** – Movement helps engage embodied awareness. It allows participants to transition from the institutional environment and begin to discharge some of the stress and anxiety they carry from living in the chaotic, stressful, and, at times, trauma stimulating environment in which they live.
- **Check-in** – Create an opportunity for participants to check-in and become aware of how they feel as they enter the practice. You might suggest that they note how distressed they are feeling on a scale of one to ten (e.g., the SUDS scale) or come up with a word or two about how they are feeling. That word might be a feeling, a color, an animal, a shape, and so on. Allow time for that awareness to land. The option for people to share this will depend on how familiar the group is with one another. If you're unsure how some in the group will feel about being asked to share, it might be best to skip sharing and always remind participants that they are always free to pass.
- **Establish an external resource** – Because we are asking participants to pay attention to the experience they are having in their bodies, where significant trauma may be held, it's helpful to establish an external resource for participants to turn to if they begin to feel overwhelmed. Guide participants to notice something outside their body that feels neutral or grounding. Let them know that they can turn to this resource if they begin to feel overwhelmed by their internal experience.

During Practice

- **Choose accessible postures** – Choose postures accessible to the vast majority, if not every group member, while still creating an opportunity for achievement. This balance can be tricky to establish. Successfully achieving a challenging posture can foster a sense of self-efficacy. However, if a person cannot successfully do a pose, this can reinforce a negative self-image. Recall the intention of the postures in creating an opportunity for embodiment, discharge of accumulated tension, and building resiliency. A pose can be both challenging and accessible.
- **Choose safe postures** – Avoid postures that might lead to physical injury. An injury could jeopardize the program, especially if the injury necessitates expensive medical treatment. Yoga is generally a safe practice; there are poses, however, that are prone to causing injury, and any pose engaged too intensely can lead to injury.
    - **Prohibited poses** – headstand, shoulder stand, plow pose.
    - **Poses to be used with caution** – backbends, poses that create rotational strain on the knees (Warrior II, Half-Pigeon), extreme forward bends.
    - **Poses considered safe** – lunges, squats, side-bends, gentle forward bends, gentle twists, seated poses.
- **Avoid postures that may be triggering** - there are no hard fast rules about what postures to avoid because they may be "triggering" or make participants feel vulnerable. In fact, any pose or cue phrasing could be a potential trigger for someone. However, we can, with awareness and discernment, choose poses that are less likely to be triggering. It's essential to consider the

group you are working with, what you know about their histories, and recognize there are things you do not know about them. It's evident that a pose such as "Happy Baby" would be contraindicated for a group of known survivors of sexual abuse and should be avoided. It's perhaps not so evident that everyone in a group not offered specifically for sexual abuse survivors has not experienced sexual abuse.

- **Offer choices in postures** – Offer choices and different options for each pose, including Savasana. Avoid defining one choice as more advanced than another; use the term 'variation' instead of 'modification'.
- **Alternate active and neutral/resting postures** – By alternating active and neutral or resting postures you are helping to develop participants' ability to smoothly move from states of sympathetic nervous system activation (SNS, or fight/flight) to parasympathetic nervous system activation (PNS, or rest/restore). The importance of this shift from SNS to PNS activation cannot be overemphasized.
- **Go slow** – Moving too quickly through a practice doesn't allow time for participants to feel into the pose (mindful interoceptive awareness), or to adjust based on their awareness of their experience.
- **Give options for longer holds** - Allowing for longer holds gives participants the opportunity to discharge accumulated stress while building resilience and developing impulse control. This also gives participants an opportunity to learn to experience their edge and take effective action, exiting a pose before it becomes overwhelming.
- **Offer conscious breathing practices** - Breathing practices provide tools to regulate stress response and anxiety levels, increase Heart Rate Variability (HRV) and vagal tone, and strengthen the Parasympathetic Nervous System. Remember, though, when offering breathing practices to allow participants to remain in control of their own breath. (See the note on breathing in the language section.)
- **Create periods of stillness and silence** – It's important to include periods of stillness and silence to allow participants to notice the effects of practice or posture in their bodies, and to reflect on their experience. Be aware that silence and stillness can also be triggering particularly when asking a participant to notice what's happening in their body. This is why it's important to establish an external resource outside the body where the participant can return to if they begin to feel dysregulated.
- **Create an arc in the practice** – After the initial movement and check-in, the arc of the practice should generally follow from warm-up to postures and practices that require increasing effort to allow for the discharge of accumulated stress. There should be a level of effort followed by postures and practices that shift the emphasis from effort to ease, allowing the nervous system to disengage a stress response as fully as possible before entering the final resting pose.
- **Practice along** – By practicing along with your participants you integrate yourself into the community on an equal basis.

- **Remain on your mat** – Do not walk around during class, including (and especially) during the final resting pose. If you need to leave your mat let the group know that you are going to do so and why; narrate what you are doing. "I'm going to close this window now."
- **No hands-on adjustments**– In most incarceration environments, nothing more than a handshake, fist bump, or elbow tap is allowed; some prohibit even this. Please know the guidelines for the facility you are working in, and follow them. Our reasons, however, for refraining from hands-on adjustments go beyond this. In this environment, it may not be easy for a participant to feel they can say no. Consider that trauma is often associated with the intrusiveness of the perpetrator and a lack of boundaries. Physical assists may be a reminder of a traumatic event and can trigger an overwhelming response. They also tend to take away the students' agency in their own experience and may inhibit internal resources development. "No intervention that takes power away from the survivor can possibly foster her recovery, no matter how much it appears to be in her immediate best interest." (Judith Herman)

Closing Practice

- **Always offer a final resting pose** – This important part of practice should not be skipped. It allows our bodies to enter as fully as possible into a state of PNS engagement. Give the option for doing this pose lying down (in a traditional Savasana position or with arms and legs configured in a way that feels most comfortable to the participant) or in a seated position. Consider taking a seated position and letting participants know that you will be there to keep an eye on the room.
- **Integrate the experience** – After the final resting pose, create an opportunity for participants to reflect on their experience and acknowledge any insight they might have gained through the practice. You might refer back to the check-in, particularly if you used the SUDS scale, to allow an opportunity to notice a shift in the level of distress. You may choose to offer a space for optional sharing depending on the size of the group, their familiarity, and the time available. Always allow participants to pass when inviting them to share.
- **Namaste or not** – The choice to close the practice with the word Namaste and a bow is up to the facilitator. Some prefer not to use this word, or any Sanskrit. Others feel this practice allows a moment for integration and acknowledgement of the community. Avoid an overly flowery description of the meaning of the word if one is offered. You might also offer an opportunity to acknowledge themselves, offer gratitude for the community, offer up the benefits of the practice, or a short version of a cultivation of compassion practice to close.

After Practice

- **Be available** – Make yourself available to participants to check-in personally, ask questions, share concerns, provide feedback, and so on. Finish a bit early if necessary, to allow for this.
- **Perform an After-Practice Review (APR)** – After leaving the facility, use these questions to guide a conversation with your co-facilitators (or with yourself) to perform an After Practice Review.

    - What was your intention?
    - What actually occurred?
    - What went well and why?
    - What can be improved and how?
- **Keep a Journal** – It's helpful to keep a journal to capture the insights gained through an APR, significant events, and stories that will help you to develop as a facilitator.

Epilogue

At the end of the day, if there is nothing else that you take away from these guidelines, remember that our work is to create a space where others can feel a sense of safety, belonging, and personal agency. These are the foundations of recovery and every person's birthright. If you bear this in mind and consider how your words and actions land with those around you, this will be enough.