



## Ways of Being. Our Code of Conduct

### September 2021

**Trauma Center Trauma Sensitive Yoga (TCTSY) is a program of the Center for Trauma and Embodiment (CFTE) at the Justice Resource Institute. All facilitators, participants, community members and associated professionals agree to follow this Code of Conduct**

#### **Preamble**

*We acknowledge that the experience of trauma takes many forms including prejudice and discrimination based on a person's age, race, ethnicity, gender, sex, sexuality, socio-economic class, religion, spirituality, immigration status, physical embodiment, neurodiversity, cognitive & physical abilities, and use of mental health services.*

*We understand that to minimize or silence the voice of a trauma survivor is itself an act of trauma.*

*Therefore, in all programs we engage with, we commit to advocating for the centrality of the survivor's lived experience.*

Our mission at the CFTE, carried out through all of our programs including TCTSY, is to develop, research and share the best resources and training we can in order to support a growing public awareness of both the prevalence of trauma, and possible pathways to recovering from its effects. Our content is theoretically sound and empirically supported. It is informed by our personal experience and our professional research.

We know from our own organizational history, as well as from examples of ethical failures in institutions that provide trauma care, that content cannot fully be shared without attention to relationships, both in how we interact with people seeking care as well as how we interact with each other within the organization. In the worst cases, content — *even if its purpose is to mitigate*

*trauma* — can itself cause harm or even retraumatization if it is facilitated without attention to relationship.

Relationship, grounded in respect and transparency, is our guiding value, not only as we connect with clients, but also as we connect with each other. *We believe that trauma sensitivity is not a product to be transferred, but a way of being that we can practice.* We believe that our capacity to communicate the values of interoception (the felt, visceral sense of embodiment), choice making and agency, all key components of the TCTSY model, to people seeking care, is nourished by our ability to share these values with each other.

Our Ways of Being has many roots. Those of us with clinical licenses bring our professional commitments to the table. Those of us from the yoga world bring with us the efforts of many who have worked hard to help improve the culture of safety and transparency within the global community of yoga practice. *We all* bring our lived experiences to the table. The deepest roots of our ethics, those we all share, lie in the indigenous wisdom traditions laid down through ancient precursors to modern day yoga that inspire our work in mindful embodiment, in particular, the practices of ahimsa (universal non-harming).

This document lays out the expectations to which we hold ourselves, our colleagues, participants, and TCTSY-Fs in good standing, and it is rooted in our desire to build a culture that reflects these expectations throughout the fabric of our organization. Cultural layers of organizations include basic underlying assumptions, espoused values, and observable artifacts. That is, cultures drive and influence “ways of being” in organizations. In that way, the “code” for us as an organization is embodied conduct rooted in a value system that names and recognizes not only personal trauma, but also power, oppression, systemic trauma, and systemic violence.

*Please note: Racism, racist ideologies such as white supremacy, and racist behaviors such as systemic violence were created and cultivated by Europeans before there was a "United States" (Stamped from the Beginning, Ibram X. Kendi) and have been fully integrated into western culture and western cultural artifacts for centuries. We acknowledge that TCTSY was developed inside of that very culture and is therefore shaped by this history. We mention the United States specifically not to be hierarchical or U.S.-dominant, but to name how the founding and management practices of CFTE (which occurred within the U.S.) have been impacted and influenced by the socio-historical context of the country within which it was founded.*

## **TCTSY Ways of Being**

### **1. Assumptions - foundation of the Ways of Being.**

As facilitators of TCTSY, we assume that:

- a. Power is weblike. Trauma is weblike. Connection is weblike.
- b. The body is an important source of wisdom.
- c. Trauma is not a pathology.
- d. Collective trauma is a part of our experience together (racism, ethnocentrism, colonialism, intersectionality, hierarchy, imperialism, power dynamics, etc.)
- e. We are not all impacted by the same violence and trauma. We also do not all experience survivorship in the same ways precisely because of systemic violence such as racism and anti-Blackness. This program still predominantly consists of people who identify as white (including people who would be read as white within the western cultural context). Because of that, TCTSY-Fs are being called to sit with the ways that systemic violence has impacted them (NOT just how it's impacted Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)/Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME)) and how non-BIPOC/BAME can show up to help. The same can be said for a variety of other identity dynamics where power / oppression is present – such as gender, social class, sexual orientation, and “ability”.
- f. Language barriers and barriers to accessing education on trauma in different countries exist.
- g. People seeking care deserve full dignity and respect.

### **2. Values – beliefs about the Ways of Being.**

As facilitators of TCTSY, we believe that the following beliefs and values are central to our professional identity:

- a. Given that we are all steeped in the waters of many systems of oppression and hierarchies of human value (i.e., racism, sexism, colonialism, classism, heteronormativity, ableism, ageism, ethnocentrism and many others), we value tools and processes that allow us to be present to our “collective traumas” in a trauma sensitive way.
- b. We believe that empathy, connection, and embodiment are not only helpful for those with and for whom we provide service, but also for us as facilitators.
- c. Integrity is important to us. We recognize that there are a set of professional standards to uphold and agree to upholding them (see part 3 below).

- d. As TCTSY-F, I am deserving of choice and agency in my approach to being and remaining a member in good standing in this organization. If I do choose to be a TCTSY-F in good standing, I understand that it comes with a valued scope of practice that has a set of standards and ways of being that I agree to uphold.

### **3. Ways of Being – observable artifacts and evidence of our assumptions and values.**

As facilitators of TCTSY, we commit to the following behaviors, which reflect our values and our assumptions:

- a. We engage in ongoing reflection (individually and in community) around our position in a system of collective trauma - what is it that I/we have inherited from my/our country and systems of origin around agency, non-coercion, shared authentic experience, interoception.
- b. We support people in having at minimum a rudimentary understanding of their own relationship with terms including, but not limited to, “systemic violence”, “colonization”, “white supremacy”, “patriarchy”, “cis-heterosexism”, “white-body supremacy”, “anti-Blackness.” Opportunities for this will be provided in several areas.
- c. There will be an annual opportunity for TCTSY-Fs to choose if they want to continue to be in good standing\*.
- d. TCTSY-Fs will refrain from representing themselves as licensed TCTSY trainers, TCTSY program mentors, or staff of CFTE if they do not hold those positions, and will operate within their scope as certified TCTSY-Fs.
- e. Every 2-3 years, there will be an opportunity for TCTSY-Fs to choose if they want to participate in revising our Ways of Being document.
- f. Our commitment to our clients:
  - i. Provide TCTSY services without prejudice toward sexual identity, gender identity, culture, race, religious or spiritual affiliation, physical or cognitive ability or age.
  - ii. Where possible we commit to providing services on sliding scales to enable access to TCTSY services regardless of socioeconomic class.
  - iii. If a client’s needs are not met by the practice of TCTSY, the facilitator will endeavor to provide appropriate referrals.
  - iv. If considered useful, an agreement that outlines the terms of care will be negotiated and signed by the TCTSY-F and the client. (These agreements are the responsibility of the individual TCTSY-F and their clients/participants, and the Center for Trauma and Embodiment at the Justice Resource Institute is not responsible for these individual agreements.)

- v. Commit to obtaining informed consent for all services, whether verbal or written.
- vi. Commit to protecting client confidentiality, allowing for exceptions in cases of safeguarding and/or transgression of the law.
- vii. Respect a participant's choice to engage in other trauma interventions.
- viii. TCTSY-Fs will never have sexual or romantic relations with clients or participants. Because our mandate is specifically complex trauma care, this prohibition around sexual behavior and romantic relationships extends for a lifetime. Sexual behavior is defined as, but not limited to, all forms of overt & covert seductive speech, gestures and behavior, as well as sexualized physical contact.
- ix. We recognize that TCTSY is being implemented in a variety of cultural contexts. For example, in a western medical context it is important to refrain from relationships with clients that involve casual socialization or friendship outside of the designated TCTSY session. We encourage upholding the spirit of this intention in a culturally appropriate way wherever one is practicing TCTSY.

*Given all of this, as facilitators of TCTSY, we acknowledge fluidity and change as constant, and so we commit to consistently reflecting upon and revising our beliefs and behaviors to align with the needs of each other and our society.*

**Violation of these standards may result in sanction, probation, suspension or permanent termination of Trauma Center Trauma Sensitive Yoga certification & good standing\* with Center for Trauma and Embodiment.**

**Individuals may file a grievance in written form with the Co-directors of the Center for Trauma and Embodiment, David Emerson. [demerson@jri.org](mailto:demerson@jri.org), or Jennifer Turner, [jturner@jri.org](mailto:jturner@jri.org). A written response will be provided within two weeks of the date of receipt.**

**If the person filing the grievance is unsatisfied with the outcome, they may make a final appeal in written form through email to the Director of Training and Trauma Response at JRI, Tara Sagor, [tsagor@jri.org](mailto:tsagor@jri.org), within 7 days of the initial decision. A written response will be provided within two weeks.**

**Where appropriate and where required by law, violation of these guidelines may also result in reporting of infractions to law enforcement, licensing boards, or other relevant entities.**

**TCTSY-Facilitators and/or their employers are responsible for all legal, fiduciary and insurance liability for any services, goods, trainings, or other deliverable practices related to**

**TCTSY. JRI holds no responsibility, legally or otherwise, for the quality of services rendered or the consequences of legal or ethical infractions, or violations made by any TCTSY-F.**

**Acknowledgements:**

**I, the undersigned, pledge to uphold the guidelines contained in this document.**

\_\_\_\_\_ (TCTSY-F signature and date)

\_\_\_\_\_ (TCTSY-F printed name)

\*Several times throughout this document we referred to “good standing”. This is the annual process whereby a TCTSYF submits a practice video, 13.5 CEU hours and has a meeting with a senior CFTE staff regarding practice. TCTSYFs choose whether or not to participate and, if they uphold the above requirements, are then also responsible for maintaining practice in accordance with this Code of Conduct document. The annual good standing meeting with the senior CFTE team member is an opportunity to also discuss matters relevant to the Code of Conduct.