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AZAHAR FOUNDATION'S MISSION

Its mission is to promote PEACE BUILDING and CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION through YOGA, MEDITATION & ARTS and supporting methodologies in post conflict and developing countries.

TEACHERS CODE OF CONDUCT

We embrace and support the Yoga Alliance CODE OF CONDUCT

1. I uphold the integrity of my vocation and by conducting myself in a professional and conscientious manner.
2. Acknowledge the limitations of my skills and scope of practice and where appropriate, refer students to seek alternative instruction, advice, treatment or direction.
3. Create and maintain a safe, clean and comfortable environment for practice
4. Encourage diversity respectively by respecting all students regardless of age physical limitations, race, creed, gender, ethnicity, religion, affiliation, or sexual orientation.
5. Respects the rights, dignity and privacy of all students.
6. Avoid words and actions that constitute sexual harassment
7. Follow all local government and national laws that pertain to our teachings and business.

Our Teachers also are asked to:

- Model the program content in your embodiment, intentions, actions, and words.
- Be in inquiry (curiosity)
- Prioritize choice and relationships
- Deliver the program with a balance of structure/support and loving-kindness

CONCEPT NOTE

WHY YOGA AND MEDITATION, AND ARTS IN PROMOTING PEACE

Each year the International Day of Peace is observed around the world on September 21. The UN General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace through observing 24 hours of non-violence and cease-fire.

But achieving true peace entails much more than laying down arms. It requires the building of societies where all members feel that they can flourish. It involves creating a world in which people are treated equally, regardless of their race. At AZAHAR Foundation, peace building is at the core of our mission. We believe that Peace is a Human Right. We believe that when we seek balance and understanding within ourselves, we end up gaining the empathy and equanimity needed to be patient with ourselves, the world and others.

DEFINITION OF PEACE

Peace' is complex term to define as there is no universally shared answer to it. But what we know it has both internal and external dimension. Peace is the behavior that encourages harmony in the way people talk, listen, and interact with each other and discourages actions to hurt, harm, or destroy each other. According to UNESCO constitution the internal dimension of peace has been emphasized as it is stated that "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minces of men that the defense of peace must be constructed" and this where yoga and meditation comes in as they both transform and grow us from inside out.

Peace doesn't mean only the absence of open violence and war but the elimination of violence in all forms such as violent conflicts, threat to life, social degradation, discrimination, oppression, exploitation, poverty, deprivation, and injustice and so on. Peace will become a reality once we abolish violent social structures that's exist in our human society. We also need to change a perspective that say peace is only external phenomenon, instead we need to include another perspective which holds that peace is also a predominantly inner factor. This new perspective suggest that peace is within you and it can be explained in presence of health, contentment and (economic) wellbeing.

AFTER ALL we need to work on three levels of peace:

Inner Peace, Societal Peace and Cosmic Peace

1. **Inner Peace:** It indicates harmony and peace within oneself achieved through a proper integration of the physical, mental and spiritual dimensions of the human personality which includes good health, and absence of inner conflicts, joy, sense of freedom etc.

2. **Societal Peace:** Interpersonal peace i.e., peace among fellow human beings, harmony arising from healthy human relationships at all levels, which includes reconciliation, resolution and transformation of conflicts, love, friendship, unity, mutual understanding, acceptance, co-operation, brotherhood, tolerance of differences, community- building, human rights, morality etc.

3. **Cosmic Peace or Peace with Nature:** achieving and maintaining harmony with our natural environment and mother earth

AZAHAR Foundation Peace building program is a **Peace Education** method

Definition of Peace Education

Defining peace education and peace educator is not easy since it is an evolving and dynamic field in education. Peace Education has been variously defined as conflict resolution training, human rights education, democracy education, etc. According to UNICEF, peace education is defined as “process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavioral changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflicts and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflicts peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level”.

The main purpose of peace education is to minimize and eventually eliminate various forms of violence through consciousness-raising, vision and action of the educatee.

COMPONENTS OF PEACE BEHAVIOR

They are ten basic components of peace behavior which are regarded as objectives of peace education

1. **Positive thinking** - It involves building a positive self-concept in oneself. Having a positive outlook helps a person to value himself and life in all forms.
2. **Compassion:** - Being Compassionate means having empathetic qualities such as love, kindness, friendliness and doing no harm to others
3. **Inner Peace:** - Inner Peace as a theme is concerned with resolution of one's own psychological conflicts and problems and discovering peace of mind. It includes ways of understanding the self and the process of thought, controlling emotions such as anger, art of soothing the mind etc.

4. **Be your true self:** - The concept “Be your true self” means the strength of the character to be honest and direct in expressing one's needs, feelings and thoughts without letting others down. The skills in such behavior are necessary for resolving conflicts and effective social interaction.
5. **Living together:** - People need to learn to work harmoniously in groups with others. The theme living together can accommodate such subtopics as sharing, mutual help, and trust building, taking group responsibility, leading and following. Learning cooperation reduces egoistic competitive tendencies in human beings.
6. **Think critically** - Critical thinking on the part of the citizens is a necessary feature of a democratic society. It involves analysis, syntheses, looking at the other sides of an issue, searching for alternatives and logical thinking.
7. **Non-violent conflict resolution:** - It encompasses such skills Necessary for conflict resolution as conflict analyses, negotiation, active listening, mediation, creative problem-solving and alternative solution seeking.
8. **Respect for human dignity:** - Respect for human dignity is based on the concepts of human rights, duties and justice. It attempts to develop a consciousness that recognizes and respects one's own and others' rights.
9. **Peace in community:** - Building peace in community means providing opportunities for its members to be open to social realities and understand people's problems and work with them.
10. **Care for the planet:** - The health of the planet has direct and immediate influence on the destiny of mankind. Values like peace with nature, preservation of nature, appreciation and admiration of natural environment, reuse, repair, recycling natural resources, etc. are included in this theme.¹⁰

METHODOLOGY: IMPORTANCE OF YOGA AS TOOL OF PEACE EDUCATION

Peace education is more effective and meaningful when it is adapted to the social and cultural context and needs of a country. It should be enriched by its cultural and spiritual values together with the universal human values.

Peace, as war, originates in the human mind and hence for peace to become a reality, one's mind must be peaceful; in other words there must be inner peace. Yoga is contributive to the achievement of inner calm and happiness. Yoga also means unity and it encourage practitioner to unite with the self, people and nature. Yoga text defines **yoga** as an art of righteous living through integrated system for the benefit of the body, mind and inner spirit.

The aim of Yoga is the attainment of the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. Eight stages of Yoga discipline that re recommended to be practiced are:

Yamas- (internal purification through moral training preparatory to Yoga)

Niyamas- (cleanliness, contentment, mortification, study and worship of God)

Asanas- Physical postures or exercises

Pranayama- (Control of vital energy/ Breath control)

Pratyahara- (Withdrawal of the senses/ making the mind introspective)

Dharana- (Concentration of the mind)

Dhyana- Meditation

Samadhi- Attainment of the super conscious state

Persons practicing Yoga are reported to have experienced tremendous inner changes leading to the strengthening of their personality in a substantially creative manner. Some of the mental health benefits said to have derived from Yoga are:

- Reduction of tension & stress
- Restoration of flexibility
- Freeing the mind from mental disturbances
- Decrease in nervousness, irritability and confusion
- Avoids depression and mental fatigue
- Revive alertness, attention and willingness to tackle problems
- Realize the self and understand issues around him/her
- Increased self-knowledge
- Attain and maintain physical and mental health and relaxation.

It is said that Yoga helps in discovering one's own true self and of enjoying one's self as it is, leading to the realization of true joy which is held to be the ultimate goal of life. The most important benefit an individual gains from the practice of Yoga is that she/he attains full command and control of her/his own self. In order to create peace and harmony in the world we have first to discover or create this peace and harmony within individuals. Yoga enables us to do this journey of self-discovery by empowering individuals physically, mentally and spiritually.

The practice of Yoga helps to develop qualities like positive thinking, inner peace, compassion, skill for nonviolent, conflict resolution, respect for the self and others etc. which are regarded as components of peace behavior. **Meditation**, the seventh stage of Yoga, is considered as an effective tool for finding within oneself a peaceful oasis of relaxation and stress relief.

Regular practice of **asana** (yoga postures) helps to keep our body fit and strengthen the mind and gives it the tenacity to withstand pain and unhappiness stoically and with fortitude. In this

way, it leads to the attainment of mental equilibrium and calmness. **Pranayama** regulates the breathing process through correct breathing technique. This helps us put our life energy to creative use. It also helps in releasing tension and developing a relaxed state of mind. As Peace Education aims at the physical, emotional, intellectual, and moral-spiritual development of children, youth and adult within the framework of a deeply rooted tradition of human values, and as the practice of Yoga has a proven track record of achieving the above goals, it is only logical to presume that a proper integration of yoga and meditation would certainly help in creating a culture of peace. Building a culture of peace is of course a difficult task to accomplish. We need more explicit inclusion of peace education in the present system of education for achieving this goal. Different ways of integrating peace into curriculum also must be adopted. Conscious and concerted efforts must be made to make our homes, schools, and all other institutions more peaceful and peace-oriented so that peace will become an abiding presence and experiential reality.

YOGA CURRICULUM: JOURNEY INTO POWER: SEQUENCE

The Journey into Power Yoga Sequence has 53 poses that comprises a well-rounded and dynamic practice. The poses are grouped into 11 series, each with a distinct Purpose that plays a potent role in the overall practice. (The methodology was designed by Baptiste Power Yoga Institute). The 11 series are:

1. Integration

- Child's Pose
- Downward Facing Dog
- Ragdoll
- Extended Mountain
- Samasthithi with 3 Oms

2. Awakening

- Sun Salutation A (x5)
- Sun Salutation B (x5)
- Sun Salutation B variation : Flip Dog/Side Plank
- Vinyasa into other side

3. Vitality

- Crescent lunge

- Revolving crescent lunge
- Extended side angle
- Warrior Two
- Thunderbolt Prayer Twist Right side
- Fingers to toes forward fold
- Thunderbolt Prayer Twist left side
- Palms to toes forward fold
- Crow pose

4. Equanimity

- Eagle Pose (x2)
- Standing leg raise
- Air plane
- Half Moon
- Dancer's pose
- Tree pose

5. Grounding

- Sun Salutation A- variation with Triangle Pose
- Side Facing wide leg forward fold
- Namaste Front facing Forward fold
- Twisting Triangle
- Vinyasa into other side

6. Igniting

- Locust
- Floor Bow
- Camel
- Bridge
- Wheel
- Supta Baddha Konasana
- Deed Bug

7. Stability

- Scissor legs and 60/30 Lift
- Abdominal twist
- Boat pose

8. Opening

- Half pigeon
- Double Pigeon
- Frog

9. Release

- Seated single leg Extension
- Seated Forward Fold
- Table Top
- Fish pose

10. Rejuvenation

- Head standing(optional)
- Shoulder standing
- Hand standing (optional)
- Plow pose
- Death Man's pose

11. Deep Rest

- Supine twist
- Supta Baddha Konasana
- Savasana
- 3 Oms

The series are done in a specific order that is designed to work globally and systematically through all the dimensions of the body.

THE ART AND MASTERY OF PRACTICING AND TEACHING JOURNEY INTO POWER

1. **LOOK:** For True North & and what's possible. Put your gaze on the areas you want to transform
2. **LISTEN:** Your Listening makes difference, not your knowledge
3. **GIVE TOOLS:** Provide tools that make a difference right now.

THE ART AND MASTERY OF WORKING WITH THE POSE

1. Look & listen from the pose
2. Look & listen for the alignment of the pose
3. Look & listen for the possibility of the pose
4. Look & listen for what's missing and find the access to give tools that make a difference right now.

TRUE NORTH ALIGNEMENT DEFINED

All physical postures originate from True North Alignment. The organizing principles of True North Alignment are the cornerstone of physical practices as we practice it, and their corresponding actions empower and enables students in their bodies to discover for themselves new power and freedom through their real as lived experience the manifestation of authentic power of new possibilities.

When fully embodied the alignment balances all elements, leaving students physically activated and powerful yet at ease in the work.

The actions of True North Alignment bring students into plumb, or align them to their plumb line. A plumb line is an essential building tool that allows a builder to determine verticality in their work. When structure is 100 percent vertical, it can stand effortlessly, as all the force and weight from above is staked directly above its supporting structure. In our bodies, the plumb lines is a spatial term that places our bodies in optimal alignment in relationship to the ground below. In proper anatomical position our joints line up with a straight plumb line to the floor. This generates an effortless center from which we can flow.

In the practice we use the organizing principles of True North Alignment to establish each student's physical foundation, giving them the experience of their centerline, contraction and expansion, and what's possible in the physical expression of the pose.

TRUE NORTH ALIGNMENT

1. Earth

The intention here is to make the foundation of the pose by grounding the down and connect to the earth. (Element Soil)

2. Flow like WATER

Intention is to soften joints. (Element Water)

3. Build your inner FIRE

Intention is to generate the fire cleanse the body and create balance through locking our bandhas. (Element Fire). From body to muscle to bone hug in.

4. Soften like AIR (Element Air)

Intention is expansion and relaxation, allow your body to fill up with air.

5. Create SPACE for something new

Intention is to create balance of action and non-action.

THE 5 ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES OF TRUE NORTH ALIGNMENT

1. **Be intentional** in creating the physical foundation of the pose & bring up to something bigger than yourself.
2. **Balanced action:** Balance, effort and ease
3. **The 5 pillars:** Gaze, Breath, Foundation, Heat, and Flow
4. **The Body Integrity:** Pull in, Press down, & Lift up to integrate...create muscle to bone connection (pull into centerline & core).
5. **Total Body Expression:** Press, Lift, Move & fully express out (move out from center & core).

THE 5 PILLARS OF THE JOURNEY INTO POWER

1. Gaze/Focus

In practice, it means focusing your eyes to one point. This focus sends soothing messages to nervous system and brings the mind from distraction to directions.

2. Breath

Breath is an audible breath that has soothing, rhythmic, oceanic quality. It is done by contracting the whispering muscles in your throat to create a long, hairline thin breath. You do not breathe all the way down to your abdomen, but rather into your chest, lungs, and back.

3. Foundation: Core, Hands & Feet

A foundation is a lock that anchors you into your stability and strength. It is a static muscular contraction used to focus attention, stimulate heat and control the energy within us. By pulling extremities into center you draw attention to the core of your body, the epicenter of all movements. Making this core focal point causes you to move, breath, and have your being from your center. Thus grounded, your body roots down and can then lift itself to a state of weightlessness.

4. Heat

Heat comes from “commitment” or “internal fire”. By putting into practice the first three pillars of Gaze, Breath and Foundation, you get access to internal heat/fire.

5. Flow

Flow is the absence of resistance. When you bring flow into your practice you let go into movements and create a liquid quality that inspires deep release. It allows you to build magnificent momentum and heat to move through your practice in an effortless, seamless manner.

TRAUMA INFORMED MIND & BODY WELLBEING

It is program designed to support each individuals in the following key areas:

- Physical Wellbeing
- Emotional wellbeing
- Positive relationships with self and community (See Fig 1- Mind & Body practices for wellbeing).

Primarily, the goal of this program is to deliver themes and practices that support emotional growth and stress management during active Mind &Body practices.

In this program the 12 Core Principles are for Growth are provided to be practiced in 12 to 14 weeks with 2 to 3 sessions per week on each of the principles. The curriculum is based on the current state of knowledge in the field of mind/body physical practice and trauma interventions and support. These practices help individuals create and maintain physical health, manage stress, steady emotions, and become more effective in relationships. This program reflects best practices in trauma-informed Mind & Body Wellbeing work.

HOW TRAUMA INFORMED, MIND & BODY WELLBEING PROGRAM IS DELIVERED

The program is delivered through four domains of Trauma-informed, Mind & Body Wellbeing Practices:

- (1) mindful practice (mindful thinking practice),
- (2) physical practice (physical poses),
- (3) inquiry (mind and body), and
- (4) Assisting and support (relationships).

The core of the program is the **12 core Principles for Growth**. These principles build on physical basics, guide you through emotion regulation, and provide support and guidance as you work your wellness and positivity in your life. Each time you practice or teach physical practices, mindful practices, inquiry or assisting and support, the 12 principles guide your effort.



Mind-Body Practices for Well-being		
Mind-Body Practices for Physical Well-being	Mind-Body Practices for Emotional Well-being	Mind-Body Practices for Positive Relationships with Self and Community
12 Core Principles for Growth (Actionable Practices)		
<p>Part I: Inner Resources</p> <p>EMPOWERMENT "I can"</p> <p>WORTH "I am worth the effort"</p>		<p>Each of the 12 Principles for Growth will be explored through the</p> <p>Four Domains of Mind-Body Practice</p> <p>⇓</p> <p>Mindful Practice (Mind) <i>Formal (seated and physical practices) and informal (in life practice) the cultivate a mindful awareness in life</i></p> <p>Physical Practice (Body) <i>The experience of the poses and sequencing of the physical practice</i></p> <p>Inquiry (Mind and Body) <i>An ongoing curiosity and questioning about your current experience and what is possible for you</i></p> <p>Assisting and Support (Relationships) <i>Compassionate relationships: teachers assisting students and students requesting support</i></p>
<p>Part II: Positive Embodiment</p> <p>SAFETY "I deserve to be safe"</p> <p>BREATH "My breath is my most powerful tool"</p> <p>PRESENCE "I work toward presence in my own body"</p> <p>FEELING "I feel so that I can heal"</p>		
<p>Part III: Self-Regulation</p> <p>CHOICE "I can find choice in the present moment"</p> <p>GROUNDING "My body is a source for connection, guidance, and coping"</p> <p>OWNERSHIP "I can create the conditions for safety and growth"</p> <p>SUSTAINABILITY "I can create a balance between structure and change"</p>		
<p>Part IV: Mindful Grit</p> <p>COMPASSION "I honor the individual path of recovery and growth"</p> <p>SELF-DETERMINATION "I work toward the possibility of effectiveness and growth in my own life"</p>		

Figure 1

OUTLINE FOR THE MBW 60-75-90 MINUTE CLASSES

This outline is here only to give you a sense of how an MBW class is ideally structured. However, you can simply take the information about the principle of growth and creatively weave them in your usual class.

Step 1: Introduce the Principle for Growth (5-5-5 minutes)

- Begin with class in a seated position.
- State the Principle. For example, “I am worth the effort.”
- Explain the principle and how it can support you in practice and in life.
- Give examples.
- Answer any questions.

Step 2: Mindfulness Practice (5-10-10 minutes)

- Take the class through the Mindfulness Practice in your manual for the principle with which you are working (Formal- in yoga class).
- Suggest to them how they can extend this practice in life (Informal- in life).

Step 3: Physical Yoga Practice (45-50-60 minutes)

- Use Journey into Power or modified version (for cultural sensitivity).you can give any modifications or options. For example, while teaching to Somali teachers, we used Downward facing V instead of Downward facing dog, and Eagle pose was removed from the sequence (all this was in line with requests in line with their cultural and religious practices).
- Bring the principle into the yoga practice and create an opportunity for the yoga participants to experience the poses in their practice. ➤ here take students through what I can or I can't, would show up or feel like in their bodies.

Step 4: Inquiry and Close Session (5-10-15 minutes)

- Return the yoga students to a comfortable seated position and generate a discussion around the principle's inquiry (an inquiry question will be provided every week).
- Each principle has a core question as well as other questions to help you go deeper if you have more than one class a week.
- Use **mindful listening** and **mindful listening for feelings**. (mindful listening for feelings is where as a listener, you listen to what the speaker is saying and being able to identify the feelings in their words/statements)

- Close each session with a short mindfulness practice bringing awareness to the breath and reminding them of the principle.

The 12 Principles of Growth are subdivided into 4 general parts namely:

- I. Inner resources
- II. Positive Embodiment
- III. Self-Regulation
- IV. Mindful Grit

Part I: Inner Resources

- Week One: Introduction, Basics, Assessment & I Can [Intro and Integration Series]
- Week Two: I am worth the effort [Awakening series] (Children- I am always worth it)

Part II: Physical Basics

- Week Three: I deserve to be safe (Integration & Awakening Series) [Children-I am always worth it]
- Week Four: My breath is my most powerful tool [Vitality Series] (Children- My breath is powerful)
- Week Five: I work toward presence in my body [Equanimity Series] (children- I can connect with my body)
- Week Six: I feel so that I can heal [Grounding Series] (Children- it's okay to feel my feelings)

Part III: Self- Regulation

- Week Seven: I can find choice in the present moment [Igniting Series] (Children- Right now, I can make the best choice for me)
- Week Eight: My Body is a source of connection, guidance, and coping [Stability Series] (Children- I feel my feet, hands, and body to steady my feelings)
- Week Nine: I can create the conditions for safety and growth [Opening Series] (Children- I can choose to keep me safe and growing)
- Week Ten: I can create balance between structure and [Release Series] (Children- I can choose when it is best to try new things)

Part IV: Mindful Grit

- Week 11: I honor the individual path of recovery and growth [Rejuvenation Series] (Children-My path is special and unique to me)
- Week Twelve: I work toward the possibility of growth and effectiveness in my own life [Deep Rest Series] (Children- I can create my own path of possibility) & Closure, Plans, Assessment (Review JIP Sequence with Growth Principles)

WHY MIND & BODY WELLBEING PHYSICAL PRACTICES WORKS

Mind & Body Wellbeing works! It is simple and right in line with how body is designed to move and operate. It builds functional intrinsic strength rather than superficial strength. It empowers students to purposefully use and train their bodies the way it is done in real life-bending, stretching, lifting, reaching and twisting- so that students can move through everyday motions with ease, agility, power and grace.

The health benefits are multilayered, going beyond just external. All the internal bodily systems are activated and improved as well. The nervous system is soothed or energized as needed (through seep rhythmic of breathing); the glandular system is balanced, creating hormonal harmony (from inversions); the cardiovascular and circulatory systems are invigorated (as result of the flow); the digestive and metabolic systems are stimulated (from the heat of the ignited fire within); and the elimination system is activated and regulated (from sweating and from the movement of lymph, the body's sewage system). Every single cell in the body benefits.

Mind & Body Wellbeing is effective on even deeper levels because it gives students a new awareness of their bodies. It brings breath and consciousness to all muscles and tissue, and students really make the connection between mind and body. From here, students start to get more attuned to the needs of their bodies, both on and off the mat.