

## **The Loft Yoga and Therapy**

### **Guidance for the Code of Conduct:**

#### **Adhere to Applicable Law**

Adherence to applicable law. Members **MUST** abide by all local, state, provincial, national, and federal laws and regulations applicable in their location(s).

#### **Scope of Practice**

Members **MUST** follow the scope of practice inherent in 1. Their professional lives and governing bodies and 2. Within their specific yoga training, acknowledging their specific scope of training and limitations.

#### **Anti-Harassment Policy**

Members must not harass Students, Trainees, employees, peers, other Members, other Teachers, Registered Yoga Schools, other schools, studios, or members of the public, in person or through online activities, now known or unknown, such as trolling, stalking, using hate speech, threatening, intimidating, reporting of false grievances, manipulating, or otherwise harassing in any form or manner.

#### **Sexual Misconduct Policy**

Members must not intentionally or negligently cause sexual harm. Verbally, physically, or otherwise to Students, Trainees, employees, peers, other Members, other teachers, or members of the public through any action, including but not limited to: actions prescribed by local, state, provincial, national, and federal laws and regulations.

#### **Do No Harm**

Members must attest that they will take reasonable steps to do no harm and will not intentionally or negligently cause harm to Students, Trainees, employees, peers, other Members, other teachers, or members of the public through any action or inaction, including but not limited to actions proscribed by local, state, provincial, national, and federal laws and regulations. Code Principle 5 also prohibits, for the purposes of safety, the Member from teaching yoga while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, except for those drugs that have been prescribed to the Member for medical purposes by a licensed medical or mental health professional. This teaching prohibition is irrespective of jurisdictional legality and within certain yogic practices and lineages, styles, and methodologies.

#### **Actively Include All Individuals**

Members must. Not discriminate against and will actively include all individuals. Members are expected to go beyond basic legal prohibitions against discrimination and, within their scope of practice, actively include, accommodate, and welcome all who wish to be included in the practice of yoga.

Code Principle: includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. **Avoid Discrimination:** Members **MUST NOT** discriminate against Students, Trainees, employees, staff, peers, or any other Members on the basis of age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, body type, personal appearance, physical or mental ability, socioeconomic status, marital status, political activities, or affiliation or any other basis proscribed by local, state, provincial, national, and federal laws and regulations.
2. **Seek Active Inclusion:** Members should seek to actively include, accommodate, and welcome persons who are typically excluded on the basis named above, therefore avoid Discrimination as a committed practice towards creating equity.
3. **Provide Reasonable Accommodations:** Members should understand and facilitate to the best of their ability reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. Members are responsible for complying with disability laws and regulations applicable in their jurisdiction. Members should carefully consider the safety and accessibility of the physical location(s) of their yoga classes and workshops.
4. **Respect Student-Teacher Relationships**

### **Student-Teacher relationships**

It is the teacher's responsibility to maintain relationships with students that are appropriate and professional.

1. **Consent-Based Touch:** As it pertains to the act of physically assisting, the Member **MUST** obtain informed consent before physically adjusting Students and Trainees in yoga practices. Informed Consent can be given verbally, in writing, by an unambiguous gesture, or via a consent indicator. Silence or lack of resistance, in and of itself, does not demonstrate consent. Further, Members understand and agree that Explicit and Informed Consent is an ongoing process of communication and agency and that previous consent does not imply future permission or allow for future physical adjustment or contact of any type.
2. We recognize the trust placed by the student in the teacher and the power that gives the teacher. While acknowledging the complexity of relationships, we avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of students. We avoid dual relationships with students (e.g. business, close personal or sexual relationships) as we acknowledge that they can easily impair our professional judgment, compromise the integrity of our instructions and/or become a means for our own gain. We never engage in harassment, abusive words, actions, or exploitative coercion of students or former students.
3. **Romantic and/or Sexual Relationships:** The Member **SHOULD NOT** enter into a new romantic and/or sexual relationship with a Student or Trainee during the course of a school, conference, workshop, retreat, class, or other such events at which the Member is perceived to be the Teacher. If feelings do develop, or if the parties mutually agree to

move forward with a romantic and/or sexual relationship during the course of the aforementioned events, the Member SHOULD suggest that the Student or Trainee find an alternate Teacher. This would not apply to spouses, common-law spouses, married couples and people in committed relationships prior to conducting class, workshop, retreat or conference. Discernment of appropriateness should be considered. An awareness that sexual dynamic must never be brought into the classroom.

4. **Work Status:** Members MUST abide by all local governing agencies, including but not limited to: local, state, provincial, national, and/or federal laws and regulations when hiring, working with, or engaging Students, Trainees, employees, or other Members. In cases of non-monetary work exchanges, Members MUST commit the details of those agreements to writing to decrease possible tensions and misunderstandings.
5. **Consent to Record:** Members MUST NOT photograph, record video, or capture any other imagery in any other medium, nor use such imagery or such likeness, without the express consent of the Students, Trainees, or members of the public who are included in such photography, video, and imagery.
6. **Honesty in Communication:** Members MUST NOT falsely represent their professional yoga history, including but not limited to: education, training, experience, and credentials. Members MUST NOT plagiarize any copyrighted material and MUST accurately disclose the source of any teaching, writing, or resource that is not their own. Members SHOULD acknowledge their Teachers or mentors when sharing a teaching related to that relationship. Members MUST NOT make unsupported or exaggerated claims regarding the effects of yoga.
7. **Local Resources:** Members MUST NOT provide advice or services in locations where they are not currently and properly licensed during or resulting from any program, including residential or immersion. In terms of disclosures, Members SHOULD create and provide referral lists of locally available resources for Students, including but not limited to: medical and mental health professionals, law enforcement, suicide prevention hotline, sexual abuse hotline, and Yoga Alliance.
8. **Cultural Responsibility:** Members SHOULD educate and inform themselves about the history and genesis of yoga and proactively inform Students and Trainees of the origin and practices from the lineage, style, or methodology being taught. Members SHOULD seek to responsibly adapt yoga teachings and practices for Students of various cultural backgrounds while also understanding the existence of appropriation and commodification in contemporary yoga and its effects on Indian and other cultures and traditions.

9. Individual Responsibility: Members SHOULD, establish an individual and personalized structure for periodic and ongoing peer mentoring, support, and advice as well as self-reflection, especially around yoga and yoga teaching issues they find challenging.
10. We recognize that the teacher-student relationship involves a power imbalance, the residual effects of which remain after the student is no longer studying with the teacher. Therefore, we suggest extreme caution if you choose to enter into a personal relationship with a former student.
11. We do not abandon or neglect students. If we are unable, or unwilling for appropriate reasons, to provide professional help or continue a professional relationship, every reasonable effort is made to arrange for continuation of instruction with another teacher.

### **Confidentiality:**

We respect the integrity and protect the welfare of all persons with whom we are working, and recognize that it is our obligation to safeguard any information about them obtained in the course of instruction.

1. All records kept on a student are stored or disposed of in a manner that assures security and confidentiality.
2. We treat all communications from students with professional confidence.
3. When supervising apprentices or consulting with other yoga teachers, we use only the first names of our students, except in those situation where the identity of the student is necessary to the understanding of the case. It is our responsibility to convey the importance of confidentiality to the apprentice or consultant.
4. We do not disclose student confidences to anyone, except: as mandated by law; to prevent a clear and immediate danger to someone; If there is a threat of abuse or harm, either to students or teachers; in the course of a civil, criminal, or disciplinary action arising from the instruction where the teacher is a defendant; for purpose of supervision or consultation; or by previously obtained written permission. In a case involving more than one person (as student), written permission must be obtained from all legally accountable persons who have been present during the instruction before any disclosure can be made.
5. We obtain consent of students, either written or a verbal before audio and/or video tape recording or permitting third party observation of their private sessions.
6. When current or former students are referred to in a publication, while teaching, or in a public presentation, confidentiality is maintained.

## **Inter-professional Relationships**

As yoga teachers, we relate and cooperate with other professional persons in our immediate community and beyond. We acknowledge that we are part of a network of healthcare professionals and recognize the need to develop and maintain interdisciplinary and inter-professional relationships in a professional and appropriate manner.

### **Scope of Practice:**

#### **1. Teach Yoga**

Teachers will teach yoga and to offer instruction and education on yoga practices and principles that responsibly reflect the level of yoga education, training, and experience of both the Teacher and the Student(s). Members may teach yoga in a group, in a one-on-one setting, or online. Members must limit teaching to practices and learnings that align with yoga philosophy and the lineage, style, and methodology for which the Member is qualified and in accordance with the competencies described in the curriculum of your specific training.

#### **2. Adjust Posture or Practice with Explicit and Informed Consent**

Allows the Member to adjust posture or practices only with Explicit and Informed Consent. All physical adjustments of any type are intentionally limited to situations where there has been prior Explicit and Informed Consent. Previous consent does not imply future permission or allow for future physical adjustment or contact.

“Explicit and Informed Consent” is narrowly defined as overt permission for a specific Teacher to use hands-on contact that has been granted by the Student. This permission can be given verbally, in writing, by an unambiguous gesture, or via a consent indicator. Silence or lack of resistance, in and of itself, does not demonstrate consent.

#### **3. Share and Cite Yogic Philosophy, History, and Anatomy**

Teachers are to properly cite sources when providing instruction in yogic philosophy, history, and anatomy. This may include teachings, studies, and the Member’s own personal commentary or opinion from many sources, including those listed below. Teachers must accurately disclose the source of the information, commentary, or opinion.

#### **4. Advise and Teach Within Permitted Scope**

Prohibits teachers from advising or teaching in areas where the Teacher does not have appropriate credentials and competence. The goal of Principle 4 is to provide guidance in cases where Teachers may encounter situations beyond the scope of their credentials, experience, or abilities.

1. Teachers must not provide advice or services for which they are not properly and currently licensed, during any program, including residential or immersion. Teachers may, at their own discretion, provide referral lists of locally available resources for Students, including but not limited to: medical and mental health professionals, law

enforcement, suicide prevention hotline, sexual abuse hotline, and Canadian Yoga Alliance.

2. Unless the Member is both competent and properly credentialed in the specific field in which they seek to provide services, advice, or products, the Teacher must (1) gain competence and proper credentials, (2) engage the services of or refer the Student to a competent and properly credentialed professional, or (3) decline to provide such service or advice.
3. Canadian Yoga Alliance credentials must never be used to imply competency or to promote the Member in fields not specifically included in the Canadian Yoga Alliance Scope of Practice.

### **5. Maintain Relevant Credentials:**

Maintain relevant credentials including compliance with any registration or continuing education requirements. Members must:

1. Maintain and comply with all relevant Canadian Yoga Alliance credentials, including all qualifications and corresponding continuing education requirements;
2. Agree to follow all other Canadian Yoga Alliance (or other specific governing body) policies and procedures.

### **6. Personal Responsibility:**

It is the personal responsibility of the yoga teacher to cultivate a life based in truth and authenticity, to oneself and to others. The yoga teacher inspires trust by living in a trustworthy manner. Yoga teachers will avoid misuse/abuse of stimulants, drugs or alcohol and dress in a modest manner. The teacher will be mindful of speech and if sharing stories of one's intimate life, assure that the stories are relevant, philosophical, inspiring and will not harm or discredit another person. The teacher will be mindful of projection, blaming, shaming and the role that unhealed, personal wounds play in intimate and teacher/student relationships.

### **7. Safety:**

1. Maintain a safe, clean and comfortable environment for the teaching and practice of yoga.
2. Maintain safety procedures for yoga equipment.
3. Support the safety of students in the teaching of yoga.
4. Adhere to relevant legislative requirements relating to safety and care including Occupational Health and Safety and Duty of Care requirements.
5. Maintain public liability and professional indemnity insurance.

### **8. Avoiding Conflict of Interests while teaching at multiple studios, in the community, internationally and online:**

1. The teacher must govern themselves in accordance with Professional Code of Conduct in all teaching settings.

2. The teacher must recognize that in teaching in a variety of situations that there may be a conflict of interest that occurs, particularly if individual, financial gain exists in competition with a home studio or multiple studios.
3. The teacher must recognize that an extraordinary amount of time, resources, personal, financial and professional investment and sacrifice goes into the creation and maintenance of a fitness centre, gym, yoga studio or retreats held internationally.
4. With the above in the forefront of the teachers mind and heart, the teacher must not covet, plagiarize, copy, entice students from one studio to another with gifts, promise of teaching or monetary gain or take the work of another to advance one's own recognition or monetary advancement.
5. In teaching at multiple studios and scenarios, the teacher must recognize that in many centres, there is a non compete clause that prohibits teachers, teaching at studios that exist in close proximity. If there is no 'non-compete clause', teachers must not encourage students that they have met in a specific professional setting, to leave their home studio to follow them to another studio, setting, workshop or retreat, specifically to acquire financial gain. The teacher acknowledges that this is unethical.
6. The teacher must acknowledge that there is a very fine line between personal relationships and professional advancement. Every attempt must occur to avoid conflict of interests in professional work.
7. If the teacher works in multiple settings, every attempt should be made to create different offerings that would not exist in direct competition with another, thereby avoiding possible conflict of interest.
8. The teacher will recognize that advertising or promoting self interest, particularly for financial gain, through the portal of The Loft Yoga and Therapy, either in person, through advertising or online is considered a conflict of interest and unethical.

**9. Autonomy:**

***Specific to The Loft Yoga and Therapy, we recognize and want the ethical, financial and autonomous advancement of our teachers. The teacher must recognize that there are so many untapped classes, workshops, retreats and official teacher, trainings with the potential for exploration and advancement and that if the energy that goes into the studio is collective, the studio in turn, thrives and so will the individual teachers and students. Personal endeavours are encouraged when teachers are able to promote their endeavours, under the wind of their own sails or if there is energy, commitment and loyalty, that in turn promotes our beautiful, ethical, home studio. In this way, there is a true, free flow of energy that we all hold dear in yoga. If full autonomy is required by the teacher, The Loft Yoga and Therapy encourages independent pursuit of one's own professional life, separate and not inclusive of our studio but will be open to amalgamation of professional endeavours.***

## **Violation of Ethics and Codes of Conduct:**

Ethics and Codes of Conduct is necessary in all professionals holding the responsibilities of mental, physical and spiritual care of people. It seems to me that there is a certain amount of ambivalence in the yoga community with several violations both at a local and International level. In this way, accreditation and adherence to a governing body that assures compliance, behaviour and standards is imperative.

If a violation of Ethics, standards or codes of conduct is apparent and brought to the attention of the teacher, student, colleague or director: The following actions will be taken.

1. Examine the situation: Determining the facts of the situation through all parties is important. Establishing the teacher/client relationship will be necessary. Asking questions like “Is there a third party responsible for the client’s payments and medical history?” Who said what? What are the actions taken?
2. Consideration of the situation: What are the ethical, legal, moral considerations of the problem? What values are involved? Are their cultural considerations for which to be sensitive or educational? Is the law being fractured?
3. Employ the help of esteemed colleagues. Ask people whom are highly educated. Consult legal representation. Identify the true problem.
4. Identify options: Utilize brainstorming techniques to de escalate a situation. Consider our own contributions. Ask questions: Is this a projection of my own, unexamined issues. Of my dark, shadow side? Am I seeing this situation with a tarnished lens? Why is this triggering for me? What is unhealed within me being that I may have been triggered by this situation? Own responsibility. Identify what is the responsibility of another party. Encourage mediation.
5. Evaluate the consequences of each option.
  - \*Confrontation of a student or other practitioner or teacher may be necessary. I believe that direct, honest and kind communication, being cognizant of healthy boundaries is the best way to communicate. Being mindful of three important questions: Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind? Speak and act with integrity.
  - \*Meeting with a student with another person present. A colleague. A leader or director of the school or studio.
  - \*Identifying if the situation is abusive.
6. If the situation is deemed abusive, physically or mentally harmful or dangerous, it is imperative to consult with the local police authorities before a situation escalates. The student will first be reminded that we are intolerant of abuse and be asked to immediately leave the premises. If this fails to occur and a threat is identified for personal safety or for safety of others, the police authority need to be called.

7. If a teacher violates ethical boundaries and code of conduct: The following will occur:
  - \* See above
  - \* If the relationship is salvageable, clearly and concisely communicate expectations, boundaries and reminders of code of conduct (if the violation is benign).
  - \*If the violation is a serious misconduct violation, remind the teacher of their code of conduct and ethics, explain that misconduct is not tolerated in the studio or teaching program and wish them well on their journey as they are removed from the certification, class or studio.
  
8. There are certain codes of conduct that will not be tolerated with either student or teacher and that includes but not limited to:
  - \*Teaching or attending class under the influence of marijuana, alcohol, opiates and drugs.
  - \*Sexual misconduct
  - \*Physical, mental, financial, emotional, sexual abuse
  - \*Theft
  - \*Harassment (Online, trolling, fake profiles and in person)
  - \*Demearing. Toxic, manipulative behaviours to other students or teachers
  
9. With serious misconduct issues, the teacher or student will be asked to leave, terminated from employment or study and revoke their certification and membership.

### **Code of Conduct Guide for Students:**

In order to guarantee that each student receives the best experience possible, The Loft Yoga and Therapy requests that students respect the Code of Conduct and Teacher Ethics described above. In addition to this reciprocal and mutually respected code of conduct where applicable, we ask the students to respect the etiquette of our studio.

1. First time students should arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of their first class to register. We recommend that all students prebook their classes on our online booking site. Due to Covid Restrictions, we cannot guarantee entry should students arrive late (without booking) or arrive without pre-booking with public health safe practices in mind.
  
2. Please respect other students and teachers by arriving on time and being prepared to stay for the duration of the practice. We appreciate that life happens and therefore, although we recommend arriving to the class prepared for the start of the class, our door is always open. Come into the class quietly and set up in a place that is least distracting to other students.
  
3. As this is a sacred place, we attempt to keep the studio clean, therefore, please remove your shoes/boots when entering the studio.
  
4. Due to the physiological discomfort of perfume allergies, our studio is a perfume free space. Refrain from wearing heavy, commercial perfumes. We do use essential oils. Please advise us if you have allergy to perfume and/or infusions of essential oils.

5. No use of cell phones, wrist computers or pagers in the studio. Please turn them off before entering.
6. No food, gum or candy in the teaching rooms. Water is accepted.
7. Limit your postures to poses and techniques that are being guided by your instructors. Take advanced postures if your practice allows for that adaptation. Listen to your body, guided adaptation and do not hesitate to go into a resting pose should you require to do so.
8. Please inform your instructor during class about current health issues or injuries.
9. Please respect the scope of practice and limitations and strengths of our instructors and understand that you should seek professional advice from people that are professionally trained to offer advice when it comes to physical, spiritual and mental health.
9. Please speak and listen mindfully to your instructors and fellow students.
10. Treat everyone with respect, care, compassion and non-judgement.
11. Please understand that our studio promotes compassion, care and trust by creating a space of non judgement. This means that students recognize that our teachers and students come from vast socio-economic, sexual orientation, familial, religious, educational, political, racial, inter-racial and world backgrounds. No student or teacher should be unfairly judged based upon the above. The student shall recognize that all information received online or in person is filtered through one's own lens. The student shall recognize that lens may be rose coloured, dark or filled with blind spots, based upon many factors, including religious upbringing, education, lack of education, media bias, parental influence, personal experience and lack of experience. The student shall recognize that one's truth may not be everyone's truth and every attempt is made to teach, receive and live Universal truth.
12. Students are requested to maintain healthy, professional boundaries within our studio, including our instructors and other students, all all times. A student must not engage in any verbal or physical behaviour of a demeaning, harassing or abusive nature in any professional context. Any form of harassment will not be tolerated and student may be barred from the studio should the behaviour persist. The students are encouraged to refrain from gossip and toxic communication.
12. Students should not contact the studio or our instructors through phone, email or social media regarding any serious personal issues or histories (e.g., mental health/illness) unrelated to their yoga or meditation practice at our studio. Should students require additional support regarding their mental health needs, we recommend that you contact your Doctor, Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Social Worker or appropriate health care provider.
13. The student shall be mindful of the policies of our studio, the tender story that created our studio, one's own drama, projections or chaotic influences, therefore respect the peace, sanctity

and beauty that is our extraordinary space. Arrive to class. Settle in. Respect the quiet space for oneself and others.

14. Above all, be open, have fun and practice each class with mindful intention.

This specific document has been created by Tami Ellis BScPT, BPE, CAFCI, CPMA, Gunn IMS, RYT-E 500 to promote ethics and integrity for teachers and students, specifically at The Loft Yoga and Therapy.

The following resources have been modified, edited and utilized in the making of this document:

1. *Yoga Well Institute, Code of Conduct: California*
2. *Code of Conduct and Ethics: Yoga Alliance*
3. *Code of Conduct and Ethics: Canadian Yoga Alliance*
4. *Code of Ethics: Iyengar Association of Canada*
5. *Code of Conduct and Ethics: Yoga Australia*
6. *“Let’s clean up our yoga community now, take a stand, stop the crap” : Gary Kissiah, Lawyer ([garykissiah.com](http://garykissiah.com))*
7. *Five Ethical Principles in Student Life- Goshen College*
8. *Code of Conduct: College of Physical Therapists of Alberta*