

Trauma-Informed Mindful Embodied (TIME) Yoga for Childhood Trauma Survivors:
Self-Regulating During a Global Pandemic

by

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We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

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Abstract

Survivors of complex childhood trauma (CCT) tend to develop distinctive mental health challenges later on in adulthood, which may be exacerbated by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. CCT survivors often struggle with self-regulation, making it difficult to tolerate the distress associated with “gold-standard” trauma-processing therapies for survivors of single-incident and adult-onset trauma. Yoga can enhance self-regulation, through physical movements, breathing techniques, meditative focus, and ethical guidelines of behaviour. This dissertation encompasses the creation of a new approach for teaching yoga to trauma survivors, called TIME yoga. This approach is based on a neuropsychological understanding of the bio-psycho-social alterations that CCT survivors undergo. Chapter 1 details the methods employed in this series of dissertation studies. A randomized controlled trial (RCT) was conducted with 26 adult survivors of CCT. Mental health, emotional functioning, resilience, and cognitive functioning were assessed via subjective and objective measures at two time points (i.e., pre- and post- participation in the online yoga program or waitlist). Chapter 2 is a retrospective and cross-sectional study describing survivors’ pre-intervention psychological and cognitive functioning during the pandemic, and evaluating the impact of trauma at particular developmental stages. Regression analyses revealed particular implications of adolescent and young-childhood trauma. Chapter 3 presents a manual of TIME yoga and feasibility data from the initial RCT, supporting both feasibility and safety of the program. Chapter 4 underscores yoga-related improvements in depressive symptoms, interoceptive awareness, and executive functioning. Using both repeated-measures ANOVAs and clinically meaningful indicators of change, this study illustrates how TIME yoga effectively improved

survivors' self-regulation during the global health crisis. Future directions for program development and evaluation are discussed.