

Abstract

Ways of Knowing and Being: Qualitative Study of Indigenous Perspectives on Trauma-Sensitive Yoga

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Indigenous communities endure intergenerational trauma through ongoing oppression, genocide, violence, and colonization with adverse effects on wellbeing and systemic barriers to holistic care. Trauma Center Trauma-Sensitive Yoga (TCTSY) is an empirically-based yoga intervention for posttraumatic stress disorder that promotes practitioner autonomy and trauma healing through choice-based somatic practices. To become a TCTSY-Facilitator, candidates complete a 20-hour training, followed by a 300-hour certification program through the Center for Trauma and Embodiment. The purpose of this community-based research was to document perspectives from the first Indigenous TCTSY training cohort about the usability and feasibility of TCTSY. Interviewees were 21 participants (women = 19; 13 Tribal Nations) who completed the 20-hour training, from which 10 enrolled in the 300-hour training, and 1 program mentor. Semi-structured interviews (9 questions) at post-20-hour training (May-August 2022; n = 14), mid-

300-hour (November 2022-January 2023; n = 5), and post-300-hour training (July 2023; n = 1) were conducted and transcribed by 2 master's level psychology research assistants (RAs) via Zoom. Data analyses were conducted by five master's level psychology RAs and 1 psychology professor using the consensual qualitative research method to emphasize multiple interpretations, share power, and reach consensus. Researchers engaged in ongoing reflexivity practices and Indigenous cultural learnings. Results found most participants reported positive impacts from the training and TCTSY principles aligned with their current healing approaches. Main takeaways were learning about trauma, value of invitational language, and plans to integrate TCTSY with land-based practices and ceremonies. Identified program changes were collaboration with Elders and adding resources about ongoing community trauma and oppression. Implications for culturally tailored mind-body practices will be discussed.

Keywords: yoga, trauma-sensitive yoga, Indigenous, qualitative, community-based research