

Establishing a Yoga Therapist Job Description for the Advancement of the Yoga Therapy Profession

Introduction

The International Association of Yoga Therapists (IAYT) is a nonprofit organization [U.S. classification 501(c)(3)] whose mission is to advance yoga therapy as a recognized health profession. As the field of yoga therapy continues to grow and gain recognition, it is essential to define the role of a yoga therapist through a comprehensive job description. A standardized yoga therapist position description educates potential clients and employers and fosters the advancement of the yoga therapy profession as a whole.

The intention of this job description is to provide clarity about the role and responsibilities of a yoga therapist. It takes into consideration the [Scope of Practice for Yoga Therapy](#), [Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibilities](#), and professional standards that IAYT-certified yoga therapists (C-IAYTs) agree to adhere to. This clarity is necessary to inform the expectations of clients seeking yoga therapy services, as well as institutions considering the integration of yoga therapy into their programs and other healthcare professionals who may refer clients for yoga therapy.

Job Title

Yoga Therapist

Job Description

An [IAYT-certified yoga therapist \(C-IAYT\)](#) works with individuals and groups who may have specific health concerns or conditions, employing yoga techniques and philosophical principles to promote their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. This role involves assessing clients' needs, designing and offering instruction in personalized yoga practices, and providing guidance throughout the course of the therapeutic relationship. C-IAYTs co-create with clients practices that support these individuals' goals, and participate in goal-setting. C-IAYTs work within the [Scope of Practice for Yoga Therapy](#), as well as the scope of practice of any additional qualifications or professional training/skills, and in accordance with IAYT's [Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibilities](#). They strive to embody principles of diversity, equity, inclusivity, and accessibility, as outlined, for example, in IAYT's [DEI Competencies](#).

Responsibilities

Client intake, assessment, and evaluation includes activities such as the following:

- collecting and reviewing client information, including health history and use of medications;
- conducting thorough assessments of clients' physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health, considering their history, environment, current condition, and individual goals;
- evaluating clients' movement patterns, flexibility, strength, and overall functional abilities to identify areas for improvement; and
- assessing clients' stress levels, emotional well-being, sense of purpose and connection, and other lifestyle factors that may affect their health.

Personalized yoga program design may involve:

- development of customized yoga interventions tailored to meet the specific needs and goals of each client;
- integration of appropriate yoga postures (*asana*), breathing techniques (*pranayama*), meditation techniques, relaxation practices, and other tools of yoga (e.g., mudra, mantra) into the program; and
- ongoing adaptation of yoga practices to meet clients' evolving physical and mental health needs.

Yoga therapy session protocols may involve:

- educating clients on the benefits of yoga therapy and encouraging them to take an active role in their own therapeutic process;
- working one-to-one or in small groups of people with similar health needs/conditions or circumstances;
- providing clear and detailed instructions on proper alignment, breathing techniques, and mindfulness skills;
- employing props (e.g., blocks, blankets) as needed to support goals such as postural alignment or deeper relaxation;
- gentle, consented touch for body awareness or variations as needed to facilitate safe and effective practice;
- creating an appropriate atmosphere of safety, privacy, and discretion for clients;
- providing guidance on lifestyle modifications, stress-management techniques, and other self-care practices, within the scope of the yoga therapist's training and professional background;
- offering resources and recommendations for clients' further learning and development; and
- referring clients to other practitioners and modalities as relevant or needed.

Progress tracking and documentation of yoga therapy sessions requires:

- regularly monitoring clients' progress, reassessing their needs and adjusting the yoga program accordingly;
- appropriately maintaining (according to jurisdictional regulations) confidential, accurate, and up-to-date client records that document sessions, progress, and any changes in the client's condition; and

- collaborating with other healthcare professionals, when necessary and with appropriate consent, to ensure a comprehensive and integrated approach to client care.

Desired Qualifications

- Certification as a C-IAYT with the International Association of Yoga Therapists (IAYT)
- Specific training and experience in yoga therapy techniques, anatomy, physiology, and pathology
- Knowledge of yoga philosophy, principles, and practices
- Ethical interpersonal skills to establish and maintain a therapeutic relationship and effectively communicate with clients while maintaining professional boundaries
- Ability to create a safe, welcoming environment and foster a sense of belonging for clients with diverse identities
- Ability to work independently and as part of a multidisciplinary team, collaborating effectively with other healthcare professionals

Desired Attributes

- Empathy, compassion, and the ability to work with individuals from a variety of backgrounds and cultures who have various health challenges and life circumstances
- Commitment to upholding principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility
- Attention to detail, organizational skills, and the ability to maintain accurate client records
- Commitment to ongoing professional development and staying up-to-date with advancements in yoga therapy and relevant contemporary health science as applicable

NOTE: The above job description is a general outline and may vary depending on the specific organization or healthcare setting.