

AJNA YOGA THERAPY



After a decade plus of teaching yoga, Nyk Danu wanted to take her knowledge to the next level. She already had a strong therapeutic leaning and had seen firsthand the power of yoga as a healing modality. She knew that becoming a yoga therapist would be the next step in her journey.

“If the advanced program at Ajna wasn’t available via student loans, I would not have been able to join. I’m so grateful Ajna has student loans to make this amazing training accessible for me. Now I can go out and share yoga therapy with my community,” said Danu.

Since 2008, Ajna Yoga has been training yoga teachers and yoga therapists in Canada. We’re based in Victoria, British Columbia, and run a dedicated yoga therapy studio as well offering a 240-hour teacher training (RYT-200), an advanced 300-hour Teacher of Therapeutic Yoga Certification Program (RYT-500), and an 800-hour Yoga Therapy Diploma Program.

Ajna is the only yoga college on Vancouver Island that holds a designated status with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training (MAE) and the only college in British Columbia that specializes in therapeutic yoga.

It’s our goal to give students the highest level of professional standards available in the field of yoga therapy. In 2014, we were one of the first schools to have an accredited program with IAYT. Our designation with the Private Training Institutions Branch [PTIB]-a division of the MAE-was pivotal, as it allowed us to give full-time Canadian students access to loans and full-time students from other countries access to visa applications. The availability of loans means that some students who would not otherwise be able to afford the program have the possibility of becoming a yoga therapist. Canadian students can apply to their home province student loan program for the full cost of tuition; however, it should be noted that the application process for these provincial programs takes a few months to complete. International students can apply to the Canadian government for a 1-year student visa if they are planning to do the practicum in their home country or for a 2-year visa if they do the practicum in Canada.

In the province of British Columbia, Ajna Yoga is a Designated Private Careers College with the PTIB. It is also registered as a career provider with the Canadian federal government. These additional designations support students in their learning and protect their rights as students. As a designated college, Ajna is regulated by the government and must have certain policies in place, such as procedures for tuition refunds, grade disputes, and sexual misconduct.

Nina Leibow, a Pilates and ballet instructor from Portland, Oregon, studies full time at Ajna. In 2016, she completed the 240-hour yoga teacher training and is now enrolled in the 800-hour Yoga Therapy Diploma Program on a student visa. “Both Jules and Michelle supported me during the process and provided the necessary document to secure a Canadian student visa to complete the course,” Leibow stressed.

Students in the part-time program can balance their studies with working, parenting, or travelling from out of town to study. We’ve noticed that some students need more time between modules to integrate the information, whereas others do best with an immersion style that comes with the full-time course load of 20 hours a week. Either way, we developed the program so that students would see how a yoga therapy studio works. To observe how the yoga therapist-client relationship is built and the dynamics of group yoga therapy, students first mentor faculty members in group yoga therapy classes at the studio as one of the residential modules; then, on their own, they teach four, 6- to 9-week group yoga therapy sessions in which they are mentored by faculty members.

And for Ajna student Nina Leibow and graduate Nyk Danu, they are on their way to fulfilling work with clients experiencing injury, illness, and mental health issues. **YTT**



Jules Payne, C-IAYT, E-RYT 500, has been training yoga teachers and yoga therapists since 2004. She co-founded Ajna Yoga with Michelle Kahan in 2008. Jules has a special interest in yoga therapy for healthy aging and injury rehabilitation. In training yoga therapists, Jules prioritizes a strong foundation in interoceptive awareness, applied anatomy, and evidence-based research.