

AnyBody Yoga Community Interest Company

Trauma-Informed Practice Policy

Feeling well is for everybody.

Policy Owner	Frankie Stone, Founder
Version	1.0
Date Adopted	June 2026
Review Date	June 2027
Applies To	All staff, volunteers, facilitators and partners delivering on behalf of AnyBody Yoga

1. Purpose

AnyBody Yoga is committed to delivering yoga and wellness provision in a way that is safe, empowering and responsive to the needs of people who have experienced trauma. This policy sets out our approach to trauma-informed practice, why it underpins everything we do, and what it means in practice for our delivery, our partnerships and our people.

This policy applies across all AnyBody Yoga programmes and activities, including sessions delivered in HMP Eastwood Park and other custodial settings, recovery community programmes, community wellness sessions, retreats, sauna and nature-based wellness provision, and the Yoga Teacher Training (YTT) programme for people with lived experience of the criminal justice system.

2. Background and Rationale

AnyBody Yoga was founded by Frankie Stone, whose own lived experience of the criminal justice system, addiction and recovery informs every aspect of the organisation's ethos and practice. Frankie has used yoga for nearly 20 years as a tool for nervous system regulation, trauma recovery and embodied healing. Her 500-hour Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT) training includes specialist qualification in trauma-informed delivery.

The communities AnyBody Yoga serves people in custody, people in recovery, those facing multiple disadvantage have disproportionately high rates of trauma exposure. Research consistently demonstrates that:

- Trauma dysregulates the nervous system, creating patterns of hypervigilance, dissociation, or emotional shutdown that can persist long after the original event.
- Embodied practices such as yoga, breathwork and somatic movement have a measurable positive effect on nervous system regulation, helping to reduce the physiological and emotional impact of trauma.
- Mainstream wellness spaces frequently fail to account for trauma, inadvertently retraumatising participants through environments, language or instruction styles that feel unsafe.
- Trauma-informed approaches that prioritise safety, choice and empowerment have significantly better outcomes for marginalised populations.

AnyBody Yoga exists to close the gap between the people who most need access to wellness and the provision that currently reaches them. Trauma-informed practice is not an add-on to our work it is the foundation of it.

3. Our Six Trauma-Informed Principles

AnyBody Yoga's practice is grounded in the six principles of trauma-informed care developed by SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), adapted for our yoga and wellness context:

1

Safety

Creating physically and emotionally safe environments. This includes attention to the physical space (lighting, temperature, exits visible), clear, consistent communication before and during sessions, and the removal of any element of performance, judgement or hierarchy from the practice.

2

Trustworthiness & Transparency

Being clear and consistent in how we communicate, what participants can expect, and how information about them is used. We do not make promises we cannot keep, and we are honest about boundaries and the scope of what yoga can offer.

3

Peer Support

Recognising the value of shared lived experience. Where possible, AnyBody Yoga draws on facilitators and volunteers with their own experience of the communities we serve. The YTT programme for long-term prisoners is a direct expression of this principle.

4

Collaboration & Mutuality

Power is shared as much as possible. Participants are given choices about movement, about how much to engage, about whether to share. We work with participants, not on them.

5

Empowerment, Voice & Choice

Every session is designed to strengthen the participant's sense of agency and bodily autonomy. Cues are invitational rather than instructional. No adjustment or touch is ever made without explicit consent. Participants are encouraged to listen to their own bodies and honour what they find.

6

Cultural, Historical & Gender Sensitivity

We acknowledge the particular contexts of the communities we serve including the experiences of women in the criminal justice system and actively work to ensure that our practice is inclusive, non-judgmental and free from assumptions about what wellness looks like or who it is for.

4. Practice Standards

4.1 The Environment

- Sessions are held in spaces that have been assessed for physical safety and comfort.
- Where possible, participants can see exits and are not required to sit with their backs to the door.
- Props are available and normalised using a chair, a bolster or a block is presented as equally valid as any other option.
- Sessions in custodial settings comply with all relevant institutional requirements while maintaining the integrity of trauma-informed delivery.

4.2 Language and Instruction

- Cues are always invitational: "you might like to try" rather than "do this."
- Participants are never physically adjusted without explicit, clearly given consent.
- Body-neutral language is used throughout no references to aesthetics, weight, or physical appearance.
- Facilitators avoid assumptions about what participants can or cannot do and consistently communicate that all expressions of a posture are equally valid.
- Silence is permitted and respected. Participants are never required to speak, share or interact.

4.3 Beginning and Ending Sessions

- Sessions always begin with a brief, clear orientation what will happen, what won't happen, and what participants can do if they feel overwhelmed (including leaving the room if needed).
- Grounding practices are used at the start and close of every session to support regulation and safe transition.
- Sessions end with adequate time for rest and integration. Participants are not rushed out of Savasana or closing practice.

4.4 Managing Trauma Responses in Sessions

- Facilitators are trained to recognise signs of trauma activation including dissociation, hyperventilation, freeze responses, or emotional distress and to respond calmly and without drawing unnecessary attention to the individual.
- No participant will ever be singled out, corrected publicly, or made to feel that their response to practice is wrong or a problem.
- Where a participant appears significantly distressed, the facilitator will follow the organisation's Safeguarding Policy and, in custodial settings, liaise with relevant prison staff in accordance with agreed protocols.
- AnyBody Yoga facilitators do not act as therapists. The role of the facilitator is to hold a safe, regulated space not to process trauma content or provide counselling.

4.5 Touch and Consent

- No hands-on adjustment is ever given without first asking and receiving clear verbal consent.
- Consent is sought each time, never assumed from a previous session.
- In custodial and recovery settings, where power dynamics and histories of non-consensual touch are particularly significant, the default position is no touch unless explicitly invited by the participant.

5. Facilitator Responsibilities

All facilitators delivering on behalf of AnyBody Yoga whether employed, self-employed, or volunteering are expected to:

- Hold a current yoga teaching qualification and, where relevant, specialist trauma-informed training.
- Read, understand and commit to this policy before delivering any AnyBody Yoga session.
- Complete any induction or site-specific briefing required by partner organisations (including HMP Eastwood Park and RAFT).
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times, including after sessions and on social media.

- Never share identifiable information about participants without explicit consent, except where required under the Safeguarding Policy.
- Attend reflective practice, supervision or debrief as offered or required by AnyBody Yoga.
- Disclose any safeguarding concerns promptly and in line with the Safeguarding Policy.
- Take responsibility for their own wellbeing and self-regulation. Facilitators who are themselves activated or distressed are not in a position to hold safe space for others.

6. Facilitator Wellbeing and Self-Care

Working with trauma-impacted communities requires ongoing attention to the facilitator's own nervous system, emotional health and professional wellbeing. AnyBody Yoga recognises the risk of secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue, and is committed to supporting the people who deliver this work.

AnyBody Yoga will:

- Offer regular reflective space and informal supervision for facilitators.
- Ensure that no facilitator is expected to manage safeguarding incidents or participant distress alone.
- Encourage facilitators to communicate openly about capacity and wellbeing without fear of judgement.
- Model the values of the organisation including rest, self-compassion and the right to set limits in how it treats the people who work for it.

7. Working with Partner Organisations

AnyBody Yoga delivers work in partnership with organisations including HMP Eastwood Park, RAFT (a lived experience recovery organisation), and Fire & Ice Wellness. Where sessions are delivered within partner settings, AnyBody Yoga will:

- Agree a shared understanding of trauma-informed principles with the partner before delivery begins.
- Ensure that all relevant staff within the partner organisation understand what AnyBody Yoga sessions involve and what they do not involve.
- Establish clear referral and escalation pathways for any safeguarding or welfare concerns arising during sessions.
- Maintain the integrity of trauma-informed practice even where the partner's own culture or procedures may differ.

8. Learning, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

AnyBody Yoga is committed to ongoing learning and to improving the quality of its trauma-informed practice over time. We will:

- Gather participant feedback after every programme block using our evaluation tools, with specific attention to experiences of safety, choice and empowerment.
- Review this policy annually and following any significant incident.
- Stay informed of current research and best practice in trauma-informed yoga and somatic approaches.
- Seek specialist training and consultation where gaps in knowledge or skills are identified.

9. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding Policy

- Privacy Policy and GDPR Statement
- Health & Safety Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Equal Opportunities and Inclusion Policy

Approved by

Frankie Stone, Founder

Signature: _____

Date

Date: _____

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