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## BEVERLY S. PRICE

### Supporting Patients with Eating Disorders Through Yoga Therapy



*Beverly S. Price, MA, CEDRD-S, E-RYT 200, C-IAYT, is recognized for bringing mindfulness yoga to the eating disorders treatment community along with yoga therapy training programs in eating disorders for professionals. Beverly has created, cultivated, and sold various healthcare businesses*

*in her career. She continues to train other practitioners in incorporating yoga into eating disorders treatment while consulting with healthcare professionals on business and program development, revenue management, accreditation services, and practice sales.*

I started my career as a registered dietitian in the mid-1980s. I wanted to bring evidence-based nutrition facts to the public. After working for a small community hospital, I started a private nutrition counseling practice, employing a small staff, that I owned and operated from 1990–2001. While the practice was geared to the general nutrition concerns of individuals, it wasn't long before patients with eating disorders sought my services. Although I previously had lived the experience of an eating disorder, I felt ill-equipped to deal with the many psychological and serious medical concerns of these patients. After completing several professional trainings for eating disorders, I became knowledgeable and skilled in working with them. However, I still felt that something was missing.

I sold my practice in early 2001 and traveled around the United States offering workshops for dietitians in starting, growing, and selling a private practice. In 2003, I immersed myself in a yoga practice and teacher training program. As I delved further into these studies, I realized that yoga was the missing link to eating disorders treatment. Those who struggle with eating disorders have significant body-image disturbances; I found yoga to be instrumental in connecting individuals to their body, resulting in enjoyment of their body and defining their body in terms of “what it can do” versus “what it is” while learning that they are not mere extensions of their body but that they also possess beautiful internal qualities.

Following my teacher training and pilot program, I knew what I needed to do: return to nutrition counseling with a focus on integrating yoga with eating disorders treatment. In 2004, I started yoga and eating disorders recovery groups along with my individual nutrition and yoga counseling, calling the program Reconnect with Food. This program grew organically from something on the order of a one-room schoolhouse to a comprehensive eating disorders treatment organization, the Inner Door Center, with a staff of 25 professionals. Providers included psychotherapists, dietitians, yoga practitioners, medical providers, creative movement specialists, and administrative staff; together we produced a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach. As the first U.S. program to integrate yoga philosophy into traditional treatment in a thematic program, eating disorders treatment professionals were at first skeptical of my approach, but my program was state licensed, Joint Commission

accredited, and held contracts with most insurance companies.

Through networking and national public speaking for professionals, along with social-media marketing, news coverage, and paid advertising, it wasn't long before other eating disorders treatment programs recognized our work and began to offer yoga. I began a new and different journey around the country, this time conducting yoga and eating disorder recovery programs at studios and for teacher trainings. Based on the demand, I launched a professional training program for mental health professionals, registered dietitians, and yoga practitioners to learn this system for integrating yoga with eating disorders treatment.

As an IAYT-certified yoga therapist, I was approached by Michael Lee, MA, E-RYT 500, C-IAYT, in 2016 to offer my program as a specialty elective and 300-hour bridge in his Phoenix Rising Yoga Therapy training program. Around this time, I sold my eating disorders patient program but retained the rights to my training program. I continue to offer this training, which has become a virtual platform.

From a business standpoint, I share the following guidance:

- Surround yourself with skilled professionals who can fill in where you fall short. For example, my skills are in program development, marketing, and healthcare compliance. Therefore, financial and human resources professionals were able to support me in decision-making, while other administrative staff handled referrals, scheduling, and other managerial tasks. Delegating to others can help you focus on building your business.
- Protect your investment with trademarks and copyrights. Request that trainees use your methods and materials with attribution to you displayed on educational and promotional materials. Imitation is the highest form of flattery, but it is nice to be recognized for those you train and inspire—especially your former employees.
- Keep up with the trends in your industry as they develop. As large corporations began to purchase smaller eating disorders treatment facilities and had the capital to invest in expansion, I knew that it was time for the acquisition of my company. Following the sale of my treatment center, I stepped away.

This journey has not only been about serving others but standing in my power when others were skeptical of new treatment modalities and challenged my knowledge. My path has offered lessons for me about myself and what ignites my soul. I have learned to take my own yoga off the mat, to let go of attachments to impermanent landmarks along life's path, and to understand that obstacles are our greatest teachers—this is how we grow and transform.

**YTT**

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