

Coping During Covid: Yoga and Meditation Accessibility in Academic Libraries During the Pandemic

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Discussions about coping, resilience, and mental health accompanied the COVID-19 shutdowns and gradual return to academic and workspaces across the US through 2021. As physical and spiritual practices, yoga and meditation have been shown to help people through adversity and create resilience. Academic librarians were surveyed about yoga and meditation programs throughout the pandemic. The survey found that while yoga and meditation programs in academic libraries are on the rise, many cancelled their sessions because of the pandemic. Additionally, more can be done to make these sessions accessible.

Introduction

In March 2020, there was a widespread public movement in search of ways to cope with and manage the associated stress of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the United States. Regarding library workers specifically, Dixon remarked that there was no one reason for burnout among library workers due to the pandemic, but that the levels of exhaustion that library workers were enduring was high.¹ Interviewed by Dixon, Christina Holm at Kennesaw State University noted that library workers face stressors such as “precarity in work circumstances” and “depressed and stagnating wages,” especially at places where wages start low and have not seen regular increases.² Sometimes this stress might be associated with what Moran and Nadir referred to at the ACRL 2021 Virtual Conference as an unrealistic expectation of excessive positivity.³

However, yoga and meditation were repeatedly mentioned by health care professionals as effective tools to help reduce anxiety, relieve depression, and improve resilience.⁴ Previous research around yoga as a workplace intervention has shown it is an effective means of coping with the stress of work.⁵ Additionally, there are many successful meditation programs that have been shown to reduce anxiety and depression and increase resiliency.⁶

Hoping to improve their well-being, people of widely varying levels of fitness and ability that otherwise might have avoided yoga, soon became interested in trying it. Those with stable internet connections in their homes were able to try both yoga and meditation online. These online yoga sessions served to counter the isolation and anxiety generated by pandemic-related

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lockdowns and created a virtual place where people could meet online and collectively cope by relieving their stress through movement and meditation. Classes allowed participants the comforting choice to remain on- or off-camera and practice yoga in a way that was individual and accessible to them and their level of ability. Online sessions offered a restorative experience that more traditional face-to-face yoga sessions could not provide and that had become more necessary because of the pandemic and the lack of in-person options. In this way, online yoga and meditation became potent coping mechanisms to counter both the physical and mental effects of the pandemic.⁷

Interestingly, yoga has been widely perceived in popular culture and frequently portrayed in the media as being primarily a physical practice consisting largely of poses or asanas. The media often features white, highly-fit and limber yoga practitioners in extreme poses that require considerable strength and flexibility to execute.⁸ This image of yoga as a demanding physical practice has given many people the impression that yoga is not for them and that its benefits are not accessible or attainable by ordinary people, or can only be achieved through years of arduous effort.⁹ Likewise, meditation as a stillness practice, is seen as something that only those who have already mastered the art of silent contemplation can participate in, thus adding to the disconnect that it too is not for the general public. Because of these portrayals, many people, especially those in marginalized communities, might not think that these programs are accessible to them, especially when the perceptions of these practitioners tend to focus on the white, female, able-bodied and hyper-flexible.¹⁰

While public libraries have offered yoga sessions for their patrons for quite some time,¹¹ academic libraries have only in the past 10 years or so written about these programs.¹² Many at these institutions might believe that these types of programs are the purview of other campus entities, but some of these programs in libraries have been well established and helped those in their communities to weather stressors resulting from academic work, the workplace, and more recently, the pandemic.

Literature Review

Lenstra wrote the first comprehensive review of the literature focusing on yoga in academic libraries in 2020, before the COVID-19 pandemic. He identified three main themes of yoga in the library: spaces, collections, and programming. Lenstra described a history of “wellness in the library” and identified Goucher College in Towson, Maryland as one of the first academic libraries to include space dedicated for physical fitness, which in addition to yoga also “included a cardio room, with ellipticals, exercise bikes, and rowing machines” in 2002.¹³ He found that most articles about yoga in academic libraries discuss the partnerships they made. These partners included various departments on campus, primarily campus recreation and student groups.¹⁴ Many of these partnerships hosted special programs during finals week. Lenstra conducted an “informal study during December 2018 to see how physical activity was being supported during academic finals.”¹⁵ He found that, “it seemed that yoga was being offered everywhere” and that though “we still do not know how common these types of special programs have become, we do have clear, if anecdotal evidence that these types of programs are being offered in a wide variety of academic libraries in many parts of the US and Canada, and beyond.”¹⁶

Following Goucher College’s example, many other academic libraries added spaces dedicated to meditation and yoga, including McGill University’s Tranquility Zone and the

University of Toronto's Reflection Room.¹⁷ Louisiana State University also recently provided space for a relaxation room.¹⁸ Further, some Penn State campuses have provided prayer spaces.¹⁹ The University of Oklahoma²⁰ and University of Massachusetts Amherst²¹ added walking labyrinths as a form of moving meditation. Other libraries have added items and resources to their collections to support mindfulness and stress reduction, such as MIT's Calm Collection.²²

Yoga programs supporting employee wellness in academic libraries have also been the topic of several articles. Many of these are case studies detailing how the author's library implemented yoga or meditation into their workday, including a program at Texas Medical Center Library which began in 2010.²³ Their approach to an unfunded wellness program included pay-as-you-go yoga classes and was considered a success.²⁴ Joyner Library's lunchtime yoga program for staff at East Carolina State University changed over time: after being led by an employee who was yoga certified for several years, they now watch free online yoga videos in an empty classroom.²⁵

While nearly all articles focusing on yoga in academic libraries were supportive, there was at least one author who questioned yoga programming. Walton suggested that academic libraries that were considering the support of student mental health should review other examples of services and programming already offered on campus. This would "establish processes and systems of effective collaboration"; identify resources, either financial or staffing; and assess how the initiative met students' needs to determine if allocating resources is necessary or replicated work being done elsewhere on campus.²⁶

Since the pandemic began, several studies have been published about the impact of the pandemic and libraries' responses to the mental health needs and concerns of their patrons. Cox and Brewster surveyed academic libraries in the United Kingdom about the support for student mental wellbeing before and during the pandemic.²⁷ They found pre-pandemic, yoga programming was mentioned specifically in 6 academic libraries, and mindfulness at 11.²⁸ Additionally, after the start of the pandemic, many of the activities that UK universities offered were based online. Yoga was not an option for this survey question but may have been included in the "offering webinars on well-being related topics" selection.

Bladek also wrote about academic library support for student wellness and the impact of the pandemic in libraries in the US. Many of the initiatives depended on in-person participation, which became impossible to provide during lockdowns. Some libraries were able to shift to virtual support in the form of blogs, social media posts, guides, virtual study rooms, online workshops, and yoga classes.²⁹ Jackson wrote about this shift to support her colleagues at the start of the pandemic.³⁰ She offered "Release and Reflect" weekly, a program divided into "12–15 minutes of breath work and gentle yoga and 12–15 minutes of writing." These practices were intended to help release stress in both the body and the mind. She concluded that supporting staff wellness does not have to be costly, in agreement with the previous articles, and that, "the Zoom space is a safe container that is easy to access and allow[s] for broader participation."³¹

Finally, while most of the literature provides examples and case studies of yoga and meditation in the library, there are gaps. As Lenstra pointed out, more research is needed on spaces and collections that are set aside for yoga and meditation in academic libraries, as well as the effect these services have on students and staff. Research on yoga programs for online sessions generally showed that these programs were being implemented asynchronously, so further research is needed into the specifics of the modality (synchronous vs asynchronous sessions).³² Additionally, there are few articles that discuss accessibility of the programs.³³

Accessibility in libraries typically involves making library websites accessible to screen readers. Some may add interpreters and signers for in-person programs or online closed captioning for videos and livestreamed sessions.³⁴ But in yoga specifically, “accessibility” has meant something different—that yoga is intended for “every body.” And those bodies can be of different sizes, genders, or abilities. Accessibility within yoga circles has often in the past been referred to as “making the pose easier,” and has typically involved demonstrating a simple pose and a more challenging expression, which has allowed for participants to choose the degree of difficulty they would like to attempt for that session.³⁵ The authors would like to broaden the definition of accessibility here to not only include pose modifications, but also consider the accessibility of these programs to those who might not otherwise try yoga or meditation, as well as to those populations who have been historically marginalized and ignored.

Methods

Specifically, this study aims to answer questions about both yoga and meditation program accessibility in academic libraries in the United States, while simultaneously gathering basic information about these programs. The authors see a gap in the literature about the availability of meditation programs at academic libraries, a lack of information regarding the accessibility of both types of programs, and an opportunity to see how these programs operated during the closures of the pandemic. These questions include the following:

- How many of these programs exist in academic libraries and has there been any growth (or shrinkage) in the number of the programs being offered?
- Who is conducting these programs (library staff or faculty, HR, other campus departments)?
- Who are they marketed to? Is it only students, the university/college community, or can a variety of people participate?
- Did these programs address accessibility before the pandemic?
- What are the changes that occurred during the pandemic with regards to these programs, participants, and accessibility options?

Our survey is based in part on Lenstra’s 2017 survey of public libraries wellness programs to gather basic data about these programs, as well as his 2020 informal survey of academic libraries on yoga programs. We wanted to evaluate the demographic and geographic distribution of the libraries who participated in the surveys so that future comparisons might be made about the possible growth in popularity of such programs, where these programs might be popular, and the size and geographic dispersion of the university/colleges that provide them.³⁶ However, that is not the focus of this particular survey.

The survey was approved through the IRB at both institutions of the authors. It was designed for anonymous participation, and respondents could skip any question that they wished, apart from the first question seeking consent to take the survey. The survey was designed not to collect personal identifying information. It was created in Qualtrics, with a total of 30 questions, which was intended to take 10–15 minutes to complete.

Targeting academic librarians and to maximize response rate, the authors distributed the survey link to various ALA listservs and community postings, as well as state library listservs. It was open for responses from May 24, 2021 to July 1st, 2021 to accommodate vacation or other holidays that possible participants may have scheduled.

There were 139 total responses to the survey. Four responses were eliminated because they were from people who worked at public libraries, yielding 135 academic library responses. Questions 2–8 gathered demographic information about the respondents and the type of institution that they work for and the location of the institution. Not every person answered every question, so from here on, *n* will represent the number of answers per question. For the sake of brevity, not every question will be included here, but will be presented as a summary of main points of interest. Full question survey is Appendix 1. We have also included an OSF link for full data files minus any identifying information (<https://osf.io/hfnmj/>).

In terms of the academic status of the respondents, 58 were faculty, 62 were staff, 2 MLS/MLIS students, and 6 identified as other (options also included student workers and retirees). The geographic distribution of responses was largely from Southern States with 58, followed by 34 from the Mid-Atlantic region, 14 from New England states, and 14 from Western states (geographic regions defined in Appendix 1). There were a variety of responses (*n*=99) from small to large universities and colleges. The majority of respondents (45%) were at institutions with between 10,000–50,000 students, and 21% had 1,000–5,000 students. We did not target any individual type of institutional locale, but respondents came primarily from either suburban (26%) or urban (34%) community settings, with somewhat less coming from rural (36%) settings, and a few selecting Not Sure (3%) (*n*=99).

Limitations of the survey include the possibility that distributing it over the summer as the world was dealing with the second year of the pandemic could have resulted in survey fatigue. Recent changes in the way that ALA listservs have been distributed may have also contributed to a low response rate. The survey, while effective at gathering demographic data, had a few issues with the display of matrix options for the first 5 responses that were subsequently addressed, but these matrix options might have discouraged further participation in the survey if participants were on a mobile device.

Results and Discussion

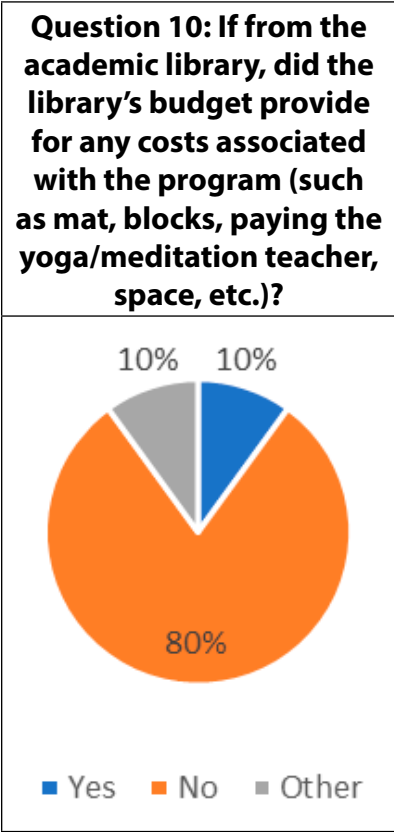
When asked whether their institution (College/University) or academic library offered yoga and meditation program(s) before the pandemic, 36 indicated that their academic library did not offer a program, while 21 responded that it did. Among the academic libraries which offered programs, 7 indicated that their library offered only yoga, and 4 indicated that they offered only meditation. For programs from the College/University, 42 respondents reported that their institution offered at least one of the programs, and 5 responded that no programs

Question 9: Did your institution (College/University) or Academic Library offer yoga or meditation program(s) before the COVID-19 pandemic?

	Yes these programs were offered		No these programs were not offered		Offered yoga but not meditation		Offered meditation but not yoga		Maybe		Total Choice Count (<i>n</i>)
	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Total Count
Academic Library	33.33%	21	87.80%	36	46.67%	7	80.00%	4	25.00%	1	69
College/ University	66.67%	42	12.20%	5	53.33%	8	20.00%	1	75.00%	3	59
	Total	63	Total	41	Total	15	Total	5	Total	4	128

were offered. Eight indicated that the College/University offered yoga but not meditation and 1 responded only meditation (Question 9). After the beginning of the pandemic in early spring of 2020 (Question 18), respondents indicated that programs were still offered with just 1 reported program in academic libraries offered virtually and 3 programs in institutions offered online. Even with the drop-in response rate for Question 18, there is a declining rate of libraries offering the programs. However, some of these programs were able to continue after a brief pause. Note: Tables are calculated by column.

Question 18: Did these yoga and/or meditation programs continue after the shutdowns in March 2020 due to the pandemic?									
	Yes, without any interruption		Yes, after a brief pause		No		Maybe		Total
	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Total Count
Academic Library	42.86%	3	33.33%	10	72.41%	21	33.33%	1	35
University/ College	57.14%	4	66.67%	20	27.59%	8	66.67%	2	34
Total	Total	7	Total	30	Total	29	Total	3	69



For respondents that indicated that their academic library offered a yoga or meditation program, they were asked if the library provided for any costs associated with the program, such as mats, blocks, space, instructor fee, etc. A large majority (40) indicated no, with only 5 responding yes, and another 5 choosing “Other” as their response ($n= 50$).

Respondents were asked if yoga or meditation programs before the pandemic were accessible. Seventeen academic library programs indicated that they were accessible, and 17 at the College/University. Nineteen answered that programs at the academic library were not accessible, and 8 were not from the College/University. Five specified for both academic and College/University that these programs might have been accessible.

Modifications of poses was the most popular method of ensuring accessibility with 17 responses at the academic library and 16 from the College/University, followed by the use of props (11 and 13). Participants also reported that 1 had an in-person interpreter at both academic library and College/University; no one offered closed captioning at the academic library but 2 did for the College/University. Fourteen at the academic library were not sure, and 21 people indicated the same for the College/

University programs. If a participant selected “Other,” they could write about what made the program accessible. One participant wrote about the instructor consulting with each participant to be aware of any needs before a session. Another wrote about a chair yoga session. An additional participant mentioned closed captioning and modifications for the College/University.

**Question 11: Were the yoga or meditation program(s) before COVID-19 accessible?
(Accessibility can be: interpreters or translators, modifications for poses, inclusion of blankets and pillows, etc)**

	Yes		No		Maybe		Total Count
	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Total
Academic Library	50.00%	17	70.37%	19	35.71%	5	41
College/University	50.00%	17	29.63%	8	64.29%	9	34
	Total	34	Total	27	Total	14	75

Question 21: Were the yoga or meditation program(s) AFTER COVID-19 accessible?

	Yes		No		Maybe		Total
	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Total
Academic library	56.25%	9	50.00%	4	33.33%	3	16
College/University	43.75%	7	50.00%	4	66.67%	6	17
Total	Total	16	Total	8	Total	9	33

Question 12: What made these programs before COVID-19 accessible?

	In-person interpreter		Modifications for poses		Inclusion of blankets, pillows, blocks or other props		Not Sure		Closed Captioning		Other		Total
	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Total
Academic Library	50.00%	1	51.52%	17	45.83%	11	40.00%	14	0.00%	0	62.50%	5	48
College/University	50.00%	1	48.48%	16	54.17%	13	60.00%	21	100.00%	2	37.50%	3	56
Total	Total	2	Total	33	Total	24	Total	35	Total	2	Total	8	104

Question 22: What made these programs after COVID-19 accessible?

	In-person interpreter		Modifications for poses		Inclusion of blankets, pillows, blocks or other props		Not Sure		Closed Captioning		Other		Total
	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Total
Academic Library	50.00%	1	50.00%	8	60.00%	3	34.78%	8	16.67%	1	60.00%	6	27
College/University	50.00%	1	50.00%	8	40.00%	2	65.22%	15	83.33%	5	40.00%	4	35
	Total	2	Total	16	Total	5	Total	23	Total	6	Total	10	62

After COVID began, 1 academic library started offering a program with closed captioning, while the College/University added 3 closed captioning. Other types of accessibility options with regards to the programs stayed approximately the same.

Question 14: Who offered/taught the program(s) before COVID-19? Select all that apply.

	Outreach librarian		Other faculty or staff member		Human resources		Other Librarian		
	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	
Academic Library	100.00%	1	29.41%	5	0.00%	0	90.00%	9	
College/ University	0.00%	0	70.59%	12	100.00%	1	10.00%	1	
Total	Total	1	Total	17	Total	1	Total	10	
	Yoga instructor from campus recreation		Yoga instructor not affiliated with the institution		Not Listed		Not Sure		Total
	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Total
Academic Library	26.47%	9	43.75%	7	83.33%	5	36.84%	7	43
College/ University	73.53%	25	56.25%	9	16.67%	1	63.16%	12	61
Total	Total	34	Total	16	Total	6	Total	19	104

Regarding exactly who is teaching these programs, the most common answers were that they were taught by a yoga instructor from campus recreation. Academic libraries and institutions also utilized yoga instructors not affiliated with the institution. Other answers included an outreach librarian (1), another librarian (9), and another faculty or staff member (5 at academic libraries and 12 at institutions). Six respondents reported their yoga program was led by someone not represented by the answer choices and several were not sure (7 for academic libraries and 12 for their institution). Only one person reported that Human Resources offered or taught a program at their institution. ($n=43$ for academic libraries and $n=61$ college/university)

Question 19: Who offered/taught the program(s) AFTER COVID-19? Select all that apply.

	Outreach librarian		Other faculty or staff member		Human resources		Other Librarian		
	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	
Academic Library	100.00%	1	27.27%	3	0.00%	0	100.00%	4	
College/University	0.00%	0	72.73%	8	100.00%	2	0.00%	0	
	Total	1	Total	11	Total	2	Total	4	
	Yoga instructor from campus recreation		Yoga instructor not affiliated with the institution		Not Listed		Not Sure		Total
	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Total
Academic Library	6.25%	1	41.67%	5	71.43%	5	36.84%	7	26
College/University	93.75%	15	58.33%	7	28.57%	2	63.16%	12	46
	Total	16	Total	12	Total	7	Total	19	72

To compare before COVID-19 answers with after COVID-19, we repeated the question. Answers were similar to those who taught before the shutdowns, except there was a decrease in the number who taught for most options. However, academic libraries worked with yoga instructors from campus recreation nearly 3% more than before the shutdowns. Colleges and universities partnered with Human Resources to offer 2 programs after the shutdowns. Other instructors included an Associate Dean and a well-being coordinator, demonstrating that other collaborators were aware of the benefits and stepped up to provide these sessions when the need indicated.

The authors would also like to recognize the comment from one survey participant that stated, "WHAT IS AFTER COVID?" (emphasis theirs) and agree this question could have been better explained by "after the pandemic started, the shutdowns ended, and people transitioned to working in office spaces again."

Thirty people responded to the open-ended question, "If you were able to participate in either a meditation or yoga session through the university/college or academic library, how did it make you feel?" Three people mentioned that the sessions made them feel "calmer," two specifically mentioned "relaxing." Others mentioned how helpful it was, and that they wished for more yoga and meditation spaces on campus. One mentioned that it was soothing, another said that it made them feel "better." A different participant mentioned that it was so great that they signed up for a mindfulness training course at their own expense. One even wrote that they felt more "connected to colleagues and felt cared for" because of these sessions. Others mentioned that being able to participate via Zoom or other online sessions helped their mental and physical health during the pandemic.

Question 24 was a follow-up, asking if any respondents had a chance to observe other participants' reactions to the sessions, and what their impressions were. This was to analyze perceptions of effectiveness.

There were 25 responses, and one "N/A." Three said that others found these sessions "enjoyable," and 4 mentioned "helpful." One wrote that their coworkers loved going in-person, and another that they saw how people enjoyed the online sessions. Other positive responses included: "Students enjoyed early morning yoga in front of the windows in the library with a great campus view during finals week pre-covid." Another appreciated the comments at the end of each meditation session, and that the sessions were recorded. Even with little attendance, people who attended several sessions appreciated them. Additionally, one respondent mentioned that yoga has been offered for many years at the library, so people seem to like it. Another participant commented:

I teach yoga and I had the chance to teach at one of our library conferences a few years ago, it was well received by staff library members. At our university they rely only on instructors from the recreation dept in the gym. I do not hold a position to teach but I know that gentle practice for library workers is essential. Thank you!

With the growing interest in these types of programs, the survey asked the participants if their library planned to offer either yoga or meditation programs in the future. Ten indicated "Yes," 15 responded "No," and 6 said they didn't know or were unsure. Two said that they were unaware of any future options, one said that they "doubted" it, and one mentioned that they hoped that plans were in the works.

The second to last question was open-ended, and asked respondents “Is there anything you would like to let us know about yoga or meditation and your experiences during the pandemic?” Their answers provided some insight into how the participants in this survey felt about having access to these programs. One stated that chair yoga helped because of the stationary nature of their work position. Another revealed that they would “love to see more of an emphasis on yoga in our academic library. I would love to be able to get professional development funds to get Yoga Teacher Training certified.” A third individual described how gentle and trauma-informed yoga is essential, and another that it is vital and essential for “navigating troubled times.” Others expressed gratefulness for online yoga programs. One participant stated how important both yoga and meditation were to them, but that these programs were not being offered at their workplace, and that “yoga and meditation give me energy and a sense of peace and wellbeing.”

Some did reveal obstacles to access, such as having a program that “took place around lunchtime and having a remote learner who was 6 years old made it a bit more difficult.” Another commented that their mindfulness room was set to open just as everyone was sent home for remote work, and they were “looking forward to this being an individual space people can use once we open up again, though there will be questions about capacity and cleaning.” One more mentioned that these options were offered online only after the pandemic hit and did not have any such program beforehand. They explained that this program was only offered to library faculty and staff, and a small group attended every week.

The last question offered a space for respondents to write in anything else that they wanted us to know about yoga and meditation programs, experiences, etc. There were 13 responses, several of which let the authors know that the survey was not allowing for participants to go back and change answers, so they wrote in what they felt were slight corrections to their answers. Others mentioned again how important that they felt the programs were and thanked us for the survey. One mentioned how they might not be able to offer their restorative program for a while because of cleaning protocols in the library. Another talked about how the yoga offerings had been irregular, which made it hard to participate.

One of the key findings of this survey was that many yoga and meditation programs were either discontinued or temporarily put on hold because of challenges related to teaching these practices face-to-face when confronted by a highly contagious virus. Another important finding was that some teachers and students adapted the practices by moving them online. Transitioning to teaching and practicing online had the unexpected effect of increasing accessibility via closed captioning and other means, which inadvertently expanded yoga and meditation to an audience that had avoided in-person sessions for various reasons.

Informing Academic Library Practice

Although this study has found that yoga and meditation programs are on the increase in academic libraries, not enough attention is being paid to issues of accessibility and inclusion. Many programs that are available in academic libraries are designed along the lines of conventional yoga and meditation programs. They do not make allowances for participants who may not be comfortable in a typical yoga or meditation class due to issues such as weight, disability, body image, ethnic or gender identity, age or other concerns.

Academic libraries need to think beyond the stereotypical yoga or meditation format and take advantage of some hard-learned instructional and pedagogical lessons of the pandemic.

Moving wellness initiatives online and taking advantage of instructional technologies such as Zoom can help introduce personal growth practices to a wider audience that had previously been marginalized or left out altogether. Programming along these lines can go a long way toward creating a safe, welcoming, inclusive environment in which body type, disability, or gender orientation are not a barrier. Providing participants with the option for a more individual, private, non-judgmental, and accepting practice environment that is available online will provide an option previously unavailable or underutilized by academic libraries.

Students, faculty, and staff who may have previously never considered trying a meditation or yoga class may be more likely to experiment with a new medium that honors their individuality and personal challenges. Real or perceived limitations may not seem insurmountable in a setting where one does not have to worry about being on display or subject to comparison or judgment because of the privacy options that the online environment provides. The unique experience of being part of a group participating in a wellness experience yet simultaneously being able to remain protected, private, and anonymous is something that academic libraries should strive for in their wellness initiatives.

Prioritizing accessibility in academic library wellness initiatives will entail thinking in a new way about wellness programming that includes not only modifying yoga poses and sequences, but the optimal use of information technology, including lighting, sound, camera angles, staging and transitions, as well as closed captioning. Wellness instructors will have to master the tricky art of establishing and maintaining an intimate and personal experience with their students remotely. The ability to do so is critical for yoga and meditation classes in which the proper setting and ambiance and especially teacher-student relationship and rapport is vital to successful personal growth and transformation. This is especially true for participants who may bring to the online environment a personal history and expectation that they will be overlooked, neglected, or marginalized based on previous group experiences.

Meditation, yoga, and related wellness initiatives in academic libraries must become less focused on simply positioning themselves as a place to practice wellness. Instead, librarians must reach out and meet users where they are and engage with them in their spaces of choice: their home, office, or classroom. This calls for a radical form of accessibility that goes beyond breaking down barriers to showing up for users and meeting with them on their own terms. It means meeting users where they are physically and psychologically and showing them that what they thought was unavailable or unattainable is now firmly within reach. The ability to provide this level of access will not only benefit users but help change the image of the academic library from being an intimidating place that is only for certain categories of users with appropriate abilities or levels of skill.

In addition to space, time is an important factor in accessibility. The creation of asynchronous instruction that makes wellness programs available anytime, anywhere, is something that has not been adequately addressed by academic libraries. Instead of relying solely on streaming live wellness programming, accessibility can be enhanced by recording yoga and meditation sessions for later viewing on demand. This will relieve users from having to be in attendance at scheduled class times or risk missing important content. It will require additional training in editing skills on the part of librarians to make sure the videos are skillfully produced and meet disability standards. It may also require changes in instruction evaluation from tracking student attendance and evaluations to indicators like views or downloads. Storage and preservation will need to be considered and digital repositories may offer promise in this regard

by ensuring that wellness content will be openly available without paywalls or institutional barriers to curtail access. Librarians may have to consider issues of privacy and protecting the identity of wellness program participants and whether they need to secure permission from those appearing in videos before making content openly accessible on the web.

Marketing strategies for library wellness programming need to be thoughtfully created. Advertising it as just another campus yoga and meditation program will not suffice. It is important to communicate that the library is offering a new and accessible approach to yoga and meditation practice that anyone can do, and the messaging must highlight the convenience of it over conventional programs. Students, faculty, and staff may not be accustomed to thinking of the library as a place that offers wellness programs, so this message needs to be reinforced. It may be possible to reach out and form partnerships with key stakeholders on campus such as Student Disability Services and organizations that represent historically marginalized groups such as LGBTQ or students of color.

Finally, academic library collections need to have adequate materials to support wellness programming. This involves more than purchasing mats, blocks, and straps and covering instructor costs. It means ensuring that students who want to deepen their understanding of these practices have sufficient materials to bolster their inquiry and conduct serious research if they so choose. Yoga and meditation need to be treated as serious academic subjects, each offering a distinctive disciplinary body of scholarship. A concerted effort to identify and select a collection of books, journals, and multimedia resources that provide not only information about yoga and meditation techniques and practices, but the historical, philosophical, and psychological foundations of these practices is needed, especially in accessible formats.

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