



Yoga Australia

Member Statement

of Acknowledgment

Yoga Australia acknowledges that many members of the yoga community have historically experienced sexual assault and other forms of abuse, occurring both within lineages and across disciplines and from individual instructors. This was highlighted by Case Study 21 of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse which found extensive instances of child sexual abuse occurred in an environment which fostered compliance, secrecy and the silence of victim survivors (<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/case-studies/case-study-21-satyananda-yoga-ashram>). The Satyandanda Ashram example illustrates the potential for harm to occur as well as the importance of ethical conduct in the individual realm - in the teacher-student relationship (see [Code of Professional Conduct](#)) and in the wider culture of yoga schools, ashrams, studios and other environments where yoga practice occurs. As such, Yoga Australia requires registered practitioners to adhere to the following statements:

- I understand and acknowledge the harms associated with sexually abusive behaviors. This may include, but is not limited to, non-consensual, coercive sexual contact as well as sexualized comments, unwanted touching and harassment.
- I commit to behaving in an ethical manner, particularly in regard to sexual misconduct, as informed by the precept of ahimsa – the commitment to non-violence and compassion. My conduct will adhere to the highest standards of professional integrity at all times, especially, but not limited to the teacher-student relationship.
- As a discipline that focuses on the mind-body-spirit connection, yoga has immensely positive potential to assist those who have experienced sexual and other forms of violence. I acknowledge that many people who engage with yoga practitioners may be addressing spiritual and cultural needs as well as physical wellness. This places teachers and instructors in a unique position of trust that is potentially open to abuse. In acknowledging this, I commit to ensuring my conduct and practice is trauma-informed and sensitive to the emotional, psychological and physical needs of survivors.
- I acknowledge the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and commit to calling out sexually abusive behavior if and when I become aware of it occurring in the yoga community. This may be done by supporting survivors to engage with Yoga Australia's grievance process (<https://www.yogaaustralia.org.au/grievance/>) and supporting a survivor to access recognised support services and police, if they so choose. Understanding that sexual crimes occur and proliferate in the context of silence, I will encourage public discussion of these issues if and when it is to the benefit of survivors.
- I also acknowledge and celebrate the historical and on-going contributions that have been made to the yoga community by survivors of assault. I acknowledge their achievements and resilience and I stand with survivors in supporting their calls for recognition, justice and safety.