



# Mind Body Spirit - The Whole News

RNASO-CTNIG Newsletter

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Photo courtesy of Karen Short

*“Nature’s peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees.”*

~ John Muir

## A Few Words from the President



**Jessica Burford**  
**CTNIG**  
**President**

Dear CTNIG members,

I am reflecting with deep gratitude on nurses, care, and what it means to intentionally care for those who spend so much of their lives caring for others.

On April 19, 2026, we hosted our CTNIG Wellness Day Experience at the Toronto Botanical Gardens. The event was designed with one clear intention: for nurses to feel fully taken care of.

Recently, as many of us do, I have been navigating a particularly full season while balancing work, school, care, and other responsibilities. Kind friends reminded me to take care of myself, too, as I have often reminded others during challenging seasons. Their words came from love, and they also reminded me to be thoughtful about how we speak about self-care.

Self-care is essential. As a nurse and in many other roles I hold, I am excellent at caring for others. I also practise self-care consistently. I meditate every day and make time for wellness routines during demanding seasons. Still, what I really needed was to be taken care of.

Receiving intentional care from someone else feels different from giving care or practising self-care. It can be restorative. It can provide relief from the weight we may have been quietly carrying. Sometimes, especially as nurses, our hearts, minds, bodies, and spirits need care offered back to us.

With this understanding, I designed the CTNIG Wellness Day Experience with the hope that nurses would feel cared for in a full and meaningful way.

Every detail was chosen with care. The welcome, the setting, the land acknowledgement, the guided forest bathing, the artistic expression, the shared meal, the gifts, the grounding meditation, and the gentle rhythm of the day were all meant to communicate one message: you matter, your well-being matters, and today, care is being offered back to you.

The day began with a welcome to our community and a land acknowledgement to ground ourselves. From there, participants moved into guided forest bathing and an art experience, where we painted pots and planted positive intentions on seed paper so each person could bring a piece of nature home with them.

At the Toronto Botanical Gardens, nurses were invited to pause, breathe, receive, connect, create, eat, reflect, and leave with full hands, full hearts, full stomachs, and rested minds.

The nature focus of the day was also intentional. Being in the gardens reminded us of the healing power of nature, even within the city. Trees, flowers, natural light, fresh air, seasonal change, calming music, softer lighting, nature images, and quiet sensory details can all help create healing spaces. In nursing practice, when clinically appropriate and aligned with patient preference, outdoor visits, courtyard time, garden walks, or time near a window can also become meaningful parts of care.

As I write this update, I am also mindful that my four years as CTNIG Chair are coming to a close. Serving in this role has been a meaningful honour in my nursing journey. I feel

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deeply proud of what we have created together and grateful for the trust, collaboration, creativity, and care that members of this community have brought forward.

Over the past four years, CTNIG has grown in visibility, confidence, structure, and purpose. Our newsletter has long been a meaningful strength of the group, offering members thoughtful content, research-informed resources, wellness reflections, updates, and opportunities for connection. It has been a privilege to help sustain and build on that foundation while strengthening communication with members, increasing social media engagement, hosting virtual and in-person programming, and continuing to co-create spaces where nurses can connect through shared values of holistic care, wellness, complementary therapies, and evidence-informed practice.

One of the accomplishments I am especially proud of is the renewed research focus within CTNIG. Together, we have continued to position complementary therapies as meaningful, evidence-informed approaches that can support nurse wellness, patient care, quality of life, emotional well-being, and healing environments. Through newsletter features, educational resources, presentations, guest speakers, posters, and knowledge-sharing, CTNIG has contributed to a stronger professional conversation about complementary therapies in nursing practice.

I am also proud of the in-person wellness events we have created. These gatherings have brought nurses together in ways that feel relational, restorative, and memorable. From shared meals and meaningful conversation to nature-based experiences, artistic expression, reflection, and community connection, our events have shown the power of designing spaces where nurses can be cared for, nourished, and renewed.

Another significant milestone has been the growth of our executive team. For the first time in recent years, CTNIG reached a full executive team, including the addition of a Student Representative and strengthened communication capacity. This growth reflects the energy, commitment, and sustainability of our interest group. It also speaks to the importance of creating welcoming leadership pathways for nurses and nursing students who want to contribute, learn, and grow within RNAO.

Across these four years, CTNIG has continued its presence as an active and engaged community within RNAO. We have contributed Members' Voices reports, developed newsletters, supported Nursing Week activities, participated in AGM opportunities, advanced poster work, engaged in election planning, and built stronger internal systems for collaboration and continuity. Each accomplishment reflects the collective care of many hands and hearts.

CTNIG has always felt like a special space within RNAO. It brings together nurses who believe in whole person care, evidence-informed complementary therapies, wellness, nature, healing environments, and the importance of caring for the people who care for others. Leading this community has allowed me to witness the generosity, wisdom, and heart that nurses bring to professional service.

I also want to offer sincere gratitude to the CTNIG executive team. Your care, creativity, reliability, and generosity have carried so much of this work forward. From newsletter contributions, social media, event planning, research sharing, policy engagement, student representation, membership work, communications, and behind-the-scenes organization, each contribution has strengthened CTNIG. It has been a joy and an honour to work alongside a team so committed to holistic nursing, member connection, and care in action.

As CTNIG prepares for its next chapter, our 2026 Call for Nominations is open for the positions of Chair and Membership Executive Network Officer. Nominations close on June 5, 2026, at 1200h ET. Members who feel called to contribute their voice, leadership, and creativity are warmly encouraged to consider putting their names forward.

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CTNIG is also preparing for an in-person presence at RNAO's 101st Annual General Meeting. We will host an in-person meeting at RNAO's Home Office on Thursday, May 28, 2026, from 1600h to 1700h ET. CTNIG has also been selected to participate in the AGM poster display, creating another opportunity to highlight our work in complementary therapies, nature-based wellness, holistic practice, research, and member engagement. Please pop by the CTNIG poster and say hello.

I hope we continue finding ways to care for the nurses in our lives and communities intentionally. Nurses carry complex, skilled, relational, emotional, and often unseen work. Our care transforms lives, supports families, strengthens communities, and holds health systems together in deeply human ways.

To the CTNIG executive team and members, thank you for allowing me the honour of serving as Chair over these past four years. Thank you for your participation, encouragement, ideas, trust, and commitment to holistic nursing. I carry great pride and gratitude for this season of leadership, and for the community we have nurtured together.

To nurses everywhere, thank you. Your care transforms lives. May you also receive care that restores you.

Best,

Jessica Burford PhD(c) RN, R/TRO, BScHK(Hon), MN-LPNP, GNC(C), CCNE, CHE, CNLC(C)

Chair, Complementary Therapies Nurses' Interest Group



Come join us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/CTNIG/](http://www.facebook.com/CTNIG/)



Follow us on Instagram [www.instagram.com/rnaoctnig?igsh=a2Z2a2U4cTQ3dWNz](http://www.instagram.com/rnaoctnig?igsh=a2Z2a2U4cTQ3dWNz)

## Who to Contact

### EXECUTIVE

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**Social Media Officer:** Alicia Ramroop

**RNAO Board of Directors Representative:** vacant

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**Students:** Vithya Esan

## We Need You!

# Wonderful Opportunity to Get More Involved with the CTNIG & Promote Complementary Therapies Within Holistic Nursing Practice

CTNIG's vision is to have Complementary Therapies (CT) recognized, incorporated and integrated into nursing and health care in Ontario.

To support this vision and make the CTNIG a strong and viable interest group, we need our members to take on leadership roles. Currently there are a number of executive positions that need to be filled:

- Chair
- Membership Executive Network Officer

No previous executive experience is necessary as you will be mentored by the members of the current executive and work as part of a team. It is not essential to practice a CT, nor to be an expert, only to have an interest in CT as part of holistic nursing practice. What a wonderful way to learn more about CT and serve the nursing community and public at the same time.

The call for nominations are now being accepted for the positions below for a two-year office.

*(Note: at the termination of the two-year term, you are eligible to stand for a second term of two years).*

Candidates must be members in good standing of RNAO and CTNIG and agree to serving for a two year term if elected.

Call for nominations closes on June 5, 2026 at 12:00 p.m.

If nominees have questions please send email to [info@rnao-ctnig.org](mailto:info@rnao-ctnig.org) with the subject line: CTNIG CALL FOR NOMINATIONS.

Click [here](#) to download the position descriptions.

Please click [here](#) to see the list of positions and the submission form.



## CTNIG Wellness Day

The CTNIG held an in person Wellness Day for nurses at the Toronto Botanical Gardens on April 19 with a small but mighty crew in attendance that included Forest Bathing and Expressive Arts experiences; a delicious lunch with opportunity for networking, and many prizes. Enjoy viewing some photos that were taken and two articles describing the experiences from a personal perspective of the writers



## Bloom with CTNIG: Rooted in Presence Through a Soul-Nourishing Forest Bathing Experience

RNAO's Complementary Therapists Nurses Interest Group (CTNIG), had the privilege of hosting a deeply meaningful wellness experience at the Toronto Botanical Gardens. Among the day's offerings, one activity stood out as especially transformative: forest bathing. This was facilitated by Laura Bincik, a certified Forest Therapy guide with the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy.

Forest bathing, also known as Shinrin-yoku, is the gentle practice of immersing oneself in nature using all five senses. It is not about exercise or reaching a destination, but rather about slowing down, becoming present, and allowing the natural world to awaken awareness within us. During our guided walk, facilitator Laura created a safe and nurturing space where participants could reconnect—with nature, and with themselves.

From the very beginning, Laura invited us to soften our pace and truly notice. Notice the subtle sway of grass in the breeze. Notice the rippling movement of water. Notice the vibrant emergence of new blooms and the quiet strength of plants pushing through the soil. With each step, our senses became more attuned—the earthy scent of the forest floor, the layered sounds of birds and wind, the intricate textures of leaves and bark. What began as a simple walk evolved into a deeply sensory and reflective experience.

At various landmarks, Laura paused to guide moments of reflection. These pauses were powerful. They encouraged us not just to observe nature, but to feel ourselves as part of it. There was a shared sense of stillness, presence, and connection that resonated across the group. In a world that often demands constant motion, this experience reminded us of the profound healing that exists in simply being.

The impact on our wellness was immediate and lasting. Many participants described feeling lighter, calmer, and more grounded. Forest bathing has been shown to reduce stress, support mental clarity, and enhance emotional well-being—and we experienced these benefits firsthand. It offered a reset, a return to balance, and a renewed appreciation for the healing intelligence of nature.

To close the experience, Laura shared a thoughtful gift: honey harvested directly from the gardens. This offering felt symbolic—a sweet reminder of the interconnectedness between people, plants, and the environment.

This forest bathing experience was more than an activity; it was an invitation. An invitation to slow down, to reconnect, and to remember that healing often begins by simply noticing what is already around us.

Leonor De Biasio RN BScN MEd CCHNC-C  
(CTNIG Education Executive Network Officer)



## Finding My "Flow": A Heartfelt Afternoon of Art Therapy

I recently had the absolute joy of hosting our RNAO-CTNIG workshop at the Toronto Botanical Garden, and my heart is still so full from the experience. Surrounded by the restorative beauty of nature, we gathered to explore the healing power of Expressive Arts Therapy, a practice that allows us to move beyond the "clinical brain" and into a state of pure, creative flow. As I sat among the blooming flowers and lush greenery designing botanical-inspired art, I was reminded of why this modality is such a vital piece of the mind, body, and soul connection we advocate for; it truly allows us to breathe again. Designing our

flower pots and planting the seeds of intention are beautiful metaphors for the blooming of life, reminding us that with mindful care, our own well-being can truly flourish

This wasn't just a workshop for me; it was a deeply personal moment of grounding and healing in a space that felt like a sanctuary. This evidence-based practice serves as a powerful complementary therapy, helping us release the mental weight we carry and fostering a unique emotional resilience that traditional dialogue often cannot reach. I left the gardens feeling completely uplifted and inspired, with a renewed spirit and a deeper connection to the "art" inherent in our nursing profession. I truly believe that when we nourish our own souls through such creative expression, we empower ourselves to practice at our fullest scope and bring a more holistic light to those we care for.

Alicia BScN, RN, MN

Social Media Executive Network Officer, RNAO-CTNIG

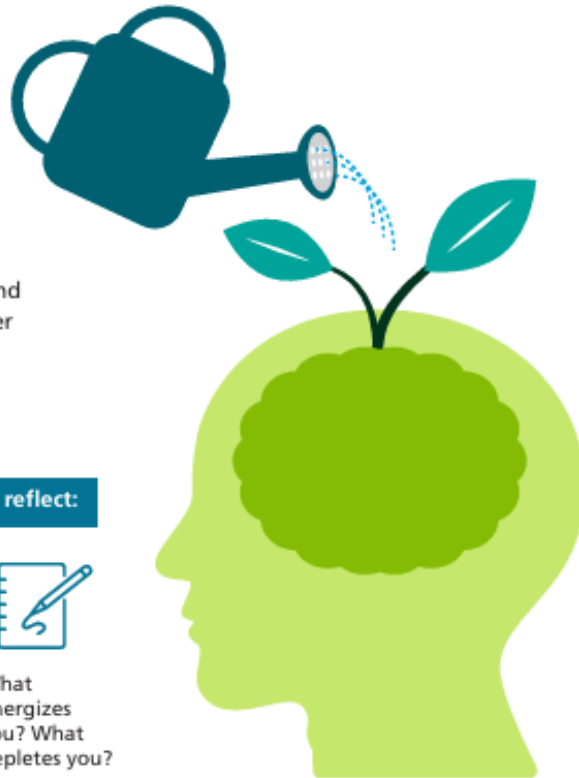


# Self-Care

## CNO Fact Sheet on Self-Care and Use of CT as a Strategy to Manage Stress re Tips

### Your health can affect the care you provide to your patients.

Research shows that physical and emotional fatigue can reduce brain function and affect decision-making, memory and attention. Our personal and professional lives will have ups and downs. Take a step back and reflect on whether you feel your physical or mental health is impacting the care you are providing. If it is, it might be time to self-care or to seek help.



Here are some **guiding questions** to help you reflect:



What are the current stressors in my life?



What strategies can I implement to help cope with these stressors?



Am I taking care of myself physically, mentally, and emotionally?



What energizes you? What depletes you?

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### Strategies to manage stress:



Practicing mindfulness. You can access a variety of information, including free online apps to guide mindfulness, breathing exercises and meditation.



Building stronger links with your colleagues so you can better support and rely on one another.



Building your social supports.



Signing up for workshops such as a stress management workshop.



Making changes to improve work/life balance.



Making changes to your diet and physical activity to help cope with stress.



Self-care benefits nurses with increased job and life satisfaction, relaxation and better physical health. Visit [www.cno.org](http://www.cno.org) for more information.

## Self-Care Tips

### Is pink noise hurting your sleep?



A new study suggests that the rather calming, soft static-y sound of pink noise may actually be hurting your sleep.

From the data, it seems clear that sleeping in a quiet room is just better. But not all of us have that luxury. Can pink noise at least attenuate the effects of the environmental noise? No — you get the worst of both worlds. In this study, exposure to environmental noise (the jets and cars and stuff) plus pink noise led to significantly less deep sleep and significantly less REM sleep. In this situation, both lighter stage 2 sleep and wake time were increased; people slept on average about 15 fewer minutes. A relatively simple solution: earplugs.

The bottom line is that those noise machines may not be helping you — not on quiet nights because they reduce REM sleep, and not on loud nights because they don't do a good enough job drowning out the environmental noises.

If you can't find a quiet place to sleep, the second best thing is to make a quiet place to sleep, and earplugs are, apparently, pretty good for that.

To view full article go to:

[https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/pink-noise-could-be-wrecking-your-sleep-2026a100039x?ecd=WNL\\_trdalrt\\_pos\\_ous\\_260206\\_etid8084275&uac=454438PT&im-pID=8084275](https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/pink-noise-could-be-wrecking-your-sleep-2026a100039x?ecd=WNL_trdalrt_pos_ous_260206_etid8084275&uac=454438PT&im-pID=8084275)



## Recipe

### Avocado Toast with Egg, Arugula & Bacon

A quick meal for home or on the go by [EatingWell Test Kitchen](#)

In this satisfying avocado-egg toast recipe, try full-flavored, high-fiber bread, like a hearty slice of German-style rye or seeded multigrain from your favourite bakery.

To turn this into a portable breakfast, swap the toast for a whole-wheat English muffin or wrap.

#### Ingredients

- ½ small avocado, mashed
- 1 slice whole-wheat bread, toasted
- Pinch of ground pepper
- ½ cup arugula
- slice bacon
- ½ teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large egg



#### Directions

1. Spread avocado on toast; season with pepper. Top with arugula.
2. Cook bacon in a small nonstick skillet over medium heat until crisp, 2 to 4 minutes. Drain on a paper towel-lined plate.
3. Heat oil in the pan over medium heat. Crack egg into the pan. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook 5 to 7 minutes for a soft-set yolk. Top the toast with the egg and crumbled bacon.

Nutrition Facts: Serving Size 1 open-face sandwich: calories 359, total fat 26g, saturated fat 5g, cholesterol 193mg, sodium 289mg, total carbohydrate 21g, dietary fiber 9g, total sugars 3g, added sugars 1g, protein 14g, vitamin c 12mg, calcium 84mg, iron 2mg, potassium 691mg

## Walking Meditation in Urban Environments



Nature is all around us when we walk in the city, in the country, or in forests as well as in our minds when we imagine or recall various natural environments and experiences.

Today we will focus on an outdoor urban environment which is a special combination of natural and manmade elements. We will be tuning in to our surroundings whether natural or manmade through a walking meditation. This is your own unique experience without any particular expectation, only your presence to what is at this time and place without judgement or criticism.

In preparation for your walk, note if you have a destination, a time limit or no set time frame in mind. Be assured that no matter what, you can do this meditation at any time and with any amount of time. Be curious, non judgmental and open during this experience.

Before you begin to walk, take a minute or two to notice your breathing without changing it. Feeling the flow of your breath as you breathe in and out.

Then take a few slow, deep breaths noticing the air moving in as it fills your lungs with the in breath and is released with the out breath.... releasing any tightness or tension with the out breath.

Slow, deep, comfortable breaths can anchor you when needed throughout the meditation.

Now notice your feet on the ground where you are standing.

Take a moment or two to feel your connection with the earth as you stand.

As you begin your walk:

- Bring your awareness to your walking, your steps....
- Is your speed/pace fast, slow, regular.....
- Do you slow down at times and then speed up at other times...
- Do you stop from time to time...

Is there a rhythm and flow as you walk?

Now take a moment to notice the sensation on your feet as they touch the ground moving from heel to toe and in your legs as they move you forward.

Notice the shift in your body weight with each step... the muscles in your legs as they tighten and release... your balance ... the distance between steps as you walk... the movement of your arms ... how the rest of your body feels when walking.

Is there effort involved or is there ease?

If a stream of thoughts are filling your mind, just acknowledge them and bring your full attention back to your steps, taking some deep breaths if needed.

Notice any thoughts or sensations that come up without judgement or attachment. Just labeling them pleasant, unpleasant, neutral.

Whatever your pace, slow it down a little, settling into its rhythm and flow and then bring your attention to

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your surroundings using your senses... the sights, sounds, smells, and touch.

If at any time you feel overwhelmed with emotion, just bring your attention back to your steps...perhaps counting them or detailing each move out loud if needed. Taking some deep breaths may be helpful as well.

In an urban setting the sights that you notice may include some manmade creations like concrete sidewalks, signs, candy wrappers, clothing, buildings or elements that are found in nature like flowers, trees, grass, birds, animals or sunsets. Pay close attention to the details like movement, colour, shape, texture. What catches your attention? ..... What feelings/thoughts do they elicit? Just notice.

When listening to sounds, you may hear car horns honking, sirens, children laughing, music, a water fountain, dogs barking, birds chirping, or the wind blowing. What sounds dominate.. what can you barely hear? Do they annoy or soothe? Just listen to what arises.

Now bring your attention to the smells of an urban environment... Do you smell car exhausts, garbage bins, cooking, or more natural ones like fresh cut grass, fragrant roses, spring air, pine trees. Do the smells change as you walk? Are these smells intense or subtle? Do they bring up any memories, feelings? Are they pleasant, unpleasant or neutral? Again just notice.

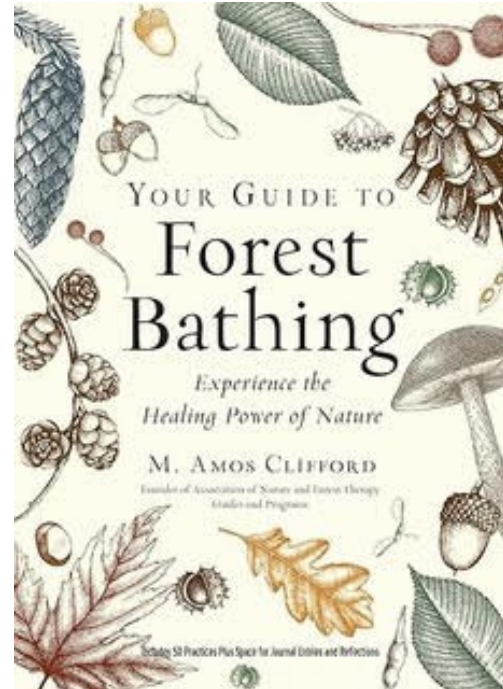
As you continue to walk, what do you notice touching you...what are you inspired to touch? Do you feel the heat arising from the concrete, the cold gusts of wind or warmth of the sun on your face? Are you drawn to touch or sit on a rock, hold a pebble in your hand, feel a leaf or flower, or hug a tree? How are you responding to these sensations? Just be with anything that comes up.

As you walk, allow yourself to feel gratitude for each experience. Be grateful for its part in this urban environment.

As you come to an end of your walk, take a deep breath, feel the earth below your feet and express some gratitude that you were even able to have this experience today.

## Books

### YOUR GUIDE TO FOREST BATHING



The bestselling guide to forest bathing comes with a new section of hands-on forest bathing practices and space for journal entries and reflections.

Simply being present in the natural world, with all of our senses fully alive, can have a remarkably healing effect. It can also awaken in us our latent but profound connection with all living things. This is “forest bathing,” a practice inspired by the Japanese tradition of *shinrin-yoku*. It is a gentle, meditative approach to being with nature and an antidote to our nature-starved lives that can heal our relationship with the more-than-human world.

In *Your Guide to Forest Bathing*, you'll discover a path that you can use to begin a practice of your own that includes specific activities presented by Amos Clifford, one of the world's most experienced forest bathing experts. Whether you're in a forest or woodland, public park, or just your own backyard, this book will be your personal guide as you explore the natural world in a way you may have never thought possible.

# Yoga

Yoga is a holistic, evidence-informed practice that integrates physical movement, breath control, and mindfulness to support overall health and well-being. Originating from ancient traditions, yoga is based on the principle of uniting the mind and body to promote balance.

In modern practice, yoga typically includes physical postures (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), and meditation or relaxation. Together, these elements work to enhance physical strength and flexibility, regulate the nervous system, and improve mental clarity.

Yoga is not limited to physical exercise; it is a comprehensive approach to health that supports the body's natural ability to restore and maintain balance. It can be adapted to suit individuals of all fitness levels and can be practiced in a variety of settings, making it particularly accessible for healthcare professionals.

## Background

Yoga dates back over 5,000 years and originated in ancient India as a spiritual and philosophical practice. Over time, it has evolved into a widely used approach to health and wellness across the world.

In the healthcare context, yoga has gained recognition as a complementary therapy that aligns with holistic nursing principles. Holistic nursing emphasizes care of the whole person—mind, body, and spirit—and yoga reflects this approach by addressing both physical and psychological well-being.

Research over the past several decades has contributed to yoga's integration into healthcare settings. It is now commonly used in stress management programs, rehabilitation, chronic disease management, and mental health care.

## Process

A yoga session can vary in length and intensity, but it typically includes a combination of the following components:

- **Centering:** The practice often begins with a brief period of stillness or focused attention on the breath to help the individual become present and grounded.
- **Breathwork (Pranayama):** Controlled breathing techniques are used to regulate the nervous system, promote relaxation, and enhance focus.
- **Physical Postures (Asanas):** A series of movements and stretches designed to improve strength, flexibility, balance, and posture. These can range from gentle to more physically demanding sequences.

**Relaxation or Meditation:** Sessions usually end with a period of rest or guided relaxation, allowing the body and mind to integrate the effects of the practice.

Yoga can be practiced in as little as 5–10 minutes or extended to longer sessions, depending on individual needs and availability. It can be done in a group setting, one-on-one, or independently at home.

## Response

Responses to yoga are individual and may vary from person to person. There is no single “correct” experience.

Common responses include:

- A sense of physical relaxation and reduced muscle tension
- Improved mood and decreased feelings of stress or anxiety
- Increased body awareness and mental clarity
- Enhanced energy levels or, in some cases, a feeling of calm fatigue leading to improved sleep
- Improved physical condition

Some individuals may notice immediate benefits after a single session, while others may experience gradual improvements with consistent practice over time.



## Research

A growing body of research supports the benefits of yoga for both physical and mental health, particularly among healthcare professionals.

Studies have shown that yoga can:

- Reduce stress and burnout by lowering cortisol levels
- Decrease symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Improve sleep quality, especially for shift workers
- Enhance musculoskeletal health, reducing back, neck, and shoulder pain
- Improve balance, flexibility, and overall physical function

Support cardiovascular health by lowering blood pressure and heart rate

In nursing populations specifically, yoga-based interventions have been associated with reduced emotional exhaustion, improved resilience, and increased job satisfaction.

Yoga's impact on the parasympathetic nervous system plays a key role in these outcomes, helping to counteract the effects of chronic stress and promote a relaxation response.

## How to Incorporate Yoga into Nursing Practice and Personal Life

Yoga is a practical and adaptable tool that can be integrated into both professional and personal routines.

### In personal life:

- Short daily practices (5–15 minutes) can help manage stress and maintain physical health
- Gentle stretching after shifts can reduce muscle tension and prevent injury
- Breathing exercises can be used before sleep to improve rest and recovery

### In nursing practice:

- Simple breathing techniques can be used during shifts to manage acute stress
- Brief mindfulness moments can support emotional regulation during challenging patient interactions

Workplace wellness programs can incorporate yoga classes or guided sessions for staff

Even partial or brief practices can be beneficial. Nurses do not need to commit to long sessions to experience positive effects.

Incorporating yoga into daily life also supports the concept of self-care, which is essential in preventing burnout and maintaining the ability to provide compassionate, patient-centered care.

Yoga encourages nurses to reconnect with their own well-being, reinforcing the idea that caring for oneself is a vital part of caring for others.

## Links to Organizations for More Information

- Canadian Yoga Alliance – <https://canadianyogaalliance.com>

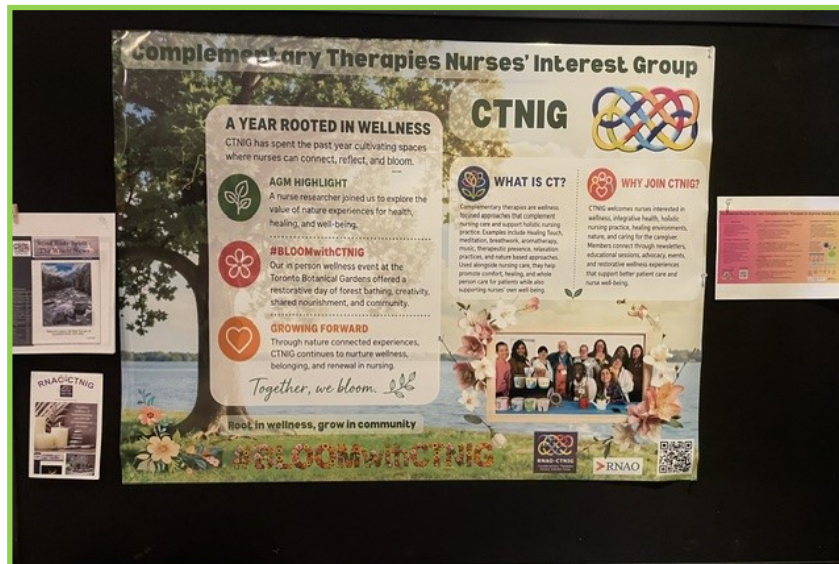
Yoga Alliance – <https://www.yogaalliance.org>

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) – <https://cmha.ca> (includes resources on mindfulness and stress management)

Brittany Nolan  
Certified Yoga Instructor  
Occupational Therapist Reg. (Ont.)



# CTNIG at the RNAO AGM



## Inspiration Corner



GOETHE

“Everything is hard before it gets easy.”



FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

“May we hope that, when we are all dead and gone, leaders will arise who have been personally experienced in the hard, practical work, the difficulties, and the joys of organizing nursing reforms and who will lead far beyond anything we have done!



RENEE BROOKS

“Teamwork means asking for help without feeling weak and offering help without being asked.”

## Research

### I. How Music Therapy Rivals Opioids in Pain Relief

Ute Eppinger - Medscape July 30, 2025

Tango, a rhythmic partner dance that enhances balance and coordination, can help ease the symptoms of Parkinson's disease. Choral singing, which combines vocal training and social interaction, may reduce depression in individuals with dementia. Music therapy has been shown to support stroke recovery by improving speech disorders.

Many clinics in Germany have incorporated music therapy to address mental and physical health conditions. "There is good evidence of effectiveness," said Lutz Neugebauer, PhD, chairman of the German Music Therapy Society and co-organiser of the 13th European Music Therapy Congress, themed "Bridges," during an online press briefing.

He noted that since Germany last hosted an international music therapy congress in 1996, nearly 9000 music therapy-related articles have been published in PubMed, including 1500 randomised controlled trials and 360 systematic reviews and meta analysis.

"There is an impressive wealth of evidence," said Sabine C. Koch, PhD, professor of empirical research in the arts therapies at Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences in Alfter, Germany. Music therapy has been well studied in the context of chronic pain and pain management in patients with advanced cancer. "The overall effect is comparable to opioids, but without unwanted side effects," Koch said. Music therapy also improves sleep and helps reduce fatigue, anxiety, and depression.

Neugebauer added that in premature infants, music therapy also strengthens the parent-child bond, "one of the key indicators for better development after a difficult start in life." Music therapy supports speech development in children with developmental delays.

"Music therapy is particularly effective for adolescents and young adults who have experienced trauma such as domestic violence, during migration, or war," Neugebauer said. "It enables expression beyond the spoken word and bridges language barriers." He added that music therapy is often the first-choice approach for individuals struggling to communicate through speech, including those with disabilities.

To view full article go to:

[https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/how-music-therapy-rivals-opioids-pain-relief-2025a1000kai?\\_gl=1\\*tldevc\\*\\_gcl\\_au\\*NzI2NTQyMjluMTc3NzA0NzcwMi4xMjYzODg3NjQ2LjE3NzcyMTY4NDluMTc3NzIxOTA0NQ](https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/how-music-therapy-rivals-opioids-pain-relief-2025a1000kai?_gl=1*tldevc*_gcl_au*NzI2NTQyMjluMTc3NzA0NzcwMi4xMjYzODg3NjQ2LjE3NzcyMTY4NDluMTc3NzIxOTA0NQ)

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### Website

**Nature and Forest Therapy Canada**

<https://natureforesttherapycanada.org/>

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## 2. Integrative Medicine for Pain Management in Oncology: Society for Integrative Oncology–ASCO Guideline

Jun J. Mao, No sat Ismaila, Ting Bao, Debra Barton, Eran Ben-Arye, Eric L. Garland, Heather Greenlee, Thomas Leblanc, Richard T. Lee, Ana Maria Lopez, Charles Loprinzi, Gary H. Lyman, Jodi MacLeod, Viraj A. Master, Kavitha Ramchandran, Lynne I. Wagner, Eleanor M. Walker, Deborah Watkins Bruner, Claudia M. Witt, and Eduardo Bruera.

Integrative Medicine for Pain Management in Oncology: Society for Integrative Oncology–ASCO Guideline



**PURPOSE** The aim of this joint guideline is to provide evidence-based recommendations to practicing physicians and other health care providers on integrative approaches to managing pain in patients with cancer.

**METHODS** The Society for Integrative Oncology and ASCO convened an expert

panel of integrative oncology, medical oncology, radiation oncology, surgical oncology, palliative oncology, social sciences, mind-body medicine, nursing, and patient advocacy representatives. The literature search included systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and randomized controlled trials published from 1990 through 2021. Outcomes of interest included pain intensity, symptom relief, and adverse events. Expert panel members used this evidence and informal consensus to develop evidence-based guideline recommendations.

**RESULTS** The literature search identified 227 relevant studies to inform the evidence base for this guideline.

**RECOMMENDATIONS** Among adult patients, acupuncture should be recommended for aromatase inhibitor–related joint pain. Acupuncture or reflexology or acupressure may be recommended for general cancer pain or musculoskeletal pain.

Hypnosis may be recommended to patients who experience procedural pain. Massage may be recommended to patients experiencing pain during palliative or hospice care. These recommendations are based on an intermediate level of evidence, benefit outweighing risk, and with moderate strength of recommendation. The quality of evidence for other mind-body interventions or natural products for pain is either low or inconclusive. There is insufficient or inconclusive evidence to make recommendations for pediatric patients. More research is needed to better characterize the role of integrative medicine interventions in the care of patients with cancer.

Additional information is available at <https://integrativeonc.org/practice-guidelines/guidelines> and [www.asco.org/survivorship-guidelines](http://www.asco.org/survivorship-guidelines)

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To view full text go to: <https://ascopubs.org/doi/full/10.1200/JCO.22.01357>

## 3. Efficacy of Pink Noise and Earplugs for Mitigating the Effects of Intermittent Environmental Noise Exposure on Sleep

Mathias Basner, Michael G Smith, Makayla Cordoza, Matthew S Kayser, Michele Carlin, Adrian J Ecker, Yoni Gilad, Sierra Park-Chavar, Ka'alana Rennie, Victoria Schneller, Sinead Walsh, Haochang Shou, Quy Cao, Magdy Younes, Daniel Aeschbach, Christopher W Jones, Efficacy of pink noise and earplugs for mitigating the effects of intermittent environmental noise exposure on sleep, Sleep, 2026; z sag001, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sleep/zsag001>

Abstract

**STUDY OBJECTIVES:** Nighttime environmental noise (EN) exposure disturbs sleep and increases morbidity and mortality. Affordable and effective countermeasures are needed, but rigorous research is scarce. This study investigates the efficacy of pink noise (PN) and earplugs for mitigating the effects of intermittent EN on sleep.

**METHODS:** Twenty-five healthy adults (mean ± SD age 28.5 ± 5.9 years, seven male) participated in a seven-night polysomnographic laboratory study with different noise conditions including exposure to EN (93 events; maximum sound pressure level 45 to 65

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dBA), PN (40 or 50 dBA), earplugs, and their combination. In the morning, participants completed cognitive tests, cardiovascular measurements, hearing tests, and surveys.

**RESULTS:** Compared to a noise-free control night, EN reduced N3 deep sleep ( $p < .0001$ ) while PN reduced REM sleep ( $p < .001$ ). Adding PN to EN worsened sleep structure, despite minor dose-dependent improvements of EN-induced sleep fragmentation and N3 sleep increases. Earplugs mitigated nearly all EN effects on sleep but started failing at the highest EN level (65 dBA). Morning cognition, cardiovascular measures, and hearing were not affected by nighttime noise, but subjective assessments of sleep, alertness and mood were significantly worse after EN and PN exposure.

**CONCLUSIONS:** In contrast to PN, earplugs proved efficacious in mitigating the effects of EN on sleep. Considering the importance of REM sleep for memory, emotion regulation, and neurodevelopment, the negative effects of PN on REM sleep caution against the widespread and indiscriminate use of broadband noise (BN). Additional research on optimal BN color/level and long-term use is needed, especially in vulnerable populations.



## Built Environments

Should a built environment allow the nervous system to regulate on its own, or should it guide someone into a specific experience?

I don't see this distinction being clearly named in the industry, and it matters.

Some spaces are designed to let the nervous system settle and, over time, become more regulated on its own.

- They reduce sensory load.
- They simplify.
- They create quiet and spaciousness.
- They offer the kind of disconnection so many people are craving.

They create coherence the body can use to downshift without being pushed or consciously guided.

You see this in quieter, nature-based retreats, smaller-scale resorts, and more off-the-map environments. Nothing is really being asked of you, and that's part of the point. You're not being led anywhere. You're being given space to let go.

But there's another category that often gets folded into the same conversation.

Spaces that are designed to move you through something. To create a specific experience or outcome.

You see this in more structured hospitality environments, curated spa journeys, wellness and social clubs, even transitional or pop-up experiences where the sequence itself is part of the design. These environments use contrast, pacing, transitions, and sensory shifts. They guide you, sometimes subtly, sometimes more directly, through a sequence of experiences, sensations, and perceptions. No matter the state you arrive in, you're being led into a particular arc. It might be activation, engagement, deep relaxation, or even very specific emotional shifts.

The goal isn't just to calm the system or let it return to baseline, it's to take you somewhere, to

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move your nervous system through a sequence of experiences over time, and that's a completely different design intention.

An important side effect of both approaches is connection, but it's not always about other people. Sometimes it starts with a deeper connection with yourself and then becomes something shared—and it shows up very differently depending on how the space is designed.

In spaces that support regulation, that internal connection tends to come first. When the system settles, people become more open and available, and connection with others can happen naturally from there. In spaces that guide experience, connection can be shaped more deliberately. Through shared timing, proximity, energy shifts, and the way people move through the space together. This can create a sense of immediacy and shared experience that brings people together quickly.

Neither is better, but they're not interchangeable. There may be overlap between these approaches, but they're not doing the same thing. Some environments are designed to hold you. Some are designed to move you. And knowing the difference changes what you're actually designing for.

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experience. Her work focuses on how space, interaction, and sensory design shape perception and influence how people feel and function in real time.

With over two decades of experience across wellness, education, and hospitality, Jessica has trained practitioners and created and led curriculum for trainings and retreats in mindfulness, meditation, breathwork, and Yoga Nidra. Her background includes extensive teaching in New York City and internationally, including years of study with Sri Dharma Mittra.

She holds a degree in human biology with a focus in behavioral neuroscience and brings together principles from neuroscience, psychology, and contemplative practice to inform her work.

By Jessica Crow  
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Founder of CNTRD  
Wellness



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~ Anonymous



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