

Code of Ethics

Preamble

The Belgian Association of Yoga Therapists is dedicated to promoting health and well-being through the professional application of yoga therapy. Although all yoga is potentially therapeutic and healing, yoga therapy is the specific application of yoga tools to support an individual's physical, mental, and emotional health.

Yoga therapists are trained to understand medical and psychological pathologies as part of their professional education, in order to adapt therapeutic yoga practices safely, responsibly, and appropriately to the needs of individuals. Yoga therapy is not intended to replace conventional healthcare, but to complement it as an integrative approach that can support prevention, recovery, and quality of life alongside medical treatment.

This Code of Ethics outlines the responsibilities and expectations for all members of BAYT in order to protect clients, practitioners, and the integrity of the profession.

This Code of Ethics is informed by applicable Belgian legal frameworks, including legislation on patient rights and data protection, while remaining distinct from statutory regulation.

1. Respect for the Person and Human Dignity

BAYT members respect the inherent dignity, autonomy, and worth of every individual.

They commit to:

- providing quality of care of the highest integrity, based on the ethical principles of yoga (i.e., yamas and niyamas) and the sensitivities of the culture they are working in
- treating all clients with respect and consideration
- recognising each client's right to make informed choices,
- respecting physical, emotional, and relational boundaries at all times

Any form of abuse, coercion, manipulation, or exploitation is strictly prohibited.

2. Equality, Inclusion, and Non-Discrimination

BAYT members practice in the spirit of equality, openness, and inclusion.

They do not discriminate on the basis of:

- gender, gender identity, or gender expression
- sexual orientation
- age
- origin, nationality, ethnicity, or culture
- language, religion, belief, or philosophy
- physical or mental condition
- social or economic situation

BAYT members are attentive and open to situations of vulnerability, including those related to migration, displacement, refugee status, trauma, or social precarity.

3. Client Rights and Informed Consent

BAYT members respect the fundamental rights of clients, in line with the principles of Belgian patient rights.

They commit to:

- clearly explaining the nature, objectives, benefits and also limits of yoga therapy
- ensuring that participation is voluntary and based on informed consent
- respecting the client's right to stop or modify sessions at any time
- adapting practices to individual needs, capacities, and circumstances

Clients are considered active participants in their own healing path.

4. Confidentiality and Data Protection

BAYT members respect the confidentiality of all personal information shared within the professional relationship.

They commit to:

- keeping client information confidential and secure
- handling personal data responsibly and in accordance with applicable data protection regulation
- sharing information only with explicit client consent; however, disclosure is permitted to chosen emergency contacts or appropriate agencies when it is believed that they present a serious and imminent threat to self or others, or as otherwise required by law.

5. Professional Competence and Proper Training

BAYT members practice only within the limits of their training, competence, and experience.

They commit to:

- having appropriate education and training in yoga therapy
- committing to the maintenance and improvement of their yoga and yoga therapy skills through continuous educational activities and professional development, their own personal practice, and ongoing study of yoga.
- recognising personal limits and seeking supervision, referral, or collaboration when appropriate.


Members do not claim qualifications, expertise, or competencies they do not possess.

6. Professional Boundaries and Integrity

BAYT members maintain clear, respectful, and ethical professional boundaries.

They commit to :

- avoiding dual relationships that may create conflicts of interest
- refraining from any form of sexual, emotional, or financial exploitation
- abstaining from providing yoga and yoga therapy if they are unable to safely and effectively do so due to my own personal impairment (e.g., practicing while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or sick with a contagious illness)
- obtaining informed consent for yoga and yoga therapy practices, as well as ethical touch if appropriate, and communicating that this consent can be withdrawn at any time
- billing accurately, equitably, and with transparency

The wellbeing and safety of the client always take precedence over personal, ideological, or financial interests.

7. Relationship with Healthcare and Other Professions

BAYT members respect the roles, competencies and responsibilities of healthcare professionals.

They commit to:

- not diagnosing medical or psychological conditions
- not prescribing medication or medical treatment
- not replacing, nor suggesting to replace healthcare professionals
- encouraging collaboration and referral to qualified professionals when necessary.

8. Responsible Communication and Representation

BAYT members communicate to the public with professionalism, humility, and clarity.

They commit to:

- representing yoga therapy clearly and honestly
- avoiding misleading claims, promises, or guarantees of results
- fully crediting the sources on which materials are based when developing materials for training programs or publication and obtaining authorization/approval to utilize another individual's or organization's copyrighted or otherwise proprietary materials
- acknowledging the origins of yoga from the source culture(s) of the Indian subcontinent and credit the lineage and/or teachers that have informed their yoga therapy practice
- using the name, logo, and reputation of BAYT with respect and integrity

9. Ethical Responsibility and Commitment

By joining BAYT, members commit to respecting this Code of Ethics.

They commit to:

- acting in good faith when ethical concerns are raised
- engaging in reflection, dialogue, and learning when ethical challenges occur
- providing accurate, truthful, and non-misleading information in connection with any BAYT application, requirement, or disciplinary investigation or proceeding

Closing Statement

As a member of BAYT, you are part of a community dedicated to promoting the highest standard of yoga therapy and supporting the well-being of our members and the wider community.

By adhering to this code of ethics, you contribute to the integrity and success of our association, ensuring that we remain a trusted professional organisation for the benefits of its members and the public.