



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
January 18, 2017

‘Consent Cards’ make yoga safer for all

Cards to launch at the 2017 Victoria Yoga Conference ensure all have freedom to move.

VICTORIA BC — Practicing yoga is about to become more inclusive for the greater community, thanks to an active initiative that will launch at the 2017 Victoria Yoga Conference: [Consent On The Mat](#).

The project was founded to address the idea of building consent in yoga practice, where hands-on adjustments to practitioners are frequently offered by instructors. Though adjustments are common in yoga practice, a hands-on experience can become a barrier for some community members not comfortable receiving touch, including those who have experienced trauma, injuries, health concerns, or who simply prefer to opt out of physical contact that day.

To make the practice more inclusive, a team of community members and conference representatives developed the idea of creating “Consent Cards,” so every yoga practitioner would have the chance to clearly express their preference for the day. The cards will make their debut at this year’s conference, February 10 to 13, 2017.

“We want to encourage instructors throughout our community to build a safer space for all, and the Yoga Conference, as such as large-scale gathering, is one of the best places to do this,” says Carlyne Taylor, creator and producer of the Victoria Yoga Conference, now in its fifth year. “‘Consent Cards’ are one way for students to communicate to their teachers, and a way for teachers to easily identify a student’s wishes at a glance.”

The “Consent Cards,” designed as a double-sided flip image, illustrate the idea of open and closed postures, with one side clearly stating “Yes, I welcome physical adjustments” and the other, “No, I am taking care of myself today.” The card is to be placed at the front of the mat, displaying a participant’s decision whether or not to receive physical adjustments during the practice. This offers teachers a simple tool to create an environment where the choice to opt in or out of physical touch is valued and easily implemented.

“As teachers, we often aren’t aware of the complex background of all of our students, and, as students we may not have an opportunity or desire to share that,” says Sarah Holmes de Castro, a Trauma Center Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Facilitator & Trainer and Director of Programs at Yoga Outreach. “In order to create a safe space for everyone, it’s important that we work together as a community to empower each other to listen to our bodies and what we need on any given day — knowing that could change the next.”

The Consent On The Mat project will be highlighted at this year's conference, with "Consent Cards" available for every participant's use, as well as a special session designed for all instructors to welcome the idea of obtaining permission, every class, before offering adjustments. "While many instructors in the community already have their own ways of creating this safe opportunity", says Jen Craig-Evans, a yoga instructor and reiki practitioner who specializes in yoga for trauma, resilience and emotional well-being, who will be teaching at the conference, "I hope the cards will offer a standardized approach to make the practice easier for all who choose to participate."

Eventually, the team hopes the cards will spread in popularity throughout Victoria and other communities.

"Ultimately, choice matters. The reason behind it does not," says Craig-Evans. "The goal is to empower each student to make the right choice for themselves."

For more information on the Consent On The Mat project, visit:
<http://www.ConsentOnTheMat.com>

- 30 -

Media contact:

Carolyne Taylor | creator | Victoria Yoga Conference
250.920.6399 hello@victoriayogaconference.com

About the Victoria Yoga Conference

Created and founded by event producer Carolyne Taylor in 2013, the Victoria Yoga Conference is an annual event held in Victoria, BC. Host to 500+ attendees and 40+ Wellness Market exhibitors, the VYC continues to grow and flourish as more teachers, exhibitors, and participants gather for the fifth annual conference February 10 – 13, 2017. At the heart of the event is the idea of community, which welcomes people of all ages and yoga abilities for a weekend of connection and discovery. There is a Wellness Market full of local entrepreneurs and exhibitors, a variety of workshops, and spirit-lifting dance parties. A strong entrepreneurial component is present throughout the conference, as there the business series and teacher talk shops offered are designed to assist studio owners and teachers on how to market themselves and make a business of their passion. The VYC truly strives to provide something for the curious to the serious.