

Clare Collins, PhD, RN, FAAN, CYT

E-RYT 500, Director of Professional Training, American Viniyoga™ Institute, LLC

"I'm an educator at heart—it's my dharma and has been for as long as I can remember."

- Clare Collins

Clare Collins, RN, PhD, FAAN, CYT, E-RYT-500, Director, Professional Training Programs for the American Viniyoga Institute (AVI) and Professor Emeritus, Michigan State University (MSU), began intensive yoga studies as she was completing a five-year National Institutes of Health (NIH) research fellowship in geriatric mental health. It was at that point that she began to see the potential for weaving together the major threads in her life—healthcare, academics, and yoga.

For more than 25 years, Dr. Collins devoted her professional career to the education of health care professionals, clinical research and patient care. She earned a BSN in nursing from Georgetown University, an MSN in mental health nursing from Yale University, a PhD in counseling from the University of Michigan, and a National Institute of Mental Health post-doctoral fellowship in geriatric mental health.

Dr. Collins' awards for excellence began early in her academic life with an NIMH traineeship award for Master's study at Yale University. Additional honors followed, including the Clifford Woody Award for Excellence in Education from the University of Michigan, the MJ Juntti Award for Excellence in Nursing Practice from the Michigan Nurses' Association, and a position of Visiting Scholar at the University of Michigan School of Nursing. In 1992 she was elected to Fellowship in the American Academy of Nursing.

Dr. Collins has completed research grants funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, the Alzheimer's Association, the American Nurses Foundation and State of Michigan. She has published extensively in peer-reviewed publications in health care, taught research methods on the master's and doctoral levels and has consulted with individuals and organizations about research design issues.

Drawn, as she describes it, by the "carefully and lovingly tended garden of yoga strategies, perspectives, and tools," Dr. Collins began studying with Gary Kraftsow in 1999. She earned her yoga teaching certification from AVI in 2003 and her yoga therapist certification in 2005. A specialist in geriatric mental health, Dr. Collins saw that yoga addressed key aspects of the lives of older adults in ways that traditional mental health care didn't, namely perspective, meaning, and ways of being in the face of adversity. She also saw that yoga could engage this population in more actively managing their physical health and emotional health. Currently, in her yoga therapy practice, Dr. Collins sees students with structural, physiological and emotional health challenges. She finds that yoga therapy methods—asana, pranayama, and meditation, adapted for the individual—are extremely powerful and very accessible to people.

Dr. Collins has assisted and taught in AVI programs since 2002 and worked with AVI on program development and design. Captured and captivated by the potential of yoga, she retired from academic life after 25 years to devote herself to teaching yoga, practicing yoga therapy, and educating yoga teachers and yoga therapists. She's also an active board member of the International Association for Yoga Therapy, serving on IAYT's committee for establishing standards for the education of yoga therapists. In her role as AVI's Director of Professional Training Programs, Dr. Collins plans, coordinates, and teaches segments in intensive, multi-week certification programs for yoga teachers and yoga therapists.

Dr. Collins has seen tremendous growth in the number and quality of research



"I have completed clinical research studies, taught research methods at the graduate level, and been involved extensively in research advisement. In the midst of over a decade of intensive yoga study, I have maintained a strong interest in how clinical research can support an understanding of the impact of yoga on health. The threads of my life—academics, research, yoga—are being woven more tightly together through my involvement with research on yoga and yoga therapy."

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studies as the scientific community recognizes yoga's potential to impact wellness and well being. She also sees a growing refinement in the types of studies being pursued and is excited about the potential of studies to look more closely at how yoga interventions targeted for specific health conditions can positively influence health outcomes. She is especially interested combining her research expertise and knowledge about yoga and serving as a consultant to researchers who are designing yoga and yoga therapy intervention studies.

