

“Aromatherapy and gentle Yoga: effective ways of bringing international and domestic Australian students together”

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Abstract:

Learning and practising basic skills in aromatherapy and gentle yoga stretches proved to be a promising venue for both International and Domestic Australians Students to get together in a safe and positive environment. Within International Student Services at QUT, this activity is usually offered from the third week of each semester. It is a one hour program for four weeks where participants gather in a circle and are welcomed to express how they are feeling at the time. The session is followed by a demonstration and instructional self massage on the head, face, arms, palms and feet areas. The participants are provided and encouraged to use sweet almond oil with very thin drops of lavender oil to assist their self massage. Gentle Yoga routine then proceeds starting with “warm up” stretches; followed by a “workout”; then finishes with a “cool down moves and relaxation”. Towards the end of the session, the participants are encouraged to say a positive word or two that they feel will help them manage their hectic day better. It was quite phenomenal how the student participants seemed to encourage each other in being positive and speaking with energy after the session.

The participants are asked to complete a feedback form on their first day and last day of the 4th week. The results have been very positive and most students (both International and Domestic) normally would like to continue after their fourth week. They are offered a place in case there is a vacancy in the next set of classes. A follow up session for each group is held before their final examination week.

At QUT, the facilitator has used “Aromatherapy-gentle Yoga” in various Student Support Groups, namely stress first aid, exam nerves calmer, panic- anxiety relief, energy booster, women’s health awareness, insomnia easer and for general relaxation and well being. These groups having “Aromatherapy-gentle Yoga” as it’s “front” proved to attract and bring together a mix of International Students and Australians.

A similar workshop structure is intended for ISANA participants. A hand out outlining the workshop benefits for students individually and as a group will be available. Handouts on other relevant topics and procedures will also be provided.

The proposed workshop at the conference may be offered for 2 sessions a day: 1.) in the morning for early risers before breakfast and 2.) in the afternoon after the day’s conference program. A maximum of 14 people per session is recommended so that greater attention and assistance is given to each person. A carpeted spacious room is recommended for “floor work movements” where people are requested to lie on their back as part of gentle Yoga. A 40 to 60 minute duration is also recommended for this workshop. The facilitator is willing to offer this workshop for at least 2 consecutive days commencing on the 2nd day of the conference.

It is essential that the participants are aware of the following information as they sign in for the workshop.

“Pointers when participating in Aromatherapy-gentle Yoga workshop”:

- Try to have your meal 2 to 3 hours **before** yoga or any exercise regime. It is ok to have water, fruit or protein shake 30 minutes before the workout.
- Bring a non slip mat or bath towel for “floor work” movements.
- Bring a bottle of water. You need to hydrate your body before, during and after the workshop.
- Be gentle with yourself and perform only to the level that you are comfortable.
- Have an open mind, ask questions or share relevant information as needed.
- Be positive and smile, it is good for your well being.