

CONNECTION

EATING DISORDER RECOVERY HAPPENS THROUGH CONNECTION



MOVEMENT IS MEDICINE



CRISTINA GUERRA AND JAN BRAUN BRING THERAPEUTIC MOVEMENT TO ESPERANZA



Movement is an important experiential and holistic element in all of Esperanza's programs. Cristina Guerra and Jan Braun lead Yoga and Nia Moving to Heal classes at EEDC. Both indicate that patients may be hesitant to participate at first, but that often they end up saying "thank you" when they learn that the focus is on increasing awareness of self and after experiencing how much better movement can make a person feel.

Cristina Guerra

Cristina Guerra completed more than 600 hours of training to become a Registered Yoga Teacher with the Yoga Alliance. She has completed additional training to learn to use yoga to help eating disorder patients heal. She has taught yoga in eating disorder treatment facilities since 2015.

"Because our patients commonly experience negative or distorted body image, this gentle approach to stretching with mindful breathing facilitates a new relationship with their bodies from the inside out," Cristina explained.

"My favorite aspect of leading yoga groups at Esperanza is the power of yoga to reduce anxiety and feelings of depression by building awareness within each student of their true wholeness and worth. It is rewarding to hear patients say, 'thank you, I really love yoga now' when they were apprehensive about it in the beginning," she continued.

Jan Braun

Jan Braun has been leading Nia classes for eating disorder patients since 2015 and has taught at Esperanza since the center opened in 2019. She holds a master's degree in Psychology and has completed five levels of Nia training as well as Nia Moving to Heal training, the therapeutic branch of Nia. She has completed courses in various types of movement to promote healing, including Somatic Experiencing, which she incorporates into classes at Esperanza.

"I love leading Nia Moving to Heal classes at Esperanza to help patients establish a more compassionate relationship with their bodies as they move to feel better. Nia M2H includes movement forms such as tai chi, yoga and gentle dance movement. I strive to meet each person where they are on their healing journey and begin movement from that place. As individuals begin to move, they can sense their own rhythm and increase awareness of sensations, including their own strength, stability and flexibility.

I enjoy weaving my training in Psychology, Somatic Experiencing and Mindfulness into each class to provide healing practices that extend far beyond the dance floor," Jan explained.

Connect with Dessimber Daniels at (210) 253-9763 for a telephone screening, insurance benefits review and to schedule a comprehensive, in-person assessment.

