

up 40 percent since the floor's installation, making it well worth the \$20,000 price tag, Williams says. "It generates more for the soul than any other addition would," he says. B.H.

HEALTH

feeling free

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EVERY MONDAY evening in Northampton, Massachusetts, dozens of people squeeze into a yoga class hosted by the Freedom Center. This activist group fights misperceptions about mental illness, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, and educates people about alternatives to medication. The center offers yoga classes, free acupuncture sessions, and support groups. It also organizes educational and advocacy campaigns.

"Many of us are looking for accessible, affordable alternatives to the dominant medical model," says Oryx Cohen, who co-founded the Freedom Center in 2001, two years after being diagnosed as bipolar. "Yoga can be very helpful in reestablishing the mind-body connection. The classes are also a great way for us to come together as a community."

The center's Monday night yoga class has attracted members of the larger Northampton community, with about 30 people attending each week.

Psychotherapist Jennifer Newman commutes nearly a half an hour from neighboring Agawam to attend the class each week. "I love that people come from all different backgrounds," she says.

Chaya Grossberg, who had been diagnosed with psychosis, anxiety, and depression, says that the Freedom Center helped show her there were alternatives to the medication-only route for maintaining emotional and mental health and balance. "[People there] redefined for themselves what they wanted their mental health to look like," she says. She credits the center with helping her to get off her medication. Grossberg, a Kripalu-certified instructor, now teaches several classes a week, including one on yoga for improving mental health. EMILY POLK

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Group Facilitator Training: Dec 1–10

Yoga Teacher Training with a Yoga Therapy Approach
Module B: Nov 6–14

Module A: April 14–22 Module B: August 14–22

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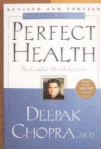
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