



Yoga & Disability Panel Discussion Webinar June 30, 2020

Alison Whitehead served as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Dominican Republic and earned her Master's in Public Health from Columbia University. She joined VA Women's Health Services in 2010 as a Presidential Management Fellow. In September 2015 she transitioned to National Program Manager for the VA Integrative Health Coordinating Center (IHCC) in the Office of Patient Centered Care & Cultural Transformation, and is currently serving as Acting Director, IHCC. In this role Ms. Whitehead leads development of programs and policies for integrative health implementation across VA. In addition, she is a yoga instructor, a personal trainer, and a yoga therapist in training. In her free time, Alison enjoys spending time outdoors hiking, running, biking, and playing soccer or indoors taking or providing yoga and meditation sessions.

Amy Burnett, a T4 complete paraplegic since 1996 due to a MVA, lives in Nashville TN. She's graduate of the University of Texas and a member of the USA Para Badminton Team. Her love for yoga started five years ago when she joined a good friend in a class. Finding adaptive yoga has increased her passion as a practitioner and helping her grow spiritually on her path to self-awareness. The breathing and meditation practices that help direct energy and sooth the mind are helping her in times of pain and anxiety on the badminton court and in life. When not playing sports Amy devotes her time serving on the boards of USA Badminton and the Permobil Foundation, as well as mentoring with the United Spinal Association. She is a spokes model for Permobil and their many products, and a proud team member of the Challenged Athlete Foundation and Kelly Brush Foundation. She is also a singer, musician and spends most of the year in an RV traveling with her dog and fiancé.

Amy Samson-Burke has been a practicing Physical Therapist since 1990 and is also a Professional Yoga Therapist. She is Director of Programs at Mind Body Solutions in Minneapolis, MN teaching adaptive yoga and developing resiliency and yoga-based programming with nationally recognized paralyzed yoga teacher, healthcare innovator, and author, Matthew Sanford. Over the past decade, Amy has developed multiple mind-body programs for healthcare professionals in settings including rehabilitation, women's care, critical care, primary care, pediatrics, end-of-life care, and more. Her passion, however, is sharing yoga with people who live with trauma, loss, and disability, opening the possibility of living fully in the body throughout the entire arc of life.

John Gillard has worked for the Department of Veterans Affairs for almost 12 years. Additionally, he is a former Navy Corpsman (6 years) who served with the U.S. Marines during combat operations. He holds a graduate degree from St. Mary's University and has committed his life to human service, including adaptive sports most recently. He is a 200-hour RYT, since 2013, and has led trauma-informed yoga classes since that time. John also teaches swim lessons on the weekends to children, who are thriving with their disability(ies). He enjoys swimming, skiing and yoga.

Keith Gabel is a below knee amputee and a member of the US Paralympics Snowboard team. He is a two time Paralympic medalist (2014 Sochi, 2018 Pyeongchang). He is the current LL2 category World champion and the 2015 X Games Gold medalist (no category) all in the discipline of Snowboardcross. As well as being a public speaker, Keith recently took on a new role as a Manager for the Sports Program for Semper Fi & Americas Fund or better known as Team Semper Fi, a non profit organization dedicated to the recovery of wounded services members. Over the years, Keith has explored the world of possibilities created through yoga and mindfulness meditation practices and without a doubt attributes the majority of his success to these practices.