

NYZENCENTER

GROUNDED IN THE DHARMA - DEVOTED TO CONTEMPLATIVE CARE



CONTEMPLATIVE MEDICINE FELLOWSHIP

engage ~ transform ~ lead

JOIN US IN CHANGING THE CULTURE OF CARE

A Year-long Evidence-Based Fellowship for Physicians, Advanced Practice Registered Nurses, and Physician Assistants

Over the past fifteen years of engagement in healthcare environments, we have witnessed a growing—and now acute—need for an approach to care that extends beyond the patient and their loved ones to include the clinicians themselves.

What we have heard again and again, is that clinicians entered the field of medicine or nursing, to be of service to those who are suffering. Yet, in the brokenness of our healthcare system, it can be challenging to practice compassionate medicine without sacrificing well-being. Perhaps you, too, are suffering—from burn-out, a sense of isolation, and loss of meaning.

The pandemic uncovered what we already knew: there is a need for deeper connections with patients, team members, loved ones, and self. Contemplative practice is a powerful instrument of healing. The importance of training and support to enhance resilience, nurture compassion, and sustain well-being is greater than ever.

In 2020, the Zen Center partnered with the LTSS Center at UMass Boston to measure the impact of our contemplative approach to care in an evidence-based research study, and in 2023, we published peer-reviewed research on the Contemplative Medicine Fellowship itself, demonstrating the effectiveness of the Fellowship in reducing clinician burnout and improving overall well-being.

The results have reaffirmed that our approach, one that nurtures wholehearted intimacy, connection, and awareness through the integration of contemplative practices in a clinician's personal and professional life, is critical in alleviating suffering in healthcare.

The past two years of the Contemplative Medicine Fellowship have been an incredibly joyful learning experience. As we celebrate the growing network of alumni who are now leading change in the culture of care, we are delighted to be sharing in the journey with a new cohort committed to transforming their role as clinicians.

Join us and a faculty of visionary teachers, changemakers, and leading physicians for this unique opportunity to sustain and nurture well-being, resilience, and joy in your work and your life.

Deep bows,



Koshin Paley Ellison Sensei
Chodo Robert Campbell Sensei
Tieraona Low Dog, MD



ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP¹

The Contemplative Medicine Fellowship is an evidence-based twelve-month training for physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, and physician assistants who want to integrate and apply a contemplative approach to their practice of medicine.

Designed to support the existing responsibilities of those practicing as clinicians, medical educators, researchers, administrators, or leaders, this innovative and transformative program cultivates and supports practitioners committed to addressing the real and significant challenges in caring for the suffering world.

The core training of contemplative medicine is based in the practices of wisdom, ethics, and contentment as prescribed by the historical Buddha 2,600 years ago. We explore how to apply these foundational understandings throughout the Fellowship.

As a cohort, fellows engage in genuine, committed fellowship to cultivate community, agency, and meaning—the foundations of resilience—and to support one another in the deeply transformative work of integrating a contemplative approach to care into the whole of their professional practice and daily lives.

Unlike traditional fellowships, the Contemplative Medicine Fellowship site is the practitioner's own place of practice and is designed to immerse participants in engaged, experiential learning immediately applicable to their life.

This program will offer continuing education credits for all Fellowship-eligible clinicians.

FELLOWS LEARN TO PUT INTO PRACTICE THE CONTEMPLATIVE APPROACH TO CARE WHICH:

- **Benefits patients by improving clinical encounters and relationships with HCPs providing a more intimate and nourishing experience**
- **Benefits physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, and physician assistants by helping to reduce individual and team burnout and stress while promoting resilience and new meaning for HCPs**
- **Benefits health care systems by promoting behaviors that support improved care delivery, productive and easeful relationships among staff, reduced turnover, and cost reduction**

¹A project supported by the DR. ROBERT IRA LEWY CONTEMPLATIVE CARE INITIATIVE

FACULTY & ADVISORY COUNCIL

GUIDING TEACHERS

Chodo Robert Campbell Sensei I, GC-C
Koshin Paley Ellison Sensei, MFA, LMSW, DMIN



MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Tieraona Low Dog, MD

CONTEMPLATIVE EDUCATOR

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2023–2024 FACULTY

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THE CONTEMPLATIVE APPROACH

Shaped by the vision of Co-Founders, Chodo Robert Campbell Sensei and Koshin Paley Ellison Sensei, the Zen Center has proven itself a leader in developing and teaching Contemplative Care as a means of addressing the crisis in healthcare. We understand Contemplative Care as an approach to care that nurtures the flow of wholehearted intimacy, connection, and awareness naturally available between individuals.

Since 2007, the Zen Center's contemplative care training has found expression through many forms, including:

- Pioneering [evidence-based research](#) with the LTSS Center at UMass Boston measuring the impact of our contemplative approach to care, and publishing [peer-reviewed research on the Contemplative Medicine Fellowship](#), demonstrating the effectiveness of the Fellowship in reducing clinician burnout and improving overall well-being
- Providing graduate and post-graduate curriculum and instructions around contemplative care practices for leading integrative physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, and physician assistants through appointments as faculty in two international medical fellowships
- Launching the groundbreaking [Foundations in Contemplative Care](#) nine-month training program for professional and volunteer caregivers
- Developing [Contemplative Orientation to Resilience \(COR\)](#), an evidence-based healthcare intervention that introduces contemplative practice as the foundation for resilience in the workplace
- Establishing the first nationally accredited [Clinical Buddhist Chaplaincy](#) program in the country
- Collaborating with University of the West in offering the [Master of Arts in Buddhist Spiritual Care \(MABSC\)](#), a 36-credit degree for individuals seeking a deeper understanding of how Buddhism intersects with social and community engagement in the contemporary world.



“I love and support NYZC because it is a clear statement of the primacy of human connection in the healing process. Contemplative care is about developing the inner discipline to be fully present to those we are trying to serve. Our patients know when we are there and when we are just going through the motions. Being there is what NYZC does. I cannot think of anything our healthcare system needs more.”

DIANE E. MEIER, MD

Director of the Center to Advance Palliative Care;
Professor, Geriatrics and Internal Medicine, Mt. Sinai School of Medicine

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

The curriculum centers the integration of contemplative practice into daily clinical and personal life as an ongoing foundation for resilient, compassionate action, an integrated life, and continual transformation.

THE CORE CURRICULUM CONSISTS OF:

- Training in meditation and contemplative practices
- Examining the basis and alleviation of suffering through the basic tenets of Buddhist thought—The Four Noble Truths and The Eightfold Path
- Training in Contemplative Orientation to Resilience (COR), our evidence-based healthcare intervention emphasizing community, agency, and meaning as sources of strength for practitioners, patients, and co-workers
- Addressing the roots of social isolation, burnout, loss of meaning, and secondary traumatic stress through the lens of medical and Zen ethics
- Developing and applying contemplative communication and interpersonal skills for partnership-centered care and leading change
- Examining core competencies of the practitioner's profession through the lens of contemplative medicine
- Integrating contemplative care and values into personal and professional roles
- Completion of a professional development capstone project that allows participants to take their training into their clinical environment or community
- Participation in our two in-person retreats will offer continuing education (CE) credits for all Fellowship-eligible professionals.

EACH MONTH OF THE ONE-YEAR TRAINING INCLUDES:

- A day-long Zoom-based training session
- Online study that consists of monthly lectures presented by core faculty, visionary teachers, changemakers, and leading physicians supported by accompanying literature and research studies, reflective writing, and case studies
- Mentorship by core faculty through monthly opportunities for Zoom-based one-on-one meetings scheduled during office hours.
- Daily contemplative practice supported by online teachings from Koshin Sensei, Chodo Sensei, and Tieraona Low Dog, MD
- Clinical assignments for developing core competencies and applying contemplative practices in Fellow's care setting to enhance the delivery of care

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CONTEMPLATIVE MEDICINE FELLOWSHIP Curriculum Overview

SUFFERING

Recognizing The Truth and Etiology of Suffering

Buddha as Physician • Differentiating Suffering from Pain • Contemplative Practice As Ground

Prognosis of Suffering and Path as Remedy

Salutogenesis • Not Knowing, Bearing Witness, Loving Action • The Power of Ritual

WISDOM

Transformative Perspective (Right View/Understanding)

Contemplative Medicine • Care Partnership • Evaluating Research • Non-anxious Presence
• Assessing Spiritual Needs

First Residential Retreat - October

Interconnectedness and Resolving to Care: The Attitude of The Care Partnership (Right Intention/Thought)

Non-harm • Community, Agency, and Meaning • Developing Deep Curiosity

ETHICS

Listening and Speaking with Clarity, Generosity, and Heart (Right Communication)

Emotional Impact • Silence in Communication • Symbolic Listening • Group & Structural Dynamics

Wholehearted Response to Suffering (Right Action)

Being in Relationship • Action-Reflection-Action • Integrating Contemplative Ethics in Clinical Action

Optional Silent Retreat (Sesshin) - January

The Selfless Service of Leadership (Right Livelihood)

Sharing Our Work • Courage to Lead • Resilient Relationships • Expressing Values

CONTENTMENT

Presence and Perseverance (Right Effort)

Befriending Aging, Illness, and Death • Redefining Discipline

Mindfulness as Medicine (Right Mindfulness)

Exploring Impermanence • Difference, Diversity, and Unconscious Bias

Tending to What Matters Most (Right Concentration)

Cultivating Receptivity and Responsiveness over Reaction • Holding Space

INTEGRATION

Resources for The Sustained Practice of Contemplative Medicine

Endings & Beginnings • Capstone Presentations • Graduation

Closing Residential Retreat - June

2024-25 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

The 2024-2025 cohort begins July 27, 2024 and concludes June 29, 2025.

- The First Residential Retreat is scheduled for October 23–27, 2024, at Garrison Institute in Garrison, NY
- Fellows are encouraged to attend an optional silent retreat (Sesshin) scheduled for January 22–26, 2025
- The Closing Residential Retreat is scheduled for June 25–29, 2025, at Garrison Institute in Garrison, NY

Monthly zoom-based learning occurs on the following Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. ET:

- 2024: July 27, August 17, September 21, October (First Residential Retreat), November 16, December 14
- 2025: January 11, February 22, March 22, April 26, May 17, June (Closing Retreat)

Visiting Faculty Sessions occur on the first and third Wednesdays of the month, 7:30–8:45 p.m. ET via Zoom with exceptions for holidays.



2023-24 FELLOWSHIP COHORT

RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

Fellows attend two four-day residential retreats during the Fellowship. Participation in these retreats will offer continuing education (CE) credits for all Fellowship-eligible professionals.

The first retreat is typically in October, emphasizing community building, contemplative practice, and guided group learning and discussion.

The Fellowship culminates with a closing retreat that focuses on integration of the twelve-month training, celebrating capstone projects, and exploring how the cohort will continue to collaborate and support one another post-fellowship.

Retreat locations are to be determined, and onsite participation is required.

Fellows are also encouraged to attend an optional silent retreat (Sesshin). A cornerstone of Zen practice, the Japanese word sesshin refers to an intensive period of meditation and literally translates to “touching the heart-mind.” This retreat is scheduled for Wednesday, January 22nd through Sunday, January 26th, 2025 at Garrison Institute in Garrison, NY.

Please note that retreat and travel costs are not included in the Fellowship tuition.



2021-22 FELLOWSHIP COHORT

METHODOLOGY

At the center of the Fellowship methodology is a relationship-centered, cohort-based model that builds genuine, enduring fellowship based upon the values of intimacy, curiosity, and courage. Each fellow's commitment to their own and their peer's journey simultaneously challenges and supports deep transformation.

Unlike traditional fellowships, the fellowship site is the practitioner's own place of practice in the midst of their full lives, and the Fellowship is designed to provide ongoing training and support to incorporate contemplative practice into the whole of one's daily life.

The Fellowship has adopted a low-residency model that immerses participants in contemplative practice and engaged, experiential learning while supporting existing clinical responsibilities.

Designed for practitioners in multiple professions, roles, and care models, the Fellowship also promotes interprofessional collaborative practice leading to improved cooperation, communication, and integration among care in teams.

Fellows learn how to transform the way they care for others, their loved ones and themselves by drawing on the tradition of Zen—the experience of disciplined practice in a shared community.



DEFINING PRINCIPLES

While medical education and practice has most recently been focused on the understanding of pathophysiology and treatment of disease, it is also a tradition that has long valued caregiving as a priority of clinical intervention (Kleinman, 2020). Medicine has also traditionally been considered a healing profession, “but it has neither an operational definition of healing nor explanation of its mechanisms beyond the physiological processes related to curing.” (Egnew, 2005)

Reclaiming both compassionate care and the alleviation of suffering as priorities in medicine is the Zen Center's mission and is the goal of the Fellowship. The twelve-month training seeks to bring together the two streams of the participant's clinical training and contemplative practice, finding their shared roots and creating a contemplative medicine. This rigorous training engenders radical compassion in both the practitioner and the patient, acting as the healing agent of suffering and empowering practitioners to lead change in the culture of care.

To read more about the defining principles guiding the Fellowship, visit our website.

WHO IS THIS FELLOWSHIP FOR?

Physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, and physician assistants who are collaborators and changemakers aspiring to serve as leaders in transforming the culture of care for themselves, their patients, and the health systems within which they practice get the most out of the Fellowship.

Although the Fellowship is designed to be supportive of the practitioner's life, it is an intensive training program requiring each fellow's wholehearted engagement.



“As I walk to the hospital everyday, as I put on my white coat, I do a chant. This is my ritual. My white robe is the teaching and the reminder to serve my patients when I can but also bear witness to their suffering when we cannot fix them. During this time, families cannot visit their loved ones, those who are not going to make it due to the virus. And I get them on FaceTime and I encourage them to say ‘thank you’, ‘I love you’, ‘I’m sorry’, ‘good -bye’ and even ‘I forgive you’. Families have been calling me back after their family members die and have been saying ‘thank you for what you did for my family. I’m never going to forget it’. This I learned from the Zen Center: not trying to fix everything but instead, acceptance.”

FERNANDO KOGEN KAWAI

Program Director of the Palliative Medicine Fellowship at New York Presbyterian Queens and
Assistant Professor of Medicine for the Weill Medical College/Cornell University

ELIGIBILITY

PROFESSIONAL

The program is currently accepting applications from licensed physicians (MD and DO), advanced practice registered nurses, and physician assistants who are practicing as clinicians, medical educators, researchers, administrators, or leaders. Clinicians of other professions who are interested in a contemplative approach to care may wish to apply for our nine-month [Foundations in Contemplative Care training](#).

CONTEMPLATIVE

The program welcomes applicants from any background who are inspired to cultivate a personal contemplative practice (or already have an ongoing practice) and share a commitment to exploring the intersection of contemplative practice and the practice of medicine. Prior participation in a silent retreat is suggested but not required. For those who don't enter the Fellowship with this experience, you are encouraged to attend a silent retreat during the Fellowship. NYZC's Sesshins (silent retreats) qualify.

ADMISSIONS FOR 2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR

Applications for the 2024-25 academic year are being accepted through June 23, 2024.

Space is limited. We encourage you to apply as soon as possible as we review applications on a rolling basis. Once the Fellowship is fully enrolled, applications will be held for the following academic year.



TUITION & SCHOLARSHIPS

TUITION

Tuition for the twelve-month program is \$11,750. This does not include the cost of the two required in-person retreats. The first non-refundable payment of \$5,875 is due 2 weeks after fellows are accepted to the program. The non-refundable balance payment of \$5,875 is due one month before the program begins (payment plans available). Visit our website for information about our early application discount.

SCHOLARSHIPS

We are pleased to offer a limited number of partial tuition scholarships to candidates in the following groups:

- Supporting Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) fellows
- Supporting those who primarily work within underserved communities

Scholarship funds are limited and are first come, first awarded. International candidates are encouraged to apply.

Scholarship applications are reviewed on a rolling basis in conjunction with the full application for

To learn more, please visit our website: [ZENCARE.ORG](https://www.zencare.org)