Somatic Resources: Body Awareness and Physical Action in the Treatment of Trauma

Abstract

Current research is showing major breakthroughs in what happens in the brain following trauma, indicating that insight and understanding may have only a limited influence on the operation of subcortical processes. A body-oriented approach is called for that facilitates new actions and addresses dissociative symptoms, including somatic components of traumatic memories (e.g., pain, analgesia, and motor inhibitions), and avoidance-related symptoms such as bodily anesthesia.

In this workshop, the presenter will address the role of developing “somatic resources”; physical competencies that help clients achieve mastery over past traumatic experience. The theory and practice of Sensorimotor Psychotherapy, a clinical approach that integrates cognitive and somatic interventions in the treatment of trauma, will be taught, emphasizing practicing actions that mitigate symptoms and develop a new way of “living” in the body. Somatic resources will be illustrated through videotaped excerpts of sessions with traumatized individuals, and brief experiential exercises.

Participants will be able to:
1. Apply simple somatic techniques to facilitate clients’ self-regulation
2. Summarize phase oriented treatment approach to the treatment of trauma
3. Observe video demonstrations of somatic resources technique
4. Explain the window of tolerance in terms of trauma-related dysregulation


“Sensorimotor Psychotherapy blends theory and technique from cognitive and dynamic therapy with straightforward somatic awareness and movement interventions... that promote empowerment and competency.”

- Dan Siegel, MD, clinical professor of psychiatry at the UCLA School of Medicine

Available Discounts:
- 10% Discount if Registered by March 25, 2016
- 10% Discount for Groups of 3 or More
- 15% Discount for Current SPI Students and Alums

Ame Cutler, Ph.D., is a psychologist specializing in the field of transgenerational trauma who brings years of experience in a variety of body-oriented modalities to her work with individuals, couples, and groups, as well as both violent offenders and victims of violent crimes. Also certified in the Hakomi Method, she combines interests in somatic psychology, mindfulness, and indigenous wisdom to assist clients suffering the aftermath of relational trauma in building a safer relationship with their own bodies.

Details

Date(s): May 21, 2016
Times: 9:00am-5:00pm
Location: Exact Venue to be Announced
Portland, OR

Tuition: $165 USD
Contact: SPI Student Services,
studentservices@sensorimotor.org
Local Contact: Aniko Becsei, anikob@comcast.net

Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Institute
Professional Training in Somatic Psychology

sensorimotor.org
The Training Program
The body’s intelligence is a largely untapped resource in psychotherapy. Few educational programs in clinical psychology or counseling emphasize how to draw on the wisdom of the body to support therapeutic change, leaving therapists mostly dependent on the verbal narrative.

Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Institute® offers a Training Program in Affect Regulation, Attachment, and Trauma for allied mental health professionals to build skills in Sensorimotor PsychotherapySM.

The Level I Training, first of three in SPI's Training Program, provides participants with foundational Sensorimotor PsychotherapySM skills that can be used to explore the somatic narrative that is arguably more significant than the story told by the words. By tapping into somatic expressions participants can illuminate implicit processes that shape the brain and body and communicate meaning that not only influences the manner in which content is formed and expressed, but may also essentially determine the content itself.

A Contemporary Method
Modern research confirms that language, verbal meaning-making, and verbal exchange with others affect implicit processes, and vice versa. The multifaceted language of the body depicts a lifetime of joys, sorrows, and challenges, revealed in patterns of tension, movement, gesture, posture, breath, rhythm, prosody, facial expression, sensation, physiological arousal, gait, and other action sequences. These implicit, automatic physical habits, developed in a context of trauma and attachment inadequacy, can constrain the capacity to make new meaning and respond flexibly to the here and now, often turning the future into a version of the past. In Sensorimotor PsychotherapySM, narrative formulation, interpretation, and “talking about” experience take second place to the mindful observation of moment-by-moment internal experience—cognitive, emotional, and sensorimotor (Kurtz, 1990; Ogden & Minton, 2000; Ogden et al., 2006). As a “body-oriented talking therapy”, Sensorimotor Psychotherapy recognizes and addresses both explicit and implicit realms as essential avenues of therapeutic exploration.

“The Sensorimotor Psychotherapy is a conceptually elegant, powerfully effective body therapy that involves a broad repertoire of somatic interventions specifically designed to help clients tap into the wisdom of their bodies. The SPI Training Program offers ingeniously taught intensive course for clinicians seeking to deepen their understanding of the body.”

- Martha Stark, MD, author of Working with Resistance and Modes of Therapeutic Action

Sensorimotor Psychotherapy: Interventions for Trauma and Attachment
Pat Ogden & Janina Fisher
W.W. Norton, April 2015

A guide for clinicians and clients to reclaim the body’s innate intelligence and engage it in the therapy process. By drawing on the therapeutic relationship and incorporating somatic interventions specific to the needs of each client, thoughtful attention to what is spoken beneath the words can heighten the intimacy of the therapeutic journey and help change take place in the hidden recesses of the self.

Trauma and the Body: A Sensorimotor Approach to Psychotherapy
Pat Ogden, et. al.
W.W. Norton, 2006

Hailed as “the book the field of psychotraumatology has been waiting for” by Dr. Onno van der Hart, Trauma and the Body incorporates theory and technique from traditional talk-therapy methods with Sensorimotor PsychotherapySM. Pioneer Dr. Pat Ogden and her colleagues present a breakthrough in trauma treatment, and expertly explain how using body sensation and movement can help heal the wounds of trauma.