Body Centered Psychotherapy and Somatic Experiencing

Welcome to my Body Centered Psychotherapy practice, where Somatic Experiencing, Focusing, and other psychodynamic approaches are used to help the client experience reduced stress, positive change, and a greater sense of overall well-being. Body Centered Psychotherapy recognizes the intrinsic unity (mind-body) of the human being in our somatic nature. Therefore, our work fosters the integration of bodily sensation, thought, affect and movement to promote integration of human functioning and the resolution of psychotherapeutic concerns. Body psychotherapeutic methods, including language, gesture and touch, when used in responsible, ethical and competent ways, make an essential contribution to the psychotherapeutic process by including the missing and often alienated aspects of our being which are rooted in our bodily nature and experience.

When appropriate, and according to my clinical judgment, I will propose the use of Somatic Experiencing (SE) in our work together. Somatic Experiencing (SE) is a naturalistic form of healing that will help you learn how to settle and release physiological activation from your body. Very often this process helps people to reduce stress and return to a sense of regulation and mastery in their lives. SE will support you in learning how to attend to uncomfortable sensations in your body and gently unwind them through your conscious attention. SE is particularly useful in managing stress because so many of the symptoms are physiologically based. If you would like to read more about SE, visit my website at TouchIntoCalm.com. I invite you to also visit the SETI website, Somatic Experiencing Trauma Institute, at TraumaHealing.org, founded by Dr. Peter Levine. You may also want to read one or more of Peter Levine’s books, Healing Trauma (a relatively short book that comes with a CD and provides practical activities), Waking the Tiger (his groundbreaking book), or his most recent, complex and comprehensive book, In An Unspoken Voice. I also will be explaining the process as it unfolds for each person, providing activities and some short reading material and happy to answer any questions.

During our sessions, I also draw upon Somatic Experiencing therapy, Psychodynamic therapy, Behavioral therapy, Psychoeducational therapy, Play therapy, Art therapy, Focusing training/therapy, and when indicated and agreed upon, Touch Therapy.

Credentials

I am a Somatic Experiencing Practitioner (SEP) certified through the Foundation for Human Enrichment, which is now called the Somatic Experiencing Trauma Institute.
(SETI). I am also certified through SETI in Touch Skills for Trauma Therapists, which means I have extensive advanced training in the ethical and therapeutic use of Touch, in conjunction with SE, to deepen the process of reducing stress, encouraging regulation of balance in the client’s system, increased capacity for resilience, and a deep sense of well-being and joy. I am a Focusing Trainer (FT), certified through The International Focusing Institute. I have a Master of Science degree in Clinical Psychology and a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology, with many years’ experience working with students and families as a School Psychologist.

If you are working with another health care provider, such as a cognitively oriented therapist, psychiatrist, etc., and would like to also work with me regarding SE, I may ask you to sign a release so that I might discuss your progress with your primary therapist. This is to ensure that we function as a good team working for your benefit.

Benefits and Risks

SE may offer you many benefits such as more relaxation, reduced stress, an increase in resilience, an increase in your ability to self-soothe and to feel empowered. However, there may also be risks as with any treatment that focuses on healing high stress or traumatic states. Although SE is designed to help you resource and work with manageable amounts of discomfort, you may experience challenging feelings, images, or thoughts. Furthermore, as with any stress reduction treatment, there can be no guarantee that you will reach your goals. That said, many people report that SE has helped them tremendously and has created positive change in their lives. Learning how to reorganize “body memory” as well as to relieve and renegotiate long held stress response patterns is often vital to learning how to relax and calm your nervous system.

Confidentiality

Everything that you share with me will remain confidential, and it is very important that a sense of safety is created. There are a few reasons, however, in which I am required to break confidentiality ethically and by law. The first would occur if you were of danger to yourself and had an active plan to harm yourself. In this case I would contact the hospital to place you on a 72-hour watch. Another reason would occur if you were planning to seriously harm another person. I would be required to contact the person threatened if possible as well as the police department. Confidentiality will also be broken if I learn of child or elder abuse and will contact protective services. If I learn of a child abuser from
a person’s past who is actively still around children I need to report this to protective services as well.

If you are a minor, I am required to share important information with your parents regarding your emotional health. This is not the case if the information you share would put you at extreme physical risk from a caregiver. Breaches in confidentiality will occur along with the same guidelines for adults above, but include a report if you are having a sexual relationship with an older adult if you are under 17 years of age.

**Phone Calls and Emergency Contacts**

Calls or texts will be returned within 48 hours during regular working hours Monday-Friday unless I am out of town. I will generally tell you when I will be away from the office. I provide non-emergency service. If you have an immediate emergency you may call the 24 hr. info crisis line at (310) 671-7464, LA Mental Health Crisis line at (800) 854-7771, or the police at 911.

**Fees**

Sessions are $120 for a full 60-minute session and $180 for a full 90-minute session.

**Cancellations**

If you decide that you need to cancel a session please call me 24 hours before at 714.865.1883. If you do not cancel, I will expect you to pay for the missed session in full. This means that if you have an appointment at 11:00am on Tuesday, you would need to cancel by 11:00am on Monday. This will allow me time to reschedule other clients who could benefit from the availability. These policies apply to me also. I will call you with at least 24 hours’ notice if I need to reschedule. If for any reason I miss our scheduled appointment without notifying you, I will provide your next session free of charge.

**SE Session Format**

SE sessions are done seated in a chair, seated on a couch, or laying on a massage table depending on your preference. You will be asked to share an impression of the sensations that you feel in your body, such as tightness, heat, shakiness, expansion,
relaxation, etc. I will teach you ways to track, or follow, these sensations with your awareness and come to a place of rebalance.

Touch

SE is not a form of massage. I may offer you touch support for the following reasons: grounding, calming and relaxation, containment, support, balance, mobilization, awareness and resilience building. You will always be asked before being touched and have the right and my full support to decline. Furthermore, I request that if you would like to touch me that you likewise request first. This gives us the opportunity to explore the therapeutic meaning of the touch work and receive its fullest benefit.

If you do not feel comfortable with touch, or if the session does not call for it, session work will not include touch.

- SE employs awareness of body sensation to help people "renegotiate" and heal rather than re-live or re-enact trauma.
- SE's guidance of the bodily "felt sense," allows the highly aroused survival energies to be safely experienced and gradually discharged.
- SE may employ touch in support of the renegotiation process.
- SE “titrates” experience (breaks down into small, incremental steps), rather than evoking catharsis - which can overwhelm the regulatory mechanisms of the organism.

Confirmation

It is a great honor for me to work with you and share my knowledge of Somatic Experiencing as well as to explore the whole process of an individualized Body Centered approach to therapy. I hope you will learn skills and have experiences that will help you reduce stress in your life. It takes strength and courage to explore greater self-awareness, and I feel privileged to support you in reaching your goals.

Please sign here to verify you have read and understood all of the above information.