INTRODUCTION TO SOMATIC INTEGRATED MODALITIES FOR TRAUMA RECOVERY

Sponsored by: Timberline Knolls Residential Treatment Center

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Somatic Integrated Modalities for Trauma Recovery

- Define somatic integrated modalities

- Introduction to specific techniques, including: Somatic Experiencing; Tension and Trauma, Releasing Exercises; Dance movement therapy; Yoga; Sensorimotor; Equine; Art

- How to decide which modality is right for you

- Q&A

The word *somatic* comes from the Greek word, *soma*, which means "body".
What is a somatic integrated modality?

A therapeutic technique that incorporates the body as a major component in the healing method.
Why are somatic integrated modalities useful?

Successful recovery =

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Why are somatic integrated modalities useful?

• Learn to reconnect to physical self
• Develop trust in physical self connection
  • Express trauma without talking
• Release trapped traumatic energy
• Create a mind/body feedback loop
  • Reinforce mindfulness
• Expand capacity to be present
• Increase control over triggers and reactions

“[A somatic approach] can rewire your brain stem, and change the fear system in your brain. It can regulate the balance between the sympathetic and the parasympathetic nervous systems and activate the cranial nerves so your body doesn’t respond to everything as if it’s getting hurt.” – Bessel van der Kolk
How do somatic integrated modalities fit into the healing mix?

• Helps create a mind/body/spirit approach to healing
• Supports the encoding process of a traumatic experience
• Facilitates stress discharge
• Provides present moment experiences of expression
• Introduces process: joy, release, doing, then reflecting
What are the benefits of using somatic integrated modalities?

• Sensorimotor
• Mindfulness
  • Focus
  • Attention
• Present moment
• Self-regulation
• Self-trust
Somatic Experiencing

“Trauma is not something you can really talk away verbally, it’s in the body. By using Somatic Experiencing people touch into the trauma in the body through one tiny island at a time. They stay present, observe sensation and transform it into aliveness so that they feel their body has the resources it needs.” – Peter Levine

The science: Mammals regulate survival responses from the primitive, non-verbal brain, mediated by the autonomic nervous system (ANS). Under threat, massive amounts of energy are mobilized in readiness for self-defense via the fight, flight, and freeze responses. Once safe, animals spontaneously “discharge” this excess energy through involuntary movements including shaking, trembling, and deep spontaneous breaths. This discharge process resets the ANS, restoring equilibrium.

The method: SE facilitates the completion of self-protective motor responses and the release of thwarted survival energy bound in the body, thus addressing the root cause of trauma symptoms. This is approached by gently guiding clients to develop increasing tolerance for difficult bodily sensations and suppressed emotions.

Significant outcomes: Anxiety and rage relaxed into a sense of safety. • Depression and hopeless transformed into empowerment. • Recalibration of nervous system. • Restoration of inner balance.
Tension and Trauma Releasing Exercises

“Once the technique is learned and mastered after several sessions, the warm-up exercises can be accelerated or replaced with your normal exercise activity like walking or yoga, and the technique then becomes a quick and effective method for consistent relaxation. Eventually, these tremors will evoke themselves naturally in a rest position to reduce any stress or tension that was accumulated over the course of the day.” – David Berceli

The science: Humans have access to the same natural stress-release mechanism as animals. TRE™ helps clients access this mechanism via a short series of physical exercises that stretch the core muscles involved in the stress-release process, creating a shaking like mechanism in the muscles that expel stress and trauma-related tension from the body.

The method: TRE is a set of six exercises that help to release deep tension from the body by evoking a self-controlled muscular shaking process in the body called neurogenic muscle tremors. The uniqueness of this technique is that this shaking originates deep in the core of the body of the psoas muscles. These gentle tremors reverberate outwards along the spine releasing tension from the sacrum to the cranium.

Significant outcomes: As the pattern of muscular tension in the body changes, the brain establishes a neural pattern related to relaxation, releasing endorphins and other stress-reducing chemicals, and restoring the individual to their natural state of bio-chemical balance.
Dance Movement Therapy

"Movement is the medium in which we live our lives." – Marian Chace

For over 50 years, dance/movement therapists have pioneered the understanding of how body and mind interact in health and in illness.

The science: Based on the empirically supported premise that the body, mind and spirit are interconnected, Dance Movement Therapy is defined as “the psychotherapeutic use of movement to further the emotional, cognitive, physical and social integration of the individual.”

The method: A variety of dance styles are used in DMT, including: modern dance with its emphasis on the pure elements of movement, various culturally-based dances, Turkish dance, ballroom dance, tango, waltz, foxtrot, aerobic dance, line dancing and body psychotherapy. There are four stages to a session: Preparation: the warm-up stage, safety is established • Incubation: relaxed, let go of conscious control, movements become symbolic • Illumination: meanings become apparent, can have positive and negative effects • Evaluation: discuss significance of the process, prepare to end therapy

Significant outcomes: Facilitates self-awareness • Enhances self-esteem • Reduces anxiety • Encourages reminiscing • Maintains and/or increases mobility • Enhances body-mind connectivity • Focus on non-verbal communication as method of therapy • Alternative method of therapy if traditional talk therapy has not been effective
Yoga

“It’s great to be able to put your feelings into words,” says van der Kolk, “and feeling that somebody understands your suffering is enormously comforting. But it doesn’t make your body know that you are safe. The real method is resetting your physiology.” – Bessel van Der Kolk

“The science: Research empirically proves that yoga reduces anxiety and salves symptoms of depression. In fact, when compared to other forms of relatively low impact physical activity (i.e. walking) yoga seems to produce similarly strong effects. In one study, there was zero significant distinction between outcomes treating stress and anxiety with yoga versus cognitive behavioral therapy.

The method: Trauma-sensitive (or trauma-focused) yoga modifies traditional yoga practices with safety precautions to help survivors engage with a sense of calm and control. Four main themes include experiencing the present moment, making choices, taking effective actions and creating rhythms.

Significant outcomes: Reaquaintance with the body. • Train the brain for focus and attention, especially on the developing the ability to be present. • Reduces anxiety • Builds a sense of self-mastery • Moves energy and releases emotions often stored in large muscle groups such as the hips and shoulders. • Encourages social interaction and group connection. • Develops: breathwork, patience, self-care, self-love and appreciation, pride and accomplishment • Increase in relatability (with self and the outside world) • Peace with daily experience • Less rumination • More sense of calm and presence

“Unless you befriend your body you cannot become well.” Bessel van der Kolk
Sensorimotor

“In our bodies, in this moment, there live the seed impulses of the change and spiritual growth we seek, and to awaken them we must bring our awareness into the body, into the here and now.” – Pat Ogden

The science: Traumatic experiences damage implicit processes, including regulating emotions, engaging with others, and defending against threat. After experiencing a traumatic event, an individual’s relationship to her body may be impacted, i.e. the nervous system stops effectively regulating emotions, which causes feelings of vulnerability, overwhelm or fear.

The method: Building on traditional therapeutic understanding Sensorimotor Psychotherapy® is body-based talk therapy that draws from somatic therapies, neuroscience, attachment theory, and cognitive approaches, plus the Hakomi Method. During sessions the therapist explores ways for the client to complete a traumatic movement that was truncated. Three phases include: 1) stabilization and symptom reduction; 2) working with traumatic memory; and 3) re-integration.

Significant outcomes: Develops client’s internal resources for self-regulation. • Clients develop an ability to examine how past experiences affect the body in the present. • Address physical symptoms, especially those of a dissociative nature. • Patients heal without being retraumatized by using words related to the trauma. • Successfully combines cognitive and somatic techniques. • Patients learn to deeply employ the process of mindfulness. • Clients have the opportunity to experience a sense of triumph which can be integrated into the nervous system.
Equine Assisted Therapy (EAT)

"It's especially good for people who don't take to talking therapies. Counselling is not a 'one size fits all'. While you might forget a conversation you had with your counsellor a few weeks on, it's unlikely you'll forget what happened when you stood in a field with your counsellor and a horse. It's not like patting a dog; it's a big animal." -- therapy counsellor Gabrielle Gardner, Shine For Life

The science: Horses and humans share similar behaviors (i.e. social and responsive), which makes creating a connection between horse and patient very easy. In EAT horses act as a biofeedback mechanism: As a domesticated animal horses respond to humans as predatory animals; their sensitivity causes horses to respond and react differently based upon a person's emotional state. As science has proven, human emotional states impact physiology; horses can smell or sense those changes thereby providing information about a client’s moods and their alterations.

The method: EAT is an experiential form of psychotherapy. In a typical session patients might ride, touch or just be near the horse. The facilitator sets goals (i.e. leading the horse, brushing, putting on a halter); when the task is completed therapist and client discuss the thought process, ideas and problem solving that was used. Main techniques used include talk therapy, Cognitive Therapy, practicing activities, activity scheduling, play therapy and story telling.

Significant outcomes: Improves language skills through discussion. • Increases client’s ability to listen, follow directions and ask questions. • Facilitates connection between client and animal; client and therapist. • Increases problem-solving skills. • The presence of a horse has been clinically documented to change human brainwave patterns. • Facilitates a sense of calm, grounded focus.
Art Therapy

“If I could say it in words there would be no reason to paint.” – Edward Hopper

“The value of art therapy lies in] completely engrossing the mind (as well as the fingers)...releasing the creative energy of the frequently inhibited patient”, [which enables him to] build up a strong defence against his misfortunes.” – Adrian Hill

The science: Neurologically speaking, “art-as-therapy” promotes EEG rhythms (increasing alpha frequency) and, hence, decreasing behavioral symptoms of anxiety. Plus, the creation of emotion-centered images promotes brain activity in the limbic system, thereby engaging the hippocampus and encouraging enhanced cognitive performance.

The method: Originally, the therapist would interpret the client’s symbolic self-expression by interpreting the art. However, in its current application analysis of transference is no longer always a component. Current art therapy processes utilize several approaches, including Person-Centered, Cognitive, Behavior, Gestalt, Narrative, Adlerian and Internal Family Systems.

Significant outcomes: Reconciles emotional conflicts. • Fosters self-awareness. • Facilitates personal growth. • Increases insight. • Develop ability to cope with stress. • Supports cognitive, memory and neurosensory abilities. Improves interpersonal relationships. • Improves mood. • Extends experience of locus of control. • Encourages self-expression. • Facilitate positive self-esteem. • Promote a sense of independence.
How to decide which modality is right for you….

• Assess your strengths
• Examine your interests
• Develop your passions
• Expand your theories
• Follow your emotional and intellectual responses
Thanks for joining us!

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A residential treatment center located on 43 beautiful acres just outside Chicago, offering a nurturing environment of recovery for women ages 12 and older struggling to overcome eating disorders, substance abuse, mood disorders, trauma and co-occurring disorders.

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