

INTERNATIONAL **BODY PSYCHOTHERAPY** JOURNAL

The Art and Science of Somatic Praxis

Published by the European and United States Associations for Body Psychotherapy and Somatic Psychology

Our Roots

Early Coping Strategies Addictive Behaviors That May Sabotage Connection

Alice Kahn Ladas

Alice K. Ladas attended her first Conference at Orgonon in 1948 and was personally examined by Reich in 1951 in order to join the staff of his Infant Research Center. She is possibly the only living person in the USA today who knew Reich in person. Here, in her own words, are some of her memories of the early days of our field, and how she influenced its development.

Keywords: Coping strategies, intimate connection, body psychotherapy, addiction

The culture in the body and the body in the culture

Finding Our Intercultural Ground An Essential Element in 21st Century Body and Somatic Psychotherapies

Carmen Joanne Ablack

Abstract

This article pulls together and expands upon a range of key concepts and ideas that were first explored in two separate talks given by the writer highlighting the importance of intercultural ground in body and somatic psychotherapy. After speaking at the European Association for Body Psychotherapy (EABP) Congress in Berlin 2018 and then presenting an opening keynote speech at the United States Association for Body Psychotherapy (USABP) conference in California later that year, the writer explores macroscales of culture and multiculturalism, social and socioeconomic considerations, political cultures and microscales of signs, symbols, rhythms, creativity, societal symptoms, and embodiment, leading to the idea of intercultural ground. Throughout the writer attends to pitfalls and possibilities for both body and somatic psychotherapy, with a specific focus on organizational, practitioner, training, and supervisory levels in the context of the wider world.

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Keywords: Dialogue, embodiment, intercultural, ground, relational

English Smiles, Italian Shoulders, and a German Therapist

Julianne Appel-Opper

Abstract

With this article I want to highlight how bodies communicate with each other. The rhythms and melodies of how bodies move are so fascinating; so much is said before we even speak. What is communicated by a still shoulder, a glance away, or a slight finger movement? How does a living body sound like an orchestra, playing different melodies from its implicit relational knowledge? How are these tones, pitches, and melodies colored by their cultural background? Would I as a German be able to understand an Italian shoulder or an English finger?

Throughout my clinical practice as an integrative Gestalt and relational psychodynamic psychotherapist, I have explored and studied these fascinating inter-bodily processes: what we say without speaking, and what we see without looking. I wanted to open up and listen to these communications without words, but most of all I wanted to find a way to reply in the same language. I wanted to liquefy and move frozen movements held in the body in a safe way, touching from a safe distance without touching each other.

Keywords: implicit body-to-body communications, cultural rhythms and melodies, embodied interventions and experiments

"If you turn me into a fag, I'll kill you!"

**Body Psychotherapy and Its Potential Role
to Help "Real Men" Become Real Men**

Marc Rackelmann

Abstract

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The article explores what needs to be considered for body psychotherapy with male clients. It touches on the debate around masculinity, and presents an overview of the research into why contemporary psychotherapy isn't suitable for many men, and what characteristics male-appropriate psychotherapy needs to have. These findings are then applied to male appropriate body-psychotherapy, and illustrated with brief case descriptions. The article also offers some reflection on issues that can arise when working with heterosexual or gay clients as a heterosexual or gay body psychotherapist. The author maintains that body-psychotherapy, with its emphasis on the unity of body and soul, its "hands on" approach, and its ability to reconcile cognition and emotion, seems to be particularly suited for working with men— if certain adjustments are made for male clientele.

Keywords: Masculinity, gender, male-appropriate psychotherapy, psychotherapy research, body-psychotherapy with men

Female Sexual Objectification and the Castrated Feminine Re-Membering Embodied Intelligence

Maryanne Comaroto and Rebecca Pottenger

Abstract

Arising out of a deep concern with the prevalence of psychological and physical violence against women, this article brings together theories underscoring a somatic and Jungian approach to understanding female sexual objectification as a cultural complex. It posits the mind–body split within patriarchal cultural and female sexual objectification has caused us to lose contact with our embodied experience and intelligence, and has infused our relationships with self, others, and the environment with traumatogenic effects. Our research illuminates female sexual objectification as a normalized cultural complex, and self-objectification as a strategy for social belonging and security. Research points to body-centered, group inquiry as an effective process for bringing awareness to the effects of female sexual objectification and its normalization and internalization. The spontaneity

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of an expressive movement and reflective small group process facilitated contact with the somatic unconscious and women's embodied knowing. This included awareness of women's experience and their internalization of female objectification. Further, women accessed and embodied energies of the feminine that promote agency and self-efficacy.

Keywords: sexual objectification, archetypal feminine, embodied knowing, cultural unconscious, patriarchal culture, somatic unconscious, post-Jungian cultural complex theory, embodied experience.

BP and SP Practice

Making Somatic Psychotherapy More Effective

Anne Isaacs and Joel Isaacs

Abstract

In our ongoing effort to make somatic psychotherapy more effective, we have identified and eliminated a number of obstacles and constraints to the therapy process as commonly practiced. Using our Bodydynamic approach, this has led to consistently enhanced therapy outcomes in our work with developmental disruptions.

Keywords: Bodydynamics, somatic psychotherapy, developmental disruptions, developmental trauma, (more) effective psychotherapy, (removing) obstacles to psychotherapy, enhanced therapy outcomes

Body Dreamwork

Using focusing to find the life force inherent in dreams

Leslie A. Ellis

Abstract

Finding and embodying the life force or "help" in a dream is the central practice of focusing-oriented dreamwork. This article briefly introduces *focusing* (Gendlin, 1978/1981) and its application to dreamwork, and provides a case example with a

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transcript of how to guide a dreamer to find the life force in a distressing dream. The practice of embodying the dream's life force provides the dreamer with an embodied resource that can be an end in itself, and can also facilitate working with the more challenging aspects of dreams and nightmares. Research and clinical examples support the use of this technique in clinical practice, and demonstrate how it can provide clinically significant relief from nightmare distress and other symptoms of PTSD.

Keywords: Dreamwork, focusing, nightmares, embodiment, psychotherapy

Work with trauma

Bodymap Protocol Integrating Art Therapy and Focusing in the Treatment of Adults with Trauma

Darcy Lubbers
Abstract

The BMP integrates the modalities of focusing and therapeutic art expression, and utilizes the outline of the body as a container. It was administered to nine adults, each of whom was receiving ongoing therapy for trauma at the time of the study. Following the administration of the protocol, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore each participant's artwork and lived experience of the BMP. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was applied to transcripts of the semi-structured interviews and the artwork. NVivo-Pro 11 software was utilized by the researcher to explore the predominant themes that emerged. The study resulted in positive outcomes, as expressed through participants' semi-structured interviews and artwork, thereby providing a foundation and motivation for continued trauma studies with this protocol.

Highlighted aspects of body psychotherapy include: 1.) neuroscience: underscoring the effectiveness of non-verbal modalities in trauma treatment; 2.) facilitating embodiment, self-regulation, and access to unconscious material through an integrated protocol; 3.)

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providing a safe container for emotional/physiological healing; 4.) moving beyond symptom reduction in healing trauma.

Keywords: art therapy, body psychotherapy, somatic psychology, focusing, trauma

Integration of Traumatic Memories

Homayoun Shahri

Abstract

In this paper, I will discuss a short review of traumatic memories based on neuroscience and information theory. Based on neuroscience and information theory, I will present a new technique that may integrate fragmented traumatic memories. The presented technique is based on slowing down the process of recall of the traumatic memory as well as adding new information at the time of recall, which may result in re-encoding these memories during the reconsolidation phase. The resulting rewritten memories seem to last for a very long time.

Keywords: neuroscience, trauma, memory, information theory, re-encoding, reconsolidation

WORKING WITH TRAUMA WITHOUT THE DRAMA: ABUSED AND STILL ALIVE

Will Davis

Abstract

There are two related themes in working with trauma patients in a safe manner. First, I introduce how a functional approach allows for the possibility that it is not necessary to work through, re-experience in a safe therapeutic environment or have knowledge of the trauma in order to be freed from it. It is possible to treat trauma patients below defenses, working with the "undamaged" endo self that exists before the trauma. The second theme is a functional model of how to understand this unlikely phenomenon considering that it

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seems to go against the basic therapeutic principles listed above.

Keywords: Reich, instroke, trauma, endo self, dual nature of relationships, functional model

Research

Toward a Somatically-Informed Paradigm in Embodied Research Jennifer Frank Tantia

Abstract

Somatic psychotherapy has been practiced for eighty years without the complement of substantial research to accompany it. Due to the practice-oriented nature of the field, most body psychotherapists have had more extensive training in practice in lieu of engaging in the riches of research inquiry. This has created a weakness in the field, and has arrested the development of somatic psychotherapy as a valid and evidence-based mental health therapy. Although there is a much larger issue that involves educational and community support, this article discusses the ways in which the very elements that are distinct within somatic psychotherapy treatment can be a valuable resource for developing somatically-informed embodied research methods. It will also discuss why embodied research methods are prime for the current *Zeitgeist*, and how embodied practices within the research paradigm are imperative for exploring phenomena such as gender identity, cultural differences, oppression, medically unexplained symptoms, existential mental health, and other topics that are still underexplored through current research methods.

Keywords: embodiment, embodied research methods, embodied inquiry, mental health, psychophysiological health

Depression and Body Psychotherapy

A qualitative study from a resilient perspective

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Christina Bader Johansson

Abstract

The aim of this qualitative study was to find out how body psychotherapists spontaneously describe their beliefs about what makes us stay healthy, which valuable methods they use and which signs of recovery they recognize when working with a depressed client. In the method of Grounded Theory, literature studies as well as open questions were conducted parallel to each other. The open questions were sent to the members of the CH-EABP, (Swiss National Association of the European Association of Body Psychotherapy, EABP). The written answers to their suggestions for useful therapeutic methods and the signs of recovery from depression were analyzed by using the method of constant comparison with an open and axial coding. The four main categories of answers from the body psychotherapists, forming a core concept were: 1) Attachment and therapeutic alliance 2) Body Awareness 3) Contact with grief enables healthy, creative aggression and 4) Self-regulation and rhythm. This study, based on the answers of the therapists, indicates that body psychotherapists have tools to work in a resilient direction, suggesting that experimental studies should follow.

Keywords: Depression, body psychotherapy, resilience, therapeutic alliance, body awareness, grief, healthy aggression

Interdisciplinary approach

Sexual Pleasure in Light of Intersubjectivity, Neuroscience, Infant Research, Relational Psychoanalysis, and Recognition Theory

Lawrence E. Hedges

Abstract

Unlike other species, humans can experience sexual pleasure as an intersubjectively achieved sense of interpersonal union, a phenomenon that is distinct from other forms of sexual experience. Infant studies demonstrate that the human capacity for

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intersubjectivity is present at birth. Right-brain to right-brain affective communication can be achieved between infant and caregiver through the cultivation of complex processes of mutual affect attunement and regulation — thus giving rise to reciprocal psychological and psychophysical experiences of mutual pleasure. The human polyvagal nerves allow genetically-driven neuroception of safety and danger — of potential pleasure and pain — in human relationships. Recognition and attachment theories clarify how these and other primal human response systems can be cultivated toward mutual pleasuring in infancy and early childhood. *Interpersonal pleasuring is foundational to later experiences of reciprocal and mutual sexual pleasure accompanied by a sense of psychological attunement and union.*

Keywords: Sexual pleasure, sexual, intersubjectivity, neuroscience, and for research, recognition Siri, Relational psychotherapy

The Principle of Minimum Stimulus in the Autopoietic Processes of Bioenergetic Self-Regulation, Bonding and Embodiment

Beatrice Casavecchia

Abstract

This paper presents the paradigm of Quantum Field Theory applied to living systems and Orgone energy as developed by Wilhelm Reich and also by Eva Reich in her formulation of Gentle Bioenergetics.

Reich developed the hypothesis of an unconscious anchored in the body, which is the root and the driving force of the libido, and created an energetic approach to a pulsating somatic psyche. He discovered a precise process of entanglement between physical and mental wellbeing.

Keywords: Quantum physical dynamics, neg-entropy, minimum stimulus principle,

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quantum coherent state, orgone energy, connective tissue matrix, autopoietic processes, self-organization dynamics.

Biofeedback as a Viable Somatic Modality for Trauma and Related Comorbidities

A New Methodology

Cynthia Kerson

Abstract

Biofeedback is a behavioral modality that focuses on the interconnection between psychological and physiological phenomena in real time. Its main premises are that emotional and cognitive behavior begets physiological behavior, vice versa, and that the conscious connection between the two augments healing. To achieve this learning, the client is coached using operant conditioning learning models while recording heart rate, breath rate, distal temperature, muscle activity, electrodermal activity, and/or brain waves. Each modality relates to the person uniquely, and it is the skill of the practitioner to know which one(s) to train to enhance the psychological process and encourage mental, social, and emotional growth. This paper explores these modalities and their best uses.

Keywords: biofeedback; neurofeedback; applied psychophysiology; learning theory, somatic modality

Professional ethics

Ethics and Ethos as Essential Elements of Professionalization of Body Psychotherapy

Ulrich Sollmann

Abstract

Ethics in the field of (body) psychotherapy is an indispensable guideline. The implementation of ethical guidelines, and appropriate treatment in dealing with violations of these guidelines must be a key component in the psychotherapeutic field, be it in

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concerted therapeutic practice, the therapist-patient relationship, or therapeutic science. However, an impartial ethics practice is necessary in relation to the management of a therapeutic organization, especially in smaller organizations. A conflict of bias can quickly lead to abuse of power. Psychotherapy is, on the one hand, a specific form of helping people in personal need. On the other hand, it is a profession, a service. The profession's development includes the development of specific quality criteria, structures, and regulations for the training, as well as the social anchoring, of the activity and its recognition. This includes professionalization. It is to be understood as the development of a general ethic and personal ethos. Both are value systems that give orientation to both the therapist and the patient. Professional and personal (self-) reflection is crucial for this. The development of an ethics code also affects the sustainability and credibility of psychological science.

Keywords: Ethics guidelines, morals, body psychotherapy, psychotherapy, professionalization, therapist-patient relationship, power struggle, science, quality criteria, sanctions

BP around the world

Body Psychotherapy in Australia

Ernst Meyer

Abstract

Somatic psychotherapies emerged in Australia in the late 1970s, and training programs and professional associations were established from the 1980s onward. Although the field was well established, no umbrella association was formed to bring the different approaches together. The role of somatic psychotherapy in Australia diminished as disputes eroded the field from within, while external financial pressures made training delivery and private practice less viable. To give the field a platform to regroup and remind itself and others of its value, establishing an association dedicated to somatic psychotherapies is currently being considered.

Keywords: somatic psychotherapy, Jeff Barlow, Australia, the tyranny of distance

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