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Embodied Clinical Truths

Terry Marks-Tarlow

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Abstract

Among clients and psychotherapists, the body is not only the repository of trauma, but it is also a vast storehouse of expert knowledge. As therapists, we gather relational patterns slowly and implicitly through experience via full immersion within a variety of clinical contexts. This essay begins with the neurobiology of embodied truths, including the importance of implicit learning in service of executive memory and prescriptive knowledge as guided by right-brain intuition. Next, I set forth seven assumptions about professional development I held at the beginning of my career as a clinical psychologist. One by one, each assumption is presented and then systematically rebutted in light of embodied clinical truths I have garnered over the past three decades.

Keywords: embodied knowledge, clinical intuition, wisdom

The Return to the Self:

A Self Oriented Theory of Development and Psychotherapy

Will Davis

Received 04 September 2014; accepted 27 May 2015

Abstract

In order to address an overemphasis on the role of the object, I discuss eight principles of a self relations theory: (1) There is an innate, self organizing endo self, (2) The self is the aim of the drive not the object, (3) The self, not the other, is the organizing agent of experience, (4) The self to self relationship is the earliest relationship, (5) The self creates the object, (6) The self creates the object to satisfy its desires, not its needs, (7) The object does not gratify, (8) Detachment is as important as attachment.

Keywords: Self relations theory, self, Reich, instroke, self referential, default mode network, brainstem consciousness

Research 101 for Somatic Psychotherapists:

Cultivating a Research Mind

Christine Caldwell & Rae Johnson

Received 01 December 2013; accepted 04 May 2014

Abstract

Many parallels exist between clinical practice and research practice in somatic psychotherapy, creating rich possibilities and cross-fertilizations. In this article, the authors introduce and discuss these

parallels, and examine how they can be leveraged to advance emerging research interests in the field of somatic psychology.¹

Keywords: body psychology, body psychotherapy, somatic psychology, research, embodiment, clinical research, psychology research

**Let's Face the Music and Dance:
Working with Eroticism in Relational Body Psychotherapy:
The Male Client and Female Therapist Dyad
Danielle Tanner**

Received: 04 March 2014; accepted 02 June 2014

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to present two cases documenting eroticism in a male client–female therapist heterosexual dyad. This phenomenological study will reflect upon the experiences of the researcher, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the human phenomena of erotic transference and countertransference in therapy. It will examine the theories of the aetiologies and common factors in erotic and eroticised transference. It will also seek to explore the therapeutic value of working with erotic transference, which is a naturalistic event, within the conceptual framework of humanistic principles and relational body-psychotherapy. Additionally it will examine the significance of the use of touch in erotic transference and countertransference.

Keywords: erotic transference, erotic countertransference, touch.

**Relational Body Psychotherapy
(Or Relational Somatic Psychology)
Aline LaPierre**

Received 13 February 2015; accepted 20 May 2015

Abstract

This article discusses the concepts, and methods that characterize relational body psychotherapy. Beginning with the evolution of the role of empathy in the object relations and humanistic movements, continuing with the development of the principles of attachment in the seminal work of John Bowlby and Mary Main, it is with the emergence of relational psychoanalysis as it replaced therapeutic neutrality with the centrality of the therapeutic relationship as an agent for change, that the way finally opened for body psychotherapy to embrace relational psychoanalytic principles. The relational approach has created opportunities to introduce embodied clinical applications into the broader field of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. Relational body psychotherapy is explored from the perspectives of (1) transference dynamics and the importance of therapeutic resonance; (2) a theory of bodymind organization that views the body as engaged in an ongoing dialogue that includes somatic flow and pulsation, cognitive organization, and relational interdependence; and (3) an attuned and collaborative therapist-client relational matrix that supports the importance of the body in restoring the capacity to love and in activating the conditions that facilitate the emergence of Self. This article is inspired by four publications I found most helpful in understanding the origin, depth, and breadth of relational body psychotherapy, or, as it is called in the United States, relational somatic psychology:

- From Broken Attachment to Earned Security: The Role of Empathy in Therapeutic Change. The John Bowlby Memorial Conference Monograph Series (2014), edited by Andrew Odgers.
- Talking Bodies: How Do We Integrate Working with the Body in Psychotherapy from an Attachment and Relational Perspective? The John Bowlby Memorial Conference Monograph Series (2014), edited by Kate White.
- Touching the Relational Edge (2014) by Asaf Rolef Ben-Shahar.

¹ This article is edited and adapted from an interview for Somatic Perspectives with Serge Prengel. The original interview can be found as an audio recording podcast and as transcription on the United States Association of Body Psychotherapy (USABP) website¹. Our thanks to Corinne Bagish for providing the interview transcription upon which this article was based.

- About Relational Body Psychotherapy (2012), edited by Courtenay Young.

Keywords: body psychotherapy, connection, embodied transference, emergence, empathy, somatic psychology, relational matrix, relational body psychotherapy, therapeutic resonance, therapeutic relationship

**Held Experience:
Using Mindfulness in Psychotherapy
to Facilitate Deeper Psychological Repair
Shai Lavie**

Received 14 May 2014; accepted 13 May 2015

Abstract

This article explores how mindfulness-centered approaches can deepen psychotherapy and facilitate transformative experience. The author uses a case study to illustrate techniques and strategies drawn mainly from the Hakomi method of mindfulness-centered therapy, demonstrating the following clinical skills: immersing clients into present-time experience; engaging mindfulness to help clients tolerate distressing affective experience; and skillfully working toward core-level material. The author introduces the term *held experience*, which refers to a critical therapeutic event in which the client becomes able to witness a formerly distressing experience in a state of somatic mindfulness and self-compassion.

Keywords: mindfulness-centered psychotherapy, the Hakomi method, somatic therapy, held experience

**Transcultural Case Study, First Interview with a Chinese Client
By Ulrich Sollmann & Wentian Li
Translated by Elizabeth Marshall**

Received 10 September 2014; accepted 06 June 2015

Abstract

A body oriented first interview in psychotherapy has a specific structure and praxeology. The article illustrates in detail a first appointment with a Chinese client. The important aspect of this circular-systemic process is the opportunity on the one hand to get enough relevant data, to find a diagnosis and a first indication. On the other hand the therapist can relate to and give feedback to the client and experience the client's reaction as well as the response of the client to the therapist's feedback. This is then translated into professional terms and is communicated in a narrative way. It is important to introduce the necessary transcultural perspective as the client is Chinese. This perspective is related to sexuality, shame, body-self, emotional dissociation, contact and relationship. All this is described on the basis of bodily expression: the practical relevance of body experience in a transcultural perspective. Finally this article is an attempt to understand psychodynamic aspects in terms of "body" (experience, expression, body-self and so on).

Keywords: shame, sexuality, transcultural, China, body psychotherapy