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### **Abstract**

This workshop will briefly outline the view of the body from Freud to the present as well as the parallel development of body psychotherapies, often initially in opposition to, but more recently in conjunction with, psychoanalytic theory and research. Case vignettes and demonstrations will clarify integrations.

### **Description**

Neuroscientific research is making it increasingly clear that psychotherapists can benefit from taking more account of somatic processes than has traditionally been stressed. Authors such as Daniel Siegel and Louis Cozolino, and especially Allan Schore, have been clarifying the significance of the unity of the psychesoma in explorations of topics such as the role of implicit/procedural memory in the development of the healthy individual as well those whose symptoms bring them to our treatment rooms. Utilization of the research of neuroscientists and attachment theorists as well as clinical research has opened new vistas in treatment possibilities. Much that we have done intuitively has been validated by this research, but it has also opened the way for the incorporation of new techniques in the treatment of the person as a psychosomatic unity.

Body psychotherapy has developed many techniques to both access and repair the effects of developmental and acute trauma. Drawing on the work of Pat Ogden, Peter Levine as well as Reichian-based traditions such as Core Energetics, this workshop will present relevant theory and demonstrate techniques that clinicians of any background can incorporate seamlessly into their present treatment modalities.

The leader will draw on her thirty years of experience practicing, teaching and writing about both psychoanalysis and body psychotherapy to present a somatic understanding of the functioning of the autonomic nervous system, and clarify many of the concepts familiar to all of us such as transference/countertransference, resistance, attachment, etc.

### **Freud**

“Freud began his investigations into the psyche stimulated by his interest in conversion hysteria. By seeing physical symptoms such as hysterical deafness and hysterical paralysis as signs of disturbances in the psyche, rather than malingering, Freud was in a way one of the first body psychotherapists. He understood that there was a connection between body and mind. It was Freud who stated in The Ego and the Id, “The ego is first and foremost a body-ego,” contending that our first sense of self is as an embodied self. However, this aspect of his work has been obscured because Freud chose to remain within the confines of the mind to affect the body, and not the reverse, by pursuing the “talking cure.” The talking cure occurred when the patient recalled past events, especially events that occurred when the symptom(s) first happened.

### **Reich**

“Wilhelm Reich encountered the work of Freud in 1919 through a seminar in medical school. Reich’s rise in the new psychoanalytic world was nothing less than meteoric. Within one year, “Freud permitted the young medical student to start seeing analytic patients and referred several cases to him (Sharaf, 1994, 58).”

It was through Reich’s work on character that he began to understand the importance of the body in psychoanalytic work. Initially, Reich was interested in resistance on the part of the patient as the reason psychoanalytic interpretation failed. His search for a way to systematically work with resistance led him to notice the importance of nonverbal,

as well as verbal, work. Reich was convinced that for analysis to be successful, memory had to be accompanied by an emotional release. The talking cure alone was not enough. Reich observed that his patients used manner, posture, even dress to block affect. Progressively, through his clinical work, Reich observed what he called "character armor -- the automaton quality of patients, their lack of spontaneous feeling."

"Involving the body specifically, Reich first noted in a 1932 case presentation not only a psychic rigidity, but a physical rigidity as well. The case was published in the International Journal of Psychoanalysis, but with a note from Freud warning readers that Reich was a Communist.

"This touch was different from massage, very pointed, affectively neutral and almost medical." The touch was directed toward emotional release and was deep and hard. Reich tended to stay away from softer touch, which he felt might be interpreted as seductive. He began to observe the role of respiration with regard to emotion, the observation of the patient's respiration becoming almost the "free association" of his therapy. Always looking for the underlying system, Reich began to formulate his theory of muscular segments, how chronic bands of tension in different segments with the body related to blocked affect and memory and how the muscular segments interrelated to each other and with behavior to form an exquisitely complex defense network

#### After Reich

"With the emergence of humanistic psychology, along with a push from the Human Potential Movement, the pendulum began to swing back to "tender-minded" psychology and away from the "tough-minded" side that had ascended in the mid-1800's. "The kernel idea of humanistic psychology is that humans are purposive organisms. Many body psychotherapists espouse values that stem from humanistic psychology. The goal of growth comes from the idea that each person possesses a growth potential that stimulates one to realize and to develop into whatever and whomever they are to become. Cultivating spontaneity and the use of imagination derives from the idea that people are basically spontaneous (DeCarvalho, 1991)."

"The early 1970's saw interesting developments concerning body psychotherapy in Europe. While there had been a small, but growing, Reichian tradition all along, Americans with new innovations and theories came to Europe to reseed and popularize body psychotherapy. The visits of Lowen, Pierrakos and their trainers spread Bioenergetics over most of Europe. Later, and separately, Pierrakos' Core Energetics would take a foothold. Al Pesso brought Psychomotor work to Europe, establishing a strong base in Holland. The Browns began trainings in Switzerland, Germany, Scandinavia, and Italy.

"Perhaps John Pierrakos had the most sweeping outlook on the role of body psychotherapy in the future. He believed it would accompany the inexorable evolution of consciousness. He said, "Life is now spinning at a tremendous rate. The elements that are not in truth are breaking down. This releases the dead energies of life. There is confrontation with these dead energies and a release. It is a great time of transformation. We are in a crucible. This time is bringing invisible and deep connections."

"The strong interest shown at USABP national conferences in the early child development research of Allan Schore, Catherine Weinberg, and Ed Tronic reflects an emerging compatibility between the ideas represented by these researchers and those central to body psychotherapy that may be one of the first girders in a bridge between body psychotherapy and the third core idea of psychology. Perhaps the story of the body psychotherapy of the twenty-first century will be the evolution of an integrative body psychotherapy that intertwines perception, motivation, and learning."

The body was at the center of psychotherapy when it first started, and then Freud and his followers left the body out of psychotherapy (possibly unconsciously, later deliberately). It has been subsequently ignored for a considerable period of time, but is recently coming into prominence again.

Damasio writes: "(1) The human brain and the rest of the body constitute an indissociable organism, integrated by means of mutually interactive biochemical and neural regulatory circuits (including endocrine, immune, and autonomic neural components); (2) The organism interacts with the environment as an ensemble: the interaction is neither of the body alone nor of the brain alone; (3) The physiological operations that we call mind are derived from the structural and functional ensemble rather than from the brain alone: mental phenomena can be fully understood airily in the context of an organism's interacting in an environment."<sup>1</sup>

Neuroscience is (just now) telling us that our emotions exist, not in the forefront of our mind where we might happen to register them, but in the more primitive mind that is intimately connected with all the other systems of our bodies, where we really feel these emotions; and also in the subconscious neural systems, in the neurotransmitters, and in the peptides (the molecules of emotion that circulate throughout our body).

Candace Pert's research on neuropeptides<sup>2</sup> indicates that there may just be a whole chemical basis for emotion, with perhaps even one peptide relating to each emotion. This would mean that emotions are literally flowing through the whole of our body, with chemical receptors for these scattered throughout all parts of the body. This would revolutionize thinking on emotions. Her research indicates that: the limbic system contains 40 x more receptors than other parts of brain and that receptors are found in blood, bones muscles, immune system and richly in the cells of the digestive tract. This could explain the common experience of touch eliciting an affective response. This also indicates emotional influences on the immune system.

If we wish to speculate a little, the receptors in the digestive tract could give us another form of physiological basis for Gerda Boyesen's theory of emotional digestion: "psycho-peristalsis". The 'belief systems' of spiritual healing, Christian Science, and New Age holistic health practices, might have a physiological basis that could be indicated by these receptors.

In Body-Psychotherapy, we have developed a number of techniques that can help in such situations. However these techniques can be very subtle, more like a craft or an art, than a science or a discipline. They have to be experienced and learnt; they cannot be just taught. These techniques include:

- ❖ Body awareness: As an access to emotional state: gestures, facial expressions, posture: attention to subtle changes in clients' respiration, eye contact, dampness, colouring, energy level, etc.
- ❖ Movement techniques: Micro-movements: Re-imagining movement for trauma: Developmental movement patterns: Authentic Movement
- ❖ Methods of touch: As boundary creation: As facilitating different energy flows: As remover of armouring: As facilitating relaxation: As facilitating awareness and sense of self: As balancer of ANS: As antidote to dissociation
- ❖ Mindfulness (all kinds) physical & dietary health; anti-stress techniques; body-mass ratios; relaxation techniques; environmental factors; etc.
- ❖ Body as metaphor - many emotional words relate to 'the body': heart-felt, belly laugh, handy, armful, stiff-necked, etc.
- ❖ Looking after our own bodies -> is very important and re-empowering as well.

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<sup>1</sup> Damasio, Antonio: "*Descartes'Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*" (1994) Avon, NY: p. xviii

<sup>2</sup> Pert, Candace: *The Molecules of Emotion*, (Pocket Books, Simon & Schuster) 1999

So we might ask, why have we even hesitated, as the profession of psychologists and psychotherapists, to include our bodies in the healing and curative processes that we describe as psychotherapy? Our bodies, in themselves, don't provide many of the answers. Neither do our minds. Separated, they are considerably less than one half of that which makes us human. Only when the circuit is fully complete, can we begin – just begin – to find some really significant answers. Only when we fully include the mind and the body as an inter-functioning whole, as a unity, do we begin to get a sense of something much larger than ourselves: we get a sense of the “field”, or the medium, in which we operate: the “circle in which we sit; the multi-dimensional hologram of our existence.

I think this is the change that is happening gradually in all of these professions mentioned: a greater awareness of our unities, and also a greater awareness of the “field” that surrounds us. The field that causes those ripples and resonances in our bodies that we can use as somatic counter-transference, and the “field” that affects our thoughts in a way that we can use as insights. Maybe even many of our illnesses and ailments are even manifestations of disturbances in the field and that we are all “field” therapists at heart.

So, if something of this perspective or awareness can be used, even in little ways, as a method of helping steer back, or to expand, psychology and psychotherapy towards a more meaningful and exciting profession, science, discipline or craft, then we may really be able to help people, where they are, with what concerns them, and in ways which really address their concerns: maybe we can also really help change the world a little bit as well.