

CONFER

The Practitioner's Body

A two day
conference
with workshops

Friday 2nd and
Saturday 3rd May 2008
London



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Holistic Medical Association

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Introduction

This conference will be of interest to therapists from all schools who wish to deepen their knowledge of the functioning of their own body in the therapist-patient/client interaction.

How are the practitioner's and patient's bodies relationally responsive to each other?

We will be examining mirror neurons, the empathic nervous system, right-brain-to-right-brain interaction, the impact of relationship on the respiratory, nervous, cardiovascular and digestive systems, and the concept of interactive physiology.

What is the role of the therapist's body as an instrument in the therapeutic process?

We will be considering the mechanisms of interactive somatic regulation in the context of transference and countertransference, the extent to which empathy involves bodily attunement, how the therapist's anchoring in his or her own body and health allows the client/patient freedom to somatically communicate affective states.

How can practitioners protect their own health?

Implicit in the therapist's somatic engagement with their patients, is the potential jeopardy to health. We will explore how this risk can be conceptualised and ameliorated, offer information on how the different systems of the body become engaged in therapeutic work and consider what practices can give therapists self-protection.

Friday 2nd May 2008

9.0 am Registration

9.45 am Dr Daniel Glaser

Mirror neurons and other findings. What can neurobiology tell us about how we relate to the movements of others?

Evidence from other primates demonstrates exquisite neural overlaps between seeing and doing simple movements. Imaging the human brain has revealed extensive networks that bring together the execution and perception of action. Our own studies with dancers have shown how your personal movement history and expertise influence the way you see others move. These findings have generated interesting hypotheses for the development of social cognition and even empathy, but does this growing field offer more than metaphorical insight into the therapeutic process?

10.30 am Kim Upton: the therapist's breathing

This presentation will explore how unconscious breathing behaviour can be triggered by internal and external factors and how our breathing patterns play a fundamental role in emotional shifts, either adaptively or mal-adaptively. The deregulatory effects of overbreathing on acid-base physiology explains a multitude of mental, emotional and physical dysfunctions. By quantitative measurement of breathing rhythm, pace and chemistry, dysfunctional patterns can be observed and corrected. Live demonstrations of the impact of external influences on our respiratory and cardiovascular systems will be included.

11.15 am Coffee

11.45 am Elizabeth Wilde McCormick

The Therapist's Heart

The heart is the most potent organ in the body for most people, and it is central in the intimate dance of psychotherapy. It serves two dimensions: it is inextricably bound up with the lungs for the transmission of oxygen and millions of blood cells; its connection with the nervous system means that the heart is implicated in all thoughts, feelings, emotions, and in stressful consequences of effort. This contribution will consider how therapists may learn to hear and use the feeling intelligence of their own hearts to remain courageous, compassionate, and well.

12.30 pm Lunch (vegetarian) and exhibits, yoga class or massage treatment

1.30 pm Workshop Options (1-6)

3.0 pm Tea

3.20 pm Babette Rothschild

The therapist's body as an instrument of empathic attunement

Empathy is the most tried and true therapeutic tool, regardless of the philosophy or model applied. Usually we think of empathy as emotional attunement - being able to feel our way into a client's experience. We will further explore how empathy involves body-attunement, the therapist's body playing a major role. As such, empathy appears to be the result of interplay between at least four phenomena that have been identified by neuroscience and social psychology: somatic markers, facial feedback, postural feedback, and mirror neurons. This keynote will focus on how these four dimensions of empathy interact between client and therapist in both helpful and unhelpful ways.

4.10 pm Roz Carroll

The role of the therapist's body in working with borderline clients; self-regulation and interactive regulation

Borderline clients are known to have a particularly strong impact on the therapist's body, communicating intense states either graphically or via projective identification and dissociation. The sharing of affective states is mediated by rapid, non-conscious, implicit and co-ordinated exchanges between client and therapist, involving split-second responsiveness of face, gaze, head orientation and micro-movement. The task for the therapist is both to *self-regulate* and *interactively* regulate the client. This ability depends upon the therapist being anchored within their own body, able to bear and attend to sensation, and allow spontaneous - rather than defensive - nervous system shifts to occur.

4.45 pm Discussion

5.00 pm End of day

Saturday 3rd May

8.30 am Social Dreaming Matrix led by Laurie Slade

Social dreaming is a way of working with dreams. In social dreaming we meet to share and associate to dreams, make connections were possible.

9.30 am Registration

10.0 am Susie Orbach

The relational, intersubjective body

I will focus on the ways in which we could reflect on the therapist's body to enhance our understanding of the individual or couple in therapy. The therapist brings her body, as much as her heart and mind into the room, and her body has an impact on the therapeutic situation. Similarly the bodies of her clients impact on her. We usually exempt the body from such discussions unless the therapist has an extreme reaction such as falling asleep. This presentation will focus on the importance of the relational inter-subjective body.

11.0 am Coffee

11.30 am Howard Evans

Locating a place of wellness in the midst of trauma

Many health professionals spend much of their working lives as direct or vicarious witness to human suffering. A slow process of traumatisation may occur, often referred to as burnout. In craniosacral work our first aim is to re-establish the patient's connection with their inherent health. This is not an idea but a perceptual state modelled by the therapist. It offers both patient and therapist a place of wellness around which to organise the chaos of trauma. This presentation will illustrate this process and how a sense of inherent health is available to us all.

12.15 am Margaret Landale

Re-sourcing the therapist's body: a mindful approach to self-regulation

The inevitable high exposure to negative emotion and deeply held distress affects the therapist's physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. Mindfulness-based approaches have been found to be highly effective in managing stress and facilitating emotional self-regulation. This presentation will explore the application of mindfulness in psychotherapy.

1.00 pm Lunch (vegetarian) and exhibits, yoga class or massage treatment

2.00 pm Workshop Options (6-11)

3.30 pm Tea

4.00 pm Mike Ash:

Collateral Damage: How psychological stress can cause immune based illness in therapists

If the immune system can induce depression, does working with challenging patients increase the risk of immune disturbance in the therapist? Certainly stress impacts on the immune system by activating endocrine pathways and the sympathetic nervous system, which in turn alters immune function making people vulnerable to illness including psychological and psychiatric problems. As practitioners engaged in information exchanges with distressed patients the impact of ongoing psychological unloading can have a distinctly unpleasant effect on your immune system. This presentation will explain the events underlying the concepts of injury, repair and protection of therapist's immune function, and teach you how to optimise your immune function in the face of third party stressors.

4.45 am Discussion

5.00 pm End of day

Workshops

1. Gillie Gilbert

The nature and effects of energetic transactions between client and therapist.

Leaders in the field of Body Psychotherapy have used phenomenological and evidence-based research on the nature of human beings as energy-based systems. I shall be illustrating the effects of different energy systems on the therapist and client using the concepts of transference-countertransference and resonance.

2. Kim Upton

Deepening your awareness and management of your breathing

This workshop is an opportunity to deepen your understanding of your breathing patterns and how these are influenced by the external pressures placed on you by the client's presence or material. You will be introduced to techniques for managing your breathing.

3. Babette Rothschild

Empathy as a tool; empathy as a risk

This workshop will give therapists the chance to increase awareness of their individual talent for and vulnerability to empathy. Through exercises and demonstration, tools for using the therapist's body to increase empathy with clients will be offered and also those needed for the therapist's self-care.

4. Margaret Landale

Re-sourcing the therapist's body: a mindful approach

This practical workshop will explore how mindfulness can be a vital resource for the psychotherapist. We will look at key mindfulness based techniques and concepts which support self-regulation, influence emotional arousal and contribute to relational attunement.

5. Liz McCormick

The therapist's heart and health

This workshop will experientially explore our relationship with our hearts; how we can learn to listen from this complex organ, to regulate and take care of ourselves and thus better manage the demands of clinical practice on our mind-body self.

6. Sue Staziker

Yoga Group

This yoga session is an opportunity to explore your bodily self in the context of the pressurised environment of a conference. We will focus on ways of understanding how you may be individually experiencing those pressures in your body, and how yoga can provide techniques for self-regulation and grounding.

7. Hartmut Wuebbler

Interactions, energetic self-care and subtle body connections in the therapy room

Therapists of all modalities use intuition to inform their therapeutic work - in the process opening them to subtle energies. In doing so they can become drained or manifest their clients' physical and emotional symptoms. This workshop's emphasis is on understanding the energetic interactions between client and therapist and practical tools for self-care.

8. Howard Evans

The other's attention on our own inner state

In this practical exercise we will, working in pairs, explore the effects of another's attention on our own inner state. This will be a 'hands-off' exercise suited to therapists working with or without touching.

9. Mike Ash

Practical strategies for optimising immune and mental health.

Immune disruption is a silent process that denies us optimal mental and physical health. By choosing nutrients, planning physical strategies and using microbial agents it is possible to repair and reverse the process, recover optimal function and vitality. The key components of immunonutrition will be explored.

10. Roz Carroll

Containment through self-regulation and interactive regulation

In this experiential workshop we will explore the interlinked skills of self-regulation and interactive regulation. The therapist's self-regulatory capacity is critical to her ability to consciously and non-defensively calibrate interventions. At the same time as attending inwardly to her own body, the therapist learns to actively perceive the facial and bodily communication of the client. This deep attunement is the basis of interactive regulation.

11. Dr Elya Steinberg

When your body whispers the truth of others ...

Deep inside our bodies we know the truth. This inner implicit core within us, that uses information from mirror neurons, the autonomic nerve system and other mechanisms, knows how to read the implicit cores of others and enables us to gently communicate what is hidden beneath our clients' words or silence. We will explore the unique contributions of touch and inner voice with in the context of biodynamic approach.

Speakers and workshop leaders

For full biographies please go to www.confer.uk.com

Michael Ash is an osteopath, naturopath and clinical nutritionist. He has developed health strategies for patients with metabolic problems, immune disturbances, gastro intestinal health problems, and psychological issues and has a particular interest in nutrition based immunotherapeutics. He researches, lectures and publishes on the mucosal immune system within the gastro intestinal tract and its effect on the health of the body.

Roz Carroll is a body psychotherapist, trainer and writer. She teaches at the Minster Centre, The Chiron Centre, the Centre for Attachment-based Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy and Terapia. She wrote and delivered the course Embodiment and Emotion for Confer. Her recent publications chapters include *New Dimensions in Body Psychotherapy* (Ed. Totton), and *About a Body: Working with the Embodied Mind in Psychotherapy* (Ed. Corrigan).

Howard Evans' originally studied Chinese Acupuncture. In 1992, he trained in integrative and core process psychotherapy. He worked as a masseur and discovered his metier was bodywork rather than psychotherapy. In 1996 he completed his trainings in craniosacral therapy and then in therapeutic bodywork at the University of Westminster. He teaches massage and cranial sacral therapy in England and Spain.

Dr Daniel Glaser is Head of Special Projects in public engagement at the Wellcome Trust. He comes from a neuroscience background, was the first 'Scientist in Residence' at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), has presented a television series for the BBC and co-chairs Café Scientifique at the Photographers' Gallery. He is a founder member of International Neuro-Psychoanalysis Society.

Gillie Gilbert comes from a scientific background in Ethology. She is a biodynamic psychotherapist and craniosacral therapist and has spent over 18 years teaching bio-physics, biodynamic massage and body psychotherapy in France, Eire and London. She is currently a Trainer and Supervisor for The London School of Biodynamic Psychotherapy.

Margaret Landale is an integrative psychotherapist, experienced workshop facilitator and trainer. She was former Training Director at the Chiron Centre for Body Psychotherapy. She has a longstanding meditation and yoga practice and interest in body's role in psychotherapy.

Elizabeth Wilde McCormick has been practising as a psychotherapist for over twenty years. Her background is in social psychiatry, humanistic, transpersonal psychology, mindfulness based psychotherapy and cognitive analytic therapy. She was, with Nigel Wellings, Director of Training at the Centre for Transpersonal Psychology in London and is author of several books including *Your Heart and You: a holistic guide to a healthier heart*.

Dr Susie Orbach brings a psychoanalytic lens to a series of social, policy, interpersonal and individual concerns. She has written much about women's psychology and the construction of femininity, gender, the making of the body, psychoanalysis and social policy, eating difficulties, obesity to anorexia, women and brands, globalism and body image, emotional literacy in business, education and government.

Babette Rothschild has been a practitioner since 1976 and a teacher and trainer since 1992. She is the author of three books, *The Body Remembers: The Psychophysiology of Trauma and Trauma Treatment*; *The Body Remembers CASEBOOK: Unifying Methods and Models in the Treatment of Trauma and PTSD*, and *Help for the Helper: The Psychophysiology of Compassion Fatigue and Vicarious Trauma*. She maintains a private practice in Los Angeles and trains psychotherapists globally. (www.trauma.cc).

Sue Staziker has been teaching yoga for 25 years. Her training has involved working with Iyengar teachers and she is registered with the British Wheel of Yoga. She is involved with the therapeutic aspects of yoga and its healing potential. She values an approach which equally values physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual processes in the individual's practice.

Laurie Slade is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist in private practice. He is a member of the Guild of Psychotherapists, The Confederation of Analytical Psychologists and the International Neuro-Psychoanalysis Society. He has been exploring social dreaming for the past 8 years. His paper *Social Dreaming for a Queer Culture* was published in *Self and Society* (Nov 2005).

Dr Elya Steinberg, MD, is Director of the London School of Biodynamic Psychotherapy (www.lsbp.org.uk). She is a biodynamic psychotherapist, integrating body-psychotherapy, Gerda Boyesen methods and bioenergy with conventional allopathic medicine. She interweaves alternative and conventional approaches to allow a person to grow as a holistic complex.

Kim Upton originally trained as a Buteyko breathing specialist and specialises in using a natural, holistic treatment for asthma. He combines the latest biofeedback techniques with breathing practitioner skills. He specialises in areas where 'stressed' breathing can play a significant role and has been shown to be directly related to a host of medically unexplained symptoms.

Hartmut Wuebbeler is a Biodynamic Body Psychotherapist with a background as a biologist and research scientist. He has trained in a range of energy work disciplines, and teaches a weekly class and workshops. He is a member of staff at The London School of Biodynamic Psychotherapy and also works in private practice. He runs Triple Helix Practices, a network of consulting rooms.

