

WAFCA SUMMARY OF:

The Body: A Wellspring of Healing

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FOR WAFCA-CE WITH FUNDING SUPPORT FROM THE GREAT LAKES MHTTC



ISSUE IMPORTANCE

Science has revealed that unprocessed emotions can become trapped in the body. While many therapeutic interventions prioritize cognitive processing and re-framing, **somatic interventions equally emphasize and treat the body and mind**. The use of somatic therapy modalities helps release stored tension that can negatively affect an individual's physical and emotional wellbeing.

“We recognize that all knowledge is mediated through the body and that feeling is a profound source of information about our lives.” - Audre Lourde



KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Trauma can cause mental, emotional, behavioral, relational, and physiological symptoms.

Talk therapy is a “top-down” process. Somatic therapy adds a “bottom-up” process, engaging the body for healing.

Regulation of the nervous system (through co- and self-regulation) is a foundation of somatic healing.



EXAMPLES & GOALS SOMATIC, BOTTOM-UP, NEURO-BIOLOGICAL, REGULATION-FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS

Somatic Therapy Modalities

- Mindfulness
- MBSR: Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction
- Yoga
- Pilates
- SE: Somatic Experiencing
- SP: Sensorimotor Psychotherapy
- Reiki
- TIPP (a DBT skill): Temperature, Intense exercise, Paced breathing, Progressive muscle relaxation
- Tapping
- TRE: Trauma/Tension Release Exercises
- Transforming Touch

Objectives

Decrease

- experience of overwhelm
- global high-intensity activation
- rigidity & chaos

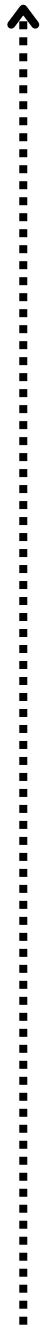
Expand

- tolerance
- resiliency
- capacity
- possibility of fluidity, flexibility



PLATFORMS OF SOMATIC HEALING

[Click here for a graphic resource on the states of the nervous system.](#)



Consolidation

- Punctuating, affirming, and validating changes
- Developing rituals & planning for the future

Coherence

- Emergence of fluidity and flexibility in responses
- Self-stability, balance, and emotion/reaction matching

Transformation

- Giving time and space for developing clarity and agency
- Practicing “even though” talk
“Even though I have experienced X, I can experience a full, joyful life.”

Reorganization & Integration

- Moving from incoherence to coherence through connecting to past experiences
- Decreasing confusion

Survival Strategies

- Awareness of patterns leads to change and new experiences
- Finding new options/tools for regulation

Increasing Tolerance

- Identifying activation patterns (“triggers”)
- Practicing cycles of activating (dysregulation) & regulating
Helping someone access dysregulation in safety, with space to re-regulate.

Social Engagement

- Increasing capacity to discern threat and safety
- Establishing boundaries; accessing “yes” and “no”
- Developing interpersonal skills; co-regulation

Building Resilience

- Slowing down
- Growing connection and safety
- Moving from auto-regulation to self-regulation

Epigenetics

- Observing sensitivity to social & environmental stimuli
- Identifying and managing physiological vulnerabilities
- Developing new neuro-pathways

This guide was created with funding from the Great Lakes Mental Health Technology Transfer Center.

The guide is based on material presented by Anita Mandley on August 10, 2023 for WAFCA-CE, with funding support from MHTTC.

WAFCA serves as the Wisconsin partner for the Great Lakes Mental Health Technology Transfer Center.

