

Training in Psicoterapia Sensomotoria (Sensorimotor Psychotherapy)

Level 1. Training for the Treatment of Trauma

Traditional psychotherapy addresses the cognitive and emotional elements of trauma, but lacks techniques that work directly with the physiological elements, despite research findings that trauma profoundly affects the body and that many symptoms of traumatized individuals are somatically driven.

Level I of the Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Training presents simple body-oriented interventions for tracking, naming and safely exploring trauma-related somatic activation, creating new competencies and restoring a somatic sense of self. Students will learn effective, accessible interventions for identifying and working with disruptive somatic patterns, disturbed cognitive and emotional processing, and the fragmented sense of self experienced by so many traumatized individuals. Techniques are taught within a phase-oriented treatment approach, focusing first on stabilization and symptom reduction.

Curriculum (Level I)

- Including the Body in Psychotherapy Practice How to track and name somatic experience and work with physical action.
- Trauma and the Body The role of the body in perpetuating PTSD symptoms.
- Developmental and Attachment Issues The effects of trauma, attachment failure, and developmental arrests on mind and body.
- Hierarchical Information Processing Somatic interventions that expand the capacity to integrate traumatic experience.
- The Use of Mindfulness The role of mindfulness in the treatment of trauma and how to teach mindfulness to clients.
- Self-Regulation How to stabilize traumatic activation and restore autonomic equilibrium.
- Somatic Resources Identification of missing somatic resources and interventions to help clients develop new resources.
- Boundaries How trauma affects boundary styles and techniques to restore healthy somatic and psychological boundaries.
- Orienting and Defensive Responses Interventions to reinstate effective orienting and defensive responses truncated in the wake of trauma.

- Treatment of Traumatic Memory Somatic approaches to overcoming the fear of traumatic memory and interventions to process and integrate memories.
- Dissociation Interventions to work with alterations of consciousness and structural dissociation of the personality.

Level II. Attachment, Development and Trauma

Sensorimotor Psychotherapy identifies two general kinds of interrelated psychological issues: developmental and traumatic. Developmental issues result from disturbed early attachment relationships that lead to limiting beliefs about oneself and the world, while post-traumatic stress disorder results from overwhelming experience that remains unintegrated. When combined with unresolved trauma, early attachment disturbances can lead to a wide variety of adult relational problems. Level II of the SPI training program builds on the curriculum of Level I, emphasizing how traumatic, attachment, and developmental issues influence one another, and how to provide effective treatment given their inevitable intertwining.

Curriculum (Level II)

- Translating the Language of the Body
- Working with the Organization of Experience
- Working with State-Specific Memory
- Attachment Issues: Dependency and Differentiation
- Therapeutic Use of States of Consciousness
- Body Reading
- Characterological Barriers to Adaptive Action
- Somatic Transference and Countertransference
- Working with Physical and Mental Action Tendencies
- Psychobiological Action Systems
- Character Strategies and their Interactions with Trauma
- Modulation Patterns and Correlation with Trauma
- Somatic Resources for Character and Attachment Issues
- Character and Structural Dissociation
- Working with Regressed Ego States
- The Therapeutic Relationship, Attunement, and the Body

- Systems Theory: Developmental and Traumatic
- Restoring a Somatic Sense of Self

Level III. Certification Skills Training

(a graduate of this course is called a Certified Advanced Practitioner)
This program is designed as an advanced training towards certification in Sensorimotor Psychotherapy. The focus of the training is the refinement of Sensorimotor Psychotherapy skills at each stage of the therapy process. Each weekend includes exercises, practice, video assessment, review of homework assignments, demonstrations and individual feedback to each student. The length of this training is approximately 140 hours. Certification is an individualized process for each trainee, and attainment of all the necessary skills for certification status may require work beyond this training.

Curriculum (Level III)

- Practice techniques through exercises and role-play with classmates.
- Consultation and feedback from instructors regarding practicum with clients and skills necessary for certification.
- Individual troubleshooting, consultation and assessment to assist each student in refinement of skills.
- Analysis of audio and videotapes, and individual assignments to help each student refine their skills.
- Homework and study group assignments that include tape analysis and other assignments.
- Attention to each student's character strategies, countertransference tendencies, and traumatic patterns as they interfere with certification skills.
- Experiential exercises, individual processing as well as relevant didactic material and discussion are included.
- Review and analysis of videotaped student sessions.

Teaching Methods at SP Institute Trainings

Lectures

Didactic material is taught through lectures accompanied by slides.

Exercises

Role play and practice vignette exercises are designed to give students the opportunity to practice techniques.

Demonstration

Faculty demonstrates techniques through role-play, vignettes with students, and review of video sessions with patients.

Discussion

Both large and small group discussion offer opportunities to explore topics in depth and ask questions.

Consultation

Case consultation is provided by instructors to facilitate integrating Sensorimotor Psychotherapy interventions into clinical practice. Faculty provide consultation regarding Sensorimotor Psychotherapy interventions only, and not comprehensive client or case consultation or supervision.

Feedback

Faculty observe and critique students' skills during class exercises.

Video Library

Videos of Sensorimotor Psychotherapy therapy sessions as well as lecture videos on various topics by faculty are available for students to review online.

Reading Assignments

Each training has its own online training manual containing articles to accompany course material.

Writing Assignments

Online workbooks are provided that contain study exercises and written homework designed to facilitate application of course content.

Peer Partner Assignments

Students team up with one other student in the training for educational purposes to practice elements of the method.