

**Body-Psychotherapy:
Integration of body and mind into psychotherapy and mental
health**

**Curriculum Body-Work in the Field of Mental Health
(2015-2016)**

**A joint venture of the
German-Chinese Academy of Psychotherapy and
Shanghai Mental Health Centre**

proposal by Ulrich Sollmann Dipl.rer.soc.

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**Body-Psychotherapy:
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Body-Psychotherapy

Body-Psychotherapy is a distinct branch of psychotherapy and has a long history and a theoretical position which is proofed by scientific research. It is theoretically and practically based among others on psychoanalysis, attachment and movement theory, infant research and neuro-psychology.

Body-Psychotherapy involves an explicit theory of mind-body functioning. The common underline assumption is that the body reflects the whole person and there's a functional unity between mind, body, feeling and behaviour. The body does not merely mean the "soma" and that this is separated from the mind, the "psyche". Both are functioning and interactive aspects of a whole human being.

Body-Psychotherapy involves a developed mental-model, a theory of personality, and its development, hypothesis as to the origins of disturbances as well as a rich variety of diagnostic and therapeutic techniques. Used within the frame-work of the therapeutic relationship.

Body-Psychotherapy has a wide variety of body-techniques, some of which are used on or with the body involving touch, movement and breathing.

Body-Work: energy and personality

Body-Psychotherapy is a depth psychologically-based method which works with deep psycho-layers by using direct body-contact especially with early traumas, manifested at the time of nonverbal child-development. This also includes working with psychological and bodily resistance as protection as well as way of emotional and psychic survival. Both is expression of the personality as a unit. In addition to the direct work with the body in the form of a variety of breath-work, body-exercises, actual conflict, dreams, free association and work with the emotions are integrated into the process.

In Body-Psychotherapy personality function and therapeutic process are understood in terms of the energetic processes of the body. This means gesture,

movement, breathing pattern, facial expression, emotional expression, relating and grounding.

Mobilization of the energetic processes of the body is the access around which other dimensions of therapy articulate. Bring it to the point, this means:

Breathing is feeling, feeling is movement, movement is personal expression and personal expression is relating to the other. And vice versa.

Body-language

The way how I move and communicate also nonverbally and by body-language mirrors the present situation of feelings and well-being as well as the personal patterns of behaviour. These patterns of behaviour can be clearly observed and analysed under stress. They were developed in the early childhood and mirror the way how the person has experienced the early childhood and has reacted to specific relational conflicts.

Insofar the body-language shows how the person is grounded in his current life. It gives an insight into unconscious feelings, wishes, needs and forms of resistance. It also shows how the person relates to the world, to the other.

Indication

Insofar the body tells the story of the person's childhood, his life and the development of his specific psychodynamics.

Insofar body-psychotherapy focuses on both: the connection and interaction between the energetic process of the body, the analytical and relational process of the therapeutic procedure. The key to understanding personality, behaviour and relationship always is bodily expression.

Change in personality, change in psychotherapy or mental health is based on an energetic change in form and motility of the body along with changes in relational patterns and personal expressivity.

Attachment, emotional self-expression, grounding and sexuality are cornerstones of the personality. Whereas relationality is a fundamental component of life in general and of the therapeutic process.

Body approach in the 2-years-training

To the core of ones own experience there are two basic teaching tracks in the training:

- *The self-development of the therapist:* the personal evolution and essence of the practitioner and the cultivation of the attitude of trustful, sensing and loving presence.
- *The specific methodology and techniques:* The self-development of the therapist proceeds by going deeply into the basic psychological and emotional makeup of the student in an attitude of gentleness and safety. Although the focus of the training is on learning the body-approach as a method of therapy, personal development becomes an important aspect of the curriculum. To understand the rationale behind learning through personal evolution is to experience the essence of the body approach, for the fundamental ways in which a student relates to self, other, and environment are shaped by core issues, the same core issues which shape that student's (therapist's) interaction with clients. The more awareness and acceptance the therapist has of his or her own process, the more consciously and creatively the work will unfold. Special attention is paid in the later stages of the training to personal character and style to help fine-tune the creative, individual approach of each therapist. Emphasis here is placed on increasing fluency, refining skills, developing artistry, and studying advanced character strategy. By developing self-acceptance and compassion towards oneself the therapist is able to increasingly cultivate an attitude of loving presence towards the client.

Curriculum Body-Work in the Field of Mental Health (2015-2016)

Ulrich Sollmann (Bochum, Germany), Qui Jianyin (Shanghai, China)

An **academic cooperation** with:

- German-Chinese Academy for Psychotherapy (DCAP) (Shanghai/Heidelberg)
 - Shanghai Mental Health Center (SMHC) (Shanghai)
 - German Association of Body-Psychotherapy (DGK) (Germany)
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1. Target of the training program

The program is designed for Chinese physicians, psychologists, social-workers and mental health workers, practising in a clinical field who wish to obtain theoretical and practical competence in a psychodynamic orientated body-psychotherapy in the German-Chinese training program.

2. Preconditions for participation

- 2.1.** Participants with continuous clinical practice will be admitted to the program.
- 2.2.** The training program will be held in English with translation into Chinese. Good knowledge of English is necessary. The candidate has to read scientific literature in English and should be able to understand and to speak English.

3. Conditions for successful participation

- 3.1.** A continuous participation in the training is obligatory. The participant has to take part in the total program comprising of
 - 3.1.1 Theoretical parts

3.1.2 Body-self-experience in the group.

3.1.3 a final case-report in Chinese and English could be appropriate.

3.2. The participant will be awarded a certificate about the successful participation in the German-Chinese training program for psychodynamic based body-psychotherapy

4. The general content of the program

The program is based on the core-curricula in body-psychotherapy which is held in Germany, Europe and North-America, without claiming to realize these standards fully.

4.1. Bodily-self-experience in the group

An important step in body-self-experience. The opportunity offers intense self-experience. If possible it could be convenient and indicated to have at least three sessions in single therapy/single-self-experience

4.2 Group work

The training program is based on an intense group-work, work in diades and triades. There will also be a single-work in front of the group in the group. Insofar the ground on which the body-self-experience is possible, it offers the possibility of learning by experiencing. It's structured as a space where the dynamics, the process in the group can be analysed and used as a supportive space which guarantees trust, attachment, mindfulness, openness, emotional and relational balance.

4.3 Lectures

Special theoretical, clinical, conceptual and culture topics of current interest related to psychodynamic based body-psychotherapy will be presented during the workshop

4.4. During the two-years-program the participants should treat patients continuously.

4.5 Theoretical parts

The curriculum consists of the basic issues in body-psychotherapy and will be developed later.

5. Realization of the program

5.1 Teaching staff

The first training program is designed, structured and were lead by Ulrich Sollmann from Germany together with Qiu Jianyin from Shanghai. If needed and if possible specific competent colleagues are integrated into the program. The peer-groups are supported by Qiu Jianyin.

5.2 Duration, extent and workload of the training program

5.2.1 Duration

The German-Chinese training program includes 24 days over four parts of six days extending from ... 2015 until 2016.

5.2.2 Extent and workload

The extent of the training program and the workload of the participants consist of three parts:

1: The "*on-campus-program*": The lecturer contact, the participation during the training at the "Shanghai Mental Health Centre"

2: The "*self-study*": The homework for studies, reading articles, preparing theory, doing clinical work and presenting a case report.

The training program is experiential. Insofar working with the body, working with the self and working with the group is the main focus. About 90% of the workload is covered by the "one-campus-program", 5-10% by "self-study".

5.2.3 Evaluation

The success and out-come of the participants will be evaluated by the active participation and the final case report

After every part of the program/workshop the participants should evaluate the contents and the teaching by a questionnaire.

The training-program by itself is evaluated at the end of the program by Ulrich Sollmann, Qiu Jianyin and some representatives of the training group.

5.2.4 Scientific research and integration

This is necessary but will be developed and discussed during the first program. This also includes the evaluation of this training program which functions as a pilot project, as a field of professional learning. Insofar this curriculum also is characterized as action research learning, which includes the necessity of intercultural and trans-cultural integration.

5.2.5 More details about the curriculum

As this program is a pilot training program it is also an action research project. This means we all learn from one step to the next step. Therefore it is necessary that we stay in close contact in order to evaluate each step and to learn out of this for the next step to be done. The group of participants also will be involved into this process.

The end of this pilot project and action research project will be a publication in a scientific journal.

Member of the program committee

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Body approach and process of body-psychotherapy is often compared to a birth in which the practitioner acts as a midwife, assisting a spontaneous, self-generating process to unfold. With this attitude, the practitioner models a cooperative form of self-experience, interaction / relationship and power in his daily life.

Seminar 1

Introduction into body-self-experience and sensory awareness of emotional expression and personality

Target

- Improvement of the awareness and experience of the body and the emotional expression as part of personality
- Opening the senses for the energy in the body (charge and discharge, flow and structuring, containment)
- Exploration and understanding of self- experience / self-image of the body and the image of the others / public image

Content

Body-centered, somatic psychotherapy means: the body serves as a resource that reflects and stores formative memories and the core beliefs they have generated, and also provides significant access routes to core material of the person. The workshop follows a general outline: First, we establish an ever-present, attitude of gentle acceptance and care known as trusting presence. This maximizes safety, respect and the cooperation of the unconscious. With a good working relationship established, we then help the client to focus on and learn how core material shapes his or her experience. To permit this study, we establish and use a distinct state of consciousness of mindfulness. Mindfulness is characterized by relaxed volition, a gentle and sustained inward focus of attention, heightened sensitivity, and the ability to notice and name the contents of awareness, experience and consciousness.

Therefore we work with the following issues: (with yourself and the other)

- Introduction into the interplay of sensory awareness, breathing, voice, movement and feeling
- Multi-modal experience of one`s own body and the body of the other
- Sensing and getting familiar with self-regulation in the body and relevant personal expression
- General introduction into specific theoretical concepts
- Indication of body-self-experience and specific exercises
- Input of English literature

At the end of the workshop you will be able to:

- Be aware of impulses as they arise, develop and become emotionally and bodily meaningful
- Be aware of when you are in the grip of an emotion and experiencing the impact on yourself
- Develop self-monitoring capabilities and competence
- Subdivide different ways of sensory and emotional awareness

Homework

- Specific body exercises and documentation in the personal log-book
- doing exercises with clients and / or friends and documentation in the log-book

Seminar 2

Body-language, (non-) verbal communication and body diagnosis

Target

Diagnostics and understanding of body language:

- as meaningful expression of the person
- as a result of childhood development
- as part of communication and relationship in the here and now
- and connected to different levels of personality like: body, reaction under stress, patterns of behavior, core values, typical life-conflicts, contact to reality

Content

Core material is composed of memories, images, beliefs, neural patterns and deeply held emotional dispositions. It shapes the styles, habits, behavior patterns, perceptions and attitudes that define us as individuals. Typically, it exerts its influence unconsciously, by organizing our responses to the major themes of life: safety, belonging, support, power, freedom, control, responsibility, love, appreciation, sexuality, spirituality, etc. Some of this material supports our being who we wish to be, while some of it, learned in response to acute and chronic stress, continues to limit us.

Body-psychotherapy allows the client to distinguish between the two, and to willingly change material that restricts his or her wholeness. To distinguish and live with it on all levels of the personality: body, feeling, thinking, moving and behavior. This supports a structured approach to the detection of patterns of posture, movement and facial expression

Body-psychotherapy is experiential: present, felt experience is used as an access route to core material; this unconscious material is elicited and surfaces experientially; and changes are integrated into the client's immediate experience.

Therefore we work with the following issues: (with yourself and the other)

- basic interaction (early childhood): infant and care-giver
- patterns of attachment
- criteria / model of body language and nonverbal expression
- character structure as functional identity / unity
- examples of disordered development
- specific tools / techniques of body reading (verbally and nonverbally)
- reference to one`s own working situation

At the end of the workshop you will be able to:

- Understand how emotions function as patterns of the personality
- Recognise your personal triggers
- Adopt active listening and observation skills
- Recognise bodily expression and emotions in others to aid deeper understanding
- Understand the signals you're sending to others

- Be alert for signs of contradiction
- Practice useful mirroring techniques
- Evaluate behaviour to determine contact, relationship and grounding

Homework

- body orientated diagnostics of three clients (using specific basic bioenergetic exercises)

- experiencing oneself and / or clients while doing specific body exercises related to the character structure (case study).

Seminar 3

Emotional expression of the body and integration into personality, relationship and personal life

Target

- Experience, expression, understanding and containing of strong feelings / emotions in yourself and / or under stress as well as in others
- experience of and working with the new concept of stress-profile which means: structure of typical experience and behavior under stress, which is based on childhood-experience
- becoming familiar with self-produced stress
- exploring deep feelings as a very personal resource and reservoir of energy
- grounding, containing and relating of strong feelings to the daily life situation

Content

The heart of body-psychotherapy works with the client's present, felt experience, as it is presented spontaneously, or deliberately and gently evoked by having them experiment with habitual tension or movement patterns known as "indicators." These emotional/cognitive patterns automatically keep deeper experience out of present awareness.

We establish in the seminar a relationship in which it is safe for the client to become self-aware. And we use the methodology of body-psychotherapy to evoke experiences that lead to the discovery of organizing this as core material. And seek healing changes in the core material. We therefore become familiar with and feel safe in the interplay of excitation and personal identity.

Therefore we work with the following issues: (with yourself and the other)

- experience, expression and understanding of deep emotions and excitation
- development of energetic and bodily resources
- grounding, containing and relating of deep emotions
- We define the personal stress-profile
- To work with strong emotions and bound energy, safely releasing them, and finding nourishment in that release
- To work with the inner child and other specific self-states, often in the context of vividly re-experienced memories, frequently providing the "missing experience" for the child
- We explore emotional and bodily expressed life as an unknown reservoir of energy and competence

- Experiencing the charge and discharge of energy in the body as well as being contained and grounded in reality

At the end of the workshop you will be able:

- to understand how deep and intense emotions function and how they are related to the person and influence relationships
- to experience how this is related to one`s own personality (structure)
- to experience oneself under stress and to develop a thus related competence
- to explore and develop one`s own energetic and bodily resources

Homework

- Exploration of the different states of touching and attachment with clients
- observation and documentation of touching in relationship and society
- take photos / videos or search for these which show emotional (different and strong) expressions

Seminar 4

Working with specific body segments, specific body techniques and interventions, conceptualisation and integration into ones own work

Target

- Experience and identification of the relationship between body-segments, feelings, meaning and behavior
- The unity of diagnostics and indication as "theragnosis" (diagnostics and indication are *always one process*)
- Specification of bodily techniques and interventions as well as transfer to one`s own job situation
- Embodied relationship (everyday life, therapy / counselling and transference)

Content

All is in support of this primary process. Once discovered in this experiential manner, core material can be examined, processed, and transformed. Transformation begins when awareness is turned mindfully toward felt, present experience; unconscious material unfolds into consciousness; barriers are attended to; and new experiences are integrated that allow for the reorganization of core beliefs. These, in turn, allow for a greater range of mental, physical, and emotional coherence and behavior.

This coherence mirrors the personal experience to others. It characterises the correspondence to all levels of the personality. The coherence is convincing and powerful expression of the person and his identity.

Body-segments are: head, arms / shoulders, chest, abdominal / pelvis, legs / feet. The body-segments thus function as part of the person to relate to reality and other people. They stand for the basic dimensions of reality: sensing the world around, grounding in reality, relating to the other, enjoying sexuality and bringing oneself to perfection by generating.

Finally, we help the client to integrate these new beliefs, modes and choices into everyday life. It is here – in the ability to transform new possibilities discovered in the office into on-going actualities of daily living – that real change happens.

Therefore we work with the following issues: (with yourself and the other)

- modes of emotional expression, behavior and relationship in terms of body-segments
- specific indication of techniques
- role of therapist / counsellor and transference
- closing up a session (therapy and / or educational, counselling)
- transference to the job in daily life

At the end of the workshop you will be able to:

- You are familiar with the functioning of the body-segments
- Use this information to work with others constructively
- Identify the importance of baselines and the relevance of when they occur
- Identify and evaluate character structure in relationship to the body-segments
- You feel bodily more safe in the therapist / counsellor-client-relationship
- Carry out hypothesis testing and development of specific and concrete doing
- Utilise these skills to evaluate working hypothesis and needs in your working context in your everyday life

Homework

- Design case studies and discuss them together with peers
- Structure your everyday work related to a body approach

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