



## Newsletter January and February 2011



### Greetings NCAMHP,

I first wish to thank the membership community for electing me into NCAMHP Presidency. I hope to continue NCAMHP's efforts in strengthening and empowering the membership to confront the challenges facing the profession in today's uncertain world, advocate for the preparation for future concerns, and assist with advances within our practices. I am proud to be an NCAMHP member and continue contributing to our professional community.

As an association we are defined as an organized body of people who have an interest, activity, or purpose in common. I believe NCAMHP is not only an organization, but also a community. We seek to advocate for our membership's professional organization needs, private practice and organizational concerns, strive to bring multiple psychological professions together, provide continuing education events, and build access to employment opportunities, community, and professional resources. Through our website you can post and receive up-to-date information on legislation concerns, practice needs, ethical concerns, and, of course, make and gain appropriate client referrals based on your expertise, interests, insurance, and geographic location.

I am proud to be a part of a community with an influential and collective voice. Please take the next moments in your day and consider reaching out to your NCAMHP community. Consider what needs you may have, future concerns, areas of educational or training interests, and/or how you may wish to contribute to this voice. NCAMHP is our professional organization; together we can create change, build a stronger community, and develop further connections within our community at large.

Respectfully,

Lesley Manson, Psy.D.  
NCAMHP Board President 2011



## **SOMATIC EXPERIENCING: A BODY-MIND APPROACH TO HEALING TRAUMA AND INCREASING RESILIENCY**

**By, Brad Kammer, MA, MFT, SEP  
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A century ago, Sigmund Freud wondered why animals in the wild do not manifest the symptoms of post-traumatic stress, even though they experience direct threats to their lives on a daily basis. Nearly forty years ago a young researcher named Peter Levine picked up this unanswered question, and through his research of animals in the wild along with his study on stress and trauma, developed the theoretical and clinical basis for Somatic Experiencing (SE).

What Dr. Levine (author of *“Waking the Tiger”*) and others discovered is that symptoms of traumatic stress often result from activated survival responses within the body, specifically within the brain and nervous system. In response to perceived threat or injury, animals, including humans, automatically respond with biologically-based actions to meet the threat and defend themselves. These survival responses are known as flight, fight, and freeze. When these survival responses are inhibited in any way, symptoms of traumatic stress often appear.

In the animal kingdom, if the survival response is successful, the animal will not be traumatized. Dr. Levine observed that after an exhausting and possibly terrifying battle or escape, animals are able to physically discharge the high levels of energy necessary to successfully out-fight or out-run their predators. It is this innate mechanism that regulates the animal’s nervous system back to equilibrium and calm.

Dr. Levine soon realized that humans, too, have this natural ability to regulate their internal systems after threatening situations. But because of complex factors unique to the human experience – including the evolutionary development of the “rational brain” (neo-cortex), inhibitive social norms, and fear conditioning – these survival responses are often not completed and become locked in a chronic freeze response. The incomplete survival responses – and unresolved, stuck high energy state – can lead to a severe disruption within the brain and nervous system, leading to post-traumatic stress disorder and other degenerative diseases, as well as depression, anxiety, phobias, and maladaptive patterns.

Within medicine, psychology, and popular culture, trauma is often misunderstood. We are now learning that trauma is not defined by the event – as in an earthquake, a car accident, or a physical assault – but in our experience of an event. A useful definition for trauma is: *“any experience that overwhelms our capacity to cope”*. Traumatic stress can indeed be caused from major life events such as accidents and abuse.

Less obvious are what one traumatologist refers to as the “hidden traumas” of daily life. This means that something even as “harmless” as a 5 mph fender-bender in the Safeway parking lot or an upcoming dentist visit could produce symptoms that overwhelm a person’s capacity to cope.

Thanks to new research on the brain, along with the rapid development of trauma study, we now understand the often debilitating short and long-term affects of traumatic stress on the human brain and body. Still, as a culture, we often chalk these affects up to other causes such as genetics, chemical imbalances, or even hysterical reactions, as in, “it’s all in your head” and “psychosomatic symptoms”. Dr. Levine developed Somatic Experiencing as a naturalistic approach to resolving the effects of traumatic stress. By integrating an awareness of body and mind, SE helps individuals complete their survival responses, re-regulate their nervous systems, and therefore facilitates healing of the underlying source of their symptoms. This approach is particularly useful in the treatment of stress-related disorders and trauma, although more recently it has been expanded to work with all sorts of emotional, mental, and developmental difficulties.

Somatic Experiencing differs from traditional psychotherapeutic models in that this body-centered approach builds an individual’s innate resources necessary for healing, and does not rely on analyzing, interpreting, or medically treating the client. For individuals with high energy symptoms such as anxiety, restlessness, insomnia, nightmares, intrusive images, and aggression, medicine often helps calm their symptoms temporarily, but SE aims to help these individuals resolve the trauma that is driving these symptoms, as well as give them tools to deal with their overwhelm in the moment. SE therapists act more like midwives, guiding the individual to follow their own instinctual experience, what some refer to as one’s “self-regulatory process” or “flow”.

Somatic Experiencing helps clients get to know their body in a positive way, to learn to ground themselves, and to provide enough of a sense of safety for them to approach their “scary stuff”. There are simple tools that can be learned which help people move through traumatic states to find resolution and acceptance. The primary tool is learning the language of the body: learning to track physical sensations and how to attend to the energy within. The body never lies and is always in the present moment. It is here, underneath the thoughts, emotions and memories, that we have direct access to the nervous system.

Another major tool is establishing healing resources: these are the internal and external places in our lives that produce a sense of comfort, safety, competence, and goodness. For example, a client may recall her favorite spot on the coast where she goes to for comfort in difficult times, and the associated warmth and tenderness she feels as she remembers this place. Another client may remember how he felt so strong and tall after being the first one in his family to complete college. These resources act as a counterbalance to the negative pull of trauma and by focusing on the client’s strengths, helps build greater resiliency. Another essential tool of SE is

that of physical discharge: by looping back and forth between the sensations of resource and stress, the high arousal of energy is able to slowly move out. As this energy lessens within, symptoms alleviate and equilibrium can be restored. Dogs often “shake off” their fear and “lick their wounds” after close encounters with cars, which is a good example of an animal releasing the excess energy and returning to a place of normal functioning.

These tools, all natural in the way animals respond post-trauma, are accessible to us as humans. Even after the death of a loved one, physical injury, illness, rape, assault, accident, and exposure to collective terror, people can learn to manage their overwhelm through this body-based process. This new body experience, which directly contradicts the experience of fear and powerlessness, helps people to move forward in creating new ways of living based on healthy, functional relationships to themselves and those around them. Thus, Somatic Experiencing enables practitioners to work with clients in a way that utilizes trauma as a key to personal transformation.

Brad Kammer, works as a Marriage and Family Therapist and Mendocino College Instructor, as well as a Somatic Experiencing Practitioner and Assistant Trainer.



### **Conflict Management: 5 Powerful Strategies to Quickly Resolve Conflict and Influence Others**

By: Larina Kase, PsyD, MBA is a business psychologist and New York Times bestselling author who helps professionals achieve the things they can't (but wish they could).

Whether it's personal or professional, conflict is always stressful. It often escalates from a small dispute to a much larger issue. You and/or the other person feel wronged, frustrated, irritated, and sometimes, pessimistic about whether things will change. When, on the other hand, you're able to manage conflict well, you and others feel more relaxed, focused, happy, and fulfilled.

Conflict management is possibly the most essential skill to positive relationships. The goal is not to never argue or be frustrated with others, it's to effectively handle the inevitable disputes that arise.

Directly addressing conflict, rather than avoiding it, can improve relationships, if of course it is addressed well. Research on couples has shown that the way in which couples argue predicts whether or not they stay together.

When you're in a conflict with someone, it may be impossible to change their mind in the heat of the moment. Instead, look for ways to de-escalate the conflict. Once there is peace, it will be easier to influence him or her to your way of thinking.

Here are 5 ways to de-escalate a conflict and getting your ideas heard:

1. Start with the facts. People often get engaged with their emotions and forget to do their research and start with the objective data. When you focus on the facts, you're less likely to get defensive or make the other person defensive.
2. Look for common ground. In research with all types of people (kids, businesspeople, couples, etc), the most effective way to resolve conflicts has been shown to find an overarching objective about which you both agree. When you're in an argument with someone, it feels as though you are light years apart. Establishing a common goal helps draw you together.
3. Express empathy. If the other party does not feel that you're listening, they will resist your influence. They need to know that you understand where they're coming from, or at least that you're trying to. If they keep repeating themselves over and over, chances are that you have not used active listening and expressed empathy.
4. Give and take (but give first). According to the law of reciprocity, when you give others naturally want to give too. Say, "That was a good point, I will definitely work on that piece," and you'll be amazed how quickly the tone changes. Of course, what you say is not as important as how you say it, so don't forget to do #3 above (empathy) so you mean what you say.
5. Get feedback—on yourself. Ask someone who is not involved in the conflict and will tell you the truth if you are being stubborn or ridiculous in your position. It may give you the incentive to negotiate if you're standing firm is unreasonable. Remember that it typically takes multiple presentations before someone remembers someone (or something), so aim to be in front of key players on a regular basis. Keep your message consistent, use the above networking tips, and you will be more magnetic and memorable!

When you use even one of these conflict management skills, you'll see how quickly and easily you can reduce the conflict, come to resolutions, and improve your personal and professional relationships.



### **Upcoming Training Events**

**Carmela Wenger will present a half-day training on Infidelity on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011 from 9:00am to 12:15pm at the Humboldt Area Foundation.** Cost \$65.00 for 3 CEUs. Please join us for our first ever half-day training! This workshop will equip attendees with knowledge and skills to enhance psychotherapy practice with clients dealing with

infidelity. The presenter will provide attendees of an overview of current assessment and treatment options for these clients. Attendees will learn about these assessment and treatment options through lectures, discussions, and case examples. For attendance questions or concerns call Judy Judge at 707-443-3384. See our brochure:

[www.ncamhp.org](http://www.ncamhp.org)

**Next General Meeting is Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011 from 5:30pm to 8pm at the Humboldt Area Foundation.** 1 CEU will be provided. Topic: Assessing Sexual Difficulties: Common Problems, Important Questions. Presented by Melinda Myers, PsyD.

**Steven Frankel will present a training on Laws and Ethics on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011 from 9am to 4:30pm at the Humboldt Area Foundation.** 6 CEUs will be provided. Dr. Frankel will once again keep us entertained with this required training.

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### Advertisements

The below advertisements are not endorsed by NCAMHP

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#### **An Introduction to Somatic Experiencing: A Body-Mind Approach to Healing Trauma & Increasing Resiliency**

Developed by Dr. Peter Levine, author of Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma, Somatic Experiencing (SE) is a naturalistic method for addressing the psychobiology of stress and trauma. This body-focused approach helps individuals resolve traumatic symptoms and enhances one's capacity to enjoy a wide spectrum of human experience.

This workshop provides an introduction to a theoretical and clinical model for supporting our psychobiological capacity to heal from overwhelming experiences. Clinical, medical, and health care professionals who deal with the aftermath of trauma will learn how to recognize and support this healing.

Friday February 18, 2011

9:30 am – 5:00 pm

Humboldt Area Foundation Community Center

Nilsen Room

373 Indianola Road, Bayside, CA 95524

Cost: \$100 (CEUs available)

Pre-registration required: contact Robin Goldner, (707) 459 5673

Workshop facilitated by Brad Kammer, MA, MFT, SEP

[www.body-mindtherapy.com](http://www.body-mindtherapy.com)



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## Announcements

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Katherine Salinas is pleased to announce that she is a newly Licensed Clinical Social Worker. With expanded practice hours, she is welcoming new clients of all ages to her Eureka office. In addition to providing verbal approaches to therapy, Katherine has equipped her office for play therapy with children and sandplay with clients of all ages. She invites providers and community members to contact her at 443-4348 for more information about her work or to discuss possible referrals.

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## New Advertising Guidelines

The Board and newsletter committee has worked hard to create guidelines to further develop and streamline our newsletter! Advertisements will remain free of charge to all NCAMHP members. The new guidelines are as follows:

1. The advertisement will be limited in word count.
2. The advertisement must be approved by the NCAMHP BOD to ensure relevancy toward the profession and the membership.
3. There will be a \$25.00 charge per newsletter for non-members.
4. NCAMHP members can advertise for free per above advertising rules.
5. There will be a notice above the ad section that will state: The Below Advertisements are not Endorsed by NCAMHP.

Please give us feedback on this new policy: [newsletter@ncamhp.org](mailto:newsletter@ncamhp.org), Lesley Manson, Psy.D. at [drmanson@msn.com](mailto:drmanson@msn.com) or Jennifer Saffen, MFT at [jes@humboldt1.com](mailto:jes@humboldt1.com)

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## Newsletter Frequency

The NCAMHP Newsletter is changing to a seasonal format:



**Spring:** March through May;



**Summer:** June through August; and



**Fall:** September through November



**Winter:** December through February

Because the Newsletter will be coming out 4x a year instead of the usual 6x keep in mind members may advertise and post announcements for office rentals free of charge via the web at any time:

Step 1: Go to [www.ncamhp.org](http://www.ncamhp.org)

Step 2: Click on Member Login and Login

Step 3: Click on Member Discussion Board

Step 4: Choose "Office Rental"

Please give us feedback on this new policy: [newsletter@ncamhp.org](mailto:newsletter@ncamhp.org), Lesley Manson, Psy.D. at [drmanson@msn.com](mailto:drmanson@msn.com) or Jennifer Saffen, MFT at [jes@humboldt1.com](mailto:jes@humboldt1.com)

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### **Your voice is important!**

We welcome all members to contribute to the newsletter.

The NCAMHP newsletter is many things and among them a forum to share professional information; ideas; inspirations; experiences and knowledge.

In future newsletters we hope to include "Spotlight" Meet Your Fellow Members: For those interested please send us a professional bio, areas of concentration, interests, and, of course, a picture.

Contributions are welcome; anything from a paragraph to a page would fit well in the newsletter. Send your ideas to the newsletter committee: [newsletter@ncamhp.org](mailto:newsletter@ncamhp.org), Lesley Manson, Psy.D. at [drmanson@msn.com](mailto:drmanson@msn.com) or Jennifer Saffen, MFT at [jes@humboldt1.com](mailto:jes@humboldt1.com)



### **Board of Directors**

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## **NCAMHP COMMITTEES**

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Looking for Members!!!

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