

## A Very Short History of Body Psychotherapy

Body Psychotherapy has developed from the work of Wilhelm Reich and has melded with influences from humanistic, transpersonal and eastern psychology.

Wilhelm Reich was a student and colleague of Sigmund Freud, who became increasingly interested in how through the process of character armouring humans develop fixed or rigid postures and patterns of movement and relating in order to protect themselves from emotional pain. Traumatic experiences lead us to suppress our spontaneous impulses, feelings and emotional expression.

The work of Wilhelm Reich was later developed by his students and followers into different schools of Body Psychotherapy including: bioenergetics (Alexander Lowen), core energetics (John Pierrakos), biodynamic psychology (Gerda Boyesen), Hakomi (Ron Kurtz), Emotional Anatomy (Stanley Keleman), Biosynthesis (David Boadella) and Integrative Body Psychotherapy (Jack Rosenberg).

## Terminology

The term Body Psychotherapy has been adopted as the umbrella term for a number of different body psychotherapies. Body Psychotherapy is not the same as body therapy or “bodywork”. However, there is overlap in theory and clinical application between Body Psychotherapies and Body therapies. Terms such as body-centred psychotherapy, body-oriented psychotherapy, somatic psychotherapy, somatic psychology, biodynamic psychology and psychotherapy are also in use.

The newer Mindfulness based therapies such as Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction and Mindfulness Based Cognitive Behaviour Therapy also draw on common methods used in Body Psychotherapy, e.g. experiencing through the body, breath awareness, body awareness, sensation awareness.

## Books and Links

Getting Your Body Back (book) - Christine Caldwell

Your Body Speaks its Mind (book) - Stanley Keleman

UKCP Journal Winter 10/11, Issue 47 - Body Psychotherapy is the special feature - [click here](#) (if the link does not work use the following url: [www.psychotherapy.org.uk/download805.html](http://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/download805.html))

150 years of Body Psychotherapy - an article by Courtney Young [click here](#) (if the link does not work use the following url: [www.courtenay-young.co.uk/courtenay/articles/150\\_years\\_of\\_B-P.pdf](http://www.courtenay-young.co.uk/courtenay/articles/150_years_of_B-P.pdf))