

Body Psychotherapy

Body psychotherapy is an approach to therapy that invites us to connect more fully with who we really are rather than who we believe we should be.

As we become more connected with who we really are we find ourselves making different choices - choices which arise from a healthier, more harmonious and empathic relationship with our self.

Will-power and good resolutions tend to only have minimal impact. The more force we use with ourselves the more entrenched we tend to become. Instead of force this process invites us to become more in tune with ourselves and discover a different way of being in the world.

Mental insight alone is often not enough to transform recurring problems. Therefore, in addition to thoughts, we pay attention to physical sensations, images, feelings, breathing patterns and spontaneous impulses arising from the body.

It is an approach where the present moment is seen as a gateway to our deepest self, to extraordinary wisdom and our innate capacity to heal.

What can Body Psychotherapy help with?

Most difficulties in our relationship with ourselves, others, work and life itself can be helped with body psychotherapy.

Body psychotherapy can help with stress, depression, anxiety, panic attacks, trauma, loss, long-term illness, issues around self-image, self-esteem and confidence, intimacy and relationship issues.

In addition it can be helpful in exploring blocks to creativity and a fuller, more enjoyable experience of life.

What can you expect from Body Psychotherapy?

The hope in psychotherapy is not just for transitory relief from difficult sensations, feelings, thoughts, behaviours and relationships but for a richer, freer and more fulfilling life.

Some of the hopes of body psychotherapy are:

- being more at ease with yourself and others
- feeling less anxious, stressed or overwhelmed
- feeling more grounded and secure in your sense of self
- feeling more present, vibrant and alive
- having a deeper and more satisfying relationship with yourself, others and your work
- having a deeper connection with what is meaningful in your life

What happens in a session?

Body psychotherapy starts like any other psychotherapeutic approach by talking about your concerns and struggles as well as your hopes, needs and aspirations - the work develops from there.

Individual sessions might involve:

- sitting and talking,
- breath work,
- working with images, dreams and visualisation,
- biodynamic massage,
- bio-energetic exercises,
- movement and other forms of creative exploration such as drawing.

The aim of these different ways of working is to support you in getting to know yourself more fully, particularly the unconscious self, and facilitate greater connection between your outer and inner life.

The way we use the session and the methods of exploration are discussed and agreed jointly. There is no pressure to work in any particular way and clients wishes are always respected.

How long does Body Psychotherapy take?

This depends on our life experiences as well as our reasons for starting psychotherapy. I offer both short and long term support. Short term is usually between 3 - 6 months. Deeper, more long lasting and transformational therapy usually takes longer.

Short term therapy

Short term therapeutic support - this is usually where a person is at a crossroads or impacted by an immediate crisis/challenge and is seeking more support to explore a current situation. The work tends to be more structured and goal oriented with a focus on practical decision-making and handling obstacles and challenges. Sometimes clients start with a short-term contract and as the process unfolds they may decide to enter into a longer term process.

Longer term therapy

Longer term therapeutic work explores deep seated, partially conscious as well as unconscious, habits, beliefs and assumptions about self, others and life generally. It is a process where the client is supported to deepen into themselves and get in touch with the hidden and under-developed parts of themselves that impact on their life right now. It is a process that takes time and requires a trusted and secure therapeutic relationship where the client feels comfortable and safe to explore - this takes time.

The difference between short and long term work - an analogy

A useful analogy for short and long term therapeutic work can be to think about the difference between redecorating our home versus restructuring or renovating our home. Decorating is more about the surface such as painting the walls, fitting a new kitchen or moving the furniture. In contrast structural work involves opening up the internal layout and going into the attic and cellar to create a different space, one which we feel more fully at home in.

If we do not feel safe or happy in our physical home we can decide to move - this is not possible when the home we are talking about is our self. Seeking professional support can help us secure our foundations and restructure our internal space so we can be more comfortable and at ease living with ourselves.

Getting Started

The **first step** is usually a brief phone conversation to discuss what you are looking for and if appropriate to arrange an initial exploratory meeting.

The First Meeting (consultation)

This usually lasts up to 60 minutes and allows time for us to explore what you are looking for in a bit more detail. It's an opportunity to ask questions about the approach and discuss its suitability. The consultation is an opportunity to see if I am someone you would feel comfortable working with.

There is no obligation to take the next step toward working together for a longer period.

Fee: if you decide after the first 20 minutes that you do not want to continue with the exploratory session there is no charge; if after the first 20 minutes you want to continue for the full hour the full fee of £45 is payable.

Further Sessions

If we proceed we would usually agree 6 sessions. This is another opportunity to test out whether this way of working is for you. On the fifth session we would review what has happened and consider the possibility of continuing for a longer period of time if appropriate.

Fee: £45 for a 60 minute session

Time and Availability

Body psychotherapy works with the body's innate rhythms so sessions are organised on the same day, and at the same time each week. Usually clients come for weekly sessions of one hour.

Please contact me for my current availability.

Cancellation Policy

Cancellation with less than 24 hours notice will require payment of the full fee.

A 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)

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)