



How can Body Mapping Develop Professional Practice?

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Somatic Body Mapping (SBM) is a safe, respectful, and gently paced process which encourages and engages with your body sensations, movement, feelings, and creativity. Creative space in Somatic Body Mapping provides opportunity for a deeper “felt sense of connectivity to yourself and others” (Kossak, p.15, 2009). It is explorative, experiential, playful, and sometimes risk-taking. Creative process elicits awareness of the present moment in yourself.

Why do Somatic Approaches Matter?

When you stay with somatic experiences, it can creatively and mindfully support you to explore, understand and respond flexibly in the here and now instead of rehearsing the embodiment of our pasts. (Ogden, 2015, van der Kolk, 2014). Embodied experience can move you between the subconscious and the collective unconscious (Ackerman,1999). In SBM, we incorporate body, movement and creativity into creation of a body map as we collectively and somatically experience the process. Among psychiatrists, psychologists, counsellors, psychotherapists and other allied health professionals, body-mind connection or a body-based approach has been increasingly recognised and practiced over verbal, linguistic, explicit processes (Kurtz, 1990: Ogden, 2015, Minton and Pain, 2006: van der Kolk, 2006).

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Sensorimotor psychotherapist, Pat Ogden (2015: p25) states,

“The multifaceted language of the body depicts a lifetime of joys, sorrows, and challenges, revealed in patterns of tension, movement, gesture, posture, breath, rhythm, prosody, facial expression, sensation, physiological arousal, gait and other action sequences”

Her statement resonates with the philosophy of Somatic Body Mapping that we offer. As practitioners, it may feel vulnerable to explore our own self in our body with our being more comfortable to challenge but hold our clients in their vulnerability. SBM can increase capacity in practitioners to make new meaning and respond flexibly to the here and now, instead of rehearsing a version of the past (Ogden,2015, van der Kolk, 2014).

Somatic Body Mapping is a rich combination of approaches.

Finding bodily sensations or creatively exploring with colours, images, textures, and memories can feel like dipping your toes into the unknown. Adler (2007, p.25), an American dance movement therapist and Authentic Movement pioneer states that being in the unknown is to develop an inner witness or an “internalised other” (Adler, 2007, p.27). The process of creating a body map for ourselves facilitates discovery of the gift of ourselves and the gift of our own authenticity (Adler, 2007).

I am a trauma-informed practitioner (Kezelman & Stavropoulos. 2019). Relational company is offered in the form of witness but is always your choice. Offered witness may empower and strengthen you, as you are echoed in another’s memories, images or maybe in their body. Your Body Map is your unique visual journal of paying attention in a rare flexible experience that could hone your therapeutic map to better accompany others.

References

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