

Sensorimotor Psychotherapy: Interventions for Trauma and Attachment (Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology)

By Pat Ogden Ph.D., Janina Fisher

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A book for clinicians and clients to use together that explains key concepts of body psychotherapy.


The body's intelligence is largely an untapped resource in psychotherapy, yet the story told by the "somatic narrative"-- gesture, posture, prosody, facial expressions, eye gaze, and movement -- is arguably more significant than the story told by the words. The language of the body communicates implicit meanings and reveals the legacy of trauma and of early or forgotten dynamics with attachment figures. To omit the body as a target of therapeutic action is an unfortunate oversight that deprives clients of a vital avenue of self-knowledge and change.

Written for therapists and clients to explore together in therapy, this book is a practical guide to the language of the body. It begins with a section that orients therapists and clients to the volume and how to use it, followed by an overview of the role of the brain and the use of mindfulness. The last three sections are organized according to a phase approach to therapy, focusing first on developing personal resources, particularly somatic ones; second on utilizing a bottom-up, somatic approach to memory; and third on exploring the impact of attachment on procedural learning, emotional biases, and cognitive distortions. Each chapter is accompanied by a guide to help therapists apply the chapter's teachings in clinical practice and by worksheets to help clients integrate the material on a personal level.

The concepts, interventions, and worksheets introduced in this book are designed as an adjunct to, and in support of, other methods of treatment rather than as a stand-alone treatment or manualized approach. By drawing on the therapeutic relationship and adjusting interventions to the particular needs of each client, thoughtful attention to what is being spoken beneath the words through the body can heighten the intimacy of the therapist/client journey and help change take

place more easily in the hidden recesses of the self.
100 illustrations

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Editorial Review

Review

“This encyclopaedic work is a treasure trove of practical information and ready-to-use materials that you can utilize over a client’s entire healing journey. . . . Already I’ve gleaned much from the book that can enhance my work with clients, both those who have suffered trauma and those who have not. . . . What I appreciate most is the pragmatic approach Ogden and Fisher have taken in creating something much like a workbook for therapists in practice. There is a beautiful and logical flow to both the theory and the practical worksheets for therapists both old and new to the world of trauma therapy. ” (The Neuropsychotherapist)

“[G]reat for therapists who want to learn more about how the brain-body connection influences the lives of clients ? their emotions, cognitions, and physiological responses. . . . Ogden and Fisher make it easy to integrate the book’s exercises into therapy sessions, and to use the text directly with clients. In turn, clients who recognize that their traumatic experiences affect both the mind and the body may finally find some healing.” (PsychCentral)

“[I]ncorporating both a practical and theoretical perspective. . . . serves to bridge the gap between body psychology and other modalities. . . . [E]xplicitly for students and professionals, the vast amount of information presented makes it useful for practitioners of all degrees of experience.” (Somatic Psychotherapy Today)

“It has been said that the body is the unconscious in its most immediate form. In *Sensorimotor Psychotherapy*, Pat Ogden shares with the reader the reality of this miracle as a here-and-now relational adventure that brings its full psychotherapeutic meaning to life. In a feat that approaches wizardry, the affective power of the body becomes so clearly grasped as a channel of communication within and between people that the physical is expanded beyond neuroscience, and neuroscience is therapeutically expanded beyond the individual brain/mind and the individual body. Simply put, Pat Ogden is not only a thrilling author but, for many readers, may be transformational.” (Philip M. Bromberg, PhD, author, *The Shadow of the Tsunami: and the Growth of the Relational Mind*)

“This magnificent book is the last word on the ‘somatic narrative’?the nonverbal language of gestures, postures, and facial expressions that reflect the inner maps that determine our orientation to our surroundings. Pat Ogden brilliantly explores how our fundamental engagement to the world is not primarily expressed in words or concepts, but by the way we habitually move and connect. Profound in its fundamental insights, thorough in its scientific underpinnings, and practical in its applications, this eminently accessible book promises to be the preeminent guide for therapists and patients alike to explore and transform persistent maladaptive behavior patterns. I hope that every therapy training program will put *Sensorimotor Psychotherapy* near the top of its required reading list.” (Bessel van der Kolk, MD, Medical Director Trauma Center at Justice Resource Institute; Professor of Psychiatry, Boston University School of Medicine)

“*Sensorimotor Psychotherapy* is a landmark book in the history of body psychotherapy and effectively provides the bridge between traditional psychotherapy and body-oriented therapies. In this discipline-changing volume, Pat Ogden brilliantly decodes the crucial role that the body plays in regulating physiological, behavioral, and mental states. The book provides an accessible tutorial that will enable the reader to understand the voice and vocabulary of the body. We learn that even when the spoken word fails the body dynamically communicates in a complex social world through gestures, postures, facial

expressions, and vocalizations. *Sensorimotor Psychotherapy* equips the reader, whether clinician or client, with the tools necessary to link the intuitions of the body and the words of the personal narrative.” (Stephen Porges, PhD, Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; author of The Polyvagal Theory)

“*Sensorimotor Psychotherapy* by Pat Ogden is a must-read for psychoanalysts interested in nonverbal communication, dissociation, and trauma. This sophisticated book provides a remarkable integration of theory and clinical practice, informed by research in trauma, attachment, infancy, and neurobiology, as well as by psychoanalysis. Through mindful moment-by-moment observation of experience, Ogden draws our attention to the somatic narrative, which may be different from the verbal narrative. Our habitual postures, alignment, gestures, and rhythms are intelligent adaptations to past experiences, but they may sustain outdated coping strategies. The book offers a rich array of entry ports into these habitual strategies, focusing on the body as the target of therapeutic action. Pat Ogden’s work makes an outstanding contribution to our field.” (Beatrice Beebe, PhD, Clinical Professor of Medical Psychology, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, New York State Psychiatric Institute)

About the Author

Pat Ogden, PhD, is the founder and director of the Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Institute. She lives in Boulder, Colorado.

Janina Fisher, PhD, a clinical psychologist and instructor at the Trauma Center, lives outside Boston, Massachusetts.

Users Review

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