

**SOLUTIONS TO TRAUMA, PART II:
COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES
AND NEW TECHNOLOGICAL
METHODS**

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WHILE doing an Instagram post a few months ago, I was thinking about the various treatments for trauma that exist and that I myself had experienced when the saying “All roads lead to Rome”, came into my head. It’s very apt where trauma is concerned. There are many different routes to healing and the various treatments we may try, some perhaps for a short time and others for longer, all form part of that journey.



Each treatment can take us down a new path, open a new and different door and allow us to learn something else about ourselves. This can happen even if the treatment isn’t for us.

Sure, we may have some weird and wonderful experiences with the various trauma treatments available and we may need to try a number of them before finding one approach, or a few, that work for us in the long term.

Because I know that there are a multitude of different treatments for trauma and so many unique and wonderful individuals out there who may want to know more about what’s available, I decided to create this “Solutions to Trauma” series.

I’m sure there are methods I have missed out, but I have tried to list and talk about as many as possible. Of course, I have my own preferences and know what worked for me, but as I said – we are all unique and what works for one, might not work at all for another.

I’d love this series to act as a guide for those of you who’d like to try new things. Remember the one you choose at first might not be the quickest route, or the most efficient path, but each different healing method may get to different cells or open up and work with different neural networks.

Equally for any clinicians, therapists or body workers reading this, or offering the e-book to clients, please do join the Trauma Thrivers community on Facebook. There is an opportunity there to discuss modalities and treatments with other professionals and laypeople and I’d love to see you there.

I really hope you find valuable information inside this e-book. It’s been a pleasure to create, in part praying that the outcome might be it may help you find your way more easily on your own healing journey. I’m keeping everything crossed!

All my love,

Lou x.

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Solutions to Trauma: Craniosacral Therapy



We will now discuss Craniosacral therapy (CST) and how it can be applied in our approaches to healing trauma. But first let's consider trauma impacting our lives, particularly Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and why it needs to be healed.

Healing trauma is a crucial element in restoring those who have been affected by traumatic experiences, helping them to return to normality and improve their overall quality of life. For trauma survivors, the root cause of present-day difficulties and dysfunction is an inability to fully process the traumatic event(s) or circumstances.

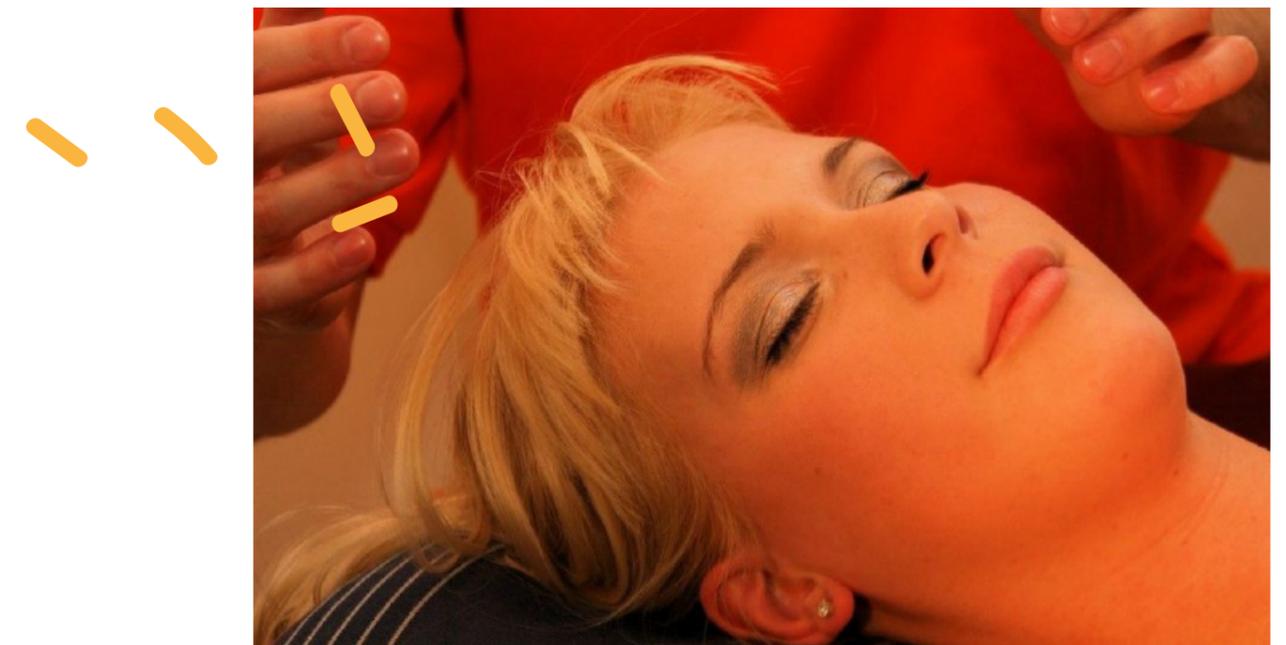
In the face of threat, which could have been anything from sexual abuse or combat trauma to childhood neglect or invalidation, our basic reaction is one of three primary threat responses – fight, flight, or freeze. In getting ready to employ one of the modes of self-preservation, our bodies flood with energy. Ideally, once the threat has passed, our bodies discharge all this energy and we return to homeostasis (equilibrium of the nervous system, or balance) within the body.

Unfortunately, as humans we are sometimes unable to discharge this energy appropriately, so

it becomes stuck in our bodies and gives rise to dysregulation and dysfunction later on. This phenomenon is especially prevalent in those suffering with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The combination of experiencing a singular or prolonged traumatic event and being unable to fully process leaves affected individuals in a state hypervigilance, characterised by a heightened state of awareness in which unexpected stimuli can cause an exaggerated response. Sufferers of PTSD also experience intrusive thoughts that interrupt their ability to concentrate and can be debilitating. [1] There is also proneness to panic attacks, prolonged fear and anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts.[2]

Physical and psychological distress as a result of overwhelm and the inability to discharge causes prolonged activation of our sympathetic nervous system, the part of our whole (autonomic) nervous system that governs fight or flight.[3] The calming nature of therapeutic touch, like that involved in Craniosacral Therapy, helps to reduce activation in the sympathetic nervous system and increase activation of the parasympathetic nervous system, which is involved in slowing the rate of our heart, breathing and digestion, this results in overall relaxation of the muscles.[4]



What is Craniosacral therapy?

Craniosacral therapy (CST) is a therapeutic modality which promotes the body's own natural healing ability and ultimately enables the affected individual to process difficult truths. It is a type of bodywork, other types of which include massage therapy, acupressure and sports massage. Bodywork utilises the benefits of physical touch to promote healing in the client.[5]

First developed in the 1970s by doctor of osteopathy John Upledger, CST has since been used in the treatment of a variety of physical and psychological conditions, including but not limited to[6]:



- Alzheimer's Disease
- Chronic Fatigue
- Concussion
- Dementia
- Migraines
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Stress
- Anxiety
- Post-traumatic Stress Disorder



How does Craniosacral Therapy work?

Craniosacral therapy can be employed as a complementary therapeutic modality, alongside other forms of trauma-informed therapies like CBT, EMDR and Somatic Experiencing.

During a CST session, before any treatment is applied, clients are asked about their symptoms and pre-existing conditions, in order to give the practitioner a greater understanding of the client's background.

A session typically lasts one hour, during which the client lies down in a comfortable position. The practitioner begins by gently placing their hands on the client's body, perhaps starting with the feet, but with a focus on the skull and sacrum. These are considered key elements in accessing the central nervous system (CNS). The attuned practitioner will listen with intent to follow the movements of the bone, fascia and connective tissue. By engaging it with the body's connective tissue, which surrounds every internal organ, the practitioner can encourage it to relax and relieve itself of stored tension.

CST is subtle, non-invasive and, according to the Upledger Institute, helps the practitioner to 'evaluate and enhance the functioning of the craniosacral system – comprised of the membranes and cerebrospinal fluid that surrounds and protects the brain and spinal cord.'[7]

There have been some studies that have shown positive outcomes following the application of CST for traumatised individuals. One study involving veterans of the Vietnam War who had been diagnosed with PTSD and were treated using CST and similar modalities, became more trusting of their therapist and more open to discuss their traumatic experiences. They also displayed a reduction in PTSD symptoms.[8]

A different study, carried out by Naturopathic Physician Dr. Lisa M. Chavez, involved the use of the CST with Tibetan ex-prisoners who had undergone torture and imprisonment, resulting in trauma. The study reported that unlike the control group, the experimental group scores of anxiety and related issues had decreased based on the administered questionnaires.[9]

While strong empirical evidence on the effectiveness of Craniosacral therapy is limited, there is still much research to be done on the link between our physiology and our psychological well-being. This may further inform us about the importance of CST and other types of bodywork in promoting positive overall health.

The journey to recovery from trauma is different for each individual and what works for some may not work as well for others. Despite the lack of concrete evidence to support the efficacy of CST as a valid therapeutic modality, dealing with trauma is an extremely difficult and challenging experience, so anything that offers even the slightest possibility of relief from trauma-related symptoms is worth considering and trying.



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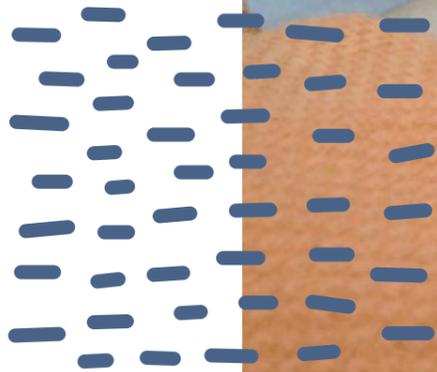
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Solutions to Trauma: Acupuncture



Trauma treatment comes in many different shapes and sizes. Traditionally, trauma has been treated with a combination of psychotherapy and medication to reduce symptoms. However, trauma is complex and treatment has long sought to identify improvements in how it is delivered. Alternative treatments are available and work to varying degrees depending on the individual. Many of these alternatives to traditional treatment for trauma-related conditions like PTSD, anxiety and depression consider the psychophysical connection – the connection between mind and body.

Since Peter Levine wrote *Waking the Tiger* and introduced Somatic Experiencing into the mental healthcare arena and then in recent years Bessel Van Der Kolk's trauma reference bible *The Body Keeps the Score* was published, interest in somatic approaches to healing has increased. That's not to say, however, that the mind-body connection is a new concept. Long before modern medicine, healers across many cultures had incorporated the body in healing issues of the mind.

Somatic Experiencing, Psychodrama and EMDR have all emerged and have either empirical or at the very least anecdotal evidence of their effectiveness. One approach to healing both physical and emotional or psychological pain is acupuncture, which will be the focus of this blog.

Acupuncture is not considered or advocated here as a cure-all approach, but can be highly effective as complementary therapy, alongside other therapies that are cognitive and exposure based.

What is Acupuncture?

Derived from ancient Chinese medical practice and widely used today, acupuncture is a therapeutic approach involving the insertion of very fine needles into the skin and muscles[1], along specific points that are considered to be centres, or channels, of energy in the body.

'Numerous studies have shown that acupuncture is well tolerated by patients, safe and cost-effective compared to routine care.'[2]



The idea behind acupuncture is that when these fine needles are inserted, sensory nerves under the skin are stimulated, which signals the production of substances within the body. Some of these substances are endorphins, which are the body's own natural pain relievers. This stimulation of natural pain relief is a major contributing factor to the popularity of acupuncture today. Treatment using acupuncture is typically more beneficial when multiple sessions are attended, as opposed to a one-time experience.

Acupuncture has been widely praised as an effective treatment for migraines and chronic tension-related headaches, joint pain and post-operative pain. Some research has suggested that acupuncture also has potential in treatment approaches for anxiety, stress and other trauma symptoms, like PTSD.



Acupuncture and PTSD

The scope of people who can be affected by trauma is broad. PTSD is commonly associated with veterans of war, but in fact can occur in anyone who has been a victim of abuse, neglect, violence, an accident, sudden grief and even natural disasters.

One 2014 study on military personnel reported a reduction in PTSD symptoms like anxiety, depression and overall physical and mental health.[3]

Another study carried out by researchers at the Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine looked at the use of acupuncture in approaching treatment for people who had been experiencing PTSD following earthquakes. Acupuncture was found to reduce depression and anxiety and showed better outcomes when compared with the use of Paroxetine, a common antidepressant drug.[4]

Mind and Body in Healing

As a form of ancient medicine, acupuncture holds the view that the mind and body are equally important when it comes to healing. Trauma, regardless of its origin, is believed to impact a person's 'Qi' or life energy. By targeting specific energy points on the body, which are thought to be linked to certain organs and the nervous system, acupuncture aims to promote calmness, relaxation and relief from stored tension.

'With careful diagnosis and a complete understanding of the person's situation, acupuncturists will use specific points on the body to help align one's qi, to rejuvenate a person's energy, relieve pain, ease tension and revitalize their sense of well-being.'[5]



Acupuncture: A Complementary Approach to PTSD Treatment

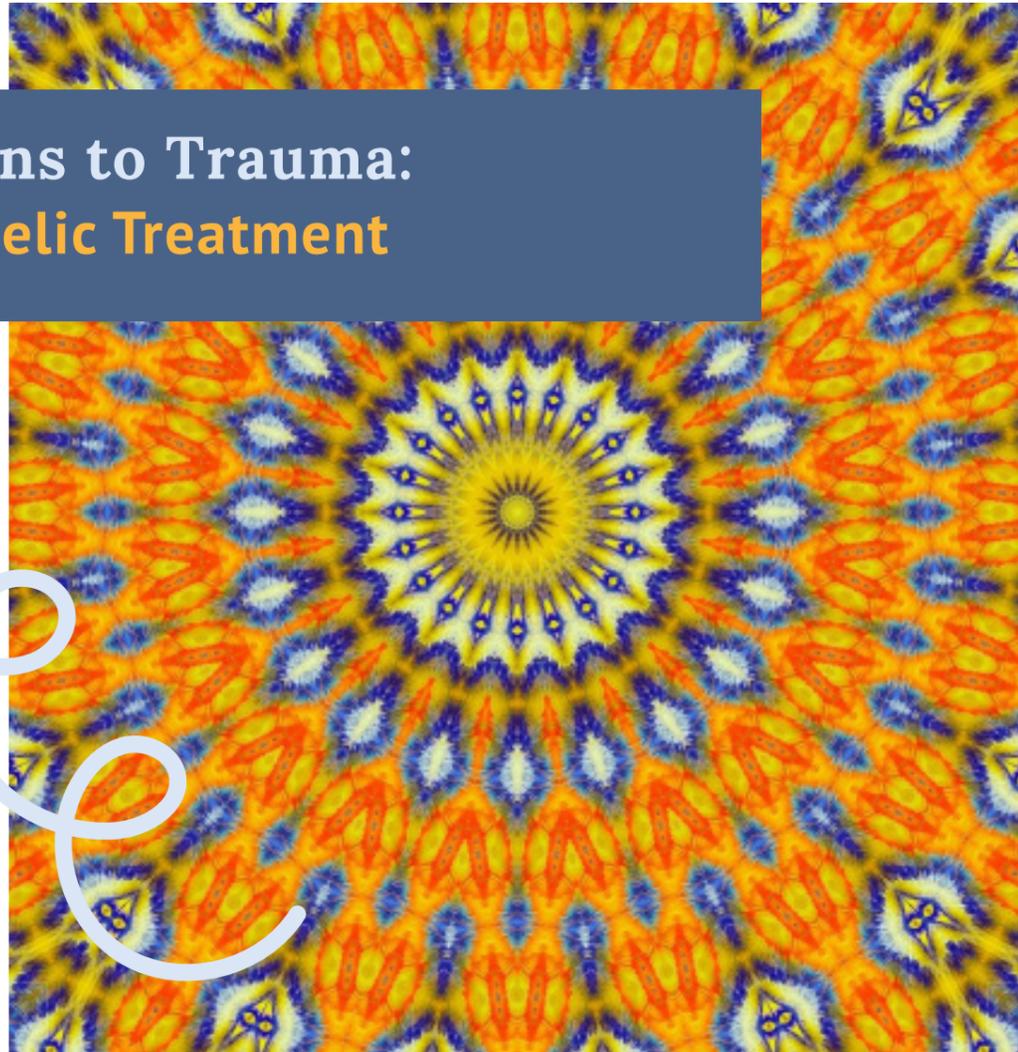
Researchers have observed that patients who combined acupuncture with other forms of treatment showed significantly improved outcomes when compared with those who received typical care.[6]

When it comes to alternative treatments, what works for one person may not work as well for another. Trauma and PTSD are complex, deeply personal issues, so finding a one-size-fits-all approach to treatment is extremely difficult. For this reason, patients and practitioners alike must be open and curious about the range of alternative treatments that are available, instead of shunning an approach due to a lack of strong empirical data. Of course, nobody wants to waste time and money on something that might not work for them, but acupuncture is a drug-free, safe and cost-effective treatment that has shown positive results in the past and has huge potential for the future. Even while one is waiting for other types of treatment, acupuncture can be used to get even temporary relief from symptoms.

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Solutions to Trauma: Psychedelic Treatment



The use of psychedelic drugs in assistance with psychotherapy for the treatment of PTSD is on the rise. Traditionally, antidepressant medications like paroxetine and sertraline have been used in PTSD treatment[1], which serve to reduce the symptoms of PTSD but fail to address its underlying causes. This is not to say that a person should not use such medications; the symptoms of PTSD are extremely difficult to deal with and can be severely debilitating, so any help in dealing with symptoms should be considered and applied. However, these medications must be taken daily and, of course, come with adverse side effects. They require compliance and can cause physical and psychological damage if suddenly discontinued.[2]

Exposure-based psychotherapy has long been considered the first-line approach in treating PTSD, which has been proven to yield positive outcomes. Still, even after these types of treatment, many people still qualify for a clinical diagnosis of PTSD. It is a deeply complex illness, with significantly high rates of psychiatric and medical comorbidity.[3]

In the search for new approaches to treatment for PTSD and other trauma-related disorders and difficulties, one approach in particular is seeing an increase in popularity – the use of psychedelic substances.

Research and Public Opinion on Psychedelics

Back in the 50s and 60s, clinical research on the benefits of psychedelics was common, but became outlawed in the 70s when the prevalence of these substances on the streets being used for recreational purposes was increasing. Not only was recreational use of psychedelics criminalised, but all clinical research had to come to a halt.



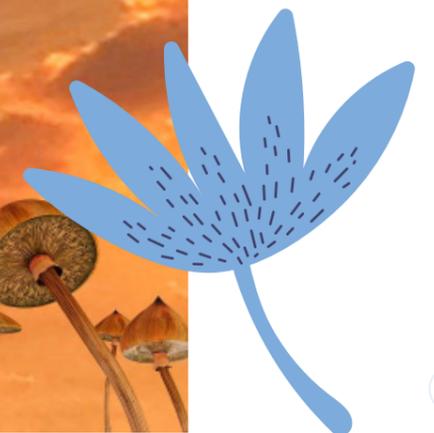
Recent times have seen an upsurge in interest in the therapeutic use of psychedelic substances. The Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) has been pioneering the research and campaign efforts in legalising the clinical use of MDMA for the treatment of PTSD.[4]

There is much fear and disconcertment around the use of psychedelics in the public eye. We have for a long time been taught the dangers of psychedelic substances, yet much of the shared information is based on individual cases of recreational misuse, whereby a particular substance is used outside of an appropriate dose, in conjunction with other substances, or in non-medical, unsupervised contexts.

An important aspect of this revival of interest in the therapeutic application of psychedelics, often called the 'psychedelic renaissance', is 'the re-emergence of a paradigm that acknowledges the importance of set (i.e., psychological expectations), setting (i.e., physical environment) and the therapeutic clinician-patient relationship as critical elements for facilitating healing experiences and realising positive outcomes.'[5]

Psychedelic-Assisted Psychotherapy

Psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy usually involves two to three sessions with the use of a psychedelic substance, spaced about one month apart with traditional, non-drug-based psychotherapy sessions in between. Before any substance is used, the client and therapist will spend some time discussing the client's personal and medical background, building rapport within the therapeutic relationship and in educating the client about what they can expect during treatment.



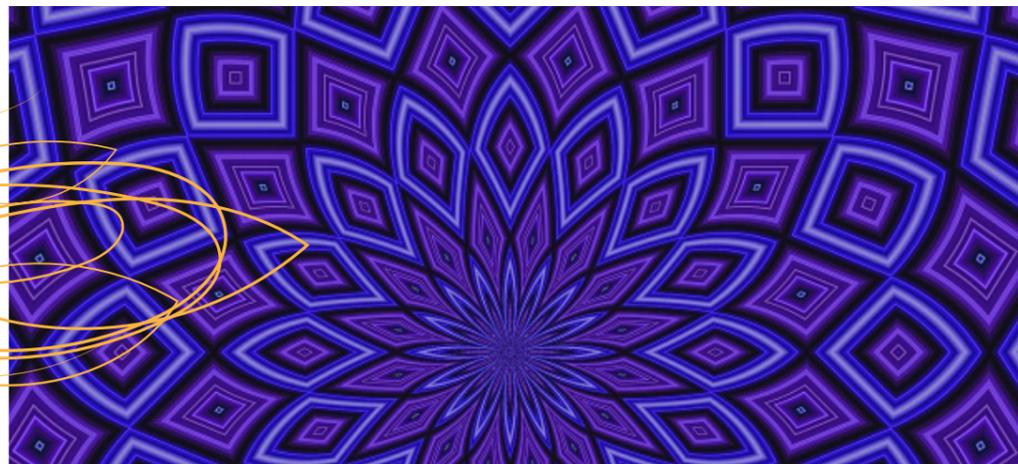
During treatment, once the drug has been administered, the client is typically provided with headphones and eyeshades as they lie in a comfortable position. Throughout the session, which can last for up to 6-8 hours, the client can choose to talk to the therapist when they feel they want to.

The most common substances used in this type of therapy are psilocybin ('magic mushrooms'), MDMA and LSD.

Are Psychedelics Effective in Treatment?

Psychedelic assisted psychotherapy has been found to show positive outcomes in addressing not only PTSD, but also other difficult illnesses and disorders, including addiction, depression, social anxiety and anxiety related to terminal illness.[6]

One study in the US investigated the efficacy of MDMA assisted psychotherapy in the treatment of PTSD[7] and showed that such a treatment could improve current approaches that involve pharmacotherapeutic and psychotherapeutic modalities. Not only did the study show a reduction in PTSD symptoms, it also found that some participants of the experimental group were no longer clinically diagnosable with PTSD, in terms of the diagnostic criteria outlined in the Diagnostics and Statistics Manual, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV). Over three years later, 74% of the same participants showed 'sustained reductions' in their CAPS (Clinically Administered PTSD Scale) scores.'



On the experience...

Czech psychiatrist Dr. Stanislav Grof had the following to say about psychedelics:

'Psychedelics are to the study of the mind what the microscope is to biology and the telescope is to astronomy.'

Psychedelics can provide users with a feeling of unity and shared humanity. Users often experience a phenomenon described as transcendence of the ego, whereby one's focus on the self is reduced and there is an increase in feelings of connectivity with others and the environment. They also serve to promote trust and openness in safe settings, which is beneficial for the clinician-patient relationship.

Due to their introspective nature, psychedelics can often open up for clients a channel to their inner world, where the root causes of present day difficulties can be seen, identified and acknowledged, all within the safe and secure therapeutic relationship.

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Solutions to Trauma: Orthomolecular and Biomolecular Treatment for Trauma



'The basis for good health is good nutrition.'¹ - Abram Hoffer, Orthomolecular medicine for everyone : megavitamin therapeutics for families and physicians.

Stress is one of the most physically harmful symptoms of trauma due to the pressure it places on the body. Prolonged rapid heartbeat and high blood pressure, with muscular tension and heightened arousal, take their toll on our physical and mental health. Stress significantly evokes and exacerbates mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and mood disorders,² as well as physical health problems such as heart disease, stroke and high blood pressure.

Orthomolecular medicine offers a complementary treatment approach for trauma-related conditions and their common, challenging symptoms, such as depression, anxiety and other stress-related disorders, tackling trauma from a biomolecular perspective.

'It's no secret that substances found naturally in the body can be used to prevent and treat disease',³ says Naturopathic Doctor and Orthomolecular practitioner Jonathan Prousky.

Vitamins, minerals, amino acids and essential fatty acids are used in orthomolecular medicine. It is a safe, non-toxic approach to aiding trauma recovery and is one that reduces the need for prescription medication. It emphasises the importance of nutrient-rich foods such as berries, leafy green vegetables and supplements.

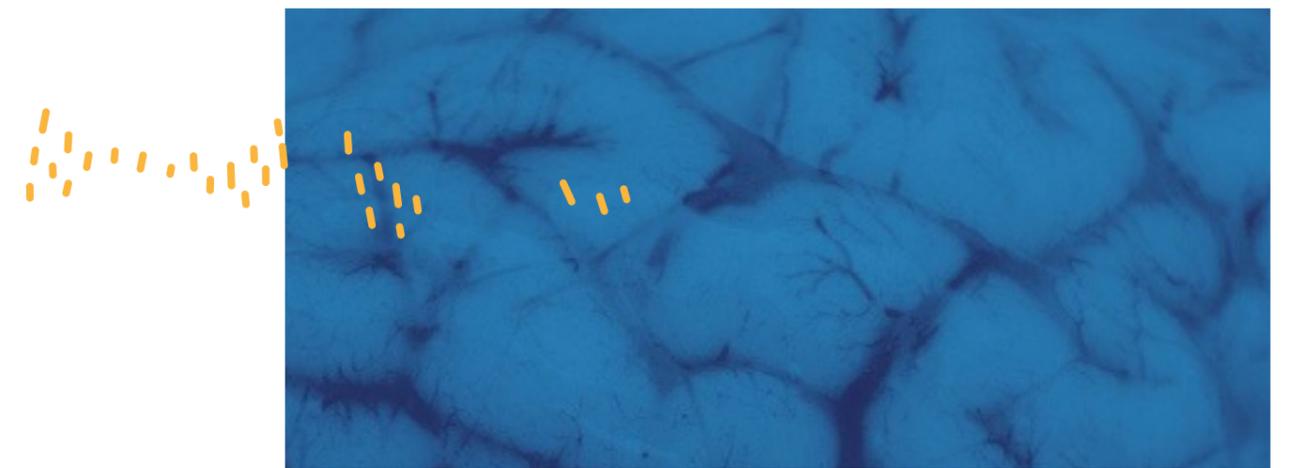
Right Molecules

'Ortho' is the Greek word for 'right'. Orthomolecular medicine is the delivery of the 'right molecules' to the body's systems, where the dosage is dependent on the client's specific dietary needs.

To receive orthomolecular therapy, a client undergoes an assessment by a medical professional, where blood test results and an understanding of the patient's recent dietary history are evaluated to determine if there are any nutrient deficiencies. If necessary, clients are guided to make appropriate dietary changes and may receive a prescription of supplements. Some nutrients may be prescribed in megadoses, which are doses that exceed the recommended daily allowance (RDA).

Orthomolecular and treatment approaches to trauma support long-term healing and recovery. It comes down to working with the body as a whole, not just treating specific symptoms or relying on cognition to heal the person. The whole system must be brought back to homeostasis, or balance, so that trauma may be worked on and worked through from a place of mental and physical stability.

Treatment for trauma and its symptoms is varied, in terms of type of treatment as well as efficacy. In recent times, treatment has involved a combination of talk-based, cognitive psychotherapies, medications for symptom management and mind-body based approaches such as Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) and Somatic Experiencing (SE). Trauma is subjective and unique to each individual, so approaches and modalities that work for some may not be as effective for others. People can spend years trying to find the right type of therapy or medication for their condition, spending a lot of time and money in the process.



The symptoms of trauma are intensely undesirable and can be debilitating. When necessary, prescription medication can be provided to reduce and manage symptoms. Orthomolecular medicine can be used in conjunction with medication – as long as the orthomolecular foods/supplements do not interact with the medicine. Grapefruit, for example, decreases the gut's ability to process the anti-anxiety medication Sertraline.⁴

Prescription drugs can be 'slowly withdrawn as the patient begins to respond to orthomolecular treatment.'⁵

Trauma manifests in the body as stress and illness



When we are faced with a real or perceived threat, the body's natural threat response⁶ –fight/flight/freeze – kicks into gear. This threat response becomes activated to ensure our survival. Similar to animals in the wild, our threat responses typically involve fight –aggression and attacking the threat, flight – fleeing from the threat if it can't be fought, or freeze – a paralysis, or 'shut down' of the mind or body, or both.

Once the threat has passed, the nervous system ideally releases this activated energy and returns to homeostasis, or internal balance of the body's systems. Some people experience overwhelm in the face of commonly traumatic events – war, sexual abuse, childhood neglect, motor accidents, natural disasters – and remain able to live their lives in good health and regulation, unaffected by trauma symptoms. Others are not so fortunate and carry the trauma memory deep within the body, for it to manifest as physical and psychological illness.

Common to all types of trauma and traumatic experience is a high stress level within the body. Hyper-arousal and hypervigilance, common trauma traits, are caused by increases in the cortisol and adrenaline levels in the body, otherwise known as the stress hormones.

Prolonged stress, or prolonged activation of these stress chemicals, exhausts the mind and also wears down the body. Some of the physical symptoms of stress include:

- Aches, pains and muscle tension
- Chest pain
- Colds and infections
- Change in appetite

Painkillers and other prescription medications are often prescribed to manage the above symptoms. Orthomolecular medicine offers a supportive approach to the management of these symptoms, where clients are prescribed foods and supplements containing natural substances found in the body, promoting the body's own natural healing abilities. As trauma is stored in the body, working on re-balancing the body's systems through orthomolecular or biomolecular treatment will help recovery in the long-term.

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Solutions to Trauma: Nutraceuticals and the Importance of Nutrition in Trauma Recovery



The food we eat has an effect not only on our physical health, but also our mental and emotional health well-being. Mood and cognition can be influenced and affected by the quality of food we intake, so getting the right nutrients to support your brain and body's functionality is a must.

According to Adan, Van der Beek, et. al.,¹ there is increasing evidence that suggests 'a strong association between a poor diet and the exacerbation of mood disorders, including anxiety and depression, as well as other neuropsychiatric conditions.'²

For trauma survivors, nutrition can play a key role in the recovery process. Among the range of adverse symptoms associated with trauma-related conditions such as PTSD, C-PTSD and developmental trauma, one that is often overlooked is nutritional deficit. Reduced intake of nutrients and the resulting effects on the body can lead to the exacerbation of poor mental health symptoms.

What is a nutraceutical?

A nutraceutical is a food, or part of a food, that is rich in nutrients and offers medicinal benefits to the consumer, such as disease treatment or prevention.³ Nutraceuticals are seeing increased popularity as an aid to trauma recovery, due to their powerful health benefits and level of safety. In order for a person to have the best chances of healing from their psychological trauma, the body should be as healthy as it can be. Nutraceuticals offer quick, simple nutritional support, while also providing medicinal benefits to the consumer.



Trauma Symptoms and Symptom Management

Very often, clients diagnosed with PTSD or other trauma-related conditions are prescribed medication to manage symptoms, such as:

- Chronic aches and pains
- Nightmares or flashbacks
- Hyperarousal
- Depression
- Anxiety
- High stress levels

Medications can be a great help for symptom management, but far too often patients are prescribed a number of different medications. Multiple medication use poses a greater risk of adverse drug reactions, misuse and abuse and increased tolerance. Nutraceuticals offer a safe alternative to prescription medication, reducing the harm that polypharmacy can sometimes cause.

The Impact of Trauma on Nutrient Absorption

States of hyper arousal, anxiety, or stress wear down the physical body and can inhibit the ability to effectively absorb nutrients. With nutrient intake compromised, the body faces further stress as it does not have nutritional support.

'Stress is associated with changes in gut bacteria which in turn can influence mood. Thus, the gut's nerves and bacteria strongly influence the brain and vice versa.'⁴

Stress causes a number of changes to the body and how it functions. Common negative effects of stress on the body include:⁵

- Muscular aches and pains
- Increase or decrease in appetite
- Nausea
- Stomach and bowel discomfort
- Poor digestion

The intestine is the main organ involved in digestion and houses many beneficial nutrients in the form of healthy gut bacteria while simultaneously fighting off bad bacteria. High cortisol levels in the body as a result of trauma-related stress weaken the intestine, inhibiting its ability to support nutrient absorption.

Nutraceuticals for Improved Health

With compromised nutrition, we are at greater risk of developing adverse health conditions such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, cancer and osteoporosis. Nutraceuticals have been emerging in recent times as a means of protecting oneself against such diseases.

Nutraceuticals use natural food products and their derivatives and fall under the following categories:⁶

- Dietary Fibre
- Probiotics
- Prebiotics
- Polyunsaturated fatty acids
- Antioxidant vitamins
- Polyphenols
- Spices



Examples of Nutraceutical foods:

Some examples of food and food products that can serve as nutraceuticals for the reduction of stress include Siberian Ginseng, Schisandra Chinensis and fish oils.

Siberian Ginseng 'helps balance blood sugar levels – [an] important part of stress management.'⁷ It also helps the body conserve vitamin C, which serves to reduce some of the harmful effects of stress.

Schisandra Chinensis is a traditional Chinese herb that has been found to improve physical performance and improve concentration.⁸

Fish oils help to reduce stress by reducing cortisol levels and the body's adrenal output.⁹

In Conclusion

'Nutraceuticals have proven health benefits and their consumption (within their acceptable Recommended Dietary Intakes) will keep diseases at bay and allow humans to maintain an overall good health.'¹⁰

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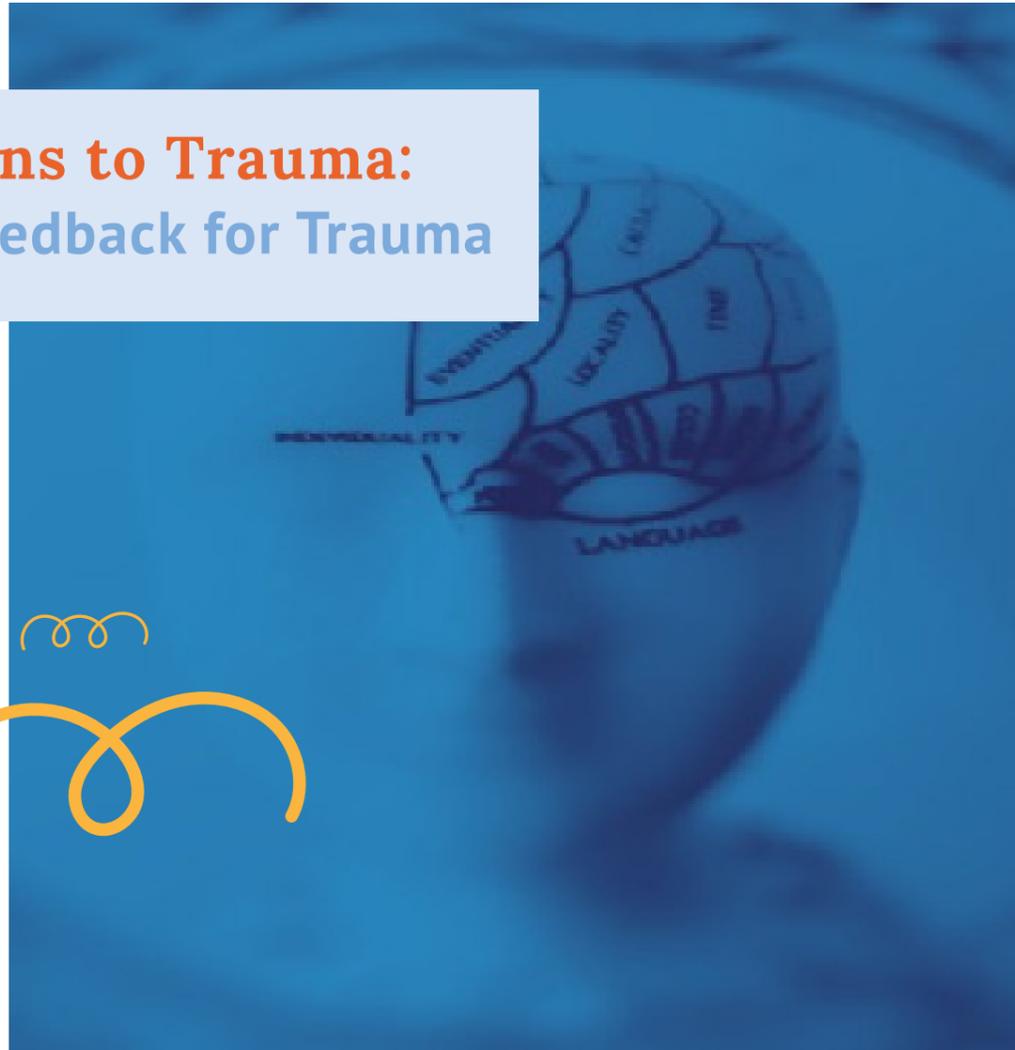
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Solutions to Trauma: Neurofeedback for Trauma



Neurofeedback therapy is the use of biotechnology (encephalogram, or EEG, sensors) to measure a client's brain waves and involves the manipulation of those brain waves to improve the client's health and well-being.

Traditionally, treatment approaches for trauma have included talk-based psychotherapy and medication for symptom management, but new approaches are gaining popularity and offer different methods of treatment, with promising results.

As with psychotherapy, EMDR and other approaches to healing from trauma, the goal of neurofeedback therapy is to help a client process their traumatic memories, so they are no longer impacted by them in the same destructive way. Of course, the memories may always be there, but their power and impact can be significantly reduced with neurofeedback.

In traditional talk-based psychotherapy, the client is assisted in processing these difficult memories by talking about them with the therapist. This can help, but often results in a deeply uncomfortable experience for the client, who may even feel as though they are reliving the event.

Neurofeedback differs from traditional approaches in that the client does not have to verbalise the memories in order to process them.

What is an Encephalogram?

An encephalogram (EEG) is a way of recording brain waves through electrodes attached to the scalp; they are known as sensors. These electrodes record information and send a map of electrical activity in the brain to a computer, where the neurofeedback therapist can see a visual representation of the brain's activity.¹

Brain Wave Stimulation

Twenty neurofeedback sessions are generally recommended, though this can vary depending on the client's progress.



In a session, EEG electrodes are attached to the client's scalp. The client then plays a video game, watches a video, or listens to music in order to stimulate brain wave activity. Throughout the game or clip, the activity of the client's brain waves influences the action on screen. If playing a simple driving game, for example, the player is rewarded by a clear path ahead instead of obstacles – as long as they can inhibit a certain brain wave or excite another.

Similarly, the quality of lighting and sound in the video clip or song can change depending on the brain waves most active in the client and the quality improves when the client can inhibit or excite one type over another,

This positive change on screen or in the audio clip is a reward for the brain. The brain then seeks out more rewards. It begins to understand that certain brainwave activation leads to improved screen quality, or advancements in the game, so it aims to remain in these wave states for as long as possible, or return to them when other, less optimal brain waves are dominant.

Clients can track their state by following the action on screen, helping them to understand and recognise what is happening in their minds and bodies when suboptimal brain waves are operating, so they can make a conscious change.

Why are brain waves important in Neurofeedback?

So, we know that neurofeedback therapy involves the inhibiting or exciting of certain brain waves, but why? How do these brain waves relate to our health or our trauma?

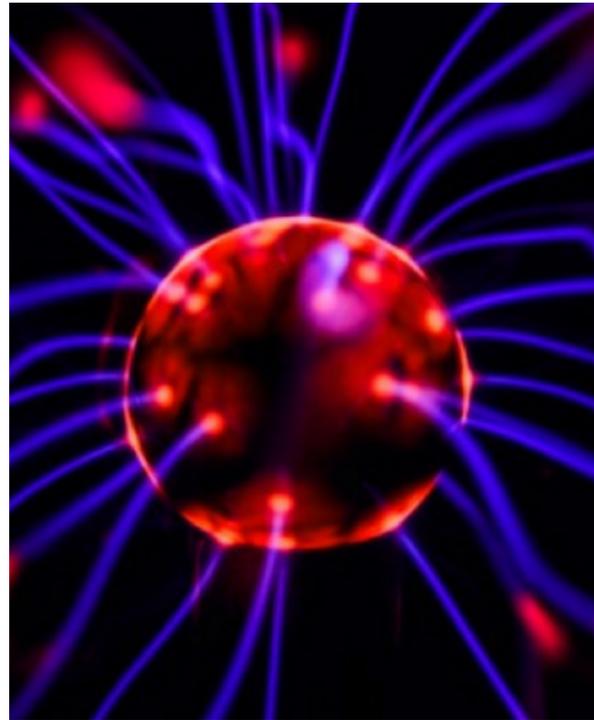
Different brain waves are associated with different states and characteristics of behaviour.

Picture brain waves as a heart rate monitor. We know that a slower wave means the heart is beating slowly and a fast wave means it is beating fast. In the context of brain waves, slower waves can mean we are more relaxed, yet we could also be sluggish, inattentive, or depressive. Faster-paced

waves mean we are alert and focused, but can also mean hyperarousal and anxiety.

Before beginning the neurofeedback sessions, the therapist will discuss with the client what issues they are facing in order to determine what the goals of therapy should be. For example, if a client is lethargic and depressive, then the therapist may aim to train the client's brain into a more active state. In contrast, a client dealing with anxiety and hyperarousal may be guided towards a more relaxed base state with neurofeedback.

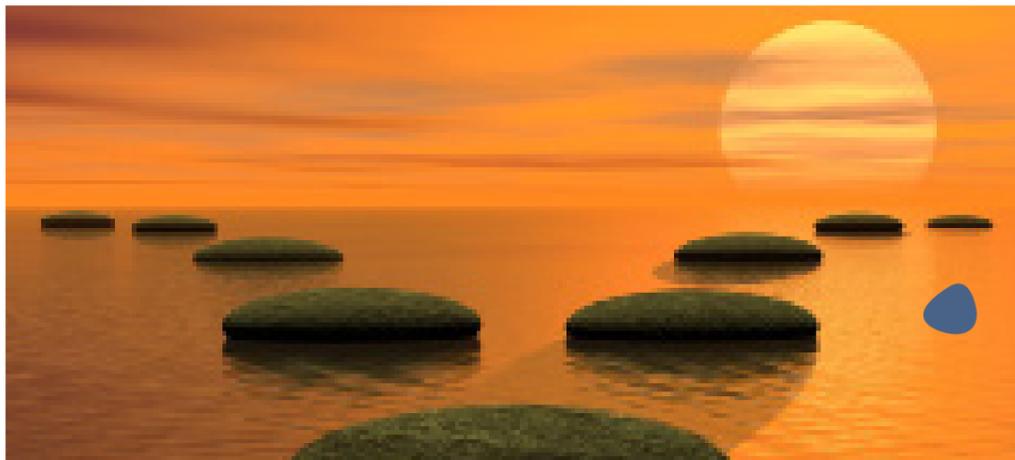
Neurofeedback works because the brain is neuroplastic² – it can adapt and change with the right training. New neural networks and pathways can be formed and old ones discarded by increasing activity in certain areas of the brain and decreasing it in others.



Is Neurofeedback Effective?

Neurofeedback was found to be an effective treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as far back as the 1980s. It was studied and found to be effective when one group of Vietnam veterans diagnosed with PTSD received the treatment, while a second group did not receive the same treatment. The first group exhibited significantly better improvements in PTSD symptoms than the second group. After 2.5 years, symptoms had returned in only 20% of the first group and 100% of the second.³

Another study of neurofeedback and PTSD involving around 300 war veterans was conducted in 2012. In this study 75% of the participants had 'fewer and less severe PTSD symptoms after as few as ten sessions'⁴



Neurofeedback has also been found to be helpful in the treatment of developmental trauma.⁵ Developmental trauma differs from PTSD in that it refers to the trauma experienced in early childhood as a result of issues related to attachment. Childhood abuse, neglect, or sudden loss of a caregiver are considered to be developmental traumas.

In Conclusion

Neurofeedback is a promising treatment for those suffering the adverse effects of trauma. Common to all types of trauma, such as PTSD and developmental trauma, is an inability to self-regulate one's state. It promotes regulation and the ability to self-regulate, thus ameliorating difficult and challenging trauma symptoms, such as hyper and hypo-arousal, anxiety and insomnia.

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Solutions to Trauma: Rolfing



Traumatic events can shape us and not just figuratively. When we are traumatised by an event, which can range from a flying bullet during combat to an unwanted sexual experience, a motor accident or a natural disaster, our amygdala – a tiny almond-shaped structure in the brain – sends a signal to the body that we are in danger. This results in a release of chemicals or hormones, like cortisol and adrenaline, which mobilises the muscles, increases the heart rate and gets the body ready to fight or flee.

This fight/flight response is an activation of the sympathetic nervous system. If the threat faced is too strong (i.e., can't be fought or fled from), the next response is to freeze. This involves a 'shutting-down' of the physical body, the release of endorphins which provides an analgesic effect and a dissociation from reality.

When we freeze, we leave the present moment in order to preserve our sense of self. For us to completely unfreeze, we must discharge this frozen energy. But unlike other mammals, humans are really bad at doing so. Instead, we carry this frozen energy with us in our daily lives. Whether we are aware of it or not, this energy, the remnants of our initial response to threat, impacts our mental, emotional and behavioural well-being.

This stored energy, or unfinished business, can manifest as PTSD symptoms, like hyper-vigilance, anxiety, night terrors, distress, flashbacks, numbness, poor memory, avoidance and chronic pain.

These symptoms are not caused by the original event itself, but by our response and the inability to discharge.

Within the body, muscles and connective tissue that have tightened in fear can remain that way, ultimately blocking the natural flow of energy around the body. This affects our posture and overall body dynamics. Thus, we can actually be shaped by our trauma. However, this doesn't have to be permanent.

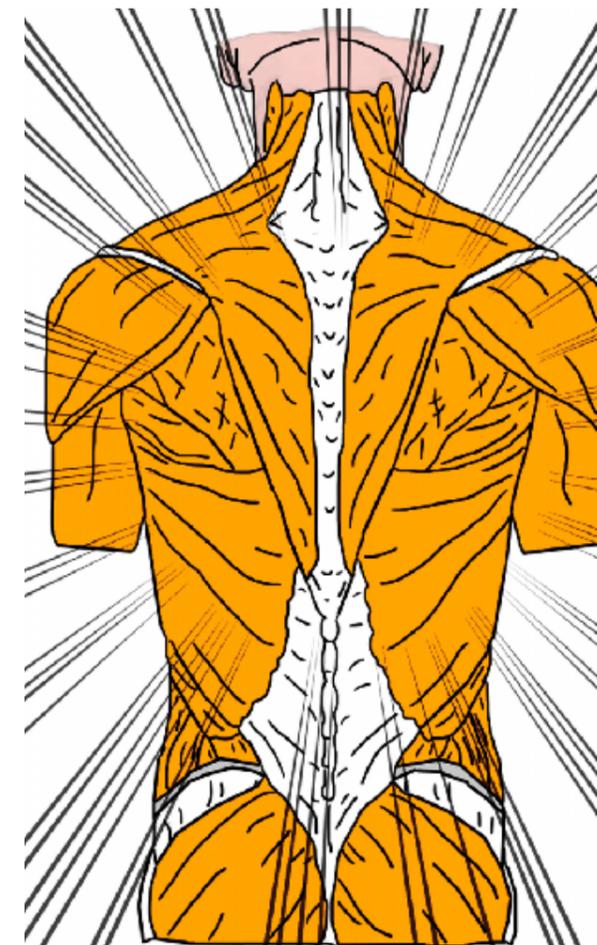
A form of physical therapy known as 'Rolfing' was developed by American biochemist Ida Rolf and aims 'to address patterns and tension that can develop as a result of trauma, work demands, or postural habits', for the purpose of restoring in the client a 'more efficient and easier alignment.'

Rolfing is a treatment approach that views each part of the body as an interrelated whole, so it aims to treat the complete physical structure, over the course of ten professionally led sessions.

According to Rolfing® UK, overall benefits of treatment include[1]:

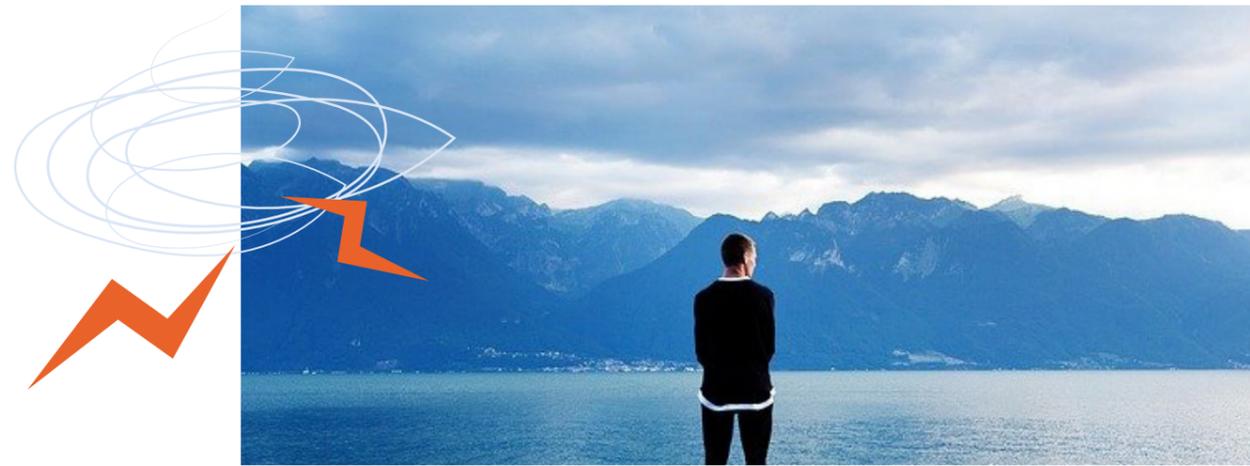
- Pain relief.
 - Improved flexibility.
 - Improved posture.
 - Increased range of movement.
 - Acute and chronic pain management.
 - Release of painful, problematic holding patterns.
 - Increased energy.
 - Improved overall well-being.
- One of the benefits mentioned above, the 'release of painful, problematic holding patterns', is how Rolfing aims to assist clients in overcoming their traumas.

According to Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, Rolfing is a very deep tissue work where people tear your muscles from your fascia with the idea that, at a certain moment, your body comes to be contracted in a certain way that you habitually hold yourself. So, your body takes on a certain posture. And the idea of Rolfing is to really open up all these connections and make the body flexible again in a very deep way.[2]



Rolfing focuses on structural integration, where any malalignment of the body is corrected to better align it with gravity, increasing the efficacy of physical function.

Over the course of ten sessions, known as Ten-Series, a certified Rolfing practitioner will slowly but firmly connect with and manipulate your muscles and tendons and most importantly your fascia, or connective tissue.[3]



Rolfing is delivered over ten structured sessions

Breathing

In your first session, the main focus is on improving your breathing. The practitioner, known as the Rolfer, targets the fascia surrounding your torso, shoulders, neck and head, to 'evoke a more balanced and efficient breathing pattern.'[4] Education on breathing awareness is provided and clients are encouraged to explore their breathing after the session.

Support

The second session involves working with the lower body, mainly the feet, lower legs and knees, to improve strength and create 'an adaptive base of support for changes that will take place later on in the upper body.'[5] Part of the base strengthening is to cultivate within the client a stronger sense of connection with the earth, without which mental and emotional freedom may be more difficult to achieve.

Owning your Space

In session three, the practitioner works on the lateral sides of the body and continues with the breathwork in order to cultivate in the client a greater sense and ownership of the space around them. The practitioner educates the client on the 'side view' for 'an understanding of how the head, shoulder girdle and hips are positionally related to one another when standing under the influence of gravity.'[6]

Support from the ground up

In the fourth session, support is established in the legs from the feet to the pelvic floor, creating the capacity to feel the flow of energy from the ground up.

Core Activation

The focus of the fifth session is on walking with ease. The connection between the legs and the spine is considered and worked on which, when improved, results in greater physical efficiency and reduces strain on the lumbar spine and hip flexors.[7]

Spinal Awareness

Following on from session five, the spine is the focus of session six. Spinal movement is explored, as are restrictions in the back, legs and pelvis.

Balancing the Head

Our heads are heavier than many of us are aware of. A head that is out of alignment can cause the rest of the body to compensate, forcing it to carry its weight. The seventh session is centred around bringing the head into alignment with gravity.

Checking

By the eighth session, structural issues in the client have been brought to attention. Here is an opportunity for the client and practitioner to check in and address any remaining structural imbalances.

Integration

The ninth and penultimate session is a time for the client, with the support of the practitioner, to go over what has been learned so far and integrate all that new information.

Closing Session

In the tenth and final session, focus covers all parts of the body, the information learned is revisited and the client reflects on the process.



A Whole-Person Approach

Integral to the theory behind Rolfing and in fact, all mind-body therapeutic approaches to healing, is the concept of Holism. Holism, as explained in *Advances In The Theory And Practice Of Rolfing*, is the view that[8]:

- The body is an entirety and is no part more important than any other for the organisation of the whole.
- The body and the person that inhabits it are one – any somatic dysfunction will affect other aspects of being.
- The body is self-regulating and self-organising.
- The state of the whole and its environment can help explain any local dysfunction.
- No body part can be understood in isolation; there must be regard for the entire system and the environment.
- All of the above principles go hand in hand.



The Value of Rolfing

Rolfing has long been considered an effective method of releasing physical tension and emotional tension stored within the body. It stands out as a type of treatment that integrates the whole person, deeply involving clients in their own recovery journey. With positive client-practitioner rapport, increased education in awareness of breathing and re-evaluation and integration steps along the way, a ten-session course of Rolfing can make a huge difference to our overall physical, mental and emotional well-being.

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Solutions to Trauma: Homeopathy



Approaching trauma treatment can be as complex as trauma itself. While typical treatment for PTSD and other trauma-related stress are found in the form of psychotherapy and pharmaceutical prescription medication, there are a range of complementary and alternative medicines (CAMs) that are popular choices as treatment.

Clinically proven efficacy aside, traumatic stress has a different shade for everyone affected, as the memories themselves are unique. Healing is a journey that each trauma survivor experiences in a unique way. Some of the time, one's state of mind is integral to how much they progress on that journey. One treatment which has been as praised as much it has been shunned is homeopathy. In this blog we'll take a look at its origins and how its believed to work in the healing of our pain.

Homeopathy is a form of alternative medicine that has been used in the treatment of a range of illnesses for over two hundred years. It was created by German physician Samuel Hahnemann in 1796 and the theory behind the approach is that one can cure a disease by ingesting tiny amounts of a substance that, when consumed by a healthy person, produces symptoms similar to that of the disease.

The term 'homeopathy', derived from the Greek 'homios', translates as 'similar' and 'pathos' and means 'suffering'[1]. Unlike common prescription medications which work to counter or suppress symptoms, homeopathic medicines aim to work in tandem with the body's own natural healing abilities. The idea is similar to that of vaccines and antibiotics, where small amounts of the offending chemical or bacteria are introduced to the body in order to build immunity and resilience.



The Principles of Homeopathy

Three of the main principles of applying homeopathic medicine are[2]:

1st Principle – Similia similibus curanta, meaning 'like cures like'

2nd Principle – Minimum Dosage: The substances used in homeopathy are not intended for consumption in large or even moderate amounts. They are diluted to such a potency that they are barely traceable.

3rd Principle – Single Remedy: Only one homeopathic remedy is prescribed at a time. This provides space for the practitioner and client alike to gain a clearer view on how effectively a remedy is working.

The first principle of homeopathy – like cures like – is believed to work by introducing the symptoms of one's condition to the individual through diluted plant-based substances to match the existing presenting symptoms. An article in the Huffington Post likened this phenomenon to 'that old classic cartoon plot where the main character is hit on the head and loses his or her memory, only to have it return when accidentally hit on the head again.[3]

The idea could be compared to the process of psychotherapeutic treatment approaches in terms of the cognitive exposure to or recalling of the original traumatic event, whereby the client faces their associated thoughts and feelings, going back to the source of their suffering, in order to move forward on the healing journey.



Like other complementary or alternative medicines and therapies, homeopathy takes a mind-body approach to the healing process; the view that the mind and body and one's emotional states, are not to be treated as separate entities but as part of the whole person.

One homeopathic remedy used in treating states of panic and anxiety is a substance



known as aconite (aconitum), which can induce heart palpitations accompanied by anxiety when ingested. Based on the second principle of homeopathy- minimum dose – aconite is diluted to an almost immeasurable potency and helps clients to ‘bridge the gap between mind and body, providing relief for both anxiety and heart palpitations.’[4]

On the use of Homeopathic Treatment

It is important to note that, like other alternative methods of healing, treatment using homeopathy should be delivered on a case-by-case basis, where the practitioner gains a detailed understanding of the client, their lifestyle and their medical history. Furthermore, homeopathy is not intended to stand in as a replacement treatment for clinically proven, evidence-based treatments for PTSD and other trauma-related issues.



For those suffering and struggling, professional treatment based on proven clinical methods should be sought. However, as trauma is extremely complex and affects everyone differently, taking an alternative approach may provide some individuals with a sense of comfort and hope, both of which can encourage a positive outlook for the future.

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Trauma is a complex issue and there is no universal solution as each person’s suffering is as unique as they are.

This individuality was noticed by Dr Edward Bach MRCS, physician, bacteriologist and pathologist, when observing his patients in the 1920’s. He realised that by focusing on the physical body, the patient’s emotions were not taken into account.¹ So, while two patient’s may share the same acute or chronic diagnosis, requiring the same medical intervention, each patient’s individual personality and emotions influenced their healing. For example, one patient may be apathetic and the other patient frustrated – negative emotions which compromised their ability to heal.

Dr Bach had achieved remarkable results with his homeopathic vaccines on ill troops returning from the trenches of WW1, yet was concerned to be using inherently toxic material to cure (homeopathy works on the principle of like treating like).² After further research he gave up his successful Harley Street practice in order to find in nature a simple, gentle, safe system of healing that would restore



balance: “when the soul and personality are in harmony, all is joy and peace, happiness and health.”
³ His work with people experiencing all kinds of health issues and traumas, including reviving a Cromer fisherman dragged virtually lifeless from the sea, led to him completing his discovery of the 38 Bach flower remedies in 1935.

What are they?

Bach flowers are made from plants and trees, such as Rock Rose, White Chestnut and Agrimony. The remedies, in stock bottles (available online or from the high street i.e. Neals Yard, Boots, Holland & Barrett), are administered orally in drops, either neat from the bottle or added to a drink or from a bespoke mix, where up to 7 of the remedies can be combined. There are no constituent parts of the plant material in the stock bottle.⁴

Who can use them?

According to Lynne MacWhinnie a UK Expert on Bach Flower Remedies, the remedies are completely safe, used from pregnancy to birth and throughout life and with animals. Lynne says though, that if you have a sensitivity to alcohol (it is the preservative in the stock bottles), to please consult your medical professional. The Bach system can be used as a modality in its own right. Given the complexity of trauma, I personally recommend integrating the flowers with other modalities so that you create an integrative and holistic approach that specifically resonates with your needs. I worked with Lynne post my cancer diagnosis and found Bach Flower remedies helped me heal post my surgery and hysterectomy very well.



How do I choose remedies?

You can select the remedies on a self-help basis, or see a Bach Foundation Registered Practitioner – there is a global register on www.bachcentre.com – who will guide and educate you in this simple system. Many practitioners have integrated Bach flowers into their core practice, including clinical psychologists, doctors and multi-modality therapists.

Emotions associated with trauma may include, feeling panic, toxic guilt, fear, anguish, feeling disconnected, angry, tearful or out of control and the descriptions of Bach flowers will match those feelings and any other emotion you may have. Star of Bethlehem, for example, is the remedy for someone who has experienced trauma, where there is a dislocation between the physical and

subtle body.⁵ This remedy is used for past and present events.

As a client, it is not necessary to recount any traumatic event, only to explain your current thoughts and feelings. Dr Bach described the action of the remedies as ‘flooding the personality with the virtues of the flower’ and in so doing this encourages innate positive qualities and healing.



What happens when I take the remedies?

It depends, as each person’s experience is different. Some people report feeling an almost immediate positive shift and others find it is subtler and slower, yet no less profound. In the process of taking the remedies other emotions may arise – this is indicative of the ‘onion-peeling effect’ where buried feelings surface. Identify the corresponding flower and adjust your next mix accordingly. It’s important to take the remedies consistently and regularly.



There is a combination remedy that you may have heard of, with brand names of 5 Flower and Rescue Remedy. It contains five Bach flowers and helps with being centred and grounded if there is shock or anxiety. It’s used by public figures, performers and increasingly by medical and health professionals in different settings around the world. It’s a useful ‘first-aid’ remedy to have to hand should you feel triggered. It’s also available as a cream for topical application.

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Solutions to Trauma: Transformational & Holotropic Breathwork



We often take our breath for granted – we breathe automatically and move through our days without giving it so much as a second thought. However, when we begin to notice our breath by bringing our conscious awareness to it, we can achieve significant benefits to both our physical and mental health.¹ Transformational Breath and Holotropic Breathwork are approaches to healing and overall health promotion developed in the second half of the 20th century, but are based on ancient concepts.

Transformational Breathwork

Transformational Breathwork is a holistic breathing technique developed by Judith Kravitz in the 1970s, based on her experiences with another form of breathwork popular at the time known as Rebirthing.² In practice, Kravitz gained a number of insights not only into her own life, but about how the technique could be further developed. She drew on her knowledge of a range of practices, such as Kundalini yoga and sound healing, to create the modality known today as Transformational Breathwork.

What happens in a Transformational Breathwork session?

The practice of Transformational Breathwork involves conscious awareness of the breath. Clients breathe deep into the abdomen in what is known as diaphragmatic breathing, inhaling through the mouth. Following a deep inhale, the breath is allowed to leave the body naturally, without effort. The breath simply falls out of the body.

Facilitators use a gentle hands-on approach to locate areas of tension in the body. These areas highlight where our energy, or 'prana'³ is stuck or blocked. By applying some pressure to these areas of blocked energy, it becomes easier to release both physical and emotional tension, which in turn expands the client's breathing capacity.

Facilitators also use sound and positive affirmation to encourage psychophysical change, leading to greater relaxation and thus the ability to breathe deeper into the diaphragm.

Using Transformational Breath is not a cure-all solution to our problems – especially for those of us who are suffering from trauma-related symptoms. However, the tools and techniques learned and applied from breathwork can work wonders for our mental clarity, our stress levels and even our immune system.

Transformational Breathwork is a natural, safe and healthy technique that, once learned, can be used in our own time on a daily basis.



Holotropic Breathwork

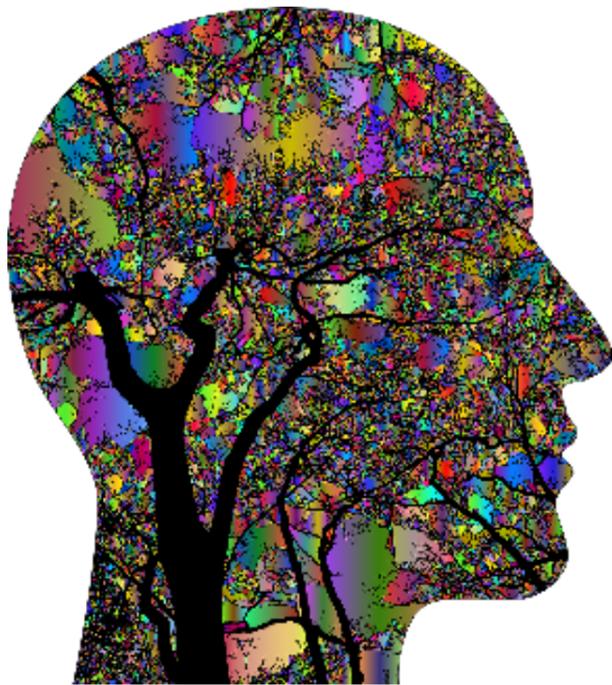
Holotropic Breathwork is a breathing technique developed by Stanislav and Cristina Grof in the 1970s. HB draws on a number of disciplines used in ancient spiritual practices and anthropology. The aim of Holotropic Breathwork is to allow clients to enter an altered state of consciousness⁴ – perhaps more appropriately termed non-ordinary states of consciousness (NOSC) for the purpose of self-discovery, self-exploration and healing. The term 'holotropic' is derived from the Greek word for 'holos' (whole) and 'trepein' (to move towards). Thus, 'holotropic' means 'to move towards wholeness'.

The development of holotropic coincided with the rise of psychedelic psychotherapy, a type of

psychotherapy that HB founder Stanislav Grof is commonly known for as a result of his revolutionary work with the psychedelic drug LSD.⁵

Holotropic Breathwork offers participants the opportunity for transpersonal experience and a 'physical and emotional catharsis associated with stress and prior trauma'.⁶ Though at times the experience can feel overwhelming, this physical and emotional release is an important step on the path to whole health.

What happens in a Holotropic Breathwork session?



In a session, which usually happens in a group, clients lie on a mat with their eyes closed and follow the guidance of a certified practitioner to breathe using the Holotropic technique. While the Holotropic experience is unique for each person, people often report some closed eye visuals and a deep understanding of where in their body their energy, or 'prana', flows freely and where it is blocked.

Integral to the work is that participants leave sessions with a sense of personal empowerment. HB facilitators are not in themselves healers, but instead support the participants own self-healing.⁷

An Intense Experience

In both Transformational and Holotropic Breathwork, the emotions and memories that arise can lead to intense experiences.

Memories, emotions and feelings that have been deeply buried and held for a long time can rise to the surface, which at first can feel a little

overwhelming. The resurfacing of these deeply held emotions and memories is a good thing, however, as this is how healing occurs. When our repressed experiences become conscious, they can be met with compassion and re-integrated into our lives from a place of calm relaxation and health.

Conclusion

The use of deep breathing techniques is not a new idea. It is integral to a wide range of ancient Eastern spiritual practices such as Kundalini yoga, Pranayama yoga and meditation in general. With both Transformational and Holotropic Breathwork, breathing is used effectively to promote natural healing and release of stored physical and emotional tension that clears a path for whole healing to occur. Though there are spiritual, or cosmic, themes running through both practices, there is



absolutely no requirement for participants to align with any spiritual belief system or religious doctrine.

Breathwork is about an individual's own journey and inner experiences and how an understanding of the self can lead to greater health and well-being.

Furthermore, these techniques are not necessarily stand-alone therapies but may significantly improve therapeutic outcomes.⁸

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Reiki is a form of alternative medicine known as 'energy healing'. It is based on ancient Japanese healing techniques and was refined in the early 20th century by Japanese doctor, Mikao Usui. It is a safe, non-invasive approach to treatment for a variety of physical and psychological health issues, including physical pain, fatigue, anxiety and stress.

The International Association of Reiki Professional (IARP) defines Reiki as 'a subtle and effective form of energy healing using spiritually guided life force energy.'^[1] Though there is a spiritual aspect to the approach, IARP explains that the practice itself is 'not affiliated with any particular religion or religious practice.'^[2]

Energy healing therapies like Reiki work with the idea that 'Qi' (or Chi) a universal vital life force, flows through our bodies and contributes to normal, healthy functioning and general well-being. If the natural flow of energy, or Qi, is obstructed, we become prone to developing physical and psychological difficulties, like chronic pain, fatigue, depression and anxiety.

Also integral to energy healing approaches is the idea that the body is self-regulating and has the natural ability to heal itself. Problems arise when energy is blocked, but when that energy is freed and can once again flow naturally, the body, mind and spirit can begin to heal.

Trauma

People can experience trauma in a multitude of ways. We all process events differently, so what may be moved on from quickly by one person may have lasting impact for another. To make matters more complex, the origin of trauma does not always have to come from direct experience. Vicarious trauma[3], for example, can occur in a person when they empathetically engage with a traumatised individual, whereby they end up internalising the other person's experience. This is most often seen in those who work in the healing profession.



Another lesser known type of trauma is trans-generational trauma[4]. This is the passing on of unprocessed traumatic experiences from one generation to the next.

Reiki, like other forms of alternative medicine and bodywork, takes a whole person approach to healing. The idea is that the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual aspects of our lives are interrelated. All flow together to create the one whole person and imbalances in one of these aspects will impact the others.

In terms of trauma healing, Reiki aims to encourage deep relaxation and the elimination of stress. For trauma survivors, stress is a major contributor to adverse health issues.

This is because in the face of threat, we, as mammals, execute a fight/flight response, during which our body is flooded with stress chemicals like cortisol and adrenaline.[5] Our sympathetic nervous system is activated, for the purposes of mobilising our muscles and preparing to either fight the threat we are facing, or flee from it. This happens so fast in fact that the signals sent from our brain to take action are delivered before our conscious mind is even aware. In situations where the threat cannot be fought or fled from, we have a third response, which is freeze.[6]

When we freeze, we physically shut down and mentally dissociate from what is happening, as the offending situation is too overwhelming to handle. However, we can't just go from zero to freeze. We must pass through the fight/flight phase first. This means that when we enter that state of freeze, our energy levels are extremely high.

Fight/flight/freeze occurs in all mammals, but humans are different in the aftermath of their threat response. Other mammals, when recovering from a threatening situation, can 'shake off' their activated energy and return to a normal, base state within minutes. Unfortunately for us, our thinking, human mind often gets in the way and inhibits us from erratic or frantic shaking

or trembling, which would help us to discharge that frozen energy. Instead, when the threat has passed, we continue with our lives but now with the added weight of the traumatic experience in the form of stored energy.

What to expect in a Reiki Session

During a typical session, the client finds a comfortable sitting or lying position and remains fully clothed.[7] Depending on the preference of the patient, music can be played, or the session can be carried out in silence.



Once the client is relaxed, the Reiki practitioner uses light touch or a hands-free approach, placing their hands on or above different areas of the body, such the head, arms, legs and torso and uses different hand shapes in the process, for anywhere between two and five minutes in each location. [8]

Essential to the effectiveness of Reiki is how well attuned to the practitioner is to the energy of the client. When working through each part of the body, the practitioner keeps their hand in that position until they sense that it is time to move on to another body part.

Reiki and Emotional Release

Reiki helps to release some of that stored energy by guiding the mind and body into a state of deep relaxation. As part of the fight/flight response, emotional responses can be buried or suppressed in order to help us get through the traumatic experience. When the person enters a state of relaxation in a Reiki healing session, those buried emotions can rise to the surface and be released.



A Subjective Experience

Reiki is not intended to act as a substitute for clinically proven treatments. Rather, it is a subjective experience that may help a struggling individual process physical and emotional pain that they

previously felt was accessible yet problematic. Reiki is safe and accounts for the potential of re-traumatisation by adapting to client's preferences (i.e., if a client is uncomfortable with physical touch, then physical touch does not have to take place).

Energy healing is an ancient method of treatment and one that is still popular today. The lack of strong scientific evidence to support energy-based treatments may deter some people, but with an open mind and curiosity, Reiki could be highly beneficial.

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Solutions to Trauma: Shamanic Healing



As you can see in the 'Solutions to Trauma' series, I don't believe there is one specific method or path to overcoming our trauma, but a myriad of methods that help. I am going to share some of my personal experience with the shamanic approach to healing.

I've got quite a few stories to tell about some of the different ways I've experimented on the healing journey. In fact, I may well do a video on that very subject soon. But a path that always appealed to me was the shamanic one, maybe because Shamans have been healers in our world since healing stories began. I love that the elder of the tribe or the wise one, who exhibited an awareness of and connection with aspects of life, various dimensions that others could not see, was there to help others on their life paths.

A Brief History of Healing

In his book *The Invisible Lion*, psychotherapist Benjamin Fry writes about the importance of whole person integration when it comes to healing^[1]. While modern medicine looks mainly at the mind and body for healing, it tends to forego a third vital element of being human – the spirit. For real healing to occur, the mind, body and spirit must be addressed.

A long time ago, explains Fry, our first port of call when experiencing a health issue would be with a priest or shaman. The belief was that health problems were related to spiritual karma and remedies may have been prescribed in the form of prayer or meditation[2], perhaps even sacrifice. But following the Age of Enlightenment, where science took centre stage above what was then deemed superstition and mysticism, the spiritual aspect of health problems was dismissed and medicine focused more on addressing and healing the physical body. As we reached the late 19th and early 20th century, the focus of health began to shift more towards the mind and how our psychological states were affecting our health and well-being.



Have we thrown the baby out with the bathwater?

Though religious ideology seems to take less importance as we move forward in society, we must consider that we may have ‘thrown the baby out with the bathwater’. Elements of spiritual rituals serve a greater purpose than compliance with any particular doctrine. As humans, we are community-based animals. Rituals that address the spirit can serve to cultivate a sense of connectedness and unity that are integral to whole-person health. Very often a perpetuating factor in mental illness is a sense of isolation and loneliness[3], which highlights the importance of the community connection we find in spiritual practice.



Ayahuasca and Shamanic Practice

My reticence has for a long time been the Ayahuasca side of shamanism. Ayahuasca, a plant-based brew containing the psychoactive substance dimethyltryptamine (DMT) has strong association with ancient shamanic practice. Even today, Ayahuasca ceremonies are held across the world and claim to promote spiritual and psychological well-being.

As some of you may know if you’ve watched my TEDx talk, an early experience some 27 years ago with a hallucinogenic substance, a psychosis and being sectioned, pretty much put me off ever doing anything like that again!

I don’t think I’m a total sceptic about it, as I know lots of people have used plant medicine or other

spiritual tools to accelerate their journey for years. In fact, two of my heroes in the field – Gabor Mate and Dr Wayne Dyer, (Wayne who has since passed) – are known to have tried Ayahuasca. It’s something that I am not completely averse to, but the recovery journey for me is often about the healing being from the inside out and not the outside in.

If Ayahuasca and another popular ancient shamanic medicine – Psilocybin – can help those who are depressed or stuck come out of it, then great!

However, to be completely honest, I would not suggest the psychedelic route for anyone who is at the beginning of their trauma healing journey. Or for those who aren’t able as yet to be the observer to their process or their mind and bodily state, because if someone is disconnected, dissociative and unable to disengage from their own internal critical voice and cannot hear an adult soothing



voice, then I personally believe that any spiritual practice including mind altering substances of any sort could be unhelpful.

Trauma and the Spirit

When we go through a period of trauma in our lives, what happens frequently is that we mentally dissociate from that phenomenon. This is part of our freeze response[4], whereby the original threat we faced, the one that led us to experiencing trauma, is too overwhelming to process. We can freeze physically, whereby we may enter a state of shut down or compliance, but there can also be a psychological freeze, or psychic paralysis. Unlike our animal counterparts, humans are unfortunately poor at ‘shaking off’ traumatic events and very often store the reactive energy deep within the body, to later impact our overall health and well-being.

But what also happens, according to the shamanistic point of view, is the phenomenon of spiritual dissociation, whereby our soul is believed to have become fragmented. A part of our souls leaves us as a protective mechanism, so that our psyche does not become so overwhelmed that it implodes. It does this to allow us to survive the situation.

When we suffer soul loss, though initially protective, this dissociation, this part of us that is lost, leaves us feeling as though there is something missing in our lives. There are many symptoms that come with soul loss or soul dissociation. People may feel anxious, depressed or suffer chronic fatigue. Soul loss happens to protect us so we may survive energetically in a period of trauma.



Shamanism views soul loss as a form of spiritual crisis. When a shaman looks at you and sees you, they are looking for parts that are not with you; parts that have left for your protection. Shamanic healing takes the view that in order to become an integrated whole, this lost part of ourselves must be found, healed and warmly welcomed back onto our lives.

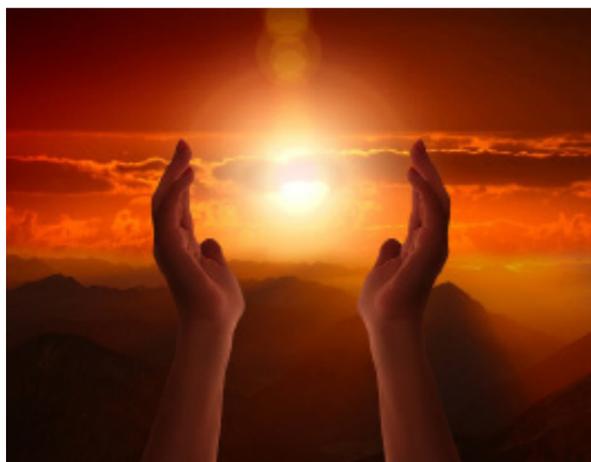
While the spiritual approach may be more easily accessible to some more than others, the root of the idea is that once you can become the observer to your process and allow the somatic (body) to discharge whatever it needs to release whilst holding a safe space, some quite extraordinary things can happen.



In fact, I recently had an amazing experience with a shamanic healer called the Quantum Medic. I have worked with shamans before and my old shamanic healer, Heather, was absolutely brilliant. We worked with the shamanic drum and rattles around my auric energy field. However, a friend of mine recently told me she had experienced an amazing release with cacao (chocolate!).

Cacao Therapy

Cacao is not mind altering nor a hallucinogenic, but has theobromine in it, just like chocolate, to help your brain and body move into a relaxed state to release. It felt ok to just be drinking chocolate given my history, so I decided to give it a go and it was a phenomenal experience! I was led by the wonderful, grounded and spiritual presence of Dr Aki Lakani, the Quantum Medic. During the four-hour process – I felt able to shake, rattle and roll my body on the floor and release energy and tears that had been held in my system for what felt like a very long time.



Shamanic Healing – A Complementary Approach to Healing

So, would I exchange Shamanism for therapy, EMDR or any other type of healing? No, probably not on its own. I think I needed to do the former work to be able to fully hold the space and allow my body and mind to release what it needed to in the shamanic work without freaking out!

But I would certainly do Shamanic or any other spiritual or healing work in addition to more conventional methods and choose to do them at the right time for me. We are all individual and need to choose for us what we feel guided to do – our higher self knows what suits us best.

I was aware in my cacao ceremony as my arm flayed about and my head rolled from side to side, and I made a sound that emanated from my lungs like I've never heard before, that I hadn't been able to do work like that in talk therapy! And even with the shaking in EMDR therapy, the noises weren't the same as they had been in the shamanic work.

So, each to their own!

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Solutions to Trauma: Sound Healing



‘Sound therapy stimulates the capacity of the human body to heal itself.’¹

Music and sound have been an important part of both culture and healing practices since ancient times, spanning the Greeks, the Egyptians and the Australian Aboriginals, to name just a few.

The use of sound in a therapeutic setting has been found to aid the treatment of a range of trauma-related issues, such as PTSD, physical pain, depression, anxiety, sleep problems and even addictions.²

In sound healing therapy, practitioners use a variety of instruments to create vibrations and tones that promote rest and relaxation in clients, guiding them towards a calm, meditative state. The powerful healing vibrations from these instruments resonate with the body and promote inner balance and harmony.

Sound Healing involves a “re-tuning” of the body. When we experience an event that overwhelms our nervous system – when our sympathetic nervous system becomes over-activated and our

parasympathetic nervous system fails to counter this activation after the event – the energy we used in response to the event, or threat, becomes frozen, or stuck, in the body and leads to imbalance or disharmony in the body. Our frozen energy is often found in areas of tension or holding in the body and the breath and the rest of the body adapts to the frozen energy, or the pain point. This disharmony can then manifest as physical or psychological illness.

‘It is when these orienting and defending responses are overwhelmed that we see trauma’,³ says Dr. Peter Levine, author, psychologist and founder of Somatic Experiencing.

While talk-based therapies can help therapists gain an understanding of a client’s issues, very often the process required to truly heal is not cognitive, but somatic, or body-based.

It may help to imagine the body itself as an instrument, like a piano. If one key is out of tune, then the whole instrument does not function properly. Sound healers use vibrational instruments, like Tibetan sound bowls or tuning forks, to re-tune the body and promote inner harmony.

Sound Healing Sessions

Sound healing sessions typically last between 45 to 60 minutes and can be taken in groups or in one-to-one sessions. Clients are asked to sit or lie comfortably and are typically given a soft blanket, a pillow for their head and an eye mask.

Some of the most benefits of sound healing therapies and practices include:⁴

- Stress and anxiety reduction
- Pain reduction
- Improved sleep
- Improved mood
- Improved concentration and focus
- Enhanced memory
- Reduction in blood pressure
- Enhanced memory
- Improves depression symptoms

What instruments are used in Sound Healing?

Sound Healing practitioners use Tibetan singing bowls, tuning forks, gongs, or binaural beats (known as brainwave entrainment) in sessions to aid clients in releasing stored tension from their bodies.

Tuning Forks

Tuning forks are used to apply a certain vibrational resonance to a specific area of the body. They are used for the release of tension and the restoration of emotional balance. Just like how acupuncture uses needles on specific body points, tuning forks target areas of tension with vibrations.

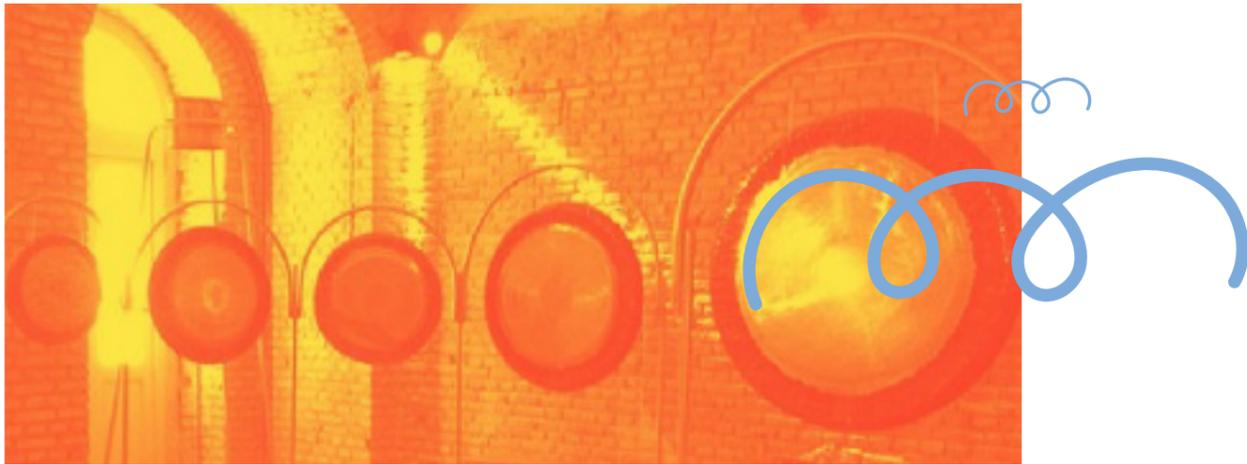


Tibetan Singing Bowls

Also known as Himalayan bowls, these instruments are used to promote deep relaxation and healing. They are often used to aid meditation practices and, in therapy, are used in 'sound baths', whereby a client is surrounded with these or similar instruments to be immersed in the healing sounds.

Gongs

Gongs, like singing bowls, are often used in sound baths. These instruments create powerful vibrations that can resonate with the body on a deep level. Common to ancient and modern yogic and meditation practices, the gong is a useful tool in bringing listeners into the present moment, the only place that real healing can occur.



Binaural Beats (Brainwave Entrainment)

The use of binaural beats involves the use of bilateral aural stimulation – sound frequencies played through headphones – and uses slightly different sound frequencies to produce a third, illusory tone. Binaural beats are used to promote relaxation and influence brain wave activity. Depending on the frequencies used, different brain waves are believed to be activated.

Why does Sound Healing help with Trauma recovery?

'Sound healing is the use of sacred instruments or voice to release energetic blockages inducing a state of ease and harmony in the body,'⁵ says Martha Collard of Red Doors Studio.

The main benefit of sound healing, one that paves the way for all of its other benefits, is that it promotes relaxation and releases tension.⁶ Trauma survivors are often inundated with feelings of tension and anxiety, making it harder for the mind and body to heal. When relaxation happens, we can take a step further on the healing journey. Traditional approaches to healing from trauma include talk-based, cognitive psychotherapies, but these modalities often fail to achieve lasting, somatic change. The use of vibration in sound healing therapies directly affects the body, promoting relaxation and well-being, paving the way for recovery from our trauma symptoms.

Of course, sound healing is not recommended to be used as a single approach to trauma recovery. It acts well as a complementary therapy in conjunction with other, evidence-based modalities, like psychotherapy and medication for symptom management if necessary.

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Solutions to Trauma: Exercise, Massage & Other Relaxation/Healing Techniques



Healing from trauma doesn't have to exclusively take place within the walls of a therapist's office. There are many approaches that can be taken by those who are suffering from the adverse effects of trauma that don't require psychotherapy or any form of psychoanalysis. Of course, professional therapy is an important aspect of the healing journey, but there are tools, techniques and general modes of relaxation that help clients reduce their levels of stress and tension, ultimately improving one's quality of life.

There are a number of ways in which trauma survivors and in fact, anybody, can give their minds and bodies the best chances at achieving optimum health.

First, the importance of relaxation. When we experience life events that overwhelm us, which can take many forms, such as a car accident, childhood abuse, neglect, sudden loss and grief, natural disaster and war, we can become traumatised. Being traumatised is less about the event or events than it is about our internal response. When faced with a real or even a perceived threat, our natural response is to fight, flee or freeze.

Whatever the response, we humans are unfortunately poorly skilled at shaking off this threat response once the threat has passed. We tend to hold on to the energy that was activated and carry it with us in our daily lives. This is detrimental to our health, however, as held stress and tension can manifest as physical and psychological dysfunction.

In order to be in our best health and give ourselves the best chances of successfully recovering from our mental, emotional and behavioural difficulties, we need to give the body what it needs to heal. Very often, this means proper exercise, nutrition and relaxation techniques.

The Power of Exercise

It is almost needless to say that exercise is key to good health. Many studies have found that exercise plays a key role in our physical and mental health. When it comes to treatment for trauma-related conditions, yoga, tai chi, Pilates and martial arts can provide significant relief from symptoms such as anxiety and depression, improve sleep and improve one's overall mood. Many approaches to trauma healing are realising the power of the mind-body connection and how the state of one informs the health of the other. Developing a connection to the body can lead to a sense of confidence and groundedness which can significantly improve therapeutic outcomes. Of course, these healing modalities when applied in the context of trauma should be trauma-informed. In other words, the sensitivity of trauma survivors must be taken into account within classes and sessions so as to avoid the risk of re-traumatisation.



The Importance of Nutrition

A healthy diet is a key factor in attaining and maintaining good mental, emotional and physical health.¹ It is a matter of providing our bodies with the fuel necessary to function efficiently, without which we are prone to fatigue, low mood and general dysfunction.

We can keep our bodies as happy and healthy as possible by following a few simple nutritional guidelines, such as eating regular meals, increasing our omega 3 fatty acid intake, eating protein-rich foods. We can also help our body to function properly by adding more magnesium and antioxidants into our diets, limiting stimulants like processed sugar and caffeine and, perhaps most importantly, staying hydrated.

The Healing Power of Massage

Massage can be of major benefit to trauma survivors, leading to reductions in stress, depression and anxiety.² As a result of our overwhelming experiences, our bodies can enter into prolonged states of hyperarousal. In hyperarousal, cortisol and adrenaline (the body's stress chemicals) are produced and released in excessive amounts and eventually wear down our muscles, leaving them weak and less able to function effectively. Not only can massage effectively reduce cortisol and adrenaline levels in the body, it has also been found to increase levels of dopamine and serotonin, which are brain chemicals associated with positive moods.³ Physical pain as a result of stress can also be alleviated through massage, as it relaxes tense muscles and improves blood circulation.⁴

Shiatsu is one type of massage that improves the overall health and well-being of trauma survivors. Shiatsu massage therapy focuses on energy flow throughout the body, where pressure is applied to trigger points to improve blood and energy flow. In shiatsu massage, deeply held tension and stress can be released and thus the associated symptoms can be ameliorated.⁵



Other Healing Modalities

Exercise, nutrition and massage are key to good health. When it comes to healing from trauma, they can support significantly positive therapeutic outcomes. In addition to these modes of healing, there are a number of other techniques that can be used by those suffering from trauma to move them forward on the path to restored health.

Kinesiology for Trauma

Kinesiology is a healing modality that monitors a client's muscular health to locate imbalances in the body that could be causing ill health and disease. Kinesiologists use a range of techniques, including acupressure, massage and close attention to a client's physical reflexes and muscular responses to determine the best approaches to facilitate natural healing.⁶

Alexander Technique

The Alexander Technique is a method of relaxation that promotes self-awareness and deep relaxation through focused deep breathing and physical alignment. Over time, the stress and tension that result from trauma can literally shape our bodies. Held tension in one area of the body

can cause the rest of the body to shift to make up for weight imbalances. Essentially, trauma sends the body out of alignment, The Alexander Technique is a means of correcting the way we move and hold ourselves so that our bodies can move and function optimally, without excess effort or tension.⁷

Bowen Technique

The Bowen technique involves the light manipulation of muscles, tendons and ligaments to release stored tension and provide relief from the physical symptoms of trauma. The Bowen technique focuses on individual areas of the body and at no point uses high pressure or force. It is light, easy and can provide relief in even one session.⁸

Healing from Trauma through Relaxation

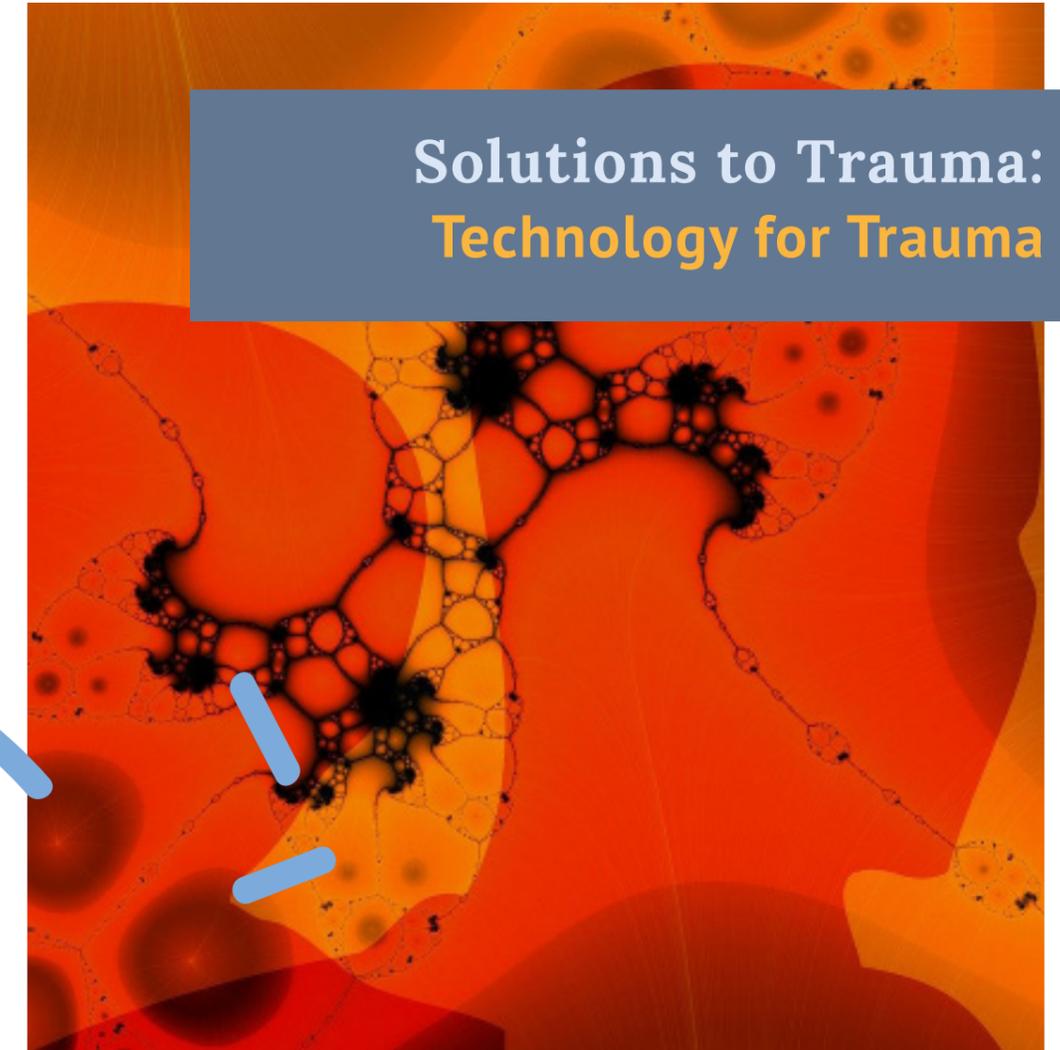
All of the above techniques and healing modalities (including nutrition) promote the healing process by supporting the body to function naturally and efficiently. As mentioned, trauma can cause significant disruption to the body's functionality, which in turn can evoke or exacerbate our psychological difficulties. All of the above approaches can be used safely alongside traditional approaches to trauma treatment. These approaches do not discriminate, they can be used by absolutely anyone. Of course, massage and related modalities must be trauma-informed, in both a physical and psychological sense, to avoid retraumatization in clients.

While some of these techniques require the help and guidance of certified practitioners, two of the aforementioned healing modalities – exercise and nutrition – can be incorporated into our lives daily and give us the best chance of living healthy, fulfilling lives.

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New Technological and Online Approaches



Solutions to Trauma: Technology for Trauma

Advancements in technology have changed the way we assess and treat trauma. There is a variety of new technologies which have been specifically designed to promote healing and wellbeing and to reduce trauma-related symptoms.

Over recent years, there have been a plethora of new additions to the field of personal development and therapy in terms of devices and enhanced online options to speed up or stimulate recovery. In this blog, I wanted to bring you some of the current offerings available which might aid your journey. It is worth noting that I haven't tested them all and no payment or commission is received for promoting them; I simply want to bring them to your awareness.

Heart Rate Variability

One advancement is the use of biofeedback devices such as heart rate variability (HRV) measuring tools which is used as a means of detecting nervous system activation.

This is exciting territory for trauma treatment, because not only does HRV measurement tell us how much an individual has been affected by trauma, it also lets us know how well a type of treatment

is working. We will elaborate further on HRV later, but first it might helpful to consider how trauma and heart rate are linked.

The Body on Trauma ***The Nervous System***

When we experience intense stress, like during a traumatic experience, our sympathetic nervous system (SNS) kicks into gear, supporting the behaviours we need to survive¹. It allows us to fight - attacking the source of threat - or flight/flee - gaining distance from the threat. If fighting or fleeing are not viable options, our parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) activates our freeze response², whereby the systems in our body significantly slow down and usually lead to psychological dissociation, characterised by a disconnect from reality.



Those of us who have experienced repeated trauma, or live in constant stress, heavily rely on the sympathetic response to cope. This reliance often results in thinking and behavioural patterns often diagnosed as anxiety, anger issues or PTSD. Anyone who has experienced or are experiencing repeated physical or sexual abuse - where fighting and fleeing are not options - will have a heavy reliance on the parasympathetic response, often resulting in dissociative disorders and depressive symptoms.

When an individual's nervous system has been traumatised, there is noticeably less activity in the prefrontal cortex, the hippocampus and other parts of the brain associated with memory, cognitive function and emotional regulation. To experience trauma and remain untreated, a person will typically suffer from the above where daily functioning, interpersonal relationships and general wellbeing are negatively affected.

While the SNS and PNS are strongly linked to trauma, there is another system of the body involved in the impact: the respiratory system.



The Respiratory System

When we inhale, our sympathetic nervous system is activated which increases our heart rate. When we exhale, our vagus nerve, linked to the parasympathetic nervous system is activated which slows our heart rate. When our nervous system is healthy, there is a balance between our sympathetic nervous system and dorsal vagal nerve and our resting heart rate is low. The healthier the system, the greater variation can be found between heartbeats. This would show as a high HRV score. HRV scores have been found to be lower than normal in those with Adverse Childhood

Experiences (ACE). A low HRV is associated with the same issues, like disease and social problems, as reported in the ACE Study. But HRV does not only tell us how deeply a person has been impacted by trauma, it also shows us how effective a given intervention is at healing the nervous system.

Biofeedback and Gaming Therapy

Child and Adult Psychotherapist, Cath Knibbs, is incorporating biofeedback technology into her therapy sessions, in the form of gaming³.



'Gaming', explains Knibbs, 'can be used for almost any issue a client presents with, if you can be creative with it and it can help to facilitate the therapeutic relationship, especially with children and younger people⁴.'

Knibbs used one biofeedback device on a young patient aged 9 years. It was explained to the patient that the device attached to his earlobe would measure his heart rate. Small variations could be detected and it was explained to the patient that his pattern of breathing and heart rate could be influenced by paying attention to the breath.

The patient was given a game to play, which involved the character navigating the world of the game and collecting gold rings along the way.

The balance between the patient's heart rate and breathing rate was reflected in the game score, so it was explained to the patient that it was in his best interests to maintain a good balance. While at the beginning of the game balance was poor, eventually the patient was able to listen to his body and make adjustments to his breathing pattern, which affected his heart rate and as a result performed better in the game.

PhysioCam as a Biofeedback Tool

Benjamin Fry, psychotherapist, author and founder of Khiron Clinics, has been collaborating with Dr. Stephen Porges - father of the Polyvagal Theory - in the creation of PhysioCam, a biofeedback device that measures activation of the nervous system⁵.

The device is connected to a camera and is able to detect changes in blood flow to the face, making it easier to understand precisely when a client is becoming over or under activated.

PhysioCam provides clinicians with a live read-out of nervous system regulation from coloured screen and enables them to record both the session and important statistics session-by-session during the extended treatment period.

Dr. Stephen Porges' Safe and Sound Protocol

The Safe and Sound Protocol (SSP) is a five-hour auditory intervention developed by Dr. Stephen Porges.

The intervention is designed to assist clients in healing from trauma and restoring function in areas that have been impacted, such as social engagement and emotional regulation, by reducing stress and auditory sensitivity.

SSP has been found to show significant results in terms of:

- Social difficulties.
- Emotional difficulties.
- Auditory sensitivity.
- Difficulties related to anxiety.
- Attention.
- Stressors that hinder social engagement.



The working concept behind SSP is that, in accordance with Porges' Polyvagal Theory, communication is improved and therapy can be more successful when a client's emotional and physiological states are calm.

'Better state regulation improves therapeutic outcomes.'⁶

SSP aims to stimulate regulation of the nervous system by using specifically processed music and sounds to exercise and challenge the nervous system.

The music used in SSP is designed to train the clients auditory pathways, with the goal being to increase the functionality of two of our cranial nerves (VII and X). Cranial nerve VII is what allows us to tune in to the human voice and pay less attention to irrelevant frequencies. Cranial nerve X (the vagus nerve) is associated with the ability to self-soothe and regulate our autonomic nervous system.

With improved functioning in these cranial nerves, clients can enjoy greater focus and calmer emotional and physiological states.

HeartMath Technology

Research carried out by the Heartmath Institute has found that heart activity affects cognitive and emotional function. When we are stressed or are experiencing negative emotions, the rhythm of the heart is often disordered and the signals sent from heart to brain lead to inhibited higher cognitive function, like clarity of thought, memory, reasoning, learning and effective decision-making.

In times of calm and positive emotional states, cognitive function is optimised, positive emotions are reinforced and we feel more stable. In such a state, the heart's rhythm pattern is orderly and coherent.

If we can learn to cultivate this heart rhythm coherence, we can create significant positive outcomes in our perceptions, clarity of thought, performance and overall emotional wellbeing.

HeartMath's Inner Balance™ technology works through a device and mobile that looks at your heart rhythm pattern and gives you simple prompts and feedback, guiding you toward coherence.

With Inner Balance, we are trained to cultivate coherence through positive emotional states and affect and regulated breathing. This helps to negate the adverse effects of stress which enables us to think clearly and leads to improved emotional and psychophysiological wellbeing.



Touchpoints

TouchPoints (patent pending) is a set of wearable technology that can be worn on the wrist like a watch, or can be attached to or placed inside clothing - as long as there are two devices that can be felt, one on each side of the body and in the same position.

When a client wears a set of TouchPoints devices, they will feel a 'gentle, haptic micro-vibration on the right and then left side of the body.'⁷

TouchPoints uses a technology known as BLAST ('bi-lateral alternating stimulation tactile' technology). BLAST technology, as utilised by TouchPoints, has been reported to 'effectively reduce both psychological and physiological pain and distress, enhance memory retrieval and promote sleep and feelings of calm.'⁸

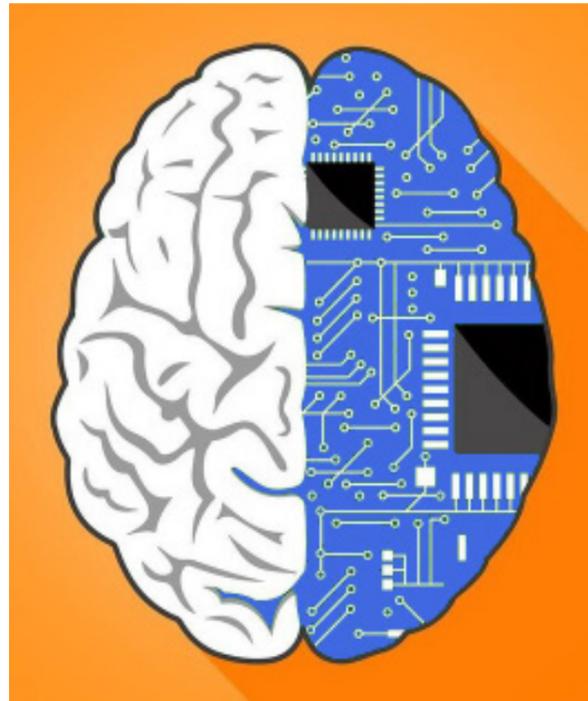
This BLAST technology helps clients who are experiencing adverse effects of trauma by improving sleep, improving performance, encouraging relaxation and increasing their ability to deal with sensory stimuli, by reducing stress and anxiety levels in the body.

This reduction in stress happens by bi-laterally stimulating the left and right hemispheres of the brain, which has been suggested to increase interaction between the two. BLAST technology affects electrical activity in the brain - in the amygdala, the insula and the somatosensory cortex - all strongly associated with stress and body's fight/flight response.

Alpha-Stim

Alpha-Stim is a wearable device used to treat some of the most common symptoms of trauma - anxiety, depression and insomnia. The device clips to the earlobes and delivers a specific electric waveform to positively affect brainwaves and restore the user to good health and wellbeing.

Alpha-Stim utilises a modality called Cranial Electrotherapy Stimulation (CES), in which tiny pulses of alternating electrical current are delivered to the brain. The aim is to improve communication between the billions of cells that make up the brain and the nervous system and, according to recent trials conducted by the NHS, the device is highly effective. 63% of users in a study reported improvement in their anxiety symptoms and an impressive 77% achieved complete remission. 9



Bilateral Beats and Audio Frequencies

The use of bilateral audio frequencies is believed to promote healing and wellbeing by influencing our brainwaves.

This brainwave technology involves the use of two slightly different audio frequencies, which are perceived by the brain as one tone, to assist listeners in healing from trauma symptoms like anxiety, stress and poor sleep.

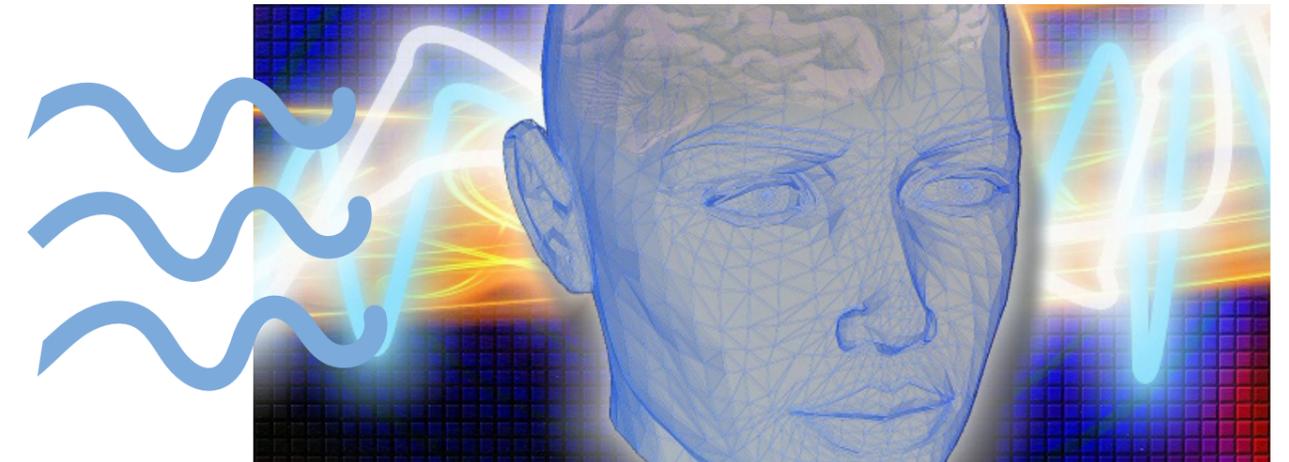
It is suggested that bilateral (or binaural) beat therapy offers a range of benefits, including; 10

- Stress and anxiety reduction.
- Improved sleep.
- Improved mood.
- Increased focus and concentration.
- Enhance psychomotor performance.

Though there is a lack of strong consistent evidence that this approach works, it has been found to be useful in achieving the above. As with any self-help tool, it is up to the individual to assess its efficacy on a personal level.

One program that uses bilateral audio frequencies to influence brain waves is Holosync®, created by Bill Harris of the Centerpointe Research Institute. The institute claims that Holosync® 'strengthens executive function (willpower, focus, creativity), while it calms the areas that create stress, impulsive behaviours and procrastination.'

Ultimately, Holosync® and other types of brain wave stimulation technology promote health by improving balance and communication between the left and right hemispheres of the brain, encouraging brain synchronisation, leading to improved mood and functioning and reduced stress and anxiety.



RESET Therapy and The BAUD

RESET (Reconsolidation Enhancement by Stimulation of Emotional Triggers) therapy involves the use of sound waves to promote healing in those suffering from PTSD and its related symptoms.

When we experience trauma - as a single event or a series of experiences - within one to two days, the memory of the traumatic event becomes consolidated, or stored, in the mind and body. Each time the memory is triggered and resurfaces, it is reconsolidated or strengthened. RESET Therapy aims to interrupt this reconsolidation by intervening with sound wave technology to relax clients enough to be able to revisit the memory.

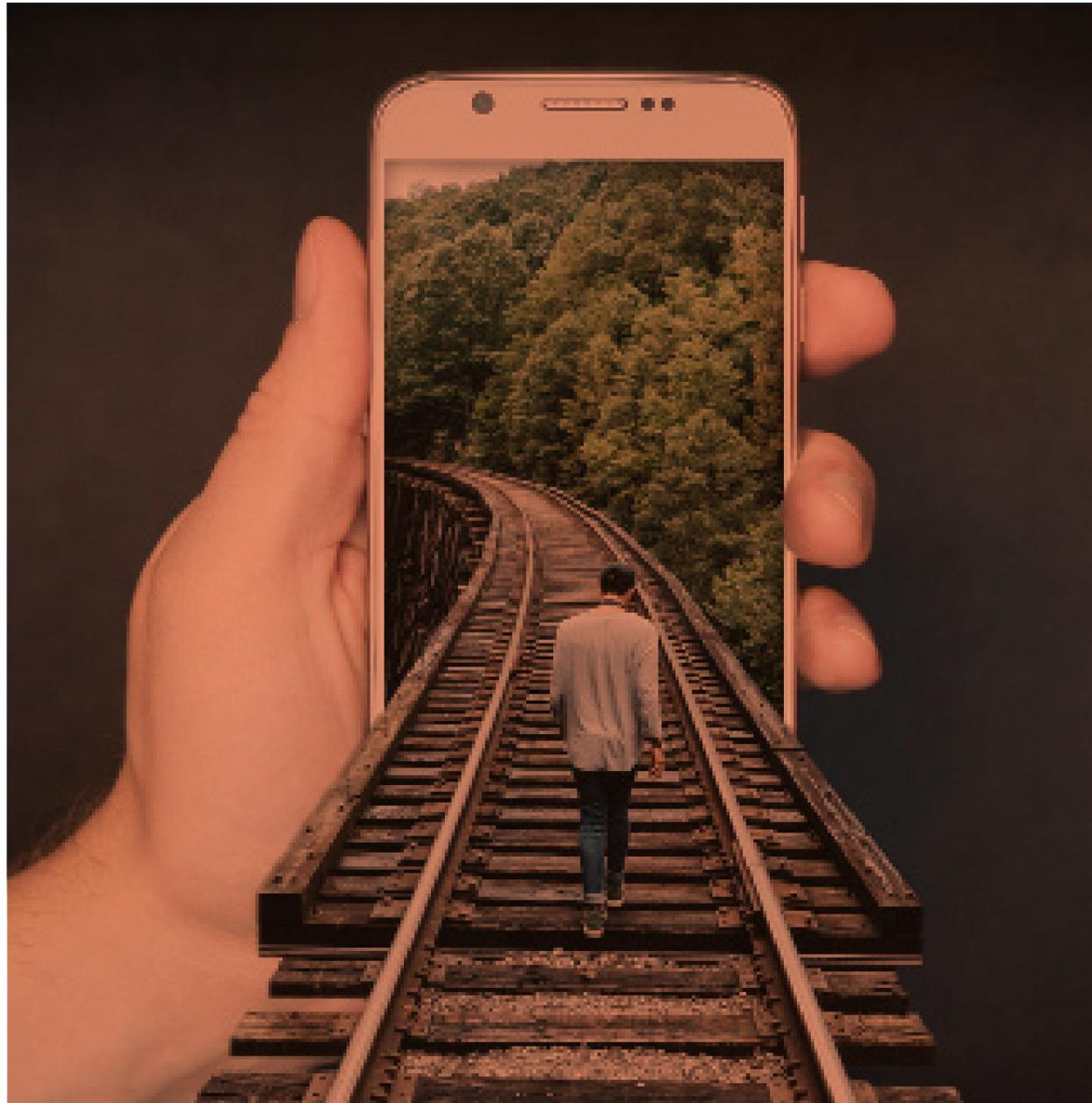
RESET Therapy uses a technology known as the Bio-Acoustical Utilisation Device (BAUD), which 'stimulates deep and targeted relaxation.'

Neuroplasticity is stimulated by the device to interrupt traumatic memory reconsolidation and provide relief from emotional issues, helping clients to overcome impulses and urges related to behavioural issues and to reduce physical pain.

Technology and the Future of Trauma Treatment

The future of trauma treatment is bright. With the latest advances in technology we are in a better position than ever to gain a clearer insight into the effects of trauma on the mind and body and can measure treatment efficacy unlike ever before.

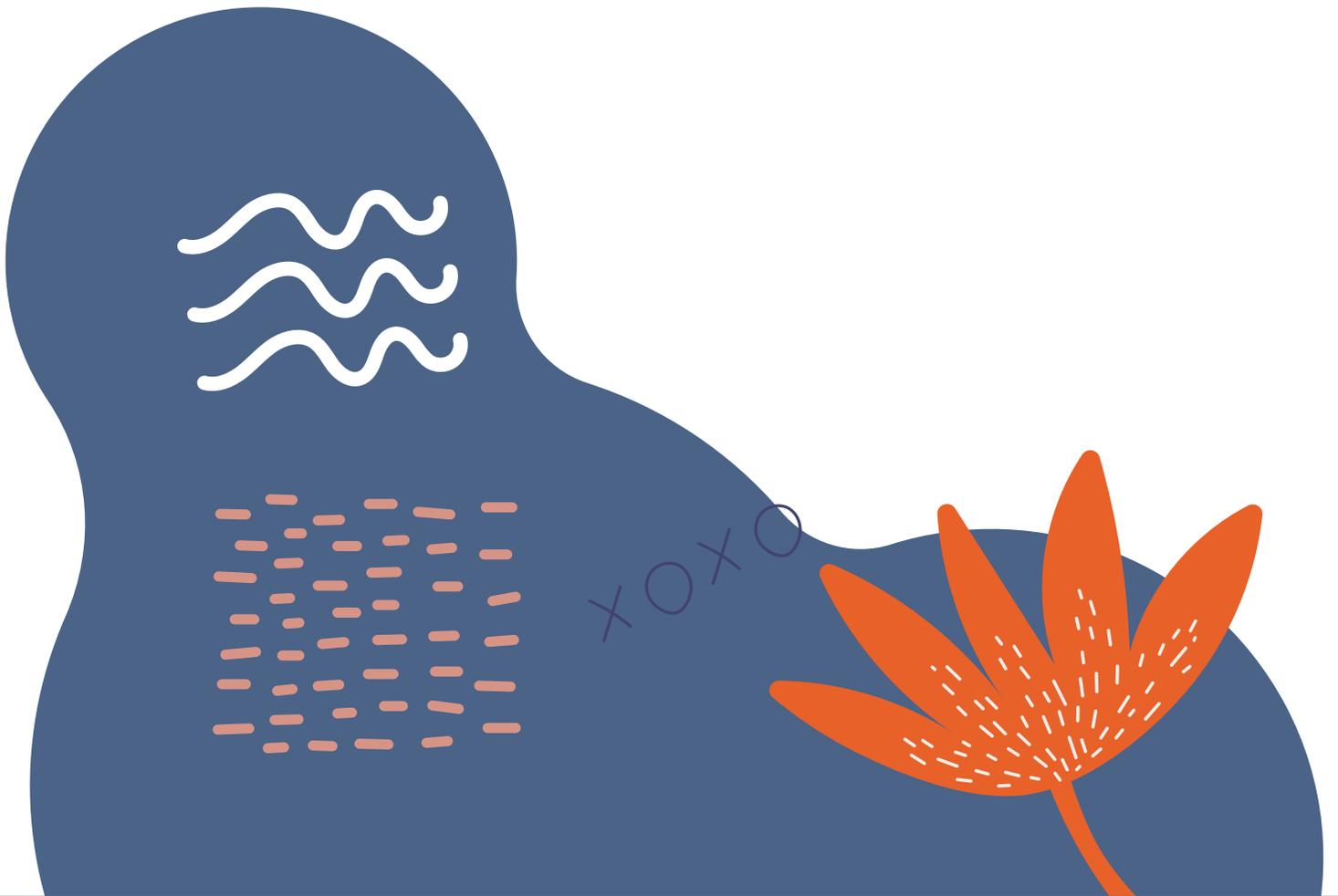
As stated earlier, this blog is not a medically backed promotion of these products and devices, but instead aims to increase awareness on the availability of alternative treatments for trauma for those who may not have seen results from traditional therapies.



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