

***Somatic Patterning***  
**Supplemental Instructor Materials**  
**Chapter 15: Body-Based Psychotherapy**

*Note: Numbered points in the chapter's reading list, objectives, and summary are correlated and focus on topics that I think will be most relevant for massage students.*

*Please contact your education director for answers to the chapter questions.*

**Chapter 15 Suggested Readings**

1. Introduction, pp. 351-352
2. Reichian Therapy, pp. 352-353
3. Bands of Armor, Releasing Character Fixations, pp. 353-354
4. Touch and Psychotherapy, pp. 354-355
5. Bioenergetics, p. 355
6. Character Types, pp. 355-357
7. Energetic Studies, p. 357
8. The Formative Process, The Accordion Practice and Embodying Process, pp. 357-358
9. Dance Movement Therapy, pp. 358-359
10. Prenatal and Paranatal Psychology, pp. 359-360
11. Fritz Perls and Gestalt Therapy, pp. 360-361
12. Focusing, pp. 361-362

**Chapter 15 Objectives**

1. Summarize the history and premise of body-based Reichian psychotherapy.
2. Formulate the relevance to massage of muscular armor and character structure.
3. Describe the seven bands of muscular armor.
4. Discuss the relationship between touch, massage therapy, and emotional release.
5. Define bioenergetics in relation to the charge and discharge of energy and grounding.
6. Describe the five basic character types and how they develop.
7. Discuss therapeutic strategies for working with the body patterns of each character type.
8. Describe the formative principle and three phases of the formative process.
9. Describe dance movement therapy and the technique of authentic movement.
10. Describe the prenatal and paranatal psychology approach to psychotherapy.
11. Describe Gestalt therapy and its unique contribution to somatic therapies.  
Describe the process of focusing and define "felt sense."

## Chapter 15 Summary

1. Sigmund Freud, the originator of modern psychoanalysis, first correlated body symptoms with psychological issues in his study of hysteria. His student, Wilhelm Reich, noticed that deep psychological changes occurred when accompanied by emotional release, which began a long line of Reichian approaches to body-based psychotherapy.
2. Muscular armor is the muscular tension that develops to help a person cope with or control overwhelming emotions. Chronic muscular armor forms a protective muscular rigidity and defensive behavior pattern that combine to form a personality or character structure. Muscular tensions rooted in character structure play an important role in a client's psychological defense system and often resist release during a massage.
3. The seven bands of muscular armor are the ocular segment around the eyes; the oral segment around the mouth; the neck segment around the base of the tongue; the chest segment around the heart, lungs, and arms; the diaphragmatic segment around breathing; the abdominal segment around the waist; and the pelvic segment around the pelvis, hips, and inner thighs.
4. Touch can evoke an awareness of muscular armor; massage can elicit the release of the unconscious muscular holding that occurs with armoring. When muscular armor relaxes, the emotions that it contains tend to surface, which may cause a massage client to experience a deep yet spontaneous emotional release.
5. Bioenergetics is a Reichian approach to psychotherapy that uses specific exercises to release muscular armor and opens the flow of biological energy through the body. Grounding, the process of making an energetic connection with the earth, is used to center a person as they release or discharge an emotional charge, which is the build-up of energy in the body from defensive holding. During an emotional release, it is important for a person to stay grounded to maintain a sense of self as defensive armor dissolves.
6. There are five basic character types in the Reichian approach. The schizoid develops when an infant is abandoned or abused and responds by becoming hypervigilant and frozen into a thin, paranoid posture; the oral develops when a baby lacks a nourishing relationship with the caregivers and responds by becoming needy, clingy, and physically weak; the psychopath develops when a young child overpowered by a caregiver's controlling manipulations and criticisms responds by rising "above it" into a lifted, expanded posture marked by an upper-lower body split; the masochist develops when the caregivers demand submission from a child, who responds by digging the heels in and compressing into a heavy and thick posture; the rigid develops when an older child becomes overly focused on pleasing the caregivers and tightens into the overly erect posture of the overachiever.
7. A client with schizoid tendencies needs slow, relaxing massage that evokes trust and yielding; a client with oral tendencies needs a nourishing massage that encourages muscular relaxation and the ability to be receptive; a client with psychopathic tendencies

needs massage that moves energy from the upper into the lower body while letting the client be in control of the process; a client with masochist tendencies needs massage that helps him or her feel internal space and length without feeling pushed; a client with rigid tendencies needs deep tissue work that helps her or him release the mind and relax into a present moment experience of the body.

8. Keleman's formative principle describes how the body continually reshapes around the flow of psychological energies and events in a three-step formative process. In the expansion phase, energy and excitement fill and expand the tissues with a vibratory aliveness; in the containment phase, excitement is driven deeper into the core and contained by the boundaries; in the expression phase, excitement is expressed and energetic charges dissipate, creating room for new experiences in the next cycle.
9. Dance movement therapy is a dynamic approach to body-based psychotherapy in which psychiatric patients move through psychological processes using improvisational and expressive movement. Authentic movement is a group dance therapy technique in which the therapist witnesses the group as they silently explore expressive, organic movements with their eyes closed.
10. Prenatal and paranatal approaches to psychotherapy are based on the premise that experiences in the womb and immediately after birth set up a template for all psychosomatic patterns and are carried into behavior through cellular memories.
11. Gestalt therapy, developed by Fritz Perls, is based on the premise that the totality of an experience, or "gestalt," is made more whole by addressing the personality fixations and rigid behaviors or scripts that a person carries from the past. To this end, it was the first psychotherapy to integrate body awareness and the client-therapist dynamic into psychological processing as a technique to access present-moment experience.
12. Focusing is a psychotherapy technique developed by Eugene Gendlin based on the premise that the outcome of therapy depends only on what people do inside themselves. Success occurs when a client accesses a vague overall body feeling called a "felt sense," which accompanies a psychological issue and undergoes a perceptible shift upon the resolution of the issue.

**Chapter 15 Questions**

*Note: Make sure to pay attention to the italics in some of the questions because they ask you to identify the statement that **does not** refer to the topic of the question.*

1. Which of the following statements *does not* describe muscular armor?
  - a. It develops to help an individual cope with and control overwhelming emotions.
  - b. It is a pattern of muscular strength that is important to maintain at all costs
  - c. It manifests in a pattern of protective muscular rigidity and character structure.
  - d. It can be extremely resistant to change because of its role in defense mechanisms.
  
2. Seven bands of muscular armor are the
  - a. ocular, oral, neck, scapular, diaphragmatic, abdominal, and pelvic segments.
  - b. ocular, oral, neck, chest, diaphragmatic, abdominal, and pelvic segments.
  - c. ocular, oral, neck, chest, diaphragmatic, abdominal, and foot segments.
  - d. ocular, oral, neck, chest, diaphragmatic, abdominal, and pelvic segments.
  
3. During a massage, a client may experience a deep yet spontaneous emotional release
  - a. when the client can talk about and figure out personal problems.
  - b. when a practitioner works on the client's painful trigger points.
  - c. when muscular armor relaxes and underlying emotions come to the surface.
  - d. when sympathetic tone increases in the autonomic nervous system.
  
4. Which of the following statements *does not* apply to grounding?
  - a. Grounding can be achieved by visualizing the body floating.
  - b. Grounding is the process of energetically connecting with the earth through the feet.
  - c. Grounding can center a practitioner when a client has an emotional release.
  - d. Grounding is a process that can help a person maintain a sense of self.
  
5. When working with a massage client who has hypervigilant tendencies marked by a paranoid, frozen posture, it is important to
  - a. provide a deep tissue massage that takes the client beyond her or his pain threshold.
  - b. provide a quick, vigorous massage that challenges the client to let go.
  - c. provide a slow, gentle massage that evokes the client's trust and relaxation.
  - d. provide a hands-off energy treatment that pulls toxins out of the client.
  
6. The three stages of the formative process, which describes how the body continually reshapes around a person's psychological experience, are the
  - a. expansion phase, the contraction phase, and the relaxation phase.
  - b. expansion phase, the containment phase, and the expression phase.
  - c. expansion phase, the containment phase, and the dialogue phase.
  - d. exhalation phase, the containment phase, and the expression phase.
  
7. Which of the following statements *does not* apply to Gestalt therapy?
  - a. It is unique because it was the first psychotherapy to focus on body awareness.
  - b. It addresses the present moment experience of the body and the therapist-client dynamic.

- c. It restores the totality of experience, or “gestalt,” by addressing rigid behaviors.
  - d. It helps the client process psychological issues through expressive dance.
8. The felt sense in the body-based technique of focusing is
- a. a vague, overall body feeling that accompanies a psychological issue.
  - b. a strong body sensation that a client gets when being touched.
  - c. a visualization process that a client uses to resolve psychological issues.
  - d. a style of touch that a practitioner uses to access muscular holding.

## Chapter 15 Suggested Learning Activities

*Note: Any exercise titled “Patterning Exercise” can be found in the current edition. Page numbers for these exercises (inserted in parentheses) are included to help instructors utilize activities during lessons that may be based on other segments of the book. “Skills Exercises” are not found in the current edition but will be included in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of SP.*

### Skills Exercise: Grounding

#### *Objectives:*

- To develop an energetic connection with the earth through the feet.
- To have a tool to stabilize the body when emotional responses are occurring.

#### *Exercises:*

1. Practice a slow, barefoot walking meditation in which you feel your feet connect with the ground. Slowly roll from the heel through all five toes. Sense the weight of your body sinking through your feet, as though it were so heavy it would leave a footprint under each step.
2. During the course of your day, notice when you feel your feet on the ground and when you do not.
3. Whenever you feel emotions arise, in yourself, your friends or family, or in your massage clients, gently press both feet into the ground and notice if it helps you keep yourself centered.

### Skills Exercise: Focusing Exercise for Self-Development (p. 331)

#### *Objectives:*

- To develop body-centered problem solving skills.
- To increase your awareness of the depth of the body-mind connection.

#### *Exercise:*

1. Pick a problem or psychological issue that you want to work on. Then clear a quiet space to sit or lie down with your eyes closed.
2. Focus on your issue and notice what happens in your whole body. Get a felt sense of the problem on a body level. Feel the whole problem at once, using a soft focus. Scan your body as you feel the problem.
3. Find a “handle,” a word or image that accesses the essence of the felt sense. You may sift through many words in your mind before you find the right one. (*When the handle accurately fits the felt sense, a deep bodily shift occurs.*)
4. Check your handle against your felt sense, to see if the two resonate. If they resonate, you will feel a deep bodily shift, or change of state, such as a sense of relaxing. If they do not resonate, go on to step 5.
5. Ask your felt sense what it is. The premise here is that your body never lies. Receive and accept whatever information comes from the body without judging it.

6. Make a short journal entry about your experience and what you discovered. Practice this exercise once a week for several weeks, making a journal entry about each exercise. At the end of this time, discuss your experience with a classmate who is exploring the same process.