



What is Somatic Experiencing Therapy?

Faith Foster, MSW Intern. Published by Hope Recovery.

About

Somatic therapy is a form of body-centered therapy that connects the mind and body using psychotherapy and physical therapies for holistic healing. The main idea is that the mind and body are connected which means thoughts, emotions, and sensations are interconnected and influence one another. It emphasizes helping clients focus on bodily sensations first then address thoughts and emotions to then develop resources within themselves in order to self-regulate their emotions.

Treatment

Somatic therapy can be most beneficial in addressing the following, but not limited too:

- Trauma
- Anxiety
- Substance Use Disorder
- Chronic Pain
- Sexual Function
- Digestive Disorders
- Post Trauma
- Grief
- PTSD
- Depression
- Addiction
- Sexual Dysfunction

Benefits

The benefits of somatic therapy include, but are not limited too:

- Focuses on body and mind unity
- Reduces anxiety and depression by bringing the nervous system back into balance
- Supports emotional regulation
- Offers a different approach when talk therapy isn't enough
- Teaches you about your nervous system patterns and how to heal those patterns
- Increase awareness of their internal experience
- Alleviate emotions, stress, and pain caused by trauma
- Helps release stored trauma or traumatic energy held in the body
- Encourages somatic awareness and being in the right now
- Improves connection to your body
- Supports long-term healing, not just coping
- Enhances overall well-being
- Finding ways to relax your body
- Develop ways to release trauma

Techniques

A few of the techniques that are utilized in somatic experiencing therapy include sensation, imagery, behavior, affect, meaning (SIBAM), bodily awareness, resourcing, titration, body tapping, and pendulation.

- SIBAM
 - Sensation include paying attention to the way sensations occur and flow through your body and how they connect to your emotions.
 - Imagery is when the therapist/clinician will ask you to imagine a scene or use interactive guided imagery to conversate about your experiences.
 - Behavior entails sharing your internal experiences and responses with your therapist/clinician.
 - Affect involved tracking how you express your emotions on the outside such as tone, words, and speech speed.
 - Meaning is how you perceive therapy and what your experiences mean to you.
- Bodily Awareness
 - This technique is about how your nervous system responds to stress and trauma and recognizing what sensations or internal reactions you're experiencing.
- Resourcing
 - This technique involves focusing on your inner strength and resiliency to cope.
- Titration
 - This technique involves the therapist/clinician helping a person work through the traumatic memory and the thoughts, feelings, and emotions they experienced at the time of the traumatic event.
- Body Tapping
 - This technique involves tapping on certain parts of your face, your shoulders, and your chest in order to regulate your nervous system.
- Pendulation
 - This technique involves using other relaxation techniques to help the body move from an anxious, high stress state to a calmer and more relaxed state. This will then help in the future during anxious or stressful experiences.

How to Get Started

If you believe that somatic therapy would be beneficial for you, you can ask your current clinician or therapist to utilize somatic therapy in future sessions or you can use Google or Psychology Today's clinician/therapist finder to search for therapists/clinicians who offer this approach.

References

- Blanchfield, T. (2026). *What to know about somatic experiencing therapy*. VeryWell Mind.
<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-somatic-experiencing-5204186>
- Davis, K. (2026). *10 somatic therapy benefits vs talk therapy: Expert guide*. Somatic Therapy Partners. <https://somatictherapypartners.com/somatic-therapy-benefits-vs-talk-therapy-expert-guide/#:~:text=Trauma%20can%20be%20stored%20in%20the%20body%2C,you%20feel%20more%20grounded%20and%20in%20control.>
- Sussex Publishers. (2026). *Somatic therapy*. Psychology Today.
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapy-types/somatic-therapy>