

Clinical Approaches to Empowering the Mind and Body Relationship with Clients

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Overview

- Why is it important to address this relationship
- Creative ways to engage the body (not just the mind) in session
- Integrating Body Trust with the Body hate to Body Love spectrum
- How to start the thin privilege and fat phobic dialog

Why is it Important?

- Eating disorder behaviors leave clients with a limited capacity to UNDERSTAND and TOLERATE their body and body sensations.
- When clients begin to reduce behavior use, they gain more awareness of their body, and body sensations.
- IF awareness, understanding, tolerance, and trust of the body is NOT improved during behavior reduction, relapse is more likely to occur

Catalan-Matamoros, D. (2011, March). A pilot study on the effect of Basic Body Awareness Therapy in patients with eating disorders: a randomized controlled trial

Body Maps

Studies "reveal that different emotional states are associated with topographically distinct and culturally universal bodily sensations"

AKA: We all experience emotion physically in very similar ways.

Nummenmaa, Lauri Et Al (2014, January) Bodily maps of emotions

Body Maps

■ ACTIVITY:

Throughout the remaining of this presentation, use the colors and map next to you, to identify emotional physical sensations you experience through the remaining hour.

Body Maps: Using with Clients

- Utilizing body maps to help clients identify how they physically experience emotions will increase understanding of BODY SENSATIONS and EMOTIONS
- Increase in understanding allows for an increase in TOLERANCE of how the body psychically experiences emotions
- This Understanding and Tolerance will decrease the need to utilize eating disorder behaviors to "numb" these sensations.

Body Maps: Using with Clients

- Complete Body Map at the Beginning and End of sessions to explore how emotions can shift in an hour
- Complete Body Maps throughout sessions to explore emotionally triggering content connected to physical sensation
- Complete Body Maps outside of session as a way to track emotion dysregulation

Body Maps: Using with Clients

- When you and your client have a better understanding of common emotional experiences and unwanted/undesirable physical sensations you can work together to pinpoint distress tolerance skills that engage the body or externalize emotions

Body Scan

- One way to engage the body in session, and increase tolerance of body sensations, is to participate in a body scan.
- LIKE THIS ONE: <https://youtu.be/HsmSEZmUT8o>

Externalize Emotions

- Clients may voice feeling as though their emotions are "STUCK" - Who has experienced this?
 - Turn emotions into colors and shapes. See if your client can begin to rotate or shake the shape.
 - Visualize rain in a comforting color, and imagine the rain running through the body, moving out all unwanted emotion/sensations, through the body, to the toes, and into the ground (or river or ocean)

Elements of Trust

- Boundaries
- Reliability
- Accountability
- Vault (confidentiality)
- Integrity
- Non-Judgement
- Generosity

Body Trust: Introducing to Clients

- BOUNDARIES:** Am I honoring my body's limitations and cues
- RELIABILITY:** Am I consistently tuning into my body's needs and showing up for those needs.
- ACCOUNTABILITY:** Are the behaviors/actions/events that I allowed to happen to my body, or when I did not honor a boundary, that I need to apologize for? Am I making amends and correcting my actions?

Body Trust: Introducing to Clients

VAULT: Am I oversharing (or undersharing) information about my body with people who have not earned it? Am I allowing others to use my body without consent, or without trust?

INTEGRITY: Am I using my body according to my values. Am I treating my body according to my values? Do I choose the "hard" or "uncomfortable" options that benefit my body, over the easy, and more harming route?

Body Trust – Introducing to Clients

NON-JUDGEMENT: Do I give my body grace? Do I have reasonable expectations for my body? In what ways do I judge my body unfairly?

GENEROSITY: Do I make generous assumptions about my body, or only quick harsh blame? Do I weigh in ALL the factors before I assume that my body is the reason I did not accomplish my goal?

ACTIVITY

TAKE A FEW MINUTES:

- IDENTIFY ONE OF THE AREAS YOU MARKED
- WRITE OUT YOUR ANSWERS TO THOSE QUESTIONS
- REMEMBER: YOUR BODY MAP IS STILL ACTIVE, TOO

Body Trust – Client Homework

One way to start developing body trust, is to have your clients complete this activity with each element, one week at a time.

Week One: Focus on Boundaries. Write the answers to these questions. Pay attention to when you are, and are not, honoring your bodies boundaries.

Body Trust – Client Homework

Body Narratives surrounding trust can also be a beneficial way for clients to better understand their long-term relationship with their body:

Time Line narratives such as:

- When was the first time I remember trusting my body
- When was the first time I felt betrayed by my body
- What other moments in my life have I felt high levels of trust, or betrayal? What were the circumstances surrounding those moments? What happened afterwards that shifted your perspective?

Body Trust – Engaging in Session

When clients are aware of the Trust Elements, you can begin to challenge their language and behaviors with these elements:

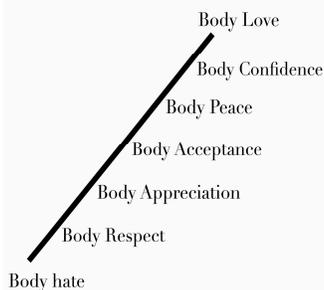
EXAMPLE:

When a client starts to share about their desire to reactivate their tender account because they want to numb their need to attention or validation you might ask

“How does that impact your body trust? Is that a very ‘vault’ thing to do? Or, are you prepared to take ‘accountability’ with your body afterwards?”

Body Hate -> Body Love

BODY LOVE SPECTRUM



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Utilizing The Spectrum

- Have your client identify where they feel they are, at this moment, on the spectrum.
- Identify what makes them believe they are at this point, not another point
- Identify barriers to moving closer to body love
 - Mood dis-regulation
 - Peer / Professional support lacking
 - Outside goals (performance or career)
 - Thin Privilege or Fat Phobia

Address TP and FP

DON'T DENY THAT THEY EXIST

If you, as an eating disorder therapist, do not believe that thin privilege and fat phobia are present in our society than I, our community, and your clients, NEED YOU to step back and do your own work with your own therapist.

Keep In Check

- Common ways weight stigma shows up in treatment:
 - Assuming those in larger bodies binge eat
 - Assuming those in normal weight ranges are exaggerating behaviors
 - Not taking a client seriously because of their weight
 - Reassuring a client that you wont them get fat
 - Advertising that you treat "obesity"

Talking with Clients

- You know your client better than anyone else in this room knows your client – this conversation is going to look and feel different with every single client and therapist interaction.
- Validate the truth : it does exist, it may or may not shift how you are viewed when you stop utilizing ED behaviors
- Explore value and strengths of your client as a point of empowerment
- Embrace the uncertainty (and certainty) of their lives. Remind them of their ability to sit in uncomfortable emotions, navigate confrontation, and to embrace their tribe when they need them.