

Embodied Approaches to Therapeutic Theories of Developmental Wounding and Habitual Patterns

CPD weekend near Exeter with Michael Soth

Sat/Sun 1 & 2 December 2018

at: The Wheelhouse, Colwell Barton, Offwell nr Honiton EX14 9SR

There are still places available for this CPD weekend in Devon, which is part of the embodied-relational series of CPD events, organised by Judy Shaw in Exeter.

The presenting past

The majority of humanistic and integrative approaches these days relies on developmental theory in the way that psychoanalytic traditions have always done. We see the client's current problems in their adult life as intricately linked to life-long habitual patterns that originated in childhood. We see the client's capacity for engaging in their adult life as a result and as a function of their developmental wounding and importantly as a function of their defences *against* that wounding. We assume these defensive habits were established early on and continue to influence or dominate the person's present reality; in the words of a famous psychodynamic textbook, we could summarise this widely established focus on developmental injury across the various therapeutic approaches as the 'presenting past'.

Different therapeutic approaches have developed different jargons and languages to describe these patterns from the past: working models, RIG's, schemas, scripts, ego states, contact disturbances, complexes, attachment styles, character structures and many more.

Differences & contradictions between various developmental models

However, there are significant philosophical and theoretical differences between the various traditional models which we use as therapists to name, describe and conceptualise the client's early developmental blueprint for the relational patterns we co-create with them in the intersubjective field of the therapeutic relationship.

The diverse traditions (psychoanalytic developmental theory, attachment theory, character structure theory, TA, intersubjectivity, relationality) each have their assumptions, conceptual frames, jargon terms, and their particular gifts and shadow aspects in disclosing or occluding certain areas of the field of relating between client and therapist. How the myriad complex aspects of the field do or do not enter the therapist's stream of consciousness depends to some extent on the theoretical lenses we use.

To widen our awareness and make it as conceptually unbiased and inclusive as possible, we can ground our observations of the relational dynamic in the detail of bodymind process, much of it non-verbal, some of it subliminal.

Grounding different therapeutic approaches to habitual patterns of relating in bodymind process

This weekend is dedicated to clarifying both theoretically and practically the differences, contradictions and overlaps between the various traditional languages and models, by attending to their fundamental ideas (e.g. attachment styles, working models, co-creation, character styles, self-states and mutual recognition, habitual patterns, etc) *as bodymind processes*.

This may allow us to build an integration that creates a productive synergy between these different traditions and diverse theoretical frames. Although theoretical principles will be involved, we will stick to the basic ideas rather than go into abstract or historical detail - the overall aim of the weekend is to keep it practical and applicable.

Learning objectives

This could include a process of comparing & contrasting:

- attachment theory (Bowlby, Ainsworth, Holmes)
- character structure theory (Reich, Lowen, Kurtz & Johnson)
- Transactional Analysis developmental theory (ego-states and scripts)
- psychoanalytic developmental theory (including Kleinian and object relations)
- intersubjectivity (Atwood & Stolorow, Orange)

Aims and format of the weekend

We will attempt to ground the key notions of these theories in embodied, experience-near terms. And we will explore how these different ideas both help and hinder us in apprehending the fullness and systemic wholeness of the relational dynamic between client and therapist.

The weekend is a unique introduction to the overlaps and differences (and possible synergies) between the different models which therapists commonly use to make sense of their experience in the therapeutic relationship. This included especially attachment theory, character structure theory, TA and relational modalities. All these theories aim to help us in making sense of the client's relational pattern and behaviour in the therapeutic relationship. All of them have two-person psychology elements and can be used in that way; but all can also be used in a more one-person psychology diagnostic fashion, by focusing mainly on the client's pattern of attachment and relating.

In this CPD weekend we will enhance the usefulness of all these models by thinking of about the inherent bodymind processes which we have observed as therapists before we can even apply *any* of the models - we will try to ground our use of the models in our phenomenological bodymind observations, of the client and of ourselves (and as these are traditional models, that includes the fact that they were used in connection with observations of transference and countertransference).

We will explore how these models complement each other and become more powerful in combination. And we will also look at the limitations and shadow aspects of each, and how as therapists we might end up using them in a way that blinds us to enactments, complications in the working alliance and impasses in the therapeutic process.



About Michael Soth

Michael Soth is an integral-relational Body Psychotherapist, trainer and supervisor (UKCP), living in Oxford, UK. Over the last 32 years he has been teaching on a variety of counselling and therapy training courses, alongside working as Training Director at the Chiron Centre for Body Psychotherapy.

Inheriting concepts, values and ways of working from both psychoanalytic and humanistic traditions, he is interested in the therapeutic relationship as a bodymind process between two people who are both wounded and whole.

In his work and teaching, he integrates an unusually wide range of psychotherapeutic approaches, working towards a full-spectrum integration of all therapeutic modalities and approaches, each with their gifts, wisdoms and

expertise as well as their shadow aspects, fallacies and areas of obliviousness. He has written numerous articles and is a frequent presenter at conferences. Extracts from his published writing as well as hand-outs, blogs and summaries of presentations are available through his website for INTEGRA CPD: integra-cpd.co.uk, or find him on Facebook and Twitter (INTEGRA_CPD). He is co-editor of the *Handbook of Body Psychotherapy and Somatic Psychology*, published in 2015.

A broad-spectrum integration of a wide variety of therapeutic approaches:

Here is a list of approaches that Michael draws from and includes, vaguely in sequence of his own trainings and his exposure to them over the last 30 years:

- drawing on all the schools of the Body Psychotherapy tradition (Reichian, vegeto, bioenergetics, biosynthesis, biodynamic, somatic psychology, somatic trauma therapy, etc)
- wide range of humanistic-integrative approaches, incl. Gestalt, Process-Oriented Psychology, breathwork & rebirthing, Transactional Analysis, Psychodrama, and others; also existential perspectives
- psychoanalytic: object relations, self psychology, intersubjectivity & relational perspectives
- systemic: both in terms of Bert Hellinger's family constellations and the systemic approach, as well as systems theory, complexity theory and integral and fractal perspectives
- transpersonal: Jungian and archetypal psychology, psychosynthesis, Wilber, mindfulness
- constructivist, including NLP (Neurolinguistic Programming) and hypnotherapy (Erickson)
- cognitive-behavioural models and techniques
- somatic trauma therapies, including Rothschild, Levine (Somatic Experiencing), Ogden (sensori-motor) and EMDR

These days, many of the above approaches are being combined into new hybrid forms, so Michael aims to keep updated with these ongoing developments.

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