

Somatic Patterning
Supplemental Instructor Materials
Chapter 1: Section 1 - SOMATICS

*Includes readings, objectives, review questions and answers,
10 question multiple choice test, and suggested classroom activities.*

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Objectives

1. Define the following terms and concepts: body-mind, soma, somatic, somatics, sensorimotor amnesia, massage, bodywork, and somatic therapy.
2. Discuss what is meant by the language of the body and describe its relevance to massage.
3. Explain why massage therapy is a body-mind therapy.
4. Define the term body-mind duality.
5. Present pros and cons of body-mind separation and the body-mind connection.
6. Describe how Western medicine view of the body-mind has changed and discuss the relevance of this change to the use of massage therapy in conventional medical treatment.
7. Describe the role of stress in health and illness.
8. Define integrative medicine and state its three major premises.
9. Identify the primary mission of the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) and list the top four complementary modalities identified by NCCAM.
10. Contrast the general effects of stress on the autonomic and skeletal branches of the nervous system. Describe two massage therapy approaches that address the symptoms of stress in each branch of the nervous system.
11. Explain why massage clients often experience emotional release during therapeutic massage.
12. Discuss the central role of touch and movement in human development and explain how this affects the massage client-therapist relationship.
13. Describe and contrast the two tissues responses that indicate the level of a client's readiness for and receptiveness to massage therapy.

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Review Exercises

1. Define "body-mind."
2. Define "somatic" and "somatics."
3. Discuss what "language of the body" means when used in relation to massage therapy.
4. Justify why therapeutic massage is considered a body-mind therapy.
5. Describe "somatic therapy."
6. Define what "body-mind duality" refers to and describe how it is reinforced by unique human traits and abilities.
7. Identify one pro and one con of body-mind separation.
8. Identify one pro and one con of the body-mind connection.
9. Describe Western medicine's changing view of the body-mind as separate or integrated, contrast the treatment protocols of each philosophy, and describe the relevance of these changes to the practice of massage therapy.
10. Describe the role of stress in health and illness.
11. Define integrative medicine.
12. Identify the three major premises of integrative medicine.
13. Describe the medical approach called psychoneuroimmunology (PNI).

14. Name the government health care agency that uses the acronym NCCAM and identify its mission.
15. List the four largest complementary therapies that NCCAM recommends for inclusion on integrative medical teams and identify the two main reasons why these four modalities were recommended and are being investigated by NCCAM researchers.
16. Describe and contrast the general effects of stress on both the autonomic and skeletal nervous systems.
17. Explain why massage clients sometimes have emotional releases as they let go of muscular tensions.
18. Describe the role of touch and movement in human development and discuss its relevance to the client-therapist relationship in massage therapy.
19. Describe and contrast the two tissue responses that indicate that a massage client is either responsive or non-responsive to a massage practitioner's touch.

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Answers to Review Exercises

1. *Define "body-mind."* Body-mind refers to the relationships between mental and physical health, the interrelated functions of physiological and psychological processes, and the integral and ongoing interplay between a person's physical condition and mental state.
2. *Define "somatic" and "somatics."* Somatic comes from the Greek root soma, which means "the living body in its wholeness." In this context, the term somatic unifies the body-mind concept into a single word. The term somatics was coined by the late philosopher and Feldenkrais teacher Thomas Hanna in 1970 to describe an emerging field of body-mind therapies that use movement explorations as a primary tool to improve posture and ease of movement.
3. *Discuss what "language of the body" means when used in relation to massage therapy.* The language of the body refers to channels of non-verbal communication that massage clients communicate through bodily responses, which include gestures, facial expressions, reflexive or organic movements, relaxation responses, changes in breathing, and protective guarding via muscular contractions.
4. *Justify why therapeutic massage is considered a body-mind therapy.* Therapeutic massage is considered a body-mind therapy because it accesses and changes the internal flow and process of a client's thoughts, feelings, and somatic experiences.
5. *Describe "somatic therapy."* Somatic therapy is a client-centered approach in which a practitioner helps a client consciously change maladaptive body patterns using self-awareness, control, and deliberate action. Somatic therapists often integrate hands-on bodywork with active movement patterning, work in private sessions and classes, and have the overarching goal of improving posture and ease of movement, often to alleviate somatic pain and neuromuscular dysfunction.
6. *Define what "body-mind duality" refers to and describe how it is reinforced by unique human traits and abilities.* Body-mind duality is the notion that the body and mind are separate, which is reinforced by the uniquely human ability to be aware of awareness. It is also reinforced by the location of the brain and head at the top of the body, which

allows a person to look down on the body and creates an illusion of a hierarchy of the body as a separate and lower self.

7. *Identify one pro and one con of body-mind separation.* A pro of body-mind separation is that we can override negative or damaging emotional reactions or responses with cognitive self-regulation. A con of body-mind separation is that we can suppress emotions and unresolved issues in a way that perpetuates muscular tensions and holding patterns, which in turn, interrupts maturation and personal development.
8. *Identify one pro and one con of the body-mind connection.* A pro of the body-mind connection is the ability to separate thoughts from feelings, a primary skill of emotional intelligence, which is the ability to inhibit intense emotions and hurtful responses in order to find creative and rational responses that lead to resolution. A con of the body-mind connection is that hypersensitive people are easily overwhelmed by intense feelings.
9. *Describe Western medicine's changing view of the body-mind as separate or integrated, contrast the treatment protocols of each philosophy, and describe the relevance of these changes to the practice of massage therapy.* Western medicine initially viewed the body and mind as separate and from this view developed specialized branches of medicine that treat specific conditions in isolation, often with drugs and surgeries. As medical researchers uncovered the role of stress in health and illness and recognize the importance of the body-mind connection in treatment, Western medicine has been slowly adopting patient-centered protocols and integrating complementary approaches like stress management and massage therapy into conventional treatment.
10. *Describe the role of stress in health and illness.* Stress causes wear and tear on the body that can lead to or exacerbate illness; stress management therapies like massage and mindfulness awareness play an important role in health care because they teach clients self-regulation skills that reduce the effects of stress and promote healing.
11. *Define integrative medicine.* Integrative medicine is a client-centered approach to medical care that combines conventional treatment with complementary approaches and empowers patients to actively participate in their own treatment and healing processes.
12. *Identify the three major premises of integrative medicine.* The three premises of integrative medicine are: 1) The body has an innate capacity for healing and a patient needs to be empowered to actively participate in her or his own health care. 2) The quality of the physician-patient relationship plays a huge role in determining the outcome of care and begins during the initial interview, at which time it is important for the physician to elicit the patient's perspective on psychosocial factors affecting health. 3) Health-care providers need to work as a team in treating the whole person and need to integrate complementary approaches into traditional treatment protocols.
13. *Describe the medical approach called psychoneuroimmunology (PNI).* Psychoneuroimmunology, a relatively new field of Western medicine, is based on discoveries of how stressful emotions and thoughts affect immune function, making mental and somatic health key components in the treatment of all health conditions.
14. *Name the government health care agency the uses the acronym NCCAM and identify its mission.* NCCAM stands for the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), a department created at the National Institutes of Health in 1998 by the United States Congress in response to the billions of out-of pocket dollars being spent on complementary and alternative modalities (CAM). This new department was

designated as the lead agency for researching CAMs, which include a broad array of mind-body modalities (listed on page 15).

15. *List the four largest complementary therapies that NCCAM recommends for inclusion on integrative medical teams and identify the two main reasons why these four modalities were recommended and are being investigated by NCCAM researchers.* The four largest complementary therapies that NCCAM recommends for inclusion on integrative medical teams are chiropractic, acupuncture, naturopathy, and massage therapy. These therapies were chosen because they have fairly consistent standards of practice and licensure and they are relatively safe.
16. *Describe and contrast the general effects of stress on both the autonomic and skeletal nervous systems.* Stress-inducing thoughts and emotional states can induce physiological stress responses, causing sympathetic dominance in the autonomic nervous system and chronic muscular holding regulated by the skeletal nervous system and leading to myofascial dysfunction and chronic pain and predisposing a person to injury and illness.
17. *Explain why massage clients sometimes have emotional releases as they let go of muscular tensions.* Muscular tension often develops to help a person manage unresolved emotional pain and trauma. When muscular tension relaxes or releases in a massage session, the client may experience the pent-up emotions or traumas stored in the chronic muscular holding.
18. *Describe the role of touch and movement in human development and discuss its relevance to the client-therapist relationship in massage therapy.* In infancy, touch and movement are the earliest channels of human communication. Because the quality of touch and movement that infants and children receive from caretakers plays a huge role in shaping emotional development and habitual responses, the way that massage clients responds to a practitioner's touch often reflect their early touch and movement histories.
19. *Describe and contrast the two tissue responses that indicate that a massage client is either responsive or non-responsive to a massage practitioner's touch.* A massage client responds to the practitioner's touch by either yielding or relaxing, or by contracting and resisting relaxation, usually on an unconscious and habitual level.

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Multiple Choice Questions

*Note: Make sure to pay attention to the highlighted words or phrases in some of the questions because they ask you to identify the statement that **does not** refer to the topic of the question, or to identify the **ineffective** or **false** answer.*

1. Which of the following definitions of body-mind is **not** true?
 - a. Body-mind refers to the relationships between mental and physical health.
 - b. Body-mind refers to thoughts and cognition and excludes physical experiences.
 - c. Body-mind refers to physiological and psychological processes.
 - d. Body-mind refers to the interplay between physical conditions and mental states.
2. Which of the following terms best describes the body-mind duality?
 - a. Mind-body

- b. Somatics
 - c. Separation
 - d. Integration
3. In massage, the language of the body refers to
- a. nonverbal communication via somatic responses.
 - b. the tone and volume of the client's voice.
 - c. what the client is thinking and perceiving.
 - d. the level of hydration in the client's skin.
4. Which phrase most clearly explains why therapeutic massage is a body-mind therapy?
- a. Massage therapy can evoke a deep physiological relaxation response that leads to slower respiration and a release of muscular tension.
 - b. Massage therapy can cause pain if the pressure is too deep and the practitioner is not paying attention to the client's condition or responses.
 - c. Massage therapy can help a person to let go of tension, which has a quieting effect on the mind.
 - d. Massage therapy can tap into a client's emotions and psychological issues and redirect the flow of body-mind processes.
5. Which of the following statements about body-mind duality and separation describes a key aspect of emotional intelligence?
- a. Body-mind duality and separation is the notion that the body and mind are separate.
 - b. Body-mind duality and separation is reinforced by the uniquely human ability to be aware of awareness.
 - c. Body-mind duality gives human beings a capacity to inhibit emotional reactions in order to think rationally and choose healthier and more appropriate responses.
 - d. Body-mind duality and separation devalues the importance of emotions, sexuality, and other bodily experiences in human relationships.
6. Which of the following statements about the role of stress in health and illness is most relevant to the effects of massage therapy?
- a. Stress is not the actual wear and tear on the body, but the symptoms caused by wear and tear.
 - b. Stress leads to many maladaptive, vague symptoms, such as headaches, fatigue, joint pain, and indigestion, which occur prior to the onset of stress-related conditions including arteriosclerosis, arthritis, and late-onset diabetes.
 - c. Stress can be reduced through stress management and relaxation trainings that teach participants self-regulation skills.
 - d. Stress can be reduced through regular massage therapy that focuses on helping the client relax and teaching the client relaxation skills.
7. Of the following statements, which one does not describe an approach to medical treatment called integrative medicine?

- a. Integrative medicine is based on the premise that the body has an innate capacity to heal and patients need to be empowered to actively participate in treatment.
 - b. Integrative medicine is based on the premise that medical problems should be treated in isolation and the patient's thoughts and feelings are irrelevant.
 - c. Integrative medicine is based on the premise that the quality of the physician-patient relationship plays a huge role in determining the outcome of treatment.
 - d. Integrative medicine is based on the premise that health-care providers need to work as a team to treat the whole person and integrate complementary approaches.
8. Why is massage therapy one of the top four complementary modalities being studied at the National Institutes of Health for inclusion on integrative medical teams?
 - a. Because massage therapy is more affordable than chemotherapy or surgery.
 - b. Because massage therapy helps people to get in touch with their bodies.
 - c. Because massage therapy has fairly consistent standards of practice and is relatively safe.
 - d. Because massage therapy, if more widely used, could stimulate economic growth.
9. Why does massage therapy sometimes evoke an emotional release in the client?
 - a. *Because muscular tension helps people manage unresolved emotional pain and as muscles relax, clients experience emotions stored in chronic muscular holding.
 - b. Because massage therapy is much more effective in resolving emotional issues than psychotherapy.
 - c. Because massage therapists are trained to counsel clients in processing and resolving psychological issues held in muscular tension.
 - d. Because massage therapy triggers chemical reactions occurring on a cellular level that results in a release of toxic emotions.
10. Which statement best describes how a client's touch history show up in a therapeutic massage session.
 - a. The quality of touch that a person received from its caretakers shapes the habitual responses that a client has to a practitioner's touch during massage.
 - b. The quality of touch that a person received from its caretakers has no effect on the habitual responses that a client has to a practitioner's touch during massage.
 - c. The quality of touch that a person received from its caretakers shapes the conscious responses that a client has to a practitioner's touch during massage.
 - d. The quality of touch that a person received from its caretakers has no effect on the conscious responses that a client has to a practitioner's touch during massage.

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Suggested Learning Activities

1. Hand Poll: Assessing Prior Knowledge

Time: 5-15 minutes

Objective: To gauge the overall experience level of your student body with [*pick one*] body-mind therapies, somatics, and body psychology.

Exercise:

- a. Take a quick hand poll of your students to find out what they know about and have experienced with somatics. “How many of you are familiar with [*pick one*]:
 - i. “the term somatic,”
 - ii. “the field of somatics,”
 - iii. “body-mind therapies,”
 - iv. “body psychology.”
- b. Ask several students to briefly describe their experience with these topics.

2. Group Discussion: What do You know about Somatics and Body-Mind Therapies?

Time: 5-15 minutes

Objective Use these talking points to uncover preexisting knowledge or experience, biases, or misinformation that your students hold about somatics.

- a. [*pick one*]: What does somatics mean? What are some somatic therapies? What are body-mind therapies? What is body psychology?
- b. [*pick one*]: How many of you have done somatic therapies? Body-mind therapies? Any kind of body psychology? Name what kind of session and briefly describe your experience.
- c. How is [*pick one*] somatic therapy, body-mind therapies, body psychology relevant to massage therapy? What are its benefits? When are its limitations or pitfalls?

3. Patterning Exercise #1: The Power of Thought (p. 9)

Time: 15 minutes, *Adapted for a group*

Objective: To demonstrate the powerful effects that thoughts can have on the body.

Exercise:

- To help your students feel the power of their own body-mind connections, have them sit in a comfortable position, close their eyes, and focus on centering and grounding.
- After a few minutes, ask them bring to mind the most pleasurable time they ever had. Ask them to fill in the sensory details of the memory using these prompts:
“Remember where you were, what you were doing, and whether you were with others or alone. Recall what your surroundings were like. Were you outside or inside? Was it day or night? What was going on around you? What did you see, hear, smell, or feel?”
- Conclude with a short discussion in which they share how they feel by describing describe the sensations and emotions evoked by their pleasant memories

4. Patterning Exercise #2: Effects of Stress (from p. 13)

Time: 15 minutes

Objectives: To get students to self-reflect on the effects of stress on them.

Exercise I: Introduce the premise that everyone is affected by stress in some manner. Then have your students consider the following questions to reflect on how stress affects them.

- 1) Do you frequently get headaches related to stress?
- 2) Do you ruminate about or have anxiety about things you can't control?
- 3) Do you eat when you feel emotional?
- 4) Do you get colds and flu often?
- 5) Do you have trouble falling asleep because of mental chatter?
- 6) Do you get an upset stomach frequently?
- 7) Do you feel less social when you are under stress?
- 8) Do you frequently feel too tired for sex or have a decreased libido?
- 9) Do you find yourself drinking, smoking, or using other vices more frequently?
- 10) Do you have trouble thinking clearly when having a stressful day?
- 11) Do you feel burned-out from work?
- 12) Do you experience muscle tension in your neck, jaw, and back?
- 13) Do you gain weight due to stress?
- 14) Do you tend to lose hair when you are under stress?

Feedback: If a student in answered yes to three or more questions on this inventory, you may want to suggest that she or he may learn stress management skills and spend more time relaxing.

5. Holmes-Rahe Stress Inventory

The Holmes-Rahe stress inventory measures the stress a person is under by giving each major life change a number. Scores between 150 and 300 imply a 50% susceptibility for having a major health crisis in the next two years. Scores above 300 raise the odds to about 80%.

Giving this inventory to students helps instructors understand the level of stress that each student is under so that instructors identify who is at a high risk levels for stress-related health problems. This inventory also helps students make decisions so that they don't overcommit while going to school, and it introduces them to stress levels that massage clients may have.

The inventory is available at <http://www.stress.org/holmes-rahe-stress-inventory>

6. Integrative Consultations (from p. 14)

These consultation questions come from a paper titled "Emerging Credentialing Practices," which is a "descriptive study of 19 integrative health care centers in the United States" that was published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* 165 (February 2005).

Objectives: An integrative doctor or practitioner ask a patient or client these questions to

- get a sense of the bigger picture of the client's health,

- establish rapport,
- build a therapeutic alliance,
- orient the client,
- and encourage client participation in the treatment/healing process.

Exercise: Have your students answer these questions about themselves to get a picture of their overall health.

- 1) Who are you as a person?
- 2) How well do you sleep and what are your dreams like?
- 3) What is the quality of your relationships with family, friends, and coworkers?
- 4) What is your typical mood during an average day? Are you happy?
- 5) What do you typically eat or drink?
- 6) Do you exercise?
- 7) Do you participate in recreational, social, or volunteer activities?
- 8) How do you view yourself and your life?
- 9) How is your health— physically, mentally, and spiritually?
- 10) What can I help you with?

7. Patterning Exercise # 3: Touch History (from p. 17)

Exercise: Explain to your students that one great benefit of massage training is that students, we get the opportunity to receive and develop healing and compassionate qualities of touch. This, in turn, can promote self-healing if our touch history was less than positive or even injurious. Have your students consider their own touch histories by answering these questions and reflecting on their answers.

- 1) What were your family patterns around touch?
- 2) Did you parents or caregivers freely touch one another?
- 3) When did your family members touch and under what circumstances, in what contexts?
- 4) What was the frequency of contact?
- 5) What quality of touch was most common in your family?
- 6) What types of touch do you most like to receive in massage, and how does this reflect your family history?
- 7) What types of touch do you least like to receive in massage, and how does this reflect your family history?