

Questions Asked During Live Webinar Broadcast on August 22, 2018



Breath Awareness and Modulation: Healing Trauma and Addiction

Presenters: Jim Morningstar and Teri Nehring

How do you control faster than normal breath work from exhaling to hyperventilating or over arousal in clients?

A: With training and practice you will notice tension in the client's exhale and coach them to relax on the exhale and possibly reduce the speed and/or volume of their breath. You can do this both verbally and by example. JM

What about clients with anxiety? Can fast breathing trigger a panic attack, and if so, how can that be avoided?

A: This is similar to the answer above with regards to the breath modulation and can be combined with other clinical tools such as empowering visualization around circumstances that normally trigger their anxiety, inner child work, etc. I have always been able to coach clients through heightened anxiety in sessions. The goal is to help them with the tools to do this for themselves out of session. JM

Could you please provide a thorough explanation of brain spotting?

A: Brainspotting is an advanced mind body therapy that helps individuals identify, process and release trauma, pain, emotional stress and a range of other psychological and somatic issues. A primary advantage of Brainspotting is that it reaches parts of the brain that are not generally accessed through traditional approaches. It is a relational and neurobiological approach to healing at the deepest level.

In the age of holistic health, brain-body approaches are increasingly sought after for treating simple and complex issues. Brainspotting is a newer mind body therapy that is showing a lot of promise in its ability to provide relief for trauma, anxiety, depression and daily stressors. It has roots in Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR) and similarly supports the reprocessing of negative experiences and retrains emotional reactions.

Brainspotting is proposed to activate the body's self-scanning ability to identify, process and release imbalances and residue emotional stress. It is based on the premise that 'where you look affects how you feel' and proposes that eye positions correlate with important neural, unconscious, internal, and emotional experiences. As an individual maintains an eye position while focusing on a stressful experience, they connect to a spot in the brain (brainspot) that gives them access to releasing and processing the challenging experience. A brainspot is not just one spot in the brain but rather a network of activation in the brain that leads to a reflexive, somatic reaction in the body. The focused eye position further allows the brain to stop scanning the room and instead internally self-scan to identify and maintain its presence on the deeper unresolved issue.

The therapy itself follows a strategy to locate client's brainspot while working with a dual attunement frame. Dual attunement is the mindful, compassionate presence of the therapist to both the client and their neurobiology. When a brainspot is activated, reflexive movements are able to be observed by the therapist that provide valuable access to healing. These movements come from deep regions of the brain, outside of a client's conscious, cognitive and verbal awareness. This makes the therapist's sensory acuity and attunement to the client's finite reflexive changes, critical to the efficacy of Brainspotting.

Brainspotting can be used as a primary mode of therapy as well as an adjunct in the therapy toolkit. For individuals who feel like they have plateaued in their healing or those who are not finding relief in more traditional approaches, Brainspotting offers new possibilities for breakthrough and healing.