

Body Oriented Model of Trauma

(sources Peter Levine, Hakomi - sensorimotor psychotherapy + Process Oriented Psychology)

will hall 03-21-10. www.willhall.net

Note: Remember diversity. This model is just a tool or possible framework. It does not define trauma. It offers a creative inspiration for exploring how you understand and heal. There is no single way to heal and no single way to explain human experience.

Simply put, Trauma is:

You left your body because you couldn't of fight back or escape.

Now you are stuck trying to get back in your body and regain your power to fight back or escape.

Stuckness intrudes on your health, relationships, and emotional wellness.

In more detail - Trauma is:

- Out of control event *perceived by body* as life-threatening + inescapable.
-
- Extreme fight / flight energy activated.
-
- Boundaries and resources are overwhelmed because the body perceives it can't escape.
-
- The body freezes / emotional "shock" as a protective mechanism. Energy is held for later release.
-
- Consciousness radically dissociates from the body.
-
- Body tries to reassociate with consciousness to unblock+ release fight/flight energy.
-
- *If body **can** reassociate* and unblock energy, process is complete. Person not traumatized.
-
- Unblocked energy looks like warmth, shaking, trembling, running, sounds, fighting, gestures, movements, strength, reconnected relatedness in *associated* body.
-
- Culture, oppression, meaning, higher brain often block re-association with the body.
-
- Instincts clash with higher/cognitive. Monkey brain at odds with reptile + horse brain.
-
- *If body **cannot** reassociate*, blocked and fight/flight energy is not completed and discharged. Person is traumatized.
-
- Incomplete fight/flight energy is held as instinctual memory in the body.
-
- Energetic memory repeatedly intrudes in order to re-associate, complete and resolve itself.
-
- Traumatic scene repeats itself compulsively in behavior.
-
- Intrusion causes emotional and physical disturbances, symptoms.
-
- Intrusions, when dissociated and not re-associated, re-traumatize. Catharsis and emotional arousal re-cycle + entrench the pattern rather than resolve it.
-
- Subjectively, intrusion means the present is experienced as if it were the past.
-
- Repetition associated to memory "triggers" as the body attempts to resolve energy.
-
- Socially linked to oppression and disempowerment, as well as cultural alienation from body, animal nature, wildness.
-
- Trauma experience is a *healthy attempt by the body to heal itself*.