

Trauma Therapy Techniques

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Surviving and continuing life normally after facing a terrible event or a bad situation is not so simple. Due to the harmful consequences which will appear throughout our journey, it is not only recommended, but it is necessary to seek professional help from trusted experts, in order to restore what has been lost and avoid all psychic, emotional and physical effects which can lead to very serious problems, including depression and death in certain situations.

Taking care of ourselves is our primary job, but when we are unable to do so, then we should get the help and support we need in order for us to heal and live happy. So why hiding and running?

In this article, we will talk about two techniques: The **Hand on heart, Hand on belly** technique and the **Grounding** technique used in sensorimotor psychotherapy inspired by *Sensorimotor Psychotherapy: Interventions For Trauma And Attachment* by Pat Ogden and Janina Fisher. These two techniques help traumatized people to overcome difficulties and regain balance that has been lost.



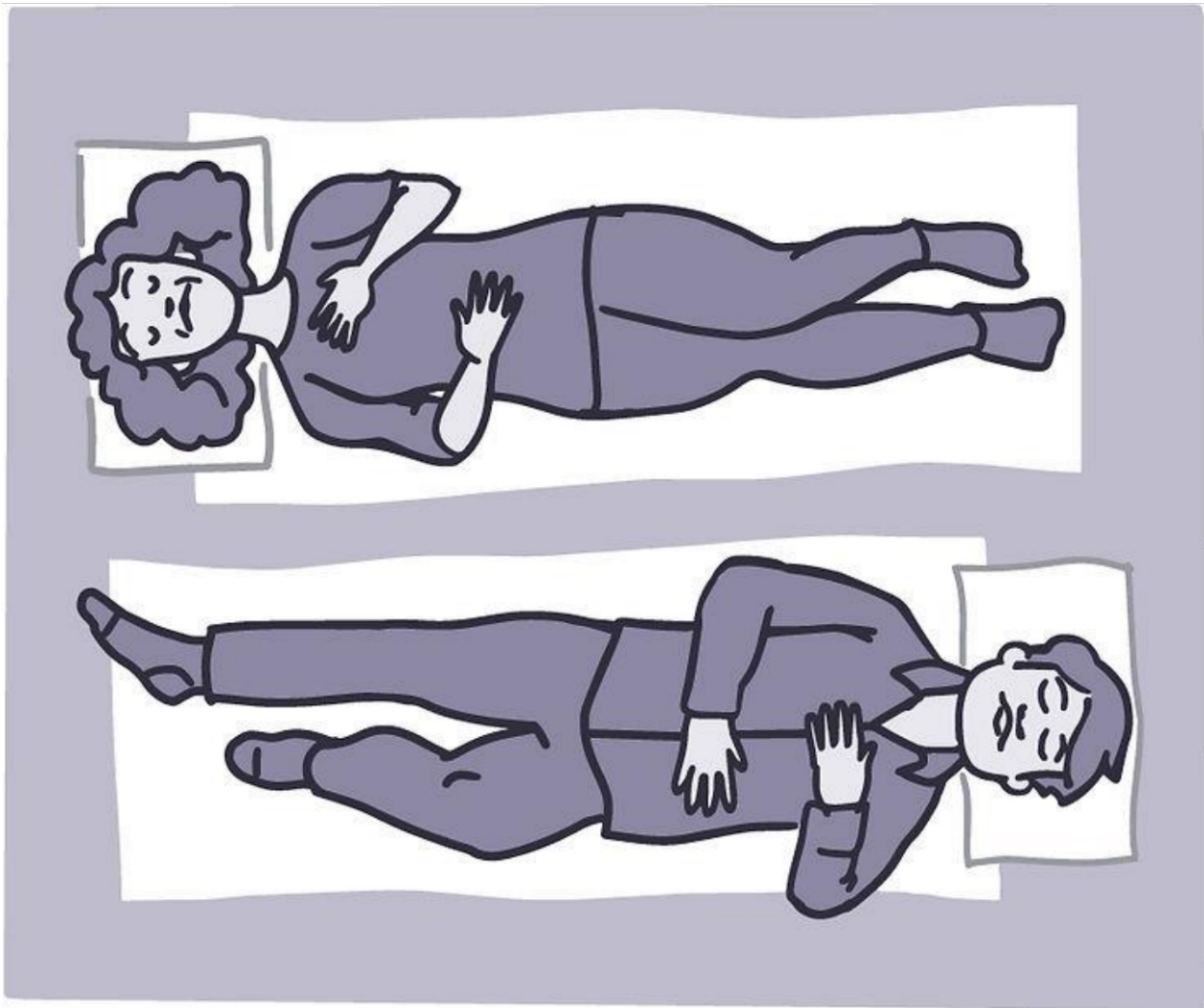
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What is Sensorimotor psychotherapy?

According to Porges, "Sensorimotor Psychotherapy is a therapeutic approach that considers the body as a crucial source of information in the treatment of past experiences related to traumas and developmental wounds. It recognizes bodily experiences, thoughts and emotions as an integral part not only of the lived experience of the trauma but also of the healing process. Its objective is to restore in the patient an adequate capacity for processing information, which would no longer be influenced by past painful experiences."

Sensorimotor techniques

A- Hand on heart, hand on belly technique is an anti-stress exercise, to explore the centering resource of placing the hand on the torso, and being aware of the effect of the hands touching the body. It helps reducing stress and anxiety, while breathing appropriately, in times of fear, panic, anger... It can be done in a comfortable standing, sitting or lying position.



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1. Close your eyes, place one hand on your heart and the other on your lower abdomen, and breathe calmly.
2. Feel the weight of your hands on your chest, the coolness, the warmth of your hands, the movement of your breath under your hands.
3. Take your time to notice what is happening in your body when you place both hands on your heart and stomach.

4. Mindfully experiment with other hand positions on your torso to find out if it energizes you more. You can place your hands on different areas of your chest or place both hands on your heart or belly, or gently press a pillow against your chest.
5. Take your time to experience the effect of each position. Notice the quality of the touch, the pressure, warmth, and the feel of your breathing.
6. Identify the hand position that feels “right” and is most centering for you.

Mindfully practice this resource at least 3 times during the week when you feel triggered or upset, and record your experience.

- What trigger or situation that prompted resource use?
- What was happening in your body when you felt triggered?
- What happened in your body when you used the resource?

B- Grounding technique: helps controlling and managing the symptoms after the traumatic experience, (like flashbacks, anxiety, and other uncomfortable feelings...), by turning attention away from bad thoughts/memories and refocusing on the present moment with a slow and gentle connection, while using the 5 senses, to calm the nervous system and return safely back to the body.



Dissociation is a very common freeze trauma response. It's considered as our body's protective response, where we disconnect from our bodies to feel safe. It can make us feel like a living contradiction, constantly feeling two things at once. The impression of being brought back to the past in the present moment while feeling everything and nothing at the same time. This can be exhausting, but it's important to remember, that we have the power to access and shift our nervous system, to a calmer and more regulated state, so we can feel connected to our bodies again.

The 5-4-3-2-1 technique:

It's a very common grounding technique. Here's how you can get started:

1. To begin, look around you, identify and describe 5 things you can see.

2. Describe 4 things that you can feel around you (object, or a physical sensation like air blowing on your legs or an itchy nose).
3. Describe 3 things you can hear. It might be helpful to close your eyes so you can concentrate on the little sounds happening around you.
4. Slowly shift your attention to your smell and describe 2 things that you can smell, even if you have to pick something up and sniff it a bit.
5. Finally, focus on your taste and describe 1 thing that you can taste. You can even have a sip of water here.

Finally, being in harmony with our surroundings is based on our inner state. The more stable it is, the less we will be affected by the current winds, which are sometimes aggressive and can alter our life. And these two techniques have proven to be very effective in the lives of our patients who turn to us for help at Institut Therapeia.

So, if you ever felt the need for help, do not hesitate to contact us at any time. Our licensed psychotherapist is always here for you.

You can make an [appointment](https://www.psychotherapeute.pro/contact) with our psychotherapist

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