



## Somatic Experiencing and Psychotherapy Safe Touch Contract

### Psychotherapy and Somatic Experiencing

Welcome to my psychotherapy and Somatic Experiencing practice. Somatic Experiencing (SE) is a naturalistic form of healing that will help you learn how to settle and release physiological activation from your body. Very often this process helps people to reduce stress and return to a sense of regulation and mastery in their lives. SE will support you in learning how to attend to uncomfortable sensations in your body and gently unwind them through your conscious attention. SE is particularly useful in managing stress because so many of the symptoms are physiological. If you would like to read more about SE, visit our website at [www.traumahealing.com](http://www.traumahealing.com) or read *In an Unspoken Voice* by Dr. Peter Levine.

### Credentials

I am a Somatic Experiencing Practitioner having completed 216 hours of professional training through the Somatic Experiencing Trauma Institute (SETI).

If you are working with a therapist and would like to work with me to teach you SE, I will ask you to sign a release so that I might discuss your progress with your primary therapist. This is to ensure that we function as a good team working for your benefit.

### Benefits and Risks

SE may offer you many benefits such as an increase in your ability to self-soothe and feel empowered. However, there may also be risks as with any treatment that focuses on healing trauma. Although SE is designed to help you resource and work with manageable amounts of discomfort, you may experience challenging feelings, images, or thoughts. Furthermore, as with any stress reduction treatment, there can be no guarantee that you will reach your goals. That said, many people report that SE has helped them tremendously and has created positive change in their lives. Learning how to reorganize "body memory" is often a vital to learning how to relax and calm your nervous system.

### SE Session Format

SE sessions are done seated in a chair or a ("regulation") table depending on your preference. You will be asked to share an impression of the sensations that you feel in your body, such as tightness, heat, shakiness, expansion, relaxations, etc. I will teach you ways to track, or follow, these sensations with your awareness and come to a place of rebalance.

### Touch

SE is not a form of massage. I may offer you touch support for the following reasons: grounding, containment, supportive, mobilization, or awareness building. You will always be asked before being touched and have the right and my full support to decline. If you do not feel comfortable with touch, or if the session does not call for it, session work will not include touch.

It is a great honor for me to work with you and share my knowledge of Somatic Experiencing. I hope to teach you skills that will help you reduce stress in your life. It takes strength and courage to explore greater self-awareness, and I feel privileged to support you in reaching your goals.

Please sign here to verify you have read and understood all of the above information.



## **Somatic Experiencing® Information Sheet**

**Based on the research of Dr. Peter Levine, and the book, *Waking the Tiger***

### **What is Somatic Experiencing also known as SE?**

Somatic Experiencing® is a body-oriented approach to the healing of trauma and other stress disorders. It is the life's work of Dr. Peter A. Levine, resulting from his multidisciplinary study of stress physiology, psychology, ethology, biology, neuroscience, indigenous healing practices, and medical biophysics, together with over 45 years of successful clinical application. The SE approach releases traumatic shock, which is key to transforming PTSD and the wounds of emotional and early developmental attachment trauma.

### **The SE Approach**

Offers a framework to assess where a person is "stuck" in the fight, flight or freeze responses and provides clinical tools to resolve these fixated physiological states. It provides effective skills appropriate to a variety of healing professions including mental health, medicine, physical and occupational therapies, bodywork, addiction treatment, first response, education, and others.

### **The Science of Trauma**

Trauma may begin as acute stress from a perceived life-threat or as the end product of cumulative stress. Both types of stress can seriously impair a person's ability to function with resilience and ease. Trauma may result from a wide variety of stressors such as accidents, invasive medical procedures, sexual or physical assault, emotional abuse, neglect, war, natural disasters, loss, birth trauma, or the corrosive stressors of ongoing fear and conflict.

### **How SE Works**

The SE approach facilitates the completion of self-protective motor responses and the release of thwarted survival energy bound in the body, thus addressing the root cause of trauma symptoms. This is approached by gently guiding clients to develop increasing tolerance for difficult bodily sensations and suppressed emotions. In SE sessions, clients are encouraged to tune into physical sensation, which creates the space for the body to reconnect with the innate healing response. This naturalistic process resolves symptoms by gently discharging the high levels of nervous system arousal associated with trauma, and helping the body return to a more manageable level of functioning.

As the nervous system is reset, integration organically occurs.