

# *Polarity and Trauma*

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By Dr. Chandana Becker, PhD, MTI, RPP, SEP

Polarity Therapy is a comprehensive health building system. It is designed to involve the client in a conscious process of living well. To accomplish this objective, a Polarity practitioner needs a variety of skills: (1) skills in presenting and conveying the methods of Polarity Therapy including bodywork, energy exercise, and nutrition and, (2) meta-skills for creating the kind of atmosphere and relationship that is therapeutic, leads to a fruitful exchange, and engenders a positive change process for the client.

Trauma is overwhelm. A person is traumatized when she gets overloaded by a stimulus and can't thoroughly process and respond to it. Since the nervous system is the main body system for processing our experiences, we say in trauma that the nervous system has been overwhelmed. As a result, many psycho-physical symptoms begin to show up and impair the client's health and functioning. From a Polarity perspective we'd say that there is an "energy block" - that the life energy of a highly stressful event is bound in the body-mindspirit and creates the symptoms of traumatization. Polarity Therapy specializes in recognizing and resolving energy blocks and imbalances.

Who among us has no history of traumatization? Living in the world today almost guarantees multiple incidents of life threat leading to overwhelm from such common phenomenon as exposure to accidents, medical procedures, abuse, war, natural disasters, and severe loss. Polarity clients come for sessions for many different reasons. However, if the Polarity practitioner obtains thorough symptom and trauma inventories from his clients, he will find that unresolved trauma is a likely factor in the presenting concerns of any given client.

Registered Polarity Practitioner (RPP) training equips practitioners with technical proficiency for addressing energy imbalances in our clients. With time, experience, supervision and reflection, a practitioner becomes more confident, relaxed, and competent in her capacities to supply clients with what they need. There are ways to purposefully create a receptive field that fosters fluid engagement and progress for our clients. I call these meta-skills - they are the overarching skills that pervade who we are, what we do, and how we share ourselves with others. From my perspective, the primary meta-skills involve awareness, dialogue, energetic boundaries, and self-regulation. When embodied, these skills are naturally transmitted to our clients and help to create a context for health that comes from and leads to deep self-care and healing. These meta-skills are crucial for trauma prevention and resolution, and are fundamental for optimal therapy of any kind for any client condition.

## **Self-care**

Reflecting on my decades of therapy and teaching experience I've developed a strong bias: I prefer that health care practitioners attend to their own wellbeing first. Then, we can share information and skills with our clients from a practical, lived experience rather than just some intellectual or theoretical basis. Therefore, when I teach, I focus on practitioner self-care as the foundation for all other therapeutic skills. I believe that when the practitioner embodies the principle of self-care, clients automatically get it through somatic resonance; and it's also easier to overtly discuss daily self-care practices that will assist clients to move toward greater balance and health. For me, self-care is a way of life that arises out of repeatedly applying the meta-skills of awareness, dialogue, energetic boundaries, and self-regulation.

## **Awareness**

From the developer of Polarity Therapy, Dr Stone, down to today's Polarity practitioners, we recognize the importance of consciousness as an essential ingredient for health and a life well lived. Honing awareness is one of my favorite activities; it includes awareness from the inside out as well as from the outside in. Learning how to process information and to discern when a response is indicated is a fine art. Awareness is a key to answering two potent questions that initiate and sustain the healing journey: "How am I?" and "What do I need for my wellbeing?"

## **Dialogue**

When you combine awareness with dialogue you begin to get a conscious feedback system. The dialogue is with yourself and with the wisdom of your body-being. You cultivate a body-centered communication process that gives you ongoing information and guidance about what is happening in you and what you need for your health and balance. When a practitioner knows how to tap his own awareness and enter a felt sense dialogue with himself, he can of course teach his clients how to do the same. Practitioner client dialogue then informs the practitioner how best to serve the client, empowers the client since the therapeutic process is arising from within, and does away with the role of practitioner as savior.

## **Energetic Boundaries**

Boundaries are breached and altered by traumatization. When a client has her own space and can be with her own experience, optimal change can take place. It is only by being where we are that we can truly move somewhere else. It's easier for a client to find herself and tolerate the reality of her experience (even pieces of a traumatic experience) when she is met by her practitioner on the edge of her energetic boundaries. Honouring and restoring energetic boundaries fosters a return to wholeness and allows you to keep what's yours and clear what's not yours, and discern what is and isn't good for you. You can see why this is so important for trauma healing specifically, healing in general, and for healthy living as a routine.

## **Self-regulation**

Self-regulation is the basis of homeostasis, it is the capacity of the body-being to bring itself back to the best balance it can. Self-regulation can also be improved when we relate to it, you guessed it!, with awareness. Given all the energetic, spiritual, mental, emotional, physiological and structural, as well as relational imbalances that commonly occur in the wake of traumatization, trauma therapy must hinge on effective ways to elicit, support, and enhance self-regulation.

I view the meta-skills as essential components of the receptive field necessary for a health-building process. I believe that the more a polarity practitioner embodies the meta-skills, the more her clients will receive the benefits of them through osmosis as well as through overt instruction. When the practitioner has got it, she gives it to her clients, when the client gets it, he gives it to himself and to the others in his life. Polarity and Trauma meta-skills for healing, for self-care, and for the conscious art of living well - ahhhh.

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