The Ethics of Touch:
Working with Trauma Survivors

with Cherie Sohnen-Moe
& Dr. Ben Benjamin

Instructors:
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Authors of
The Ethics of Touch
Webinar Goals

The goal of today’s webinar is to explore the knowledge necessary to ethically work with trauma survivors.

Logistics

- **Time:** 60 minutes

- **Questions:**
  If you have a question, please ask on my Dr Benjamin Facebook page after the webinar so everyone can see the answer.

- **www.Facebook.com/BenjaminInstitute**
Things to keep in mind

1. What is the prevalence of sexual abuse?
2. What are the stages that trauma survivors go through?
3. What does hyperarousal mean?
4. What are the stages of recovery?
5. What are the benefits of touch therapy for survivors?
6. What are the causes of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder?

Thanks to Artists

Jenny Hahn
And
Lynn Schirmer
Incidence of Abuse

One in Five

Ethical Guidelines

• Training
• Supervision
• Increased self-knowledge
Touch therapy provides a healing environment

- Being present in one’s body is a double-edged sword
- Can re-stimulate the trauma
- And evoke frightening feelings
The Potential for Harm

- Cathartic emotional releases
- Can re-traumatize the person

"The Injured Child"

"Driven by Fear"
Treatment Mistakes

- Working too deeply
- Overstepping a boundary
- Not setting clear boundaries
The Core of Trauma and Abuse

Sexual abuse is “unwanted or inappropriate sexual contact, either verbal or physical, between two or more people, that is intended as an act of control, power, rage, violence, and intimidation with sex as a weapon.”
Physical abuse is “the use of force or violence to cause pain or bodily harm which is used as an instrument of intimidation, coercion, or control.”

Emotional abuse is “the infliction of emotional harm by verbal intimidation or neglectful behavior to intimidate, demean, or hurt another person.”
The Core of Trauma and Abuse

The intent of all abuse is “to dominate, humiliate, and gain control of another person.”

"Paralysis of Perfection"

Types of Sexual Abuse

• Seductive behavior
• Sexual touching
• Sexual intercourse

“Into the White Where Bones Don’t Store Pain”
Sexual Abuse Includes

- Rape
- Gang rape
- Date rape
- Partner or Spouse rape
- Incest

"Into the White Where Bones Don't Store Pain"

Sexual abuse is rarely an isolated event

- Verbal attacks
- Put-downs
- Insults
- Demeaning comments
- Sudden irrational acts
- Withdrawal of love
- Threats to hurt others

"The Good Actress"
Quotes from survivors

“He told me if I told my mother he would kill me.”

“My father told me if I let him do things to me he would leave my sister alone.”

“He was usually drunk and would try to choke me or smother me with a pillow while he raped me. This went on weekly from the time I was 8 till I was 16.”

Prevalence of Sexual Abuse

- 1 in every 3-5 women
- 1 in every 7 men

50 Million People in the US alone

“Closet Time”
Types of Physical Abuse

- Violent beatings
- Corporal punishment
- Food deprivation
- Physical torture

Types of Emotional Abuse

- Direct verbal threats or attacks
- Taunting or belittling language
- Intimidation or Shaming
- Demeaning or hurtful language
- Put downs or Berating
- Ostracism or Humiliation
- Emotional withholding
- Emotional neglect
Cult Abuse

Mind control abuse includes control of:

• Behavior
• Information
• Thoughts
• Emotions

Cult Abuse

• Identity confusion
• Black and white, simplistic thinking
• Difficulty with decision-making
• Fear and panic disorders
• Sexual problems
• Sleeping and eating difficulties
The Effects of Trauma
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

The Three Major Symptoms of PTSD

- Hyperarousal
- Intrusion
- Constriction
“After I knew what he was doing, I used to separate from him. I used to feel that if I could just get close enough to the wall, that he couldn't touch me (yet I knew he could), but I used to go inside the wall, and it was like he was touching someone else. I would just turn off and get cold.”

Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (CPTSD)

People subjected to prolonged or repeated trauma
The Three Stages of Recovery

1. Safety
2. Remembrance and Mourning
3. Re-connection

Establish Safety
Remembrance and Mourning

Reconnection
Recovery Criteria

1. Memory
2. Emotional Range and Tolerance
3. Memory and Emotion Links
4. Symptom Mastery
5. Self-Esteem
6. Attachment
7. Meaning

Memory
Emotional Range and Tolerance

Memory and Emotion Links
Symptom Mastery
Self-Esteem
Attachment
Meaning

Benefits of Touch Therapy
Establish a Place of Safety

Regain Body Control & Rebuild Boundaries
The Pleasure of Non-Sexual Touch

Reintegrate Body Memories
Psychotherapy Collaboration

Prerequisites for Working with Survivors

Education
- Psychology
- Communication
- Sexuality
- Ethics,
- Trauma
- Counseling
Prerequisites for Working with Survivors

Self awareness
Support networks like
Peer counseling
Supervision

Psychological Understanding

Transference
Counter-transference
Power differential
Dual relationships
Boundary issues
Psychological Understanding

Flashbacks
Body memories
Psychological symptoms
• Hyper-arousal
• Intrusion
• Dissociation

Transference

Unresolved needs, feelings, and issues from childhood are transferred onto the helper.
Countertransference

The therapist also carries unresolved needs, feelings and issues into the therapeutic relationship.

Countertransference

- More emotional charge toward a client.
- Feelings of irritability or anger with a client
- Recurring themes like:
  - frequent sexual attraction to clients
  - the recurrent desire to make friends
- The expectation of praise
- Helping clients in outside matters
Feedback, Support & Collaboration
Therapist’s Issues & Motivations

- Talking about oneself and one’s life
- Difficulty telling a client that you can’t help
- Clarity about personal needs for touch
- Receiving your own therapy

Ethical Dimensions

- Relationships with clients outside
- Client confidentiality
- Setting boundaries
- Clear financial relationship
- Willingness to admit mistakes
- Honesty
Secondary Traumatization

Supervision and Support
Many thanks to:

**Paintings by Jenny Hahn**
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"Paralysis of Perfection" ©
"Infected" ©
"Numb" ©

www.jenspaintings.com

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http://lynnscirmer.com/
http://lynnsart.net/index.php/search/

**Books to Read on Trauma**

*Trauma and Recovery*
by Judith Herman, MD

*Memory Slips: A Memoir of Music and Healing*
by Linda K. Cutting

*My Father's House: A Memoir of Incest and of Healing*
by Sylvia Fraser

*A Hole in the World: An American Boyhood*
by Richard Rhodes

*Sex Trafficking: The Global Market in Women and Children*
by Kathryn Farr

*Matterhorn*
by Karl Marlantes

*A Rumor of War*
by Phillip Caputo

*Combating Mind Control & Releasing the Bonds*
by Steve Hassan
The Ethics of Touch

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Webinars Available On Demand

Dr. Ben Benjamin
Unraveling the Mystery Series:
• Low Back Pain
• Cervical Pain
• Shoulder Pain
• Knee Pain
• Ankle Pain
• Hip & Thigh Pain

Whitney Lowe
Orthopedic Approaches to Upper Body Disorders
Orthopedic Massage Approaches to Lumbo-Pelvic Pain

Carole Osborne
• Pregnancy Massage 101

Tom Myers
• Anatomy Trains: Clinical Applications of Myofascial Meridians

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