



**Measured Impact Webinar**

**Working with Survivors of Torture - the Mind Body Connection**

May 23, 2018

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**Working with Survivors of Torture - the Mind Body Connection**





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Bodywise Foundation

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Center for Victims of Torture

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**Objectives:**

1. List personal (e.g., chronic pain, anxiety) and relational (e.g., sense of connection and community) issues that can be addressed by mind body interventions
2. Describe how mind body interventions can be used effectively with survivors of torture
3. Implement brief meditation, postural awareness, and self- massage techniques which can be used with clients.

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## Trauma Informed Yoga

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### TIY in Practice

- Patient sits with one foot on the floor and the other on the carpet
- Notice how body organizes to lift an arm or leg
- Body scans/menu of sensation
- Link simple breath with movement
- Language: empowering, offer choice, invitational

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## Trauma Informed Yoga Suggested Continued Reading

- Interoception Practice with Bo Forbes (LBP 053)  
<https://www.liberatedbody.com/podcast/bo-forbes-lbp-053>
- Yoga and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: An Interview with Bessel van der Kolk, MD (2009). *Integral Yoga Magazine* Special Section I: Yoga & the Emotional Body
- Dr. Peter Levine: Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma. July 7, 1997. by Peter A. Levine, Ann Frederick (Contributor)
- Firefly International <https://fireflyinternational.org/>
- Creswell, J.D. & Lindsay, E.K. (2014). How does mindfulness training affect health? A mindfulness stress buffering account. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 23, 401-407.

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Harvard  
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in Refugee  
Trauma

BELLEVUE/NYU  
PROGRAM FOR  
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## Meditation

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## Meditation: Walking Meditation

*Ancient practice still popular in Thai Buddhist monasteries where some monks practice for several hours a day.*

- **Anchor or primary focus** of attention is on the movements of the feet and shifting of balance
- **Secondary focus** on the breath
- Walk is deliberate and slower than normal
- Practiced indoors by walking in a line or outside in nature
- Can be combined with loving kindness meditation

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### Mantra based meditation

- Sacred word often from a different language
- Two to four syllables ideal
- Focus on the words and the breath
- Helps to focus attention and quiet the mind

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### Examples of possible mantras that could be used for clients of various faiths

- Arabic- Salam
  - Means peace in Arabic
- Buddhist tradition- Buddho
  - Means Buddha in Pali
- Christian tradition- Maranatha
  - Means Come Lord in Aramaic
- Jewish tradition - Shalom
  - Means peace in Hebrew

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### Loving Kindness Meditation

- Examples of phrases
  - May I be peaceful
  - May I live in love and in compassion
  - May I be safe and protected

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### Loving Kindness Meditation

- Change language depending on who you are sending loving kindness to
  - Self
  - Benefactor or easy person/pet
  - Close friends and loved ones
  - Neutral person
  - Difficult person
  - Members of group or all beings

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### Loving Kindness Meditation

- In individual sessions I guide clients through 5 minutes focused on first two steps
- Longer LKM in group setting
- LKM with “difficult person” comes with more experience and best to start with someone that you have a low level of conflict with

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### Resources

**Centers**

- Center for Mindfulness in Medicine Healthcare, and Society, UMass Medical School
  - <https://www.umassmed.edu/cfm>
- The John Main Center for Meditation and Inter-religious Dialogue, Georgetown University
  - <https://johnmaincenter.org>

**Books**

- Hanh Nhat, T. (2011). *The long road turns to joy: A guide to walking meditation*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.
- Kabat-Zinn, J., & University of Massachusetts Medical Center/Worcester. (1991). *Full catastrophe living: Using the wisdom of your body and mind to face stress, pain, and illness*. New York, NY: Dell Pub., a division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Pub.
- Main, J.(2006). *Word into silence: A manual for Christian meditation*. London: Canterbury Press Norwich.
- Salzberg, S. (1995). *Loving kindness: The revolutionary art of happiness*. Boston, MA: Shambala.
- Treleavan, D. (2018). *Trauma sensitive mindfulness: Practices for safe and transformative healing*. NYC, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.

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### The role of touch

- Self-touch to re-connect with body (start with tennis balls or socks first to be less threatening)
- Invite client back to body (role of dissociation)
- Client example desiring partner again
  
- Start to feel pleasurable sensations
- Partner tennis ball massages (invitation to participate after 4-5 weekly sessions) to build connection, trust, communication
- Brief demo



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### Two simple techniques to help clients to feel safe in their bodies again

- From Peter Levine's Somatic Experiencing TM
- Excellent YouTube video showing this in full
- Good for decreasing anxious feelings, self-soothing, self-regulation
- Body is the container
- 1) Right hand, place just below left armpit, left hand place on outside right shoulder, breathe
- 2) Right hand on forehead, left hand on sternum, breathe, feel sensations between hands. Then, move right hand to belly, keep left hand as is.

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### Peter Levine exercise about safety, body as a container



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Peter Levine grounding and calming activity



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Peter Levine DC grounding and calming activity



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Sledjeski EM, Speisman B, Kierker L. Does number of lifetime trauma explain a relationship between PTSD and chronic medical conditions? Answers from the National Comorbidity Survey. *J Behav Med.* 2008; 31(4): 341-349.

Teodorescu, D.S., Heir T, Sigvelard J, Hauff E, Wentzel-Larsen T, Lien L. Chronic pain in multi-traumatized outpatients with a refugee background resettled in Norway: A cross-sectional study. *BMC Psychol.* 2015; 3 (7):1-12.

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Presenters

Eleanor Bramwell, Executive Director  
Bodywise Foundation <https://www.bodywisefoundation.org/>

Laura Gueron, Physiotherapy Clinical Advisor  
The Center for Victims of Torture <https://www.cvt.org/>

Laura Morrissette, Mindfulness Consultant  
Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma  
<http://hprt-cambridge.org/>

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Physiotherapy for Survivors of Torture  
Facebook group

CVT supports a Facebook group for physiotherapist around the world that also includes OT and other healing professionals as members

To join, send a Facebook friend request to Laura Pizer Gueron, who will friend you, add you to the group, and then unfriend you for your privacy.

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