

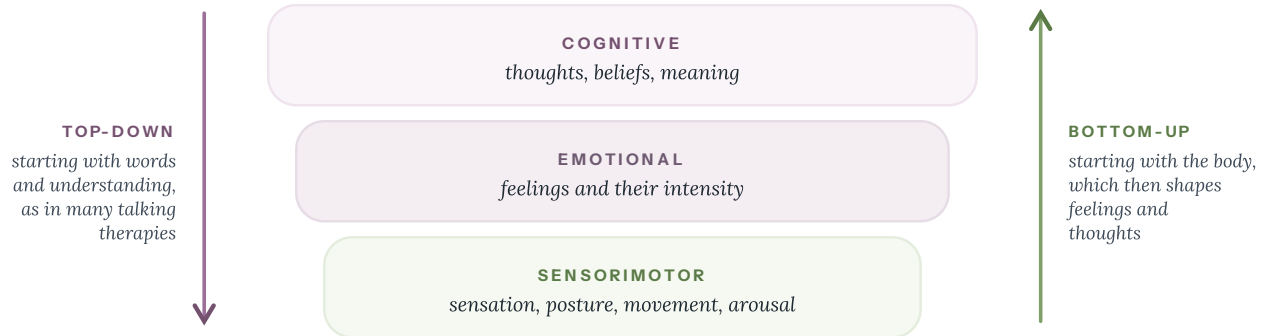
Pat Ogden: Sensorimotor Psychotherapy

Bringing the body into the healing of trauma and attachment

Pat Ogden founded the Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Institute and is a pioneer of **body-oriented psychotherapy** for trauma and attachment. Her approach integrates mindful attention to the body with traditional talking therapy, based on the idea that trauma is held not only in memories and beliefs but also in **sensation, posture and movement**.

01 Three levels of experience

working from the top down, and the bottom up



02 Key ideas

Bottom-up processing

Working with sensation, posture and movement directly, alongside words, as a pathway to feelings and meaning.

The window of tolerance

Keeping arousal within a range where we can feel and think at once, neither overwhelmed nor shut down.

Mindful tracking

Gently noticing present-moment body experience with curiosity: "What happens in your body as you say that?"

Unfinished defensive actions

Protective impulses that couldn't happen at the time, like pushing away or running, can be slowly and safely explored.

Somatic resources

Grounding, centring, alignment and boundaries: body-based capacities that help us feel steadier.

Attachment and the body

Early relationships shape how we reach out, pull back or brace, and these patterns live in posture and movement.

03 A phased approach

safety always comes first

PHASE 1

Safety and stabilisation

Building resources and widening the window of tolerance before any trauma work.

PHASE 2

Processing memory

Carefully working with traumatic memory through the body, at a pace that stays tolerable.

PHASE 3

Integration

Re-engaging with daily life, relationships and pleasure, with a more settled sense of self.

04 Noticing my present experience

pause for a moment and notice each, gently

Thoughts

words, beliefs, images

Emotions

feelings as they arise

Five senses

what I see, hear, smell...

Body sensations

tension, warmth, tingling

Movements

posture, gestures, impulses

A resource to try

Feel your feet on the floor and the support beneath you. Notice where in your body you feel even a little steadier. What happens when you rest your attention there?

In a session, this might look like...

Slowing down to notice a tightening in the chest as a memory comes up, exploring a small movement the body wants to make, or practising a steadier posture while talking about something difficult.

SOURCES

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