

Clearing Trauma is about Integration

Building Capacity

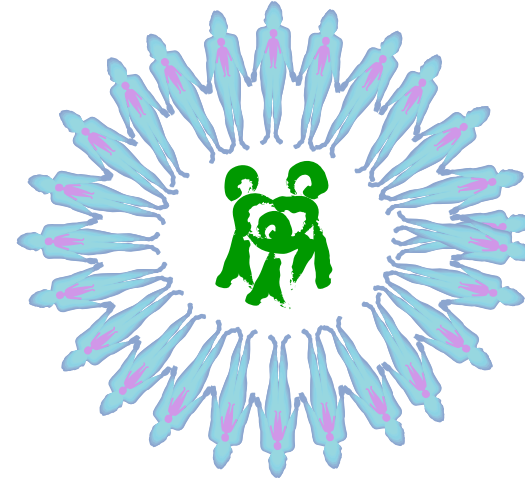
Clearing trauma is not about getting rid of the trauma. Clearing trauma is about reorganizing to integrate experiences that have overwhelmed and disorganized us. It is about building the capacity to tolerate what was overwhelming and intolerable in the past, so our nervous system can digest and metabolize fragments of experience that we have split off or numbed down.

There are two indispensable resources that help us spread the trauma load so it is easier to bear and contain:

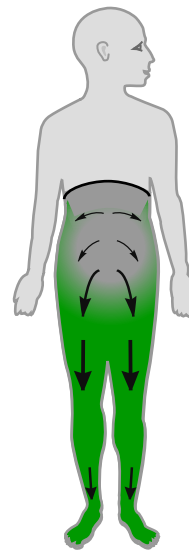
- We can share our experience with other people, in safe relational space.
- We can also expand our physical awareness so more parts carry the same embodied charge.

Resourcing, titrating and discharging are essential tools in this process. Resourcing keeps us hopeful and connected with pleasant or tolerable experiences. Titrating prevents retraumatization, and allows us to work more efficiently and precisely. Discharge can clear the excess charge as we reconnect with intense experiences. Discharge can also expand our capacity to sit with the charge of physically intense experience so we can integrate it.

- Spread the load by sharing in safe relational space.



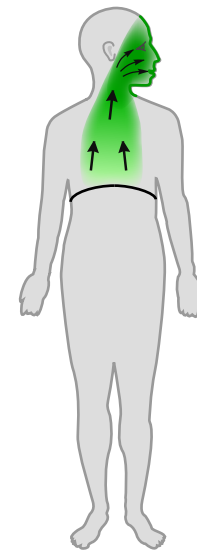
- Spread the load over a larger area of the body.



Below the diaphragm?
Spread it down the legs.



Above the diaphragm?
Spread it out the arms.



If it needs to be expressed, spread it to the face, eyes and voice.

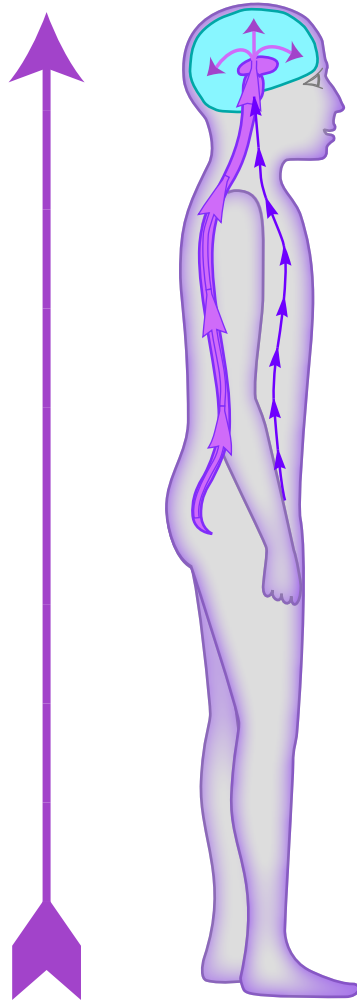
Focus on “Body Up” : Understanding Bottom Up versus Top Down

Bottom Up: From the Body Up Unconscious Involuntary

Some internal experiences arise from the body, hence the term “body up”. For example, this can be true of sensual pleasure, pain from physical problems, or a simple need to urinate.

Threat responses in the ANS arise body up. When the bottom up experience is a threat response, it usually trumps any conflicting top down agenda.

Bottom Up Interventions include working with breath, posture, movement, touch, elements of attunement, music, attachment patterns, EMDR®, Somatic Experiencing® and other body oriented therapies. Bottom up work can be solo focused and/or relationally focused. Both are eventually important.

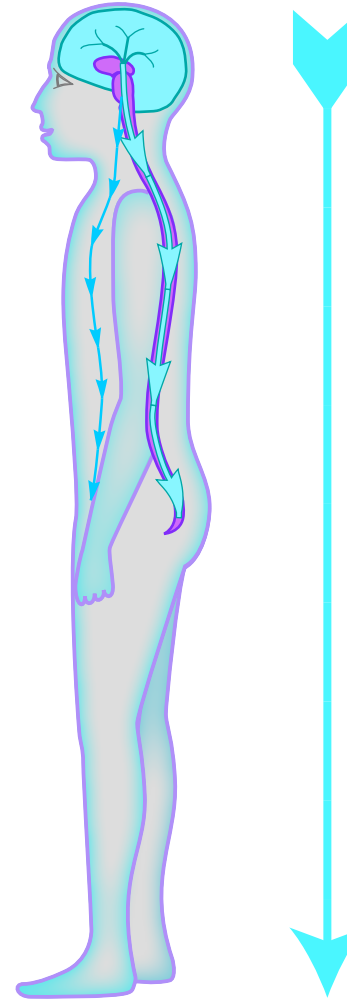


Top Down Think Mind over Body Conscious Voluntary Control

Some internal experiences come from the top down. For example, our thoughts and beliefs can generate emotions or even an upset stomach. Problems in the central nervous system can result in out of control emotions.

We may, at times, want top down control over our body up responses, but when there is a neuroception of threat, body up responses take priority.

Top Down Interventions include talk therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, DBT, most psychopharmacology. Top down work can be solo focused and/or relationally focused. Both are eventually important.



Distinguishing between bottom up and top down is highly useful in :

- Identifying the root of troublesome experiences
- Choosing interventions to shift those experiences or reorganize the threat response system