

Disordered Eating:

**Somatic, Self-Compassion, and Mindfulness Strategies
for Lasting Recovery**

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"Materials that are included in this course may include interventions and modalities that are beyond the authorized practice of mental health professionals. As a licensed professional, you are responsible for reviewing the scope of practice, including activities that are defined in law as beyond the boundaries of practice in accordance with and in compliance with your professions standards."

Learning Through Experience

Somatic Interventions

Many Types All After The Same
Results:

- 1) Awareness of self through the body
- 2) Nervous system change
- 3) Emotion regulation

Welcoming Your Body Into The Room!

Arrival Practice: Feet, Spine and Seat

Learning Something New
What Does It take?



Setting The Stage For Self-Compassion and Recovery
Embodiment- The Philosophical
Paradigm



The Mind/Body Problem

AT THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM OF PERSONAL IDENTITY LIES THE MIND/BODY PROBLEM.
ARE WE OUR BODIES? OR ARE WE OUR MINDS? OR SOME SORT OF COMBINATION OF BOTH?



- What Do You Notice?
- We pay attention to the language used:
- Notice
- Attend
- Describe
- Feeling
- Sensation

Embodiment Defined

• What This Has Left Us With In Eating Disorder Treatment

"To be a consciousness or rather to be an experience is to hold inner communication with the world, the body and other people, to be with them instead of being beside them"
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962)

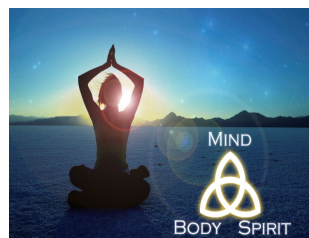
- Not knowing how to address the body that our clients complain about **ALL** the time
- How to stop talking about the "surface" body and talk about the "real" stuff
- How come when clients deal with food ie: gain/lose weight they still do not seem recovered?
- How come after behavioral recovery 50-60% of our clients are relapsing or struggling with another form of disordered eating?

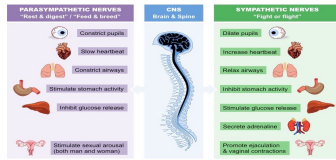
DBT; CBT; RO-DBT; FBT

Somatic practices can easily be incorporated into these frameworks as simple, engaging practices to target nervous system regulation and to help your clients have more receptivity to cognitive work and behavioral interventions!

What's Missing?

A whole missing realm of treatment and self-understanding for our clients!





What do you know about your own nervous system?
 Do you know when you feel overwhelmed? Or shutdown?
 Easily overwhelmed/underwhelmed?
 What are the sensations you notice?
 Sensitive? In what ways?
 Has it always felt this way?
 Somatic illness/interventions?



The Integration of Self-Compassion:

Understanding my neurobiology creates an understanding of myself

Anorexia

High levels of **harm avoidance**- a personality trait characterized by perfectionism, worrying, pessimism, and shyness, and low levels of novelty seeking, which includes impulsivity and preferring new or novel things (Fassino *et al.*, 2002)

Binge/purge subtype showing slightly higher levels of impulsivity and novelty-seeking (Bulik *et al.*, 1995)

The restricting subtype had higher levels of persistence (Klump *et al.*, 2000)

Bulimia Nervosa

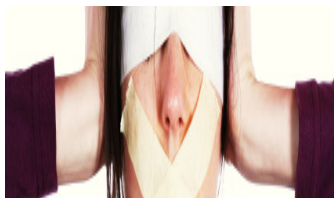
High levels of **harm avoidance** like anorexia sufferers, but instead it's paired with high levels of novelty seeking (Fassino *et al.*, 2002)

Other research has found high levels of impulsivity, emotion dysregulation, and anxiety in women with bulimia, and greater impulsivity was associated with more frequent purging behaviors (Brown, Haedt-Matt, & Keel, 2011)

Binge Eating Disorder

Higher levels of **harm avoidance** and novelty seeking and lower levels of self-directedness than healthy controls (Gruzca, Przybeck, & Cloninger, 2007)

Obsessive-compulsive personality traits (perfectionism, inflexibility, rule driven, drive-for-order and symmetry, excessive doubt and cautiousness) along with high levels of perfectionism, especially a type known as self-oriented perfectionism



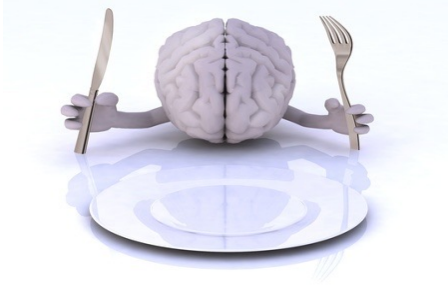
Harm Avoidance- Or A Nervous System That Is Easily Overwhelmed, aka "Dysregulated"

- Not wanting to feel strong emotions
- Not wanting to try new foods
- Not wanting to make any changes
- Not wanting to discuss ED behaviors
- Not wanting to feel the anxious system they are living in!
- Not wanting treatment!
- Focusing on “non-truths” rather than truth in treatment



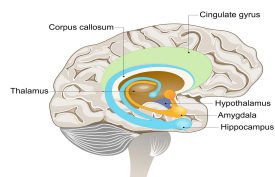
Personality traits mixed with genetic predisposition, mixed with disembodied culture, socio-cultural messages and body image ideals, mixed with mood disorders (anxiety/depression/OCD/Autistic Spectrum), mixed with trauma, mixed with time of life & transitions =





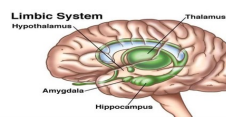
Eating Disorders ARE brain-based disorders

Limbic system



The Limbic System-Thalamus, Hypothalamus, Hippocampus and Amygdala – (Forebrain beneath the Cerebrum). The registry of sensory information. Responsible for translating the messages of bodily signals and emotions into thought.

Amygdala –An area in the hindbrain that when calm is calm, but when not triggers a fear response through the whole limbic system which continues the mis-firing of messages throughout. It sits above the hippocampus which stores memory.



When the amygdala is fired up the whole limbic system fires up
 Eating Disorder Behaviors “fire up” the amygdala response and activates the hypothalamus which, in turn, activates the sympathetic nervous system



Anxiety and the Fear Response

Parietal Lobe – (Forebrain) Where body image and perceptions live. Emotions and thoughts effect body image!

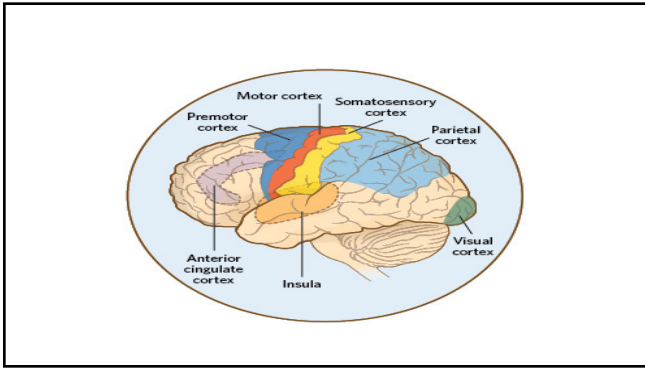
Cerebellum- (Hindbrain) Breathing, coordination and movement. Movement organizes the brain!

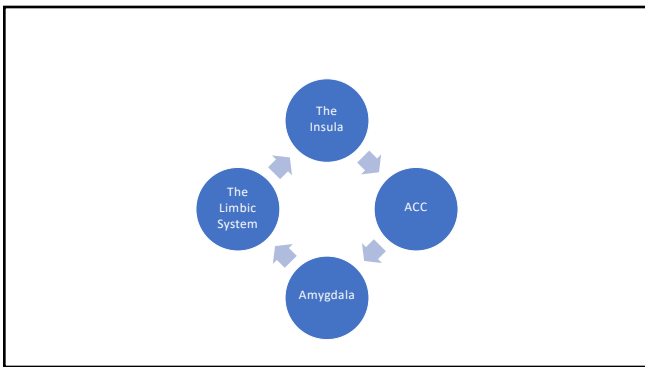
Insula – (Midbrain located deep within the cerebral cortex) A number of structures in the insula either connect to or send signals to portions of the limbic system. All bodily sensations are transmitted and filtered through here

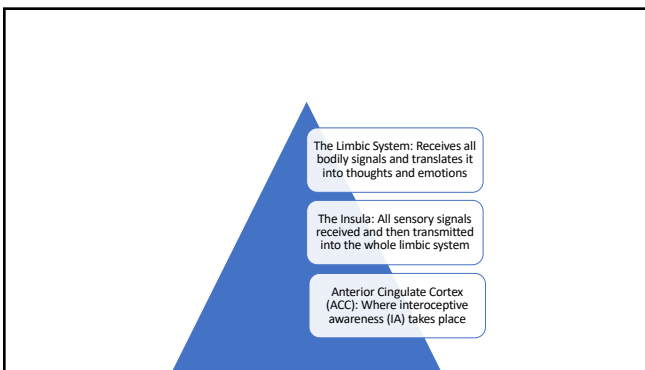
Anterior Cingulate Cortex (ACC) – (Midbrain located deep within the insula)
 Registers signals of

Interoceptive Awareness (IA) such as bodily hunger, fullness, taste, and bodily pain. All other bodily signals get processed here as well. Sensations are taken in through the cortex and then processed through the insula.

This area of the brain is responsible for organizing a *sense of self* or
“who we are.”







The register and interpretation of our internal bodily signals

What is lost the most in the ED brain
 "I can't feel any hunger" "I don't know when I'm full" "I don't feel my body struggling"

Practice: Tuning Into Your Body

The ACC is associated with the parasympathetic response in our nervous system. The "rest and digest."

Calming bodily responses increases IA awareness!

Practice: Dr. Cynthia Price MABT: Practice of Body Literacy

Teaching our clients about how their nervous system operates and how their brain functions is the first introduction to self-compassion

Internal Self-Understanding



Reduces Shame and Self-Identification with the ED
 "Out of fairness" "This is hard"

Parietal Lobe- (distortion of image)- "I'm so fat" "I hate my thighs"
 "I'm not too thin, I'm fat!" "I don't see what you see"

Insula and the ACC- (poor/incorrect internal awareness)- "I don't eat because I'm not hungry" "I have such terrible stomach pain when I eat!" "I'm nauseous" "I'm hungry all the time. I need to fill" "I feel full as soon as I eat" "I'm tired" "I have no energy"

Amygdala (fear/anxiety)- "I'm so anxious all the time" "I get triggered by that food" "I am so scared" "I just want things to stay the same"

Cerebellum- (organizing when clients are "spinning")- Movement and breath help to organize the brain.

"Let's get up and take a couple of deep breaths" "Lift your arms overhead and let them swing down by your side" "Let's take a walk" "At dinner, get up and walk around a bit then come back down to sit"

"Concentrate on your breath with slow, long exhalations"

The Introduction To Self-Compassion
 "How Do I Take Care Of Myself When I Hate Myself?!"



Where We Start:
Connecting With Another- Integrating embodied
compassion and common humanity



Trauma



Shame



Avoidance Of Emotion



Self-Criticism

We start with the integrating and modeling of common humanity and embodied information "we all have a brain!" and similar mind-set/nervous system responses

The "seed" of self-compassion lives within

Little acts of care and self-understanding ARE self-compassion

It starts with what self-soothing FEELS like in the body

We practice till we become it!

We Start With "We and Us"

Meet Them Where They Are At!

**"Self-compassion MEETS suffering rather than trying
to take it away!"**

Encourage *Feeling* That in Some Way in Their Body
Each and Every Day

**What Is A Self-Compassionate Recovery? What Does The Practice
Actually DO In The Recovery Process?**

IT ALLOWS-

It knows this will be hard from the start. It softens expectations

IT UNDERSTANDS-

I will have tough moments. "Out of fairness", I understand internally all I am
dealing with

IT EMBRACES THE DIFFICULT-

Out of the darkness comes the light. "No mud, no lotus."

IT IS SOFTER, KINDER, AND LESS HARSH-

I no longer criticize myself for every difficult moment. I will offer acts of
care and support instead

IT UNDERSTANDS RECOVERY IS NON-LINEAR –

It is MESSY!

IT LOOKS AT "RELAPSE" AS "REDISCOVERY"-

I am not deteriorating. I am re-learning!

IT EMBRACES A HOLISTIC VIEW-

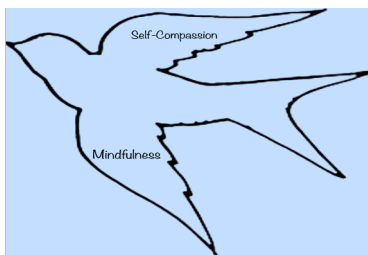
There is more than just what I think. Mind, body and spirit need to be a
part of this path

Forgiveness and self-compassion go hand in hand. One feeds the other.
 Forgiveness IS a practice!
 How the body shows up here

Practice- Meditation On Forgiveness



Can your clients handle what they become aware of?



"Two Wings Of The Bird"



**Practice of Emotional
Containment/Regulation-**

The Ability To Hold Space For Yourself

RECOVERY NEEDS TO BE A NEW PROCESS!

How do we learn something new?

Reflection- How we learn

**"By changing the way we relate to our own
imperfection and
pain, we can actually change our experience of living."**

- Kristin Neff

- Practice: Becoming Your Own Friend

Typical Countertransference Issues:

"I'm working harder than my client!"

"I'm afraid!"

"I don't know what I'm doing!"

"How long will this take?"

"Am I making mistakes?"

Being the "holder of hope" and what that takes

"My wish for you as you go forward in your compassionate embrace is for you to be your best friend and to never leave yourself behind again. My wish is that you connect with something or someone that moves you and touches your heart each and every day. My final wish for you is that you live your life in joy and freedom and that you never forget the limitless possibilities you possess when you see and hold yourself in compassion."

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Embodied Practices

Feet, Spine and Seat: Welcoming The Body Into The Room

Close your eyes (or keep them open with a soft, fixed gaze)

- 1) Take a breath in through your nose and out through your mouth (release breath)
- 2) Bring your attention down to your feet and press them into the ground deeply until you can feel all corners of your feet. Notice the sensations that begin to form around your feet and even into your ankles and legs. Notice how pressing firmly creates sensation up the legs and into your back body. See if you can feel sensations build throughout your legs and into your lower back.
- 3) Release the hold and now with your next breath, press down into your feet and follow the sensations now up the length of your spine, traveling up all the way to the crown of your head.
- 4) And now draw your attention back down to the chair beneath you, grounding your seat.
- 5) Repeat this awareness from feet, up your spine and back down to your seat a few times along with your breath.

Practice: Breath Inside The Body

Close your eyes

- 1) Notice your natural breath moving in and out through your nose.
- 2) Hold your hands facing palms up. As you inhale, the hands move up one moving up, and as you exhale they both turn down as you imagine pressing the air down slowly.
- 3) Repeat several times, slowing down the pressing down of the hands.
- 4) After a few rounds, let your hands rest into one another now and just feel this touch.
- 3) With your next inhalation, take one hand and see if you can follow your breath by noticing where you feel the breath beginning in your body when you inhale. Place a hand to that area. Notice, with each breath, where you can feel your breath the most. Move the hand around to follow it and then just allow the hand to rise and fall with the breath. After a few rounds, do the same with your exhalation. Noticing, with touch, where you can feel your breath the most and just allow the hand to rise and fall with the breath.

Practice: Brain-Based Interoceptive Awareness (IA)
Tuning Into Your Body: Developing Awareness from the Inside Out

- 1) Sit with your eyes closed and register the temperature of your body. Is it hot, warm, cold, or cool or neutral?
- 2) Now attempt to register the temperature of your breath. When you inhale, is your breath warm or cool? How about when you exhale?
- 3) Can you feel your heartbeat? Can you feel when it changes? Can you imagine how many beats your heart makes per minute? Now stand up and take a deep breath with your arms raised overhead. As you exhale allow your arms to swing down along your side. Do this a few times and then sit back down, close your eyes, and again register the change you can feel in your heartbeat and in your breath. Notice in what way(s) it has changed.
- 4) Can you imagine the inner workings of your stomach and intestinal tract? This may not seem pleasant to imagine, but it is another way to get to know your body. Can you feel movement inside your stomach? Do you have any pain or discomfort? Does your stomach feel full or empty? Can you hear any sounds it may be making right now?
- 5) This one requires even deeper imagination: Can you imagine your blood flow? Can you imagine your blood flowing freely throughout your veins and arteries? See if you can imagine the flow starting in the center of your body and extending outward into all regions of your body—your arms, legs, hands, and feet—and returning to your heart.

Practice: Discovering Stuck Points in the Body and Developing Body Literacy (MABT)

- 1) Take a breath and slowly scan your body to locate areas of tightness or areas that tend to hold tension. Ask the question, “Where do I notice tension and stress in my body?” “Where can I notice areas of tightness, unpleasant, recurring sensations?”
- 2) Once you have located this area, place a hand there and just stay with that area.
- 3) Notice the sense of the touch, maybe even the temperature of your hand touching that area. Stay here and see if you can direct your attention just to this area beneath your hand. See what it is like to call in some softening to this space. Imagine this area softening and loosening. Softening and loosening. Staying with this sensory experience. Keeping your attention and focus drawn inward. (do you feel you are in?)

- 4) Notice whenever you are drawn out now by competing thoughts or emotions. Any thoughts or emotions that pull you out, come on back in. Come back to just this sensory experience.
- 5) Watch any competing thoughts. Any thoughts about the surface of your body rather than the inner experience. Come back in. Keep coming back in. See if you can stay here. You are doing a great job staying I can sense that. What do you notice now? Can you feel yourself right there? Right with the sensation below your hand? Softening and loosening.
- 6) Now tune back in to the sensation and area beneath your hand. Can you notice any shift or changes to the tissue right below your hand? Has anything shifted? If so, what do you notice?

Practice: Connecting with Another

- 1) Close your eyes and call to mind someone you know, regardless of whether you know her or him well. This may be an animal friend. Place one hand on your heart and leave your other hand open as an offering to this being.
- 2) Take a breath for yourself. Then take a breath for this being. Repeat this over and over: a breath for you, a breath for her. Notice what it feels like to just mentally connect with another. See if you notice any feelings arising as you mentally connect. See what it feels like in your body right now to just visualize this other right here with you, right now. What sensations do you notice?
- 3) Imagine what this being would say to you about your current struggle and suffering. If it's an animal friend, maybe you can imagine your cat or dog snuggling up close to you, their affection offering words of comfort and ease.
- 4) Take a release breath and imagine yourself once more standing, sitting, or lying next to your compassionate being. Feel in your body what it is like to be close to this being. Connect with him or her in a mutuality of compassion and good will by repeating the following phrases three times:

May we both feel safe and secure.
May we both feel connected and understood.
May we both find peace and ease in this life.

Practice: Forgiveness Meditation

May all pain be eased.

May all wounds be healed.

May all sorrows and regrets soften and dissipate

May all faults and errors be forgiven.

May worry and frustration fall away.

REPEAT

May I forgive myself for the ways in which I have done/do harm to my body in any way through behaviors that have been unkind.

REPEAT

May my body heal, balance, and repair as I continue to heal, balance, and repair.

REPEAT

If I am not yet ready to forgive myself, may I forgive myself for that, and offer compassion for what I am capable of today

REPEAT

For all the ways that I may harm, negate, doubt, belittle myself, judge or be unkind to myself through my own confusions, may I learn to forgive myself.

May I come to understand that my body never meant to cause me any harm

REPEAT

May I and all beings live in safety, protection, connection, and peace

REPEAT

Practice- Hand Gestures of Containment/Emotional Regulation (Building Mindfulness)

1) Open your palms and Close your eyes and envision placing inside your hands an emotion that usually feels overwhelming or difficult for you.

Now close your palms tightly around this. Hold onto

This emotion as tightly as possible and notice what starts to happen in your body. What do you notice? Do you notice your breath changing? Are thoughts coming into your mind? If so, what kind of thoughts are moving through your mind?

2) Now open your palms once more, close your eyes, and envision placing inside your hands an emotion that usually feels overwhelming or difficult. It may be the same one, or may be another that you'd like to work with.

This time keep your palms open and see what it is like to hold this emotion with open palms. Notice what happens in your body. What do you notice? Do you notice your breath changing? What kind of thoughts are moving through your mind?

Which hand gesture do you relate to more? Are you someone who holds on tightly to emotion and attaches to your emotions and suffering? Are you someone who tries to let them go completely or avoid it? Now we will

practice a different way of approaching difficult emotions.

3) Sit comfortably and touch your fingertips together so your hands make the shape of a diamond: thumbs touching thumbs, pointer fingers touching each other, and so on. Close your eyes and envision placing inside your hands an emotion that usually is overwhelming or difficult. Listen to the words, “Right now I can openly hold the emotion of _____” (add in whatever the emotion). Then say, “This is how it is in this very moment. It is like this.” “This can move in and out; in and through me. This is just how it is right now. Just like this. Fluid in and out. In and out. Repeat this statement several times and notice if there is a difference in the way you feel in your body, in your mind.

Practice: Becoming Your Own Friend

1) Close your eyes and imagine the last time a friend of yours was suffering in some way. Maybe it is something you have dealt with before or maybe not. Call the scene to mind whether it was in person or not.

2) Remember your friend asking you for help, support, and advice. Recall what it felt like to hear your friend in pain. What do you feel right now recalling it again? Did you reach out in some way? Did you wish to? Do you remember what his or her suffering felt like in your own body? Can you notice some of that sensation with you right now in this moment?

Now recall what you said to your friend? What were the words you used to offer comfort, protection and soothing? If this friend was in front of you right now, what are three things you would say right now in this very moment? Open your eyes and write these words down.

3) Close your eyes once again. And recall the words you said to your friend. The ones you just wrote down. Consider now the last time you were suffering with something. What was it? What did it feel like inside? Perhaps you can feel some of that within you now. The feelings, the sensations. Now ask yourself, do I say the same things to myself when I am suffering? Do I use the same words within as I offer out to others?

Open your eyes and turn the statements your wrote down around to yourself. These are your self-compassionate phrases that you will now start to practice daily.