



## **In Body Mind Healing, Clients May "Release" Without Recalling Trauma** By Martha Bramhall, MSW, LISW

Body Mind Healing is hands-on work aimed at ridding both mind and body of the residual psycho-physical effects of a traumatic physical injury or of an experience that was extremely painful, frightening, or sad.

Body Mind Healing is cathartic. Some clients vividly re-experience the traumatic event in therapy. Others do not consciously remember what happened to them but, nevertheless, they go through a marked process of physical and emotional release.

How does Body Mind Healing work?

Most trauma, emotional or physical, leaves an "imprint" within the body—often in the viscera (organs) or fascia (connective tissue)—which we adapt around or compensate for. These imprints act as energy blocks in the body. Energetic imprints may cause chronic pain, inhibit a full range of emotional expression, create illogical fears, and reduce physical performance.

During a Body Mind Healing session, the therapist works with the client in a safe, supportive environment to identify, re-experience, and then release the memories, thoughts, and emotions held within the energetic imprints.

The first step is to discern whether an identifiable emotional trauma is stored in the body. Usually a place of tightness or reduction in motility is discovered. With the client's permission to move forward, the therapist then works to release the trapped energy through gentle manipulation and dialogue.

Whether recalling the traumatic event or not, clients clearly go through a cathartic process of physical and emotional release. The therapist gently encourages clients to bear witness to the past experience and to hold deep compassion for the younger self who had to go through the ordeal.

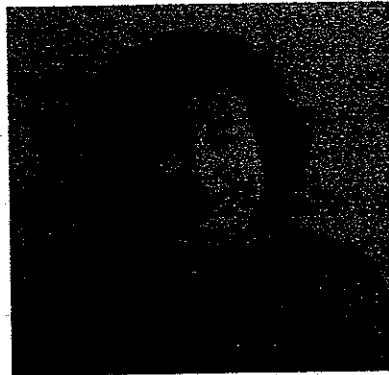
The client completes in therapy an unfinished emotional process—a process which began during the traumatic event but was halted at that time, through various psychophysical coping strategies, because the fear, anger, or sadness generated by the experience was too much to bear.

Towards the close of the session, the client is allowed time to rest quietly and integrate the healing experience. Therapist and client may then talk together briefly, reflecting on what happened during the session. Simply recognizing and acknowledging that a shift has occurred helps to anchor the client's new, clearer energies that have emerged from the process.

After a Body Mind Healing session, the client is able to think more clearly about the original traumatic experience and its effects. The strong emotional response to the experience—whether experienced as a conscious memory in the mind or an unconscious energetic imprint within the body—no longer gets in the way. Additional time spent talking through the experience is often useful to fully integrate the breakthroughs of Body Mind Healing.

At the Asclepeion Center, Body Mind Healing is one of the techniques that we use to take advantage of the close interconnections between the emotional and the physical life of the body—in order to encourage emotional and physical healing through body work.

This story appeared in *YourHEALTH Magazine*, February 2004.  
Asclepeion Center for Body Mind Health is located in Silver Spring, Maryland, (301) 495-0933.



#2004.02.D