



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

Somatic Experiencing and Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Groups

Somatic Experiencing (SE) and Sensorimotor Psychotherapy (SP) are body-oriented trauma approaches that address trauma at the level of the nervous system and physiology, not only thought and narrative. Both hold that trauma is stored in the body as unresolved survival responses and dysregulated activation, and that treatment must engage the body directly. SE, developed by Peter Levine, helps the nervous system complete stuck fight, flight, or freeze responses through slow, titrated attention to sensation. SP, developed by Pat Ogden, blends body-centered work with attachment and mindfulness. Both began as individual therapies; group delivery is emerging, with a smaller evidence base.

WHO IT'S FOR, AND WHO IT'S NOT

- A fit for those drawn to body-based work with some interoceptive awareness.
- Significant dissociation may need individual stabilization first.
- Best as an adjunct, not a replacement for better-researched PTSD treatments.

What it's for

PTSD, complex PTSD, developmental trauma, and dissociation.

Best when trauma is held in body activation more than narrative memory.

Also chronic pain and somatic symptom presentations.

WHAT TO EXPECT

1 Small groups of 6 to 8 meet weekly for 90 minutes to two hours.

2 Slow-paced; sessions open with grounding before any activating work.

3 The facilitator tracks each person's window of tolerance throughout.

Evidence is promising but still developing, and mostly on individual delivery.

- A scoping review of 16 studies found preliminary positive effects of SE on **PTSD, affective, and somatic symptoms**, with mixed study quality.¹
- The first RCT (63 adults) found SE produced **significant reductions in PTSD severity**, with meaningful improvement in most participants.²

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

Co-regulation is real. Calm nervous systems in the room help settle yours.

Slow is the point. Tracking sensation and letting it resolve beats pushing through.

Social cues as material. The group lets relational responses be noticed live.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1** Is the facilitator fully trained through SETI or the SP Institute?
- 2** Is the group psychoeducational, process-oriented, or a mix?
- 3** How is pacing and activation managed for the group?

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If you're in crisis, call or text 988.

The Group Guide is a directory, not a clinic. This handout is general education, not medical or mental health advice. Listings are written by group leaders and are not endorsements. Confirm details, cost, and fit with any group you contact. Sources on page 2.



Sources

Somatic Experiencing and Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Groups · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1 Kuhfuß, M., Maldei, T., Hetmanek, A., & Baumann, N. Somatic experiencing: effectiveness and key factors of a body-oriented trauma therapy: a scoping literature review. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology* (2021), 12(1), Article 1929023.
- 2 Brom, D., Stokar, Y., Lawi, C., et al. Somatic experiencing for posttraumatic stress disorder: a randomized controlled outcome study. *Journal of Traumatic Stress* (2017), 30(3), 304–312.

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