

The Center For Somatic Psychology, LLC

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Integrative Aquatic Therapy

Professional Training Programs

U.S.A., Switzerland, Germany

Background & History:

Integrative Aquatic Therapy (IAT) is a blend of body mind therapies that is used to heal trauma and shock from the earliest stages of life. This might involve bonding and attachment issues with the mother, physical and emotional traumas from a difficult birth, the effects of pre & perinatal toxins, being “discovered” in the womb, the influence of generational patterns, and many other injuries of a physical, psychological, and spiritual nature. If pre and perinatal injuries are not treated, it can complicate the healing from future injuries, such as a car accident, and it can lead to difficulty in future relationships, such as trouble bonding or setting healthy boundaries. It is often a present day trauma that leads a client to seek therapy. IAT sessions often weave between the past and the present. By addressing the weaknesses in these foundational structures, lasting change can occur.

IAT is practiced in a warm therapy pool. By using skills such as Watsu (Water Shiatsu) and WaterDance (yoga-like stretches and movements in a graceful, aquatic dance), trauma and shock is released from the body tissue. With the support of the warm water, long held tension patterns unwind. The tissue learns to breathe again. In this weightless environment, healthy movement patterns are rediscovered. Movement is learned from a place of embodiment, ease, and grace. Once trauma has been released, the energetic sense of self is free to inhabit the body without conflict or tension. IAT draws on the work of craniosacral therapy and the developmental movement work of Bonnie Bainbridge-Cohen and Annie Brook. IAT restores health to the body, mind and spirit.

Since most traumatic injuries impact the body and mind on a level that is pre-verbal, IAT draws heavily on these somatic based skills. The heart of the therapy, however, is a cutting edge psychological understanding of shock, trauma, self-development, and healthy relationship boundaries. IAT is an empowerment based model that strengthens the sense of self. A cornerstone of the therapy is the cultivation of healthy psychological and energetic boundaries. It is only when a client feels empowered and safe that true healing occurs. When facing emotional or physical trauma, it is the reclaiming of power that allows the fight or flight response to yield. When the tissue and psyche feel safe, the autonomic nervous system can balance. Then true relationships can be formed. IAT draws on the psychological traditions of Self-Psychology, Gestalt Psychology, Family Systems Theory, Pre & Perinatal Psychology, and body-mind approaches to the healing of shock and trauma. In IAT sessions, verbal dialogue is interwoven with somatic healing. This multi-disciplinary approach allows early traumas to be safely navigated and resolved on the deepest body-mind level. Sessions are known for the qualities of grace, spiritual depth, deep body relaxation, profound psychological insight, and for the lasting change that occurs in a relatively short period of

time.

The Basic Training (200 Hours)

The focus of the Basic Training is to expose students to the prenatal and birth material, the foundations of healing shock and trauma, and to gain a basic comfort in working therapeutically in warm water. Attention is given to the personal journey and growth of each student and to teaching skills that a student can incorporate into his or her existing practice. A prerequisite for all classes is a week of instruction each in Watsu and Wassertanzen aquatic bodywork.

Levels I & II

Before applying for the Advanced Training, students are asked to complete two levels each of The Prenatal Journey, and The Birth Journey. By taking each class twice, students are able to focus on their own personal process and to gain proficiency in the content and skills.

The Prenatal Journey: Levels I & II

In this 5–day workshop, students explore prenatal life from conception to birth. Using movement patterns in the water, the life of the pre-nate is explored - from a single cell, to an "inchworm", to a fully developed infant. Talks and meditations deepen the emotional understanding of each period. These include such themes as separation from the Divine, incarnation shock, attachment to the uterine wall, bonding issues, umbilical toxins, the loss of a twin, and many others. Students learn to release these prenatal shock patterns from the body tissue and to support the healthy unfolding of the authentic Self. People find this workshop to be a powerful and healing journey.

The Birth Journey: Levels I & II

In this 5-day workshop, the birth process is explored. Using the healing properties of warm water, students are given the tools and support to navigate and resolve difficult birth experiences. Themes are covered such as the use of forceps, anesthesia, induction, cesarean sections, pre-maturity and others. [Healing birth trauma clears the way for healthy bonding and attachment. Many find a greater level of connection, intimacy and safety in their relationships.](#)

Prerequisite: The Prenatal Journey.

The Formation Training (300 Hours)

Prerequisites:

Completion of Basic Training, Permission of the Instructor (David Sawyer)

Character Styles & Self-Development

In this module, students gain a greater understanding of the psychology and transference dynamics that occur throughout a session. When a client is reliving memories of abandonment, for instance, a therapist responds differently than if the client is feeling inundated. Likewise, issues of shock and dissociation require a unique set of skills and pacing. The same is true with themes of merging and co-dependency. This early psychology

helps a therapist to adjust the quality of touch, the physical distance, the tempo, and the therapeutic presence. A safe container is created in which deep empathy is balanced with empowerment and healthy self-development. Early wounds can heal allowing more satisfying and fulfilling adult relationships.

The Ancestral Lineage

The prenatal period is a time of great psychic openness. As the mother and father prepare for birth, the sights, sounds, smells and hormones of pregnancy can stir the unconscious memories of the parent's own birth history. In this way, traumas from long ago can be passed from generation to generation. This might include the trauma from past wars, family patterns such as divorce or an affair, the birth order of children, or unconscious gender roles. These patterns affect the parent's ability to attach and bond as well as the energetic field in which the baby's tissue and organs are developing. This module is a weaving from the ancestral to the physical as students learn the therapeutic presence necessary to hold these family stories with compassion and skill.

Body Systems: Fluids & Organs

Students learn to track trauma and health in the fluids, organs, glands and nervous system of the body. Students learn to feel the healthy potency, or breath, of the cerebral spinal fluid, interstitial fluid, synovial fluid, lymph and blood. This fluid potency deepens one's ability to feel the health and vitality of the organs, glands, and nervous system. With this heightened somatic awareness, students are better able to track negative chemical and energetic imprints. This might be alcohol or smoke that was transmitted through the umbilical cord, or anesthesia from birth, or generational patterns that have lodged in the body tissue. This module deepens a student's ability to track these different body systems and to allow these negative imprints to breathe and release.

Body Systems: Muscles & Bones

Students learn to track potency and trauma in the muscles and bones. As an example, student's learn to track the dynamics of birth and of how compressive forces can be imprinted on the baby's cranium and torso. Conjunct points, pathways and maternal pelvic shapes are learned. The psychological dynamics of birth are also explored with special emphasis on future relationship patterns. As always, this is done with a backdrop of health and potency.

Pregnancy & Fertility Counseling

Pre-conception Counseling & Aquatic Therapy:

Using *Integrative Aquatic Therapy* to clear ancestral patterns and physical, energetic and emotional blocks to fertility.

Pregnant Moms, Dads, and Aquatic Therapy

Supporting bonding and quality time with the pre-nate. Clearing emotional toxins. Easing the pains of pregnancy. Bringing the father into the pregnancy journey. Preparing the body for labor and birth. Dos and don'ts when working with pregnant women.

Infant Aquatics

Working with babies to release birth trauma, to reconnect with the cranial sacral tides and spirit, to increase bonding, and to have fun.

Integration & Skill Building

Bringing it all together. Students learn models of various kinds of *Integrative Aquatic Therapy* sessions. Emphasis is placed on strengthening verbal therapeutic skills. Special topics and professional development themes are discussed. Students present final projects and celebrate the completion of the training.

Skill Groups

Between each training module, a one-day skill building group is offered to help integrate the training material.

Certification Requirements:

Compliance with local laws for field of practice.

Completion of course work.

Final Project due at last class. *Option A: Write a paper about your journey through the training from a therapist's perspective. Option B: Review a client you have been working with from a therapist's perspective.*

Receive 5 Sessions from a Certified IAT Practitioner

Give 10 Sessions.

Can be trades with other students. Can be with outside client.

Write 1 page summary of 5 sessions.

One session is taking a genogram or Primary Scenario.

Demonstrate competency as an IAT Therapist.

Language:

U.S. classes are taught in English. European classes are translated into German.

The Staff:

Classes are taught by David Sawyer with assistance by certified IAT therapists and teachers. All assistants are established professionals with extensive experience and expertise. Staff members include: Ruth Ben Asher, M.A., L.C.P. (Israel), Annie Brook, Ph.D., L.P.C. (U.S.A.), Ursula Egli-Klingler (Switzerland), Celia Green, M.A., L.M.T. (U.S.A.), Christian Meyer (Switzerland), Tina Lüscher-Richter (Switzerland), Myrna Martin, MN, RCC, RCST (Canada), Franz Michel (Switzerland), Mary Seamster LMP. WI, R.C. (U.S.A.), Helen Schulz, OT, Director/IAKA (Germany), Classes are also assisted by advanced IAT therapists.

David Sawyer, M.A., L.P.C.

David is the developer and creator of Integrative Aquatic Therapy. He is a graduate of Wesleyan University (B.A. Psychology, 1985) and Naropa University (M.A. Psychology, 1988), a Licensed Professional Counselor (State of Colo., 1996), a certified practitioner, trainer, and former institute director of Integrative Body Psychotherapy (1990 – 2000), a certified practitioner and instructor of the Watsu method of aquatic bodywork (2000), and a certified practitioner and instructor of massage therapy (State of California, 2000). David has developed and taught CEU approved trainings for licensed psychologists in the State of Nevada and has been a course consultant for the graduate psychology program of Regis University and an internship supervisor for the graduate psychology programs of Naropa University. David's psychological training has included extensive study with Drs. Marjorie Rand, Jack Rosenberg, William Emerson, Peter Levine and Annie Brook. David has a private practice in Boulder, CO where he lives with his wife and son.

For More Information:

For specific dates and costs of trainings, or for a therapist in your area, please contact David Sawyer at d.sawyer@comcast.net or (tel.) 001.303.440.9725.

Corbonfund.org. The air travel for IAT staff is %100 offset through corbonfund.org. To reduce global warming and the impact of fossil fuels, donations are made to projects in reforestation and renewable energy for every flight mile flown. **Solar:** The electricity for the IAT office is 100% solar powered.