

Somato Respiratory Integration (SRI) - Discover

These notes are intended as support material for those who have attended an SRI Discover workshop and are not intended to stand-alone.

SRI explores the relationship between what we think and feel and the structure of our body. It provides us with new resources to explore what is happening in our body and to change it as needed.

Discover Aims

How do we move away from pain, symptoms and distress? Or put another way, what happens in our body when we are trying to avoid a physical pain, an emotion or a situation we find unpleasant or difficult to handle?

Why do we disconnect from our body anyway?

When things happen that are too much for our body to contemplate, we can go into a state of overwhelm. There is lots of energy available but we are unable to use it so instead we wall it off somewhere in our body and wait until a future point when we can experience this energy and “re-unite” it with our bodymind.

“Making the unconscious conscious”

This overview will remind you of many different ways of increasing your awareness and tapping into your internal resources that enable you to heal.

Regular practice will enhance this and give you tools to heal, grow and live to your maximum potential.

Further reading on these stages can be found on the website

<https://www.naturallyempowered.co.uk/body-mind-awakening/> or the book 12 Stages of Healing – a Network Approach to Wholeness by Donald M Epstein.

Stage 1 – Suffering and Disconnection

We are going to start with exploring different internal resources that are available to us.

Resources include:

- Touch
- Movement
- Breath
- Affirmations
- Peace
- Tone
- Energy

There are 3 positions on the front of the body we will use. Position 1 is just below our clavicles with our hands palm over palm, flat on the body. Position 2 is where the ribs come together and position 3 is the belly button or navel.

3 Positions

Place your hands on position 1. Observe what happens when you place attention in this area. How do you feel? Is it comfortable? Does your pain increase? How is your breathing affected? Is this an area you know well? There are many questions you can ask. Observe this area and throughout keep gently breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth.

Now expand this area by directing the breath under your hands. Ask the same questions and observe your response.

Repeat at positions 2 and 3. You are looking to see which area works the best for you or brings the greatest sense of ease when you focus on it.

Finding your strategy

Let's assume you have decided position 2 if your area of peace. Place your hands there.

Focus on expanding the area (with the breath in the background).

Focus on breathing into the area

Focus on the energy of the area and expand this energy as you breath into it.

Which strategy gives you the best response? Movement (M), breath (B) or energy (E)?

Primary Order

When we combine 2 of the 3 strategies together in the best possible order the 3 will show up effortlessly. This exercise helps you achieve this.

Put your hands on your area of peace and focus on your strategy (B, M or E). Let's say you are using movement. Start expanding the area and then bring breath behind the movement. Does it get easier or harder? Now try bringing energy behind the movement. There is one combination that will make

everything work. You need to explore to find out what your combination is to get the best possible connection.

Peace off the Torso

For some people, ease can be achieved on the body but to get peace we often have to go to a different place. You have the other following options to explore:

1. The jawline – with the base of your hands gently resting on the jaw
2. The eye sockets – covering your eyes with your hands
3. The forehead – palms either central or toward the outside of your forehead
4. The tops of your shoulders
5. Lower limbs, generally below the knee or on the feet

In turn place your hands on these positions bringing breath, expansion and awareness to these areas. Often when your hands are in one area everything just feels right, relaxed and peaceful. This position is your area of peace.

You can then move your hands between your area of peace and the area on the body that was the biggest challenge (1, 2 or 3) and bring some peace to this area. Always spend more breaths in the area of peace.

Affirmations

Pick which of the three positions worked the best for you, 1, 2 or 3. And then ask which position from 1, 2 or 3 was the most challenged? The objective of this exercise is to bring more ease to this area.

Put your hands on your chosen area of ease and breathe into this area focussing on your lead strategy and/or primary order. Move your hands to your challenged area and expand it using your primary strategy/primary order.

How does this area feel to you? Is it restricted, difficult, painful, sad or none of these? What do you notice and how would you describe this...

I also invite you to experiment with saying the following statements as you try to connect into your disconnected area. As you breathe out you can say one of the following:

- Sometimes I feel so disconnected
- Sometimes it feels like nothing works
- Sometimes it feels like it's never going to end
- Sometimes I feel so overwhelmed
- Sometimes I feel so alone/like I'm the only one

Say the affirmation in you first language (spoken as a child) and say it on the out breath. On the next breath observe what changes in that area (don't say anything on this breath). You can repeat for all the affirmations until you observe a significant change. You may need to go back to your area of ease between affirmations to create safety and relaxation in your body.

Tone

Some people need another strategy to explore their area of challenge. Making the noise or tone of that area can help bring change and connection. Start with your area of ease and make the noise of that area. Then move your hands to the challenged area and make the noise of that area. You want to feel vibration in your hands as you do this – then you know you are really connecting to that area.

Energy

Sometime peace is not enough. Our area of challenge needs an injection of fuel or energy. When we are in fight-flight physiology we tense our legs and arms. Often these areas remain tight and can be used as a fuel source.

Lie on your back and run your hands down the front of your legs (you may need to put your legs on a chair unless you have long arms – you should not need to do a sit-up to perform this exercise or you can do this seated). Press your fingers in slightly and you will find in some areas your hands appear to “stick” to your legs. You can check inside and outside of your thighs too. The area where your hands “stick” is an area of energy. They may also exist on your arms.

Place your hands on this “sticky” area and allow your fingers to sink in. Don’t claw them, keep them relaxed and fairly straight. Feel the energy build up in your fingers. Spend a few breaths doing this and then take your hands and the energy to your challenged area and bring B/M/E to this area and observe what happens. Repeat as necessary.

For some people it is the energy from the legs or arms that gives the biggest change in your challenged area.

Working with Pain

It may be you have a painful low back or knee. You can also use stage 1 to bring more ease into the area that feels un-resourced and/or painful. Alternate between your area of ease or peace and the area that is painful and not healing. This takes some practice but can be very useful once you have got the hang of it.

Initially I recommend you spend 5-10 minutes max per day on Stage 1. Just spend a few minutes connecting into the areas and once you have increased ease in your body you are done. Sometimes you may want to do more, but in the beginning just develop your strategies until you feel confident.

Stage 2: Polarity and Rhythms

In stage 2 we learn about different rhythms within our own body and how we relate internally to ourselves and how we respond externally to people and events.

When there is something within us that we cannot accept, process or recognize we tend to look externally and blame something or someone else for this. Alternatively we look for an external solution to fix us and give up our personal responsibility or power.

This shows up in many ways.

For example:

- we all know people who say they are never angry, yet we know that deep down they are very angry
- Some people when things go wrong can never accept it had anything to do with them?
- Then there are people who talk about their disease or their back pain as if it were separate from them, as if it has its own will, mind and personality
- Others place the blame firmly on someone else or something else – if only my husband would stop doing that, everything would be ok
- Some people are always looking for the “cure” to their problems, they become obsessed with what is causing their disease/problem and try to find it and fix it

The aim of the stage 2 exercise is to find and recognize these rhythms within us and to accept that they can sit side by side within our body. A really simple example is that you can love and hate someone at the same time and be ok with it.

Stage 2 Exercise

Place your hands on positions 1 and 3. Breath into position 1 (use your primary order here so if movement or energy are your best then keep you focus on them as you breath into the area). Switch your focus to position 3 and breathe there. Observe how the two areas may respond differently to when you put all your focus on the area. Which area moves most easily and which one doesn't.

You need to find either your words or your tones to help increase the connection to each of the areas.

Arm position:

1. let your elbows relax down to the side of your body
2. as you get more experienced you can raise your elbow – this will increase emotional connection so if you get “too emotional” relax your arms down

Make sure you get movement in both positions with the breath and energy.

You can do stage 2 between any two positions on the body. I advise you stay on the torso as you learn this skill.

Stage 2 Communication/Speak Up

As we start to observe our body through Part 1 we realise that our rules of good/bad and right/wrong are becoming muddled. There is no perfect explanation or solution. Often we experience anger, sometimes at ourselves, more often at others. We have choices at this point – we look for others who will back up our beliefs, we look for someone else to take the pain/situation away or we start to recognize there is a pattern involved and the pattern is within us. Now we have a choice to tell the parts of us that are not speaking up that they too have a voice (even when these may be voices we don't want to hear like the ones that tell us we are angry, not enough, sad and so on).

Despite using the words, did one position remain difficult to connect to? If so, you can tell this area to speak up. Do this by placing both hands on this area, focus your strategies to bring B/M/E to this area. On the out breath say "Speak up xxx" where xxx is your name. Repeat this several times until you feel you have a better connection to this area. You may also say "be yourself xxx or be true to yourself xxx".

Now return to stage 2 with hands on position 1 and 3 and repeat. What is different ?

Stage 2 Communicating between the parts

The final part of stage 2 is to share the information between them. To do this, connect to your first position and as you breath out imagine sending all the information from this position to the other hand. And then send information back. Think of it as 2 parts of you having a different opinion on something. It's good to share opinions and essential to listen to all the parts of you.

Stage 3 Stuck in a Pattern

The primary emotion of this stage is frustration and the sound is "yeuch". To find where you hold stuck in your body (and there may be multiple areas of stuck) place your hands on the front of your body above position 1. Raise your elbows so that your hands sink into your skin. Move your hands to the left observing the skin pull and back to the middle. Repeat moving to the right. If the experience is the same move down about an inch and repeat. Trace all the way down the front of your body looking for an area that is "stuck". When you have found one you can do the stage 3 exercise.

Move your hands in the direction of restriction. Twist clockwise/anticlockwise to see if it increases the "stuck" feeling. With your hands in the maximal position of stuckness bring Breath/Movement/Energy to that area and expand it as much as possible. On the out breath say out loud "I'm stuck", making sure the word has a sharpness and frustration to it (be careful if you translate into another language and the word is soft. In this case use a KKKK sound in place of stuck)