

Use of NSEW & GBPP to Facilitate Work With Pain
Jim Kepner PhD
USABP Pain Plenary, June 2005

Pain is a very complex phenomenon, involving physiological, central and peripheral nervous system changes, influences of perception, as well as ANS imbalance and potentiation.

It is both affected by and effects psychological and emotional experience.

Pain phenomena also involve subtle energy qualities in body tissues that can be discerned by a trained practitioner.

Affecting these qualities can influence both the perception of pain, and a person's body awareness in general.

We do not assume either a physiological, psychological or energetic cause but rather understand that each of these factors can influence any of the others.

- Physiological pain syndromes create psychological reactions, defenses and responses, as well as subtle energy phenomenon.
- Psychological factors influence pain perception, can be at the core of pain syndromes, can facilitate or impede healing from physiological disorders, etc.
- The flow and distribution of energy through the nervous system can impact physiological functioning, as well as awareness.

Pain and Body Experience

The experience of pain generally mitigates against the person's capacity to be aware of the areas of their body that are involved, e.g.:

- *The pain is overwhelming and thus that area is avoided by awareness,*
- *The area is already occupied by congested and pain-laden energy that literally crowds out the "energy of awareness."*
- *Pain carries associations with its origins, such as trauma, and can't be approached.*
- *Etc*

Therefore:

Client reports about their pain or these body areas are often made from *very little actual experience*. They tend to be more like distant observations, ideas and intellectual conclusions about their pain.

If, as therapists we operate from these reports as-if they are actual experience, then we are making interventions based on our theories about the patient's theories.

It's crucial, then, to have ways of working which make pain approachable to actual experience, to be able to discern more sensory data, in formulating our understanding of what to do.

Working With Pain via NSEW and GBPP

In working with pain and pain syndromes through NSEW and GBPP we take an exploratory, experimental approach, rather than a prescriptive one.

We integrate the subtle energetic skills of *NSEW* and the awareness exploration processes of *GBPP* to:

- Support the client's capacity to experience more about their pain or painful areas.
- To promote enough ease, comfort and relief of pain (or of the hyper-arousal and reactivity that is stimulated by it) to allow for real awareness (actual experience of and in that body area).
- To have direct ways to access the nerve pathways for energy and awareness.
- To take advantage of the correlation between energy flow in nerve pathways and increased body awareness.

Gestalt Body Process Psychotherapy- GBPP

GBPP, is an extension of Gestalt therapy into a body-psychotherapy approach:

- Works with present awareness of bodily sensation and experience,
- Increasing the client's capacity to sense and feel their own bodily process and experience, and
- Utilizes client's bodily awareness to discover and integrate, that which has been dis-integrated from the self as a whole.
- Understands that bodily adaptation/defenses are ways of coping, which have become structured into bodily function and response.
- Works to develop those processes based in bodily life, which have been effected by developmental or traumatic life experiences.

In Pain: We use the body awareness methods of *GBPP*, embodied language (sensation-based words, search for language which has "goodness of fit," experimental I statements using sensation-based words), to foster increased sense of connection to body, to appreciate the relationship of self to pain, to understand somatic adaptations one has made in coping with pain, to work through or experiment with different ways of relating to pain and it's meaning to oneself, to integrate

Nervous System Energy Work- NSEW

Nervous System Energy Work (NSEW) is a hands-on energy method drawing on principles of energy healer William (Bill) Gray and informed by contemporary developments in energy medicine, consciousness studies and neurobiology.

In *Nervous System Energy Work* the practitioner generates and directs a very specific flow of energy that clears, opens and reorganizes the circulation of energy through the clients nervous system.

The *energetic* nervous system appears to be a critical route for awareness in the body.

When, through NSEW techniques, we opened the flow of energy through nervous system, we observed a profound effect on increasing bodily awareness.

NSEW appears to have direct, palpable effects on nervous system functions, especially in regards to sensation/awareness, modulation of the autonomic nervous system, the activity of peripheral nerves, broad calming effects on the CNS.

We use the energetic sensing process of NSEW to help discern:

- Whether the peripheral nervous system sites of pain have discernable qualities of energy disturbance e.g. blocked flow, accumulation of inflammatory-like energy, tissue storage of emotional-energies etc.
- The degree of connection/disconnection of the person's awareness to the area of pain.
- The relative openness of the routes of access through the nervous system to the areas involved in pain.
- Whether energetic patterns, such as trauma patterns, are involved in the maintenance of responses and reactivity to stimuli resulting in pain.
- The degree of ANS imbalance involved in or resulting from the pain experience, e.g. sns hyper arousal or hyper-reactivity, inadequate of vagal tone, oscillation between sns and pns, etc.

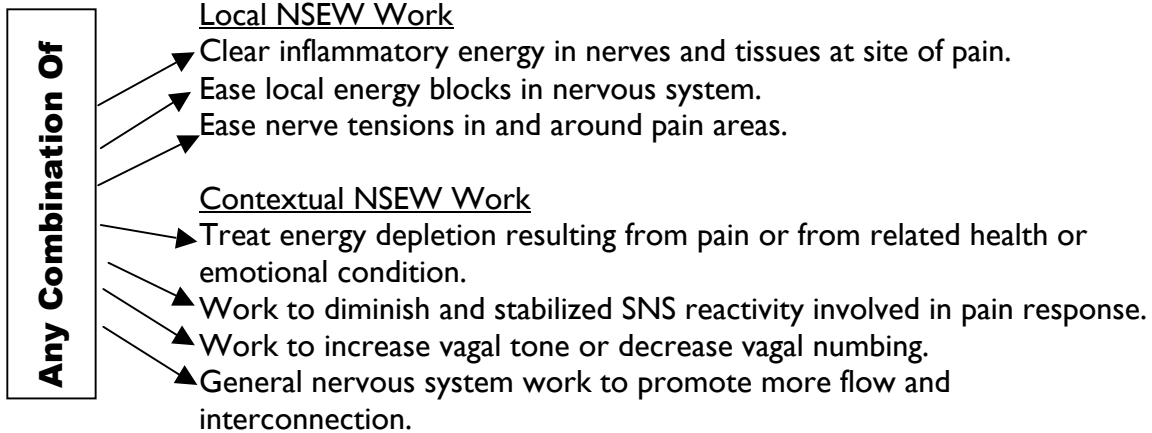
The therapist acts also as a kind of human "biofeedback device" feeding back their own sensory/energetic impressions, intended to foster awareness for the client of the parts off them in pain, and the relationship of the rest of them to these painful areas.

An Idealized Session Schematic:

1. Gathering information: what is known about the physical factors, causes and origination of the pain process; sequence of stimulation of pain; person's current experience of themselves as a person in pain (exhausted, helpless, subject to, mastering, etc).
2. Establishing a contract for use of touch and energy for therapist to gather impressions and information about client's energy, nervous system and areas involved: how, boundaries, rights, etc.
3. T sensing and gathering impressions.
4. Engaging with client about impressions and findings to discern fit with client's experience, degree of client's access to experience, etc.
5. Collaboratively formulating an experiment, or working process to test from one's findings.

Tier One Experiments:

Collaboratively formulate an exploration/experiment based on findings and test against client’s experience:



Recheck against C’s experience for any difference made: does it make for any relief?
Does it make pain more approachable with awareness?

Tier Two Experiments- possibilities

- Working to clear energetic trauma patterns.
- Foster greater nervous system connection and awareness in pain areas.
- Use of GBPP processes to explore meaning, emotional connections, and discovery of disowned aspects of self, integration of disown.
- Reorganization of relationship of self (experienced “I”) to pain and coping with pain.

References:

Kepner, James (1987) *Body Process: working with the body in psychotherapy*. Gestalt Press, Cleveland, Ohio.

(2005) Title: The vagus nerve in body psychotherapy with early developmental dilemmas: intervention via hands-on energetic work. USABP 2005 Conference Proceedings, or at <http://www.pathwaysforhealing.com/vagusnervepaper.pdf>.

The following can be found at: <http://www.pathwaysforhealing.com/resources.html>

- [About Energy Work & Nervous System Energy Work \(NSEW\)](#)
- [Summary of NSEW: origins, principles and concepts](#)
- [Comments on Trauma and NSEW](#)
- [Energy & The Nervous System in Embodied Experience](#) pdf file.

Contact the author: Jim Kepner, 3372 Clayton Blvd., Shaker Hts., OH 44120
(440) 473-8973

jimkepner@aol.com
www.pathwaysforhealing.com