

Case study in psychotraumatology: exploration change process in trauma-focused therapy based on somatosensory experience

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1. Introduction: theoretical background

Complex PTSD

- (1) Involve repetitive or prolonged exposure to, or experiencing of multiple traumatic stressors, most often an interpersonal design
- (2) Involve harm or abandonment by caregivers
- (3) Occur at developmentally vulnerable times in the person's life

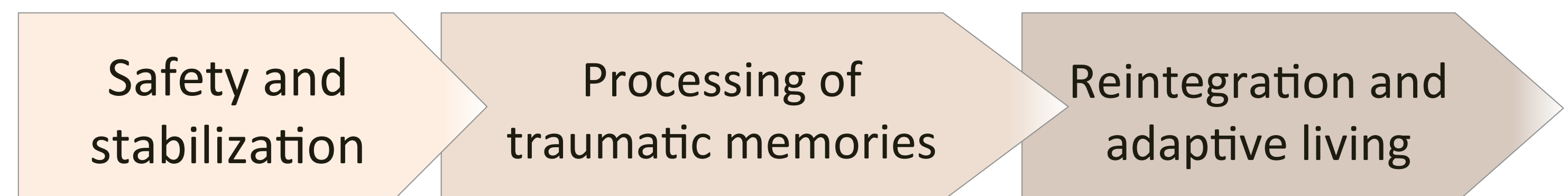
➤ SELF-REGULATORY IMPAIRMENTS IN COMPLEX PTSD

They take the form of profound and enduring problems with overwhelming emotional distress, dissociation, loss of relational trust and spiritual faith, and chronic unexplained health problems (Courtois, 2009).

Treatment Guidelines

The International Society of Traumatic Stress Studies (Cloître & al., 2012) recommends trauma-focused therapy involving treatment models based on three phases. They encourage to explore new treatment approaches which focus on **somatosensory experience** and mind-body relationship.

➤ THREE-PHASE MODEL



This study explores the change process within a therapeutic trauma-focused approach based on somatosensory experience.

2. Clay Field therapy: phase-oriented and sensorimotor approach

(1) Safety



(2) Traumatic memories



(3) Reintegration and adaptive living



In the sensorimotor approach, changes in somatosensory experience are used to support self-regulation, memory processing, and success in daily life (Elbrecht, 2013).

3. A Pilot Case Study

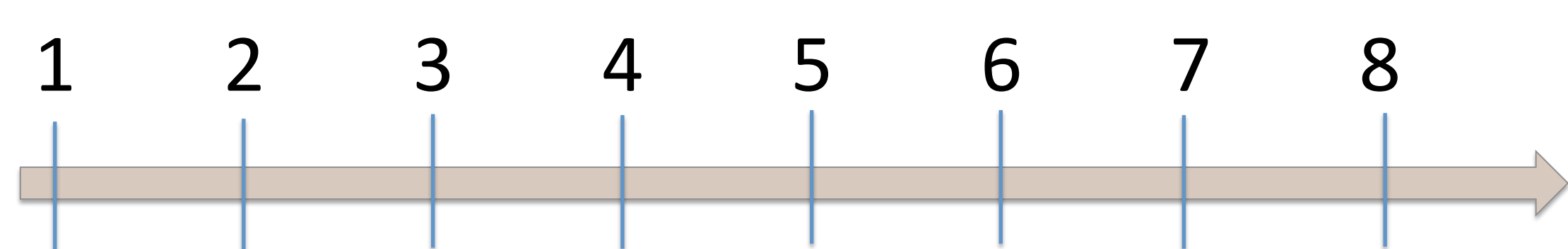
The **Aim** is to study the ongoing therapeutic process. **Research questions** investigate how trauma-focused therapy based on the somato-sensory approach can improve the regulation of deficit processes at the emotional and physiological levels (D'Andrea & al., 2012).

Hypotheses :

- (1) The assimilation level of traumatic experiences improves in the course of sessions
- (2) The physiological self-regulation shows higher coherence at the end of each session
- (3) Emotional arousal decreases throughout the sessions

➤ DATA COLLECTION: 3 to 8 subjects

8 to 10 Weekly Clay Field sessions



1–8 Audio-video monitoring

1–8 HRV monitoring

2 + 7 EEG monitoring

1 + 8 Psychometric evaluations

➤ ANALYSES:

Qualitative
analyses

Quantitative
analyses

Assimilation model

Level of problematic experiences
assimilation, APES scales (W. Stiles)

Psychophysiological measures:

HRV (Heart rate variability):
Emotional regulation marker
EEG (electroencephalography):
Emotional arousal indicator
Topographic cartography connectivity

4. Bibliography

Cloître, M., Courtois, C. A., Ford, J., Green, B., Alexander, P., Briere, J., ... Van der Hart, O. (2012). *The ISTSS Expert consensus treatment guidelines for complex PTSD in adults*. Retrieved from http://www.istss.org/Section=ISTSS_Complex_PTSD_Treatment_Guidelines, at 29 octobre 2013.

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