

Trager Essentials and Advanced Applications for Trager Practitioners

Trager Class Review:

It is from your own personal experience with Mentastics that you draw wisdom from to guide other in their own self-exploration process. Refer to the support document Thematic Movement Guide for some specific body part exercises. You may also refer to the Trager Summary from Sri Lanka for categories for movement explorations.

Dr. Trager emphasized that “we cannot give what we do not have” or in a session context - “we cannot impart a feeling of lightness, ease, peace, etc, if we do not possess it.

Through Mentastics at the table we maintain our own comfort - and a feeling of ease and peace. From this place, we can more easily maintain our heart-brain coherence.

Using movement from our feet and core, we can maintain our client’s rhythm without force while keeping our hands soft to hear and receive information from the client’s tissue.

Trager is an ideal modality to address PTSD as it overlaps a number of the efficacious components of the Trauma-informed model. In particular, it acknowledge resistance and is neutral, utilizes tissue response feedback to modify touch and mobilizations, and invites rather than forces neuromuscular change. It’s a listening model.

Additional elements of a Trauma-Informed approach include - Ensuring Safety (which facilitates vulnerability - letting go), Predictability, and Choice.

Utilizing Reflex Response when working with MS - we explored being part of a biofeedback loop to help the client let go of overuse patterns and to get more specific with muscular recruitment. We can also help to quicken the intention/action response.... Refer to the example of teaching a walking gesture. I also spoke about using RR for postural shifts to offset Kyphosis - using “don’t let me do it” working off of the pectorals muscles, posterior deltoid to activate rhomboids etc...

In Deane’s Gamma Motor System lecture he referenced the three components of the system: The Muscle Spindle, The Golgi Tendon Organ and the Motor Unit.

We reviewed using Mentastics, and multiple exercises with water balloons and thera bands to maintain our technique during COVID quarantine and in the absence of giving sessions.

During sidling demonstrations we looked at bolstering to create a neutral body (easily moved) and using one hand on the ischium we could start rhythm and walk the free hand up the spine, on either side of the spine using the thenar muscle/pad) and also scissor thumbs on the erectors (above or below the spine). The abdomen and lifting the ribs with the inside hand can also serve as a handle for mobilizing the spine with the outside hand. (sandwiching the abdomen)

Review the material about the non-invasive psoas release and the hip rotator release.

Know the concepts of action at a distance - that creating movement in one part of the body transfers to other area; That any part of the structure can be a handle for another area you wish to mobilize - and that this is facilitated by refined traction/elongation and movement from the feet. Ex. Working with rib cage can mobilize the extremities in addition to the scapula - this effect can also be created by working from the legs and feet.

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We reviewed adaptation of the prone backward to address herniations. This included framing the spinous process with the thumbs and index fingers to create small local movement in the vertebra and those adjacent vertebrae -

Understanding the essential principles and how they apply to the Mentastics process and the table work is essential to developing adaptive skills in this modality. Deepening and refining how you move from your feet, how you use your weight in compressions and elongations will greatly increase the range of possibilities that exist for you in this work - in particular when clients do not have large ranges of motion available to them and in cases where you the practitioner have limitations. Presence is paramount. Hook-up before touch.

While the scope of the training went beyond the notes above, these are the primary takeaways from the training that will enhance your work. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

To your continued success with this work and comfort as you move through life,

Much metta,

Michael