

STUDENT OUTLINE AND RESOURCES

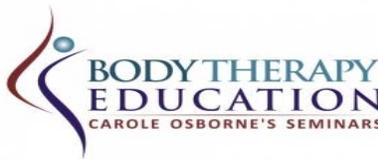
Tears, Fears, and Resistance: Managing Massage Therapy Students' Emotional Responses

Developed by Carole Osborne

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FB: Carole Osborne's Prenatal and Deep Tissue Massage Training

Introduction

Presentation Objectives

Participating teachers will be able to:

- identify types and sources of emotional processes likely to surface in the classroom.
- recognize students' emotional responses and choose from options for how to best respond and interact.
- implement classroom management that fosters healthy, appropriate emotional expression that further prepares massage therapy students for working with clients' emotions.
- progress in their development of Standard 7.2.9 in particular. Also other KSAs in standards 1, 2, 3, 6, 7. See end of handout for specifics.

Sources of Feeling reactions in any class

Benefits of Recognizing and Working with these Feelings

Emotional Responses to Massage Training

- **Amplification of Life Stresses**

- **Learning related emotions**
 - **Self-worth issues**

- **Perfectionism and mediocrity in performance**

- **Hypo and Hypercritical Students**

- **Performance Anxiety**

- **Authority Issues and Power Struggles**

My responses to Toss and Keep classroom activity:

- **Reactions to touch**
 - **General responses**

 - **Prior Physical or Emotional Trauma**

Classroom Management Options When Emotions Emerge

My responses to Experiential: Classroom Activity Triad Check-In

Focused, In-class Emotional Processing

- **Potential problems**

- **Basic Skills for helping facilitate expression of emotions**

Honoring Emotional Expression in Curriculum Design

- **Potential Benefits**

- **Potential Problems**

- **Ways to Structure in Emotional Expression**
 - **Regular, periodic group check-ins**

 - **Expressive Writing and Drawing**

 - **Collages**

 - **Games and Group “Exercises”**

 - **Movement**

My Responses to Classroom Activity Snapshots game

Emotional Facilitators on Staff

- **School Counselor and Advisors**

- **Teaching assistants**

- **Continuity person**

Designing Curriculum for Somatic Awareness and Facilitation

- **Individual Short Courses (Core or Elective)**
 - **Basic interpersonal communications skills**
 - **Theories and practices from branches of body psychology**
 - **Self-reflection course**
- **Advanced, longer courses building on these foundation courses.**
- **Incorporating or affiliating with more emotionally- focused schools or training programs**
- **Guest faculty**

Your Emotions in the Classroom

Strategies for Working with Your Feelings

Classroom Activity

Toss and Keep Learning

1. Explain that they will be doing a private writing exercise, followed by some sharing with a partner. Ask them to pair up.
2. Request that they take 3 to 5 minutes to write down any negative educational experiences they have had created by someone else. Suggest that they quickly review their pre-school, elementary, high school, and college days, jotting down a few key words, phrases or names to represent those experiences.
3. Now ask that they wad up that paper and toss it away.
4. Next ask that they write down any ways in which they have been negative in educational settings during these same periods. Again, have them wad up the paper, and throw it away.
5. Ask them to reflect for another 3-5 minutes on what factors, commitments, and needs they have to make this particular class a positive learning experience .
6. Have them write those down, share them with their partner, and then allow an additional 3 to 5 minutes to add anything to their positive educational intentions.
7. Request that they keep this paper with their course materials and review and reflect on it periodically during the course, taking the necessary actions needed to realize their desired positive learning experiences.

Classroom Activity

Acknowledge/Release Breathing

Identify a feeling response to the material we have covered. Give it a name. As we move through the breathing and movement, on inhale acknowledge feeling with internal repetition: “I feel ...”

On the exhale, release that feeling with internal repetition: ‘I release ...’

Classroom Activity Check-in: Entire Class, Smaller Groups, Triads

A sharing circle is one of the most basic, and time-honored verbal methods to provide for individual expression. Invite and encourage each student, without coercion, to offer to the group some aspect spoken from her heart center. Sharing can be without a particular theme, or can be in response to specific questions:

How are you reacting to this work emotionally?

How is this format/content/pacing working for you and affecting you?

How is your heart hearing and speaking in response to our class?

Conducted with an attitude of respect and compassion, you and your instructional staff can model how to actively listen to someone’s concerns. This behavior tends to elicit deeper exploration for the individual and builds understanding and connection in the classroom community.

Also known as check-ins, go-rounds, or wisdom circles, these circles recognize the need, and give an outlet for the need to express ones’ truth-speak and to share from the heart.

Classroom Activity

Emotional Snapshots

1. Ask students to close their eyes and reflect on their day so far, or how they feel at this point of this class. After a minute, ask them to connect to the feelings.
2. Request that they distill those feelings down to one dominant or chosen word. The word should correspond most closely with the feeling: sad, angry, fearful, or happy. If no feelings are present, then label the feelings as dispassionate or neutral.
3. With that feeling in mind, suggest that they let a vision form in their mind of their face and body expressing their feeling. Imagine it as though it were a snapshot taken by an objectively removed, but caring photographer. Request that they hold that snapshot and view it internally for 30 to 60 seconds. Remind them to do this with as little thought or interpretation and as much compassion as possible.
4. Optional step: Keeping eyes closed, ask them to allow their facial expression and body stance to reflect that inner picture.
5. Suggest they now imagine that the compassionate photographer takes another photograph. That snapshot would reflect a transformation of the feeling, a deepening, a more comfortable feeling, or a resolution of the feeling. Perhaps the new snapshot would capture how they would like to feel later in this class. (If enacting their feelings, then request a transfiguration of body and facial expression.)
6. Ask students to make an inner statement that expresses the potential they have to make that emotional change. "I feel courageous and strong." "I greet my clients with joy and caring,"
7. Invite any verbal sharing of the experience.

Variations:

1. Ask students to pair up and witness each other's expression. OR
2. Ask one-half of the class to witness the other half's expressions, and then arrange them into a "group portrait." Switch roles.

Classroom Activity

Emotional Recess

Invite students to choose a 10-minute recess activity. Request that they not attend to any tasks, answer or make any phone calls, or do anything with a goal other than to take a break.

1. Walk around the block in silence.
2. Walk while repeating internally one word as each foot touches ground: "I Am Here."
3. Move freely to the music offered.
4. Draw or color on paper or on a wipe board.
5. Take a rest.
6. Meditate with eyes closed, listening to the sounds around, including the farthest sounds audible.
7. Meditate while sitting or lying down to watch breath slide in and out. Feel the cool air entering nose and leaving it warm on the exhale.

Classroom Activity

Body Mapping

For body mapping, the student stands nude before a mirror in a safe, private space at home.

He/she looks at all body parts, writes about associated memories, and describes the functions of each part. He gets in touch with how he feels about that body part. He follows verbal reflection with a drawing of his body, letting shape, color and images convey feelings about his body.

Classroom Activity

Writing a Touch History

Another useful exercise is having the student write a touch history. A touch history is a student's recounting, including earliest to most current memories, of the qualities, quantities, providers of, and reactions to touch. These can be totally private, checked solely for completion, or read by instructors and possibly shared anonymously with the class. In either case, a timely return of such personal material respects the students' privacy and vulnerability.

Classroom Activity

Sound Machines and Sound Magnets

1. With their eyes closed, ask students to get in touch with any time they experienced a moderate to strong feeling of sadness, anger, fear or happiness. Or ask them to be in touch with their current emotional state, as in the "Snapshots" game.
2. Instead of visualizing the expression of the feeling, ask them to imagine a sound that expresses the feeling. It can be genuine, a caricature, or an exaggeration of the sound.
3. Ask them to make that sound, at first softly, then gradually more loudly.
4. Option: Ask them to keep their eyes closed and move about the room. Instruct them to allow themselves to be attracted to or repelled by the sounds of their classmates.

Encourage "choruses" to form and competitions and harmonies to evolve.

Classroom Activity

Daily Learning Journal

Possible prompts include:

What did I learn today of importance?

What did I do well?

What mistakes did I make?

What could I improve? How?

How do I feel about my participation? My learning?

What did I most enjoy in today's classes? Least enjoy?

Tips for Developing Active Listening (Effective Listening Skills)

A supportive, nonjudgmental environment created by the sensitive instructor provides opportunities for student to openly and honestly express the full range of emotions engendered during learning. Follow these guidelines to actively listen, to encourage self-understanding and to offer emotional nurturing.

1. Establish rapport with direct, calm eye contact, empathetic words, and receptive body language that conveys genuine interest and concern. Focus on the student, not on your own thoughts or projections.
2. Be alert to what the student says, how it is being said, and what is left unsaid to fully and accurately understand her.
3. Acknowledge what she shares; clarify and summarize for accuracy and to increase her self-understanding.
4. Invite more exploration by appropriate, open-ended statements, such as "How did you feel then?" "Where do you experience that feeling?", "Tell me more about that."
5. Identify any incongruent information, expressions, body language, or feelings. Be alert to the "charged" content, and/or to words and phrases that feel "hot," "tender," "tense," or "soft."

6. Do not offer unsolicited advice, and limit your own storytelling, unless requested to share.
7. Facilitative responses, listed from least facilitative to most are: advising and evaluating, analyzing and interpreting, reassuring and supporting, questioning, clarifying and summarizing, reflecting and understanding feelings.

Working with Strong Emotional Feelings in the MT Classroom

If you and your school administration adopt a policy to process emotions in the class, you will need the training and ability to facilitate your students accelerating expression, decelerating the feeling response, and closing the experience in a way that minimizes possible trauma and maximizes learning. Emotional processing should not be conducted without advance training.

If you are actively working with your students emotional reactions, you need to develop your capacity for respectful, loving awareness of feelings and acceptance of emotions as an integral and valuable part of life's experience. Some psychological education and "peer counseling" training can be helpful. You must remain alert and respectful of the difference between being a compassionate, present human being and providing what are the licensed and appropriate services of psychotherapists and other mental health professionals. At some schools, a campus counselor has the skills and responsibility to work effectively with students to process feelings generated by classroom activities. Recognizing students who need those services and having an available referral network is important for rounding out your response to emotions in the classroom.

If you determine that it is appropriate for you to process feeling states in your classroom, here are some insights from over 33 years in the bodywork classroom.

How to Structure an Emotional Processing Teachable Moment

1. Evaluate the appropriateness of processing in class.
2. Confirm that the emotive student is okay with becoming a demonstration subject while in this feeling state.
3. Have classmates discontinue their work and gather around you and the emotive student. (Other working configurations could consist of two students or of two students and an instructor or assistant.)
4. Request that they all intend to form a safe and nurturing space that encompasses the student, and that they exude a feeling of compassion.
5. Also request that the class observe your facilitative activities, the flow of expression, and their own internal responses to the process they are witnessing.
6. Turn your attention to facilitation of the emotive student's expression and to the assimilation of feelings.
7. Use the guidelines of this presentation as you facilitate an appropriate interaction with the emotive student.
8. When you have reached closure with the emotive student, return to a full class focus. Allow the class to share feelings, observations and questions that were generated. Use the immediate examples they just witnessed to teach ways in which they can work with their own clients who might have similar emotional responses.

Accelerating Expression

When working with a student who is experiencing strong feelings, there are several key points to remember. First, the breath should become your central focus. Focus on your own breath and on the student's breathing as well. Accelerated breathing, breath holding, shallow, and paradoxical breathing usually increase emotional agitation.

Along with focused breathing, the emotive student may further uncover his feelings with receptive, not overly directive guidance. Some possibilities for how you touch include subtle contact, deep pressure, or gentle, rhythmic rocking. Apply these types of touch at the typically restrictive expression areas at the solar plexus and mid abdomen; anterior-lateral neck; chin and jaw; immediately lateral to the nose; the eyebrows, immediately inferior to the clavicle, and the medial thighs and feet. While expressing emotions, the student will need your alertness and flexibility. Protection, reassurance, and safe positioning if working on a massage table, are also required.ⁱ

Decelerating and Closing Expression

Should the student become too distressed, or it seems prudent to help him to slow or to contain his feelings, breath again usually is the key. Slow, relaxed inhalation that expands the abdomen, combined with full exhalation, usually will often help to calm, center and relax the student. Combine this with bringing his awareness to his physical sensations rather than just to feelings. Have him open his eyes, as you touch his legs and feet. These changes can help to draw the emotive into a calmer state. As these activities occur, insights and observations might begin to surface. Discussing these revelations may lead to assimilation of the experience and to bringing equilibrium to the sensations, feelings and thoughts. Encourage the emotive student to

connect with supportive family members and friends, self-help groups, clergy, or psychological professionals. Follow-up after class, between class meetings, or at some other appropriate time too.

Immediate, but Private Processing

In other circumstances, drawing the student aside for direct interaction is preferable. Class activities can continue for the remainder of the class as either you or a teaching assistant privately assists in emotional resolution. This can occur either in the classroom, if enough privacy is possible or in a separate room if it is more appropriate. After reaching resolution the student and facilitative staff can return to normal class activities. If both agree, some talking about the experience with the rest of the class can deepen students' understanding of this aspect of client interaction without extensive exposure of the emotive student or at the expense of time for content.

Self- Reflection and Assessment

How Do I Manage the Emotional Processes of My Students?

- Think about the place that emotional expression has in your classroom now and explore your feelings about the emotional processes of your students. Ask yourself:
- Which student emotions do I find difficult to deal with? Why?
- Which student emotions do I find ready to deal with? Why?
- How do I provide space for students to share healthy emotional expression?
- Do I create a space where both joy and sadness are welcome? Do I allow some emotions to be expressed and require others to be contained? Why? How?
- In my view, what place does emotional expression hold in a massage therapy classroom?
- When and how does emotional expression support the learning objectives of my class?
- When and how does emotional expression pull attention away from learning objectives in my class?
- What changes do I need to make as an instructor to better manage the emotional processes of my students?

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Standards Addressed in this Presentation

Standard 1: Learner Development and Well-being

The teacher recognizes that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the physical, cognitive, emotional, [spiritual](#) and social aspects. The teacher designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences; and maintains a focus on the progress of learners throughout the educational process.

- K 1.1.2 The teacher understands how each learner's personal development (i.e., physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual and social development) affects their readiness for learning and academic performance.
- K1.1.5 The teacher knows how to make instructional decisions that build on learners' strengths and needs, based on each learner's physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual and social development. (*Level 2*)
- S1.2.3 The teacher regularly assesses individual and group performance in order to design and modify instruction to meet learners' needs and sets the stage for the next level of learning.
- S1.2.6 The teacher monitors how learners are responding to the physical and emotional demands that are placed on them by the training program, instructs learners in self-care protocols, and refers them to appropriate [administration](#), professionals or other resources as needed.
- S1.3.5 The teacher is respectful of the [body-centered](#) and emotional nature of somatic-based education.

Standard 2: Learning Differences and Integrative Approaches

The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and cultural factors to create and maintain learning environments that help learners to meet their potential. The teacher recognizes the interconnected nature of human experience to provide adult learners with rich opportunities for personal growth and integration.

- K2.1.2 The teacher grasps the interconnectedness among the physical, emotional, cognitive, spiritual and social aspects of learning and self-development.
- S2.2.6 The teacher includes content that supports learner's ongoing process of integrating their physical, emotional, cognitive, and social aspects as they learn. *Level 2*

Standard 3: Learning Environments

The teacher works with learners to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active [engagement](#) in learning, and self-[motivation](#).

- S3.2.7 The teacher designs and uses activities that build learners' compassion, sensitivity, respect and kindness for others in the development of interpersonal communication skills.

- S3.2.8 The teacher guides the [emotional tone](#) of the learning environment.
- S3.2.9 The teacher attends to both individual and group issues, and actively addresses conflict when it arises.

S3.2.12 The teacher is a responsive listener and observer.

Level 2

S3.2.13 The teacher designs activities that build learners' compassion, sensitivity, respect and kindness for others in the development of interpersonal communication skills.

S3.2.15 The teacher designs activities for learners to work productively and cooperatively to achieve learning goals.

S3.2.16 The teacher identifies potential conflicts before they arise and takes preventive measures.

A3.3.4 The teacher is a thoughtful listener and observer.

Standard 6: Planning for Instruction

The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting well-defined learning objectives by drawing upon knowledge of subject, curriculum, andragogy and [pedagogy](#). The teacher also draws upon knowledge of learners and the body-centered nature of massage therapy education.

K6.1.4 The teacher understands the body-centered nature of massage therapy education and how these somatic factors impact planning and classroom management.

Standard 7: Instructional Strategies and Delivery

The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to motivate learners to develop a comprehensive understanding of theory and methodology and to build skills to apply the knowledge in meaningful and effective ways.

K7.1.2 The teacher understands that somatic processes (e.g., sensory/kinesthetic awareness, body image, embodied history, structural and functional limitations, attitudes about touch) can influence student learning experiences and their ability to work with others.

K7.1.4 The teacher understands how different forms of communication (e.g., oral, written, nonverbal, somatic, visual, digital) convey ideas, foster self-expression, and build relationships.

S7.2.2 The teacher monitors the students' process of learning and adjusts instruction in response to the student and group learning needs.

S7.2.3 The teacher is able to address learners' issues and concerns that arise from the body-oriented aspects of the curriculum, whether it relates to their own experience or the work they are doing with clients or fellow learners.

S7.2.6 The teacher elicits students input and adapts instruction according.

S7.2.9 The teacher uses experiential exercises as a means of engaging learners at the physical, cognitive, emotional, [spiritual](#) and social levels. (Level 2)

A7.3.4 The teacher values flexibility and reciprocity in the teaching process.

Biographical Information

Carole Osborne has focused her bodywork career on maternity and somato-emotional applications of somatic therapy. In 2008 the AMTA Council of Schools named Carole the National Teacher of the Year, a high point of 38 years as a somatic arts and sciences educator. In addition to private practice, she has worked in osteopathic, psychological, and women's medical settings primarily in San Diego, CA.

Her earliest bodywork studies were with the Arica Institute, Milton Trager, Tai chi Master Abraham Liu, and in an apprenticeship with Edward Maupin, Ph.D. learning the structural approach of Ida P. Rolf. As her work has matured, she has developed a unique form of rhythmic deep tissue sculpting and begun incorporating osteopathic and neuromuscular soft tissue therapies. Carole co-founded the International Professional School of Bodywork (IPSB), in San Diego, in 1977, where she continues to teach. She has taught throughout North America and in Europe.

In 1980 she began collaborating with perinatal professionals and colleagues in researching and developing infant and maternity massage therapy protocols and instructional programs. She pioneered the reintroduction of therapeutic massage and bodywork to healthcare for the childbearing year. Over the years she has trained parents, hospital association staffs, spa and resort staffs, and over 4000 maternity massage therapists.

Carole has written two textbooks, *Pre- and Perinatal Massage Therapy* and *Deep Tissue Sculpting*, both in their second editions. Her articles appear in many professional and mainstream publications. She was a major contributor to *Teaching Massage*. She provided consultation on several videos, and for other prenatal and infant massage media items and curricula at massage therapy schools. Penny Simkin and Phyllis Klaus' groundbreaking book on pregnancy and sexual abuse survivors includes Carole's input on bodywork with pregnant survivors. She was a representative to the 1999 Massage Research Agenda Workgroup for the Massage Therapy Research Foundation, providing input to the Foundation's 10-year research agenda.

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