



Gregory Lazarus
Somatic Psychotherapist

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Why engage in psychotherapy?

Psychotherapy aims at providing a safe, non-judgmental space and relationship in which a person can explore situations that are causing concern or creating difficulties for themselves. These difficulties often confront us in those very meaningful parts of our life - our relationship with our self, with others and our work. We sometimes experience painful states of depression, anxiety, confusion, negativity and low self esteem and these states affect who we are and how we want to be in the world. The safety of the therapeutic relationship provides understanding, acceptance and mindfulness so that a person can grow and change in ways that were not possible at earlier stages in their life.

Psychotherapy is essentially a relationship with another person where it is simply safe for us to be who we really are - with our limitations but especially with our gifts and resources as well. There is a belief that the therapist is one who knows and we go along to therapy so that the therapist can tell us and make things OK. However, more realistically, it is the person in therapy who knows - otherwise why would you come to therapy in the first place - you know there is something else you want to do, there is something not quite fitting in place for you. So psychotherapy is an adventure about discovery that takes no small amount of courage, because inevitably - we change.

What's the difference between psychotherapy and counselling?

In reality therapists are often doing a little of both. Counselling is generally about resolving immediate life issues that are causing concern and learning new skills and strategies to help us live happier lives. Psychotherapy has a large focus on understanding the underlying processes that create and affect our lives. Both of these processes support healing and change. We sometimes want someone to understand us and most counsellors and psychotherapists have been trained and have a desire to do just that. At last count there are some 350 different therapeutic modalities with all kinds of theories about human development and human experience. What the current research is clearly showing is that the major determining factor for a successful outcome of any therapeutic work is not the theoretical orientation of the therapist but rather their ability to establish a caring, respectful and trusting relationship with the people with whom they are working.

What will therapy cost?

Individual therapists determine this for themselves and most have some capacity in their practice for concessional rates. Session length also varies between 50 - 90 minutes and the cost can range between \$75.00 - \$240.00. A GST will also be charged by some psychotherapists depending on their qualifications and practice.

There are many influences in the way I work but they broadly fall into 4 streams:

- Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy,
- Contemporary Somatic Psychotherapy,
- Hakomi Experiential Psychotherapy
- Socio-Analysis.

Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy

Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy has its early foundations last century in the theory and work of therapists like Freud and Jung. It was often referred to as *the talking cure* as the client did a lot of talking and the therapist a lot of listening and interpreting. There have been major developments in the theory and method of this work more recently, especially in the work of theorists like Kohut and his Self psychology, or the Intersubjective school as espoused by Stolorow, Atwood and others.

Psychoanalytic therapy is based upon the idea that much of our behaviour, thoughts and attitudes are regulated by the unconscious portion of our mind and are not within ordinary conscious control. By inviting a patient to talk about themselves the psychoanalytic therapist helps him/her to reveal unconscious needs, motivations, wishes and memories in order to gain more conscious control over his/her life.

The Psychoanalytic client is a partner with his therapist in a unique exploration of his/her life. Just as no two human beings are alike, no two treatments are alike. Our unconscious is composed of many mental processes, wishes, needs, attitudes, memories and beliefs that have been formed in us by both genetic and environmental influences that are not directly available to our ordinary awareness. More recent work in this area holds that both therapist and client bring their own subjective and unconscious experiences of the world into the therapeutic space. Briefly put - by journeying into the unconscious realm new insights are developed which enable a happier life with greater personal and emotional flexibility.

Contemporary Somatic Psychotherapy

Somatic psychotherapy honours the notion of mind and body as a single and whole entity. For many of us we have been brought up with the belief that the mind (psyche) and body (soma) are two distinct entities working independently of the other. In somatic psychotherapy, thoughts, emotions and bodily experience are understood as inter-functioning aspects of the person's whole self. Somatic psychotherapists while working verbally with a person, are also trained to notice and work with the bodily experience that a person has. So the focus is often brought to the breath, sensations, movements, postures, body image and touch when appropriate. This embodied approach can help deepen a sense of connection to oneself and others.

This form of therapy understands that the way we are in the world is conducted primarily through the body that we have and it is our body that experiences and holds many things. We are not just a mental apparatus with arms and legs. So this way of thinking about the body encourages therapists and clients to get curious about what our body is doing and feeling. We often feel stress in our bodies as a headache, or tightness somewhere. We have references in our language to the body such as "my heart is breaking" or "I have sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach" and we are often aware of these sensations before we have any thoughts about them. Body work does not discourage thinking and talking but it brings this added dimension of direct reference to the body.

Hakomi Experiential Psychotherapy

Hakomi is a method of body oriented psychotherapy. It is a gentle, respectful method allowing safe and deep access to core material providing the possibility for awareness and transformation. Our 'core material' is composed of memories, images, beliefs, neural patterns, culture, etc, and this material creates and maintains images of the self and others. All of this defines our habits, character style, perceptions and our physical way of being in the world. Some of this core material supports us and some of it - often learned in response to difficult situations - limits us. Hakomi allows the person to fully witness the differences and to make adjustments accordingly. In therapy, we firstly build a relationship which maximizes safety and the co-operation of the unconscious. With that relationship in place we can then study together how experience is organized.

As clients, to change some of these old, deep habits - we first need to know what they are. We need to examine them and understand them. Then we need to try something different. All of that requires real courage, intelligent support and an emotionally safe setting. The therapist (1) creates a calm, caring relationship in which we do the work we have to do; (2) helps us understand who we are at those deep levels; (3) provides a way to initiate new actions which are based on more realistic beliefs and lead to more nourishing experiences. That's what this method is designed to do.

This method has some unique methods. One is a practice called mindfulness. In mindfulness one simply notices the changes in ones experience, in the moment, without interfering. Clients learn to be in this state of mind for brief periods. While they are in this state we do "little experiments" that are designed to evoke reactions which help clients become aware of their deep beliefs. The experiments are always voluntary, safe and offer positive, emotionally nourishing ideas and/or actions.

Socio- Analysis

Socio-Analysis is a discipline that seeks to bring an understanding to complex systems using four primary pillars: Psychoanalytic theory, Organisational theory, Systems thinking and Social Dreaming. Essentially it is a way of working with organizations, teams and groups in way that explores the conscious and unconscious processes at work in the group. The extent to which these processes are engaged with by the group - and therefore the individuals in the group - will influence the groups way of being in the world and its ownership and sense of task.

I have trained in various therapeutic modalities over 25 years and I bring this training and experience together in an eclectic therapeutic practice.

As well as working with individuals, I also consult with many organizations and groups providing spaces in which people can really examine what it is they are doing in the workplace both as individuals and together or corporately with their colleagues. It is a kind of psychotherapy for groups at work. It is my belief that our work is one of our great loves, or at least has that potential for us. For many people though their work is a job that they clock into and out of each day. How would it be to see our work as food for the soul? How is it that we can bring our soul to work each day?

I hold the following qualifications:

- B.A. (Psych)
- M.A. (Psych)
- B.Theol.
- Diploma of Contemporary Somatic Psychotherapy
- Graduate of the [Hakomi Institute](#)

I am also a member of the [Australian Association of Somatic Psychotherapists](#) (AASP) and [Hakomi Australia](#). Both these organizations are members of the Psychotherapists and Counselors Federation of Australia.

The standard fee for a 90 minute consultation is \$110.00 including GST.

I currently live and practice in Beechworth in N. E. Victoria. I am married and have raised 4 children and now have 9 grandchildren. I love people, music, reading and poetry.