

# Ethics & Fundamentals of Psychotherapeutic Touch

Most clinicians receive very little training on the use of touch in psychotherapy. More often than not, what little education that is provided is biased against psychotherapeutic touch. While there are many clinical situations in which touch is inappropriate, the position clinicians and organizations take against psychotherapeutic touch is greatly influenced by fears of litigation, Western cultural norms, and a lack of education. These trainings aim to provide unbiased clinical research and information on touch in therapy.

This is a 20-hour training that runs from Friday afternoon through Sunday afternoon. Due to the experiential nature of this training, size is limited to 40 participants.

This training aims to fill-in the educational gap that is left by the majority of clinical educational institutions. It is not intended to convince clinicians to begin to use physical contact with clients, but rather to eliminate the secrecy around touch in therapy and provide information so that clinicians can make informed decisions about their use of touch in psychotherapy. Many clinicians avoid touch without understanding the potential impact of touch aversion or refusal within the therapeutic relationship. Other clinicians are touching clients without clear understanding of the potential impact of their touch. This training will help clinicians to become more aware of how touch has influenced them, explore their own use of touch within the clinical setting, understand when touch is clinically warranted and contraindicated, develop skills to speak with clients about touch, learn a few basic touch-based interventions, and learn appropriate documentation of all touch interventions. This training is generally aimed towards Psychotherapeutic Touch with adult populations, though some exploration of touch with minors and those who cannot consent will be explored.

This is both a didactic and experiential training. Some of the experiential exercises include physical contact. You are encouraged to participate as much as you can without allowing your physical or emotional boundaries to be violated. Just as with clients, we will respect physical contact boundaries. This means you have a right to not use physical contact in the majority of the experiential aspects of this training. You will, however, be required to participate in some touch training exercises such as Averting Client-Initiated Touch.

Please note, completing this training does not prepare clinicians for Advanced Psychotherapeutic Touch. Advanced Psychotherapeutic Touch requires years of hands-on training and expertise in Somatic Attunement. You will be provided a resource list of training programs that offer psychotherapeutic touch as a therapeutic component.

**Requirements for Course:** Participant must be a licensed mental health professional, on track for licensure, or enrolled in a masters' level mental/behavioral health program. If you don't meet these requirements, but feel this training is appropriate for you, contact me directly to discuss your situation.

## IN THIS TRAINING MENTAL HEALTH CLINICIANS WILL:

- Learn about different religious and cultural values around touch, including gender and “untouchable” considerations
- Understand power dynamics of physical contact in terms of race, gender, position, etc.
- Understand history of touch violations within psychotherapy
- Define and understand touch consent within the context of psychotherapy
- Understand purpose and clinical validation prior to using touch with clients
- Review Counseling and Psychological Associations’ Ethics and Licensing Board Regulations on the use of Touch in Therapy
- Review ethics of touch in psychotherapy and demonstrate a clear understanding of those ethics, including cultural and gender considerations
- Explore their own touch history including family influences, cultural values, beliefs, and somatic responses to touch
- Learn the importance of touch in development and the human experience
- Learn the basic history of touch in psychotherapy
- Understand basic arguments for and against touch in psychotherapy and develop their own informed opinion of psychotherapeutic touch
- Be able to clearly define the boundaries, benefits and contraindications of psychotherapeutic touch
- Learn basic psychotherapeutic touch interventions
- Understand how Corona Virus Pandemic has impacted both fear and touch-deprivation and learn tools for ethically and compassionately navigate this new territory
- Develop skills to comfortably discuss touch with clients
- Learn to gracefully avoid client-initiated touch
- Understand the impact of no-touch policies
- Understand the pros and cons of touch contracts.
- Develop a touch policy.
- Learn how to appropriately document psychotherapeutic touch interventions

## SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES BY SECTION

### Section A (2 CEs): Introduction to Ethics, Self-Evaluation, Need for Training and Interoception Awareness

Participants will:

1. Evaluate their own knowledge of touch in therapy, Explore their own history of touch and describe its relevance on clinical practice
2. Be able to identify the lack of sufficient education surrounding touch in therapy and the reasons why a common language and ethical guidelines are necessary in modern psychotherapy practice.
3. Be able to list the six pillars of ethics as they relate to psychotherapy.
4. Develop awareness of their own interoception and explain how it relates to clinical practice.

### Section B (2 CEs): Proxemics/Personal Space, Touch Research, Biology of Touch Across the Lifespan, Polyvagal Theory and Touch, Touch Refusal Training

Participants will:

1. Experience the extension of physical body to the energetic body (proxemics) and demonstrate ability to lead others in proxemics exercise.
2. Demonstrate skill in touch refusal training.
3. Be able to explain the biology of touch, recite foundational research and describe how touch influences early development and across the life span.
4. Be able to describe how neurological, social developmental theories and the polyvagal theory inform the use of touch in psychotherapy.

### **Section C (2 CEs): Touch in Psychotherapy History and Somatic Psychotherapy, Impact of Clinician's Touch History on Therapy, Touch Violations, Tools for Avoiding Touch Violations**

Participants will:

1. Be able to describe the history of touch in psychotherapy.
2. Gain awareness of the history of touch violations in psychotherapy, be able to list touch boundaries and recite the tools to avoid touch violations within therapy.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the theories of Somatic Psychotherapy.
4. Explore their own touch histories and its impact on their clinical practice.

### **Section D (2 CEs): Fundamentals of Psychotherapeutic Touch**

Participants will:

1. Demonstrate skill in using the touch qualities taught in this course.
2. Observe and practice skills associated with different types of psychotherapeutic touch.
3. Participants will be able to name the indications and contraindications of psychotherapeutic touch.
4. Participants be able to describe the fundamentals of psychotherapeutic touch, and list at least five of the individual components in each category, including:
  - a. Touch categories
  - b. Boundaries (violations, crossings, no touch areas, inappropriate touch)
  - c. Factors that affect meaning of touch
  - d. Benefits of touch
  - e. Guidelines
  - f. Purposes of psychotherapeutic touch
  - g. Safety protocols

### **Section E (2 CEs): Touch Deprivation, Arguments Against Touch in Therapy, Evaluating Validity of Arguments Against Touch in Therapy, Client Perception of Touch, No Touch Policies, Tools for Attention and Attunement**

Participants will:

1. Be able to describe the impact of touch deprivation on the physical, psychological and spiritual self and explain how that affects mental health.
2. Be able to verbalize arguments for and against the use of touch in therapy.
3. Be able to list the three critical, negative, unintended side effects of no-touch policies.
4. Develop an informed clinical opinion about the use of touch in therapy and be able to express such opinion clearly.

### **Section F (2 CEs): Governing Bodies Ethics & Legal Pitfalls; Interventions: Using Intermediary Objects, Client Self-Touch, Hands Free, Handshakes, Hand Holding & Therapeutic Hugs**

Participants will:

1. Know the national codes of ethics related to touch and understand the need to know and abide by their state and other governing bodies/associations codes of ethics.
2. Identify the legal and ethical considerations of using touch in psychotherapy and know the six top legal pitfalls of using touch in therapy..
3. Demonstrate ability to use at least 5 hands-free psychotherapeutic touch interventions.
4. Demonstrate/Describe three types of handshakes and three psychotherapeutic hugs and identify clinical indications for each.

### **Section G (2 CEs): Social, Cultural, and Ethical Considerations of Psychotherapeutic Touch & Special Populations**

Participants will:

1. Assess their current understanding of ethical issues related to touch in psychotherapy and analyze their own culture, biases and presumptions regarding the use of touch in psychotherapy.

2. Have a clear understanding of culture and cultural competence as it relates to touch, be able to compare and discuss specific cultures and variations in touch mores, and describe how cross-cultural implications of touch and power differentials direct touch protocols.
3. Understand ethics related to psychotherapeutic touch as it relates to special populations (Autism, children, couples, those in trauma reactions, etc.) boundaries and their ability to consent to touch.
4. Practice and guide psychotherapeutic touch interventions for couples/intimates.

### **Section H (2 CEs): Discussing Touch with Clients, Offering Touch (permission, request, refusal), Misattunements, Somatic Attunement, Declining Client-Initiated Touch**

Participants will:

1. Learn protocols for initiating a dialogue about touch with clients and practice touch discussions through role-play with peers and demonstrate ability to comfortably discuss touch.
2. Demonstrate ability to use basic level practical applications of psychotherapeutic touch.
3. Demonstrate basic skills in somatic attunement and demonstrate use of 10 guidelines for misattunement repair.
4. Demonstrate ability to skillfully avoid/decline client-initiated touch.

### **Section I (2 CEs): Consent/Disclosure, Touch Contracts, Clinical Documentation**

Participants will:

1. Create their own written touch policy.
2. Be able to list the nine clinical documentation criteria for psychotherapeutic touch interventions.
3. Demonstrate ability to write a clinical note on two psychotherapeutic touch interventions.
4. Develop critical thinking skills while applying knowledge of ethical codes (e.g. beneficence vs. malfeasance) to case conceptualizations applicable to the use of touch in psychotherapy.

### **Section J (2 CEs): Ethical Implications of Current Touch Trends in Psychotherapy, Review Course Material, Case conceptualization, Review the Six Pillars of Ethics, Identify Areas for Further Professional Growth, Administrative, Closing**

Participants will:

1. Be able to describe current touch trends (non-psychotherapeutic touch), their ethical implications and potential impact on clients.
2. Apply knowledge of current codes of ethics and the ethical decision-making model in case in case conceptualization while expanding knowledge of practical application of psychotherapeutic touch.
3. Identify the difference between basic and advanced psychotherapeutic touch.
4. Reflect on learning and identify areas for ongoing professional growth.

## **TRAINING DETAILS:**

**Ethics and Fundamentals of Psychotherapeutic Touch** 3-day intensives are generally held on long weekends, Friday through Sunday several times throughout the year. Beginning in 2022 they will be offered again in Colorado and Nevada. If you would like to bring them to your area, do contact me. Please visit <https://www.SabrinaSantaClara/events> for a list of currently scheduled trainings. To register, be put on a list for future trainings, or to schedule a training for your clinicians, please call Sabrina at **303.955.8945** or email her at [info@SabrinaSantaClara.com](mailto:info@SabrinaSantaClara.com)

## **CE APPROVAL:**

Please check the website for any updates regarding CE approvals.

## TRAINING COSTS:

- **Ethics and Fundamentals of Psychotherapeutic Touch (20 hours): \$545**
  - A \$45 discount is available for 30-day advanced registration and payment.
  - An additional \$40 friendship discount is available for each participant referred to the program. In order to use this discount, you must provide the name(s) of the referred friend(s) at the time of registration. Discount is given as a refund on the day of training.
- **CE Certification Processing Fee: \$25**
  - If you would like to receive CE credit when available, an additional \$25 CE Processing Fee will be applied to your account at the time of registration.
- **Cancellation/Refund Policy**

A full refund less a \$75 processing fee will be provided for cancellations greater than 45 days from the date of the Training. A refund of \$250 will be provided for cancellations occurring 21-44 days from the date of the training. There is no refund available for cancellations that occur within 20 days of the program. However, program fees are transferrable to another party. Exceptions may be made in cases of illness or emergency at the trainer's discretion.

## YOUR FACILITATOR: Sabrina S. Santa Clara, PLLC, MA, LCPC, R-DMT, CIFST, RYT

Sabrina is a licensed clinical professional counselor (LCPC) in Nevada and Colorado (LPC). Sabrina began her career using touch interventions in 1990, when she studied massage therapy at IPSB in San Diego earning her 1,000-hour Holistic Health Practitioner Certification. The focus and passion of her studies was The Hakomi Method of Experiential Psychotherapy and Structural Integration. She practiced for many years as a Massage Therapist and an Anusara Yoga Teacher while deepening her studies on the interchange of soma (body), psyche and spirit. Her personal experiences as a client of Internal Family Systems (IFS), an evidence-based, somatic, psychospiritual therapeutic model, led her to eventually become trained and certified in IFS, incorporating that work within the somatic sessions she was offering to her bodywork clients.

As Sabrina helped her clients deepen into their own somatic experiences, trauma and other mental health issues began to reveal themselves. Rather than continuing to refer her clients to psychotherapists for treatment, Sabrina began her Masters work in Somatic Counseling Psychology at Naropa University, a private, Buddhist-influenced institution. It was here that she earned her degree in 2009 with a dual emphasis in Dance/Movement Therapy and Body Psychotherapy.

Sabrina is in private practice in the Boulder/Denver area of Colorado. She provides both live and on-line support. Her therapeutic approach is holistic and integrates the expressive and creative arts, movement therapy, internal family systems, mindfulness, and, when appropriate, psychotherapeutic touch. She works as an integrated therapist and also as a Spiritual Midwife and Transpersonal Coach. She has been teaching meditation, mindfulness, Internal Family Systems and Psychotherapeutic Touch for just over ten years.