



# Neural Somatic Integration®

Safety Proximity Touch Bonding

## Curriculum

### Learning Schedule

Neural Somatic Integration® Practitioner



## What Is Neural Somatic Integration?

[Live Interview:\) Click me](#)

**In practice, NSI®** is a breakthrough approach to mind-body awareness that combines bodywork with the latest understandings of human neurobiology, especially the activation of the Social Engagement System as described in the work of [Dr. Steven W. Porges](#). NSI goes beyond traditional bodywork approaches to address the underlying neural networks that are responsible for the symptoms associated with trauma and emotional distress. Through intuitive, instinctual touch and observation that allows the body-worker to “tune in” to the neural signals of the client, NSI bypasses symptomatic manifestations of trauma and works directly with the body’s own wisdom to rewire neural networks. Release of stored trauma, postural changes, diminished or eliminated pain, increased flexibility, a new interpersonal openness and socially engaged connections are immediate results of this work.

**The body’s intricate and pervasive system** of neural networks provides a direct link between emotional states, mental images and stories, and physical sensations and symptoms. Where there is stored physical, spiritual, emotional or mental challenges that are corresponding physical indicators, which, if properly addressed, will lead the client into self-awareness, and neural reprogramming. The result, neural somatic integration, is the equivalent of removing arterial blockages or relieving pinched nerves. Energy is released; muscle tension and pain eliminated; mental and emotional distress diminished without lengthy talk or physical therapy.

**After 45 years of hands-on body-work**, training and certification in numerous body-work and feeling release disciplines ([See Resume](#)), I have reached the conclusion that the “safe” contact of a sensitive practitioner’s hands with a client’s body is the key to identifying the underlying sources of physical and feeling distress and the quickest and surest path to restoring. Drawing on the body’s own wisdom for health and well being has been part of ancient and traditional restoring modalities since the beginning of recorded time and is a cornerstone of some modern practices. Recent discoveries, however, of brain/body structures and observations of animals in their natural habitats have led to a more complete and “scientific” understanding of how the body responds to trauma and how it can, if properly enabled, can heal itself.

**Drawing on the body’s own wisdom** for health and self-healing has been part of ancient and traditional self-healing modalities since the beginning of recorded time and is a cornerstone of some modern practices. Recent discoveries, however, of brain/body structures and observations of animals in their natural habitats have led to a more complete and “scientific” understanding of how the body responds to trauma and how it can, if properly enabled, can heal itself.

**Peter Levine’s observations** of animal in the wild, for example, have revealed that the body has a “natural” way of dealing with trauma that leaves the victim without lasting symptoms and dysfunctions. However, in humans the “unnatural” conditions we live in and the cultural programming we have experienced have alienated us from our own natural restoring processes and self-regulating mechanisms. Neural Somatic Integration leads us back to the restoring processes that nature has stored within our bodies. Once we have learned to access this inner wisdom, we are capable of self-regulation and self-restoring.

## How Does It Work?

**NSI® is surprisingly simple.** It does not require complex electronic, bio-feedback devices or invasive deep bodywork manipulations and lengthy talk therapies. We can trust the body, when offered the opportunity, to reveal its needs and find its restoring. The job of the practitioner is to offer sensitive attention and presence, along with touch that takes its cues from the client's own physical and verbal responses. There is *"no agenda"* to the touch offered in NSI®. No regimen of manipulation and pre-programmed stroking.



The practitioner's hands *"ask"* permission of the client's body to find those areas where trauma has created blockages or constriction. Once located, the simple presence of the practitioner's hands communicate support in ways that were absent at the time of the original triggered trauma. The body's response to this presence trigger is relaxation of tension and release of defensive postures. Images, thoughts, and sensations may arise in the course of a NSI® session. The client is invited to share these with the practitioner. They are then treated as *"clues"* and reference points by the practitioner as he continues to provide restoring touch and presence.

Historical or imagistic content is not the subject of analysis. If stories "bubble up" they are allowed the opportunity for expression, but not treated as material for analysis or used to determine "treatment." Frequent inner self---assessment (*focusing*) and real---time physical responses are the neural material the practitioner works with to guide the client's body into restoring and self---regulation. Music, singing, and movement are used in sessions to facilitate behavioral understanding and aid the process of neural somatic integration (See Chapter 4, Contradictions and Singing).

A traumatic experience shocks our entire body. The way we think, learn, remember things, the way we think about ourselves, the way we think/feel about other people, and the way we make sense of the world are all deeply shaped and altered by the traumatic experiences, which is why it is so important that trauma and the resulting feelings are dealt with and that a person of trauma is helped to release the experience. If trauma is not released the powerful images, feelings, and sensations do not just 'go away' instead they are deeply imprinted and are stored in the body's cellular memory. The following illustration is a map how feelings are stored in the body. ([Bodily maps of feelings by Lauri Nummenmaa, Enrico Glerean, Riitta Hari, and Jari K. Hietanen](#)) The active memories of the trauma remains 'locked' in the system causing blockages until a 'trigger' occurs.

***\*\*\*When a trigger that allows the person to access the trauma presents itself in the client, the real cause of the original trauma is not recognized and is instead transferred to the Trigger, for example if a practitioner treats a client who is storing trauma in his/her body and acts as the trigger for releasing this trauma the client will assign the blame for the trauma to the practitioner who has helped them access the trauma. Peter Levine***

Part II

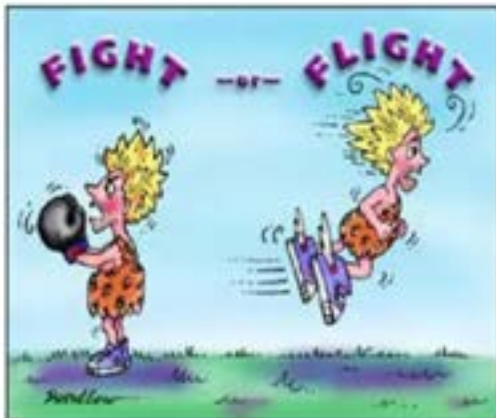
# Ten Principles of Neural Somatic Integration® (NSI®)

## 1. The Body as a Portal



The physical body “carries” (stores) ALL our experience (from trauma to pleasure) in neuronal circuitry and/or chemical biological, physical functionality and structure. This makes the physical body a portal for restoring and trauma relief.

## 2. Stress Responses Lead to Pathology



Chronic distress (pain) – physical, mental, feeling and spiritual that is not “organic” in its origins (i.e., the result of disease or accident) is the result of a defensive physiognomic response to past experienced or anticipated threat or pain. Called “stress,” these responses, while originally intended to preserve or protect (e.g., signals to the organism to either fight, flight freeze), when persisted in after the perceived threat has passed, create pathology.

## 3. Discharge or Sensation



Release of these no-longer functional responses results in “discharge” (an electrical term that is applied to what the body/mind experiences when released from constrained or restrictive constructs.) Discharge is a pleasurable experience, even exhilarating: energy that has been “cooped up” (surprised or compressed) in neuro-circuitry is now free to move, flow, and be available for creative and productive and pleasurable experiences.

## 4. The Role of Cognition

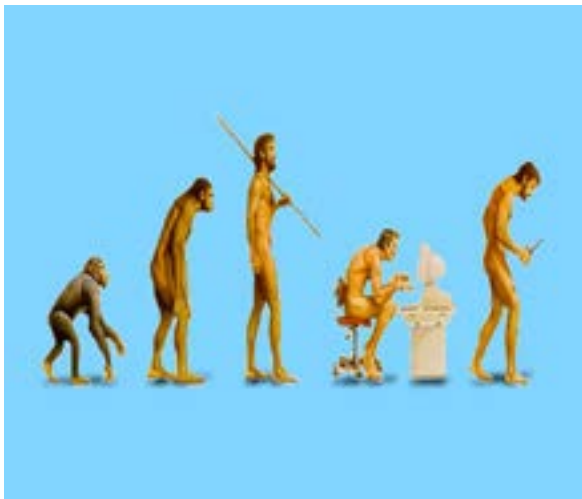


Psychotherapy (including all forms of psychological intervention) seeks to obtain this release through cognition – through analysis, synthesis, “understanding” (and accepting and/or changing) the historical causality that resulted in the pathology. Beyond simple “understanding,” however, effective psychotherapy provides a compensatory feeling container in which the mind/body can “let go” of what it no longer needs to protect. Thereby discharging the related neural and pathological energy that has been devoted to “holding” the multitudes of beliefs, feeling triggers, and corresponding physical pathologies in the four

bodies. Talk therapy has begun to acknowledge the role of the body in restoring psychological trauma and neuroses. The work of [Gene Gendling and his introduction of the concept of a “felt sense”](#) present **IN THE BODY** as a key to effective therapy is an outstanding example as a tool for NSI®

*\* The term “felt sense” can be translated as “holistic inner feeling”. “Felt sense” refers to the physically tangible, meaningful, direct experience of a situation, interaction, topic or problem.*

## 5. The Evolution of Body Work



Bodywork has also “evolved” very quickly in recent years (or perhaps rediscovered what it was originally) from addressing only the physical manifestations of a distress complex (i.e., the gross anatomy of muscle, ligament, tendon, lymph gland, and physical symptoms of restricted motion, cramping, etc.). Pioneers such as Feldenchrais, Trager, Alexander, Rosen, etc. developed methods to address the underlying patterns of body dysfunction. The work of Peter Levine on trauma release processes is particularly relevant to this discussion.

## 6. Neural Causality



Neural Somatic Integration® (NSI®) is a continuation of the process of addressing the that are the proximate underlying neural and biological patterns cause of a given distress pattern. Proximate, because it is the cause that is present in the organism, be it in an unconscious or conscious way – a memory, a body structure/posture, a feeling, or a pain symptom. The historical cause of a distress complex is not present. Only the residue of the organism’s response to the distressing input remains in “flesh and blood” including the entire network of neuro-biologic circuitry.



## 7. NSI Brings Release from the Past



NSI® offers opportunities for the client to heal himself by bringing attention to the pathologies and distress complexes that the practitioner “senses” through visual observation, touch, and/or verbal and physical sensation feedback. The practitioner does not presume to know “how” to heal the client. He places faith in the client to heal himself, yielding to the extraordinarily complex self---restoring and self---regulating mechanisms of the autonomic nervous systems. The practitioner’s role is to

be a “living feedback mechanism” to the client of what he senses about the client’s physical condition and to encourage the client to shut down pathologic psycho--- physical protocols and allow itself to function “naturally and organically” (i.e., without a pathologic syndrome interfering with health and life). The practitioner “senses” through visual observation, touch, and/or verbal feedback. The practitioner does not presume to know “how” to heal the client. He places faith in the client to heal himself, yielding to the extraordinarily complex self-restoring and self-regulating mechanisms of the autonomic, nervous system. The practitioner’s role is to be a “living feedback mechanism” to the client of what he/she senses about the client’s physical condition and to encourage the client to shut down pathologic psycho-physical protocols and allow the body to function “naturally” (i.e., without a pathologic syndrome interfering with health and life). The effect is to allow the client to “breathe” naturally, to feel itself, to release what has been held onto out of a reflex of fear of continued or repeated wounding. The client is shown that the historical cause of the distress reaction is no longer operative; or, if it is, it must be shown that options for “safety” or change or alternative responses are available. NSI®’s message to the body is: You no longer need to hold on to this or that defensive complex which may have once provided you with security or even enabled you to survive and was a perfectly “natural” response to the trauma that was experienced --- but which is now immobilizing you, or at least restricting your ability to experience your body, your mind, your feelings (i.e., your life) in the present, and is limiting your access to the positive states of joy, safety, peace, love, resonance, tranquility and courage.



## 8. Body Worker As Listener and Observer



The body worker who employs NSI® will not follow any regime of massage or manipulation, even those of ancient tradition (e.g., reflexology, acupressure, etc.) Rather, he/she will “listen” to the client as they speak through gesture, voice, muscle tension, pain sites, posture, responsive imagery, recollection, etc. He/she will observe in a neutral, loving and non--judgmental fashion what is really there in the client, reflect this back through feedback, verbal and tactile, to the client, and offer the client the opportunity to release, discharge, and heal. The practitioner cannot “force” this release. He/she cannot force the client to “let go” of a long--standing neural defense/distress structure. Such pressure will inevitable be greeted by the client as a further attack or stress and it will respond with a reinforcement of the very distress complex the practitioner is seeking to relieve.

## 9. Trust and Safety



Only when there is a free and safe interchange between practitioner and client will restoring occur. Trust and safety is necessary for any restoring relationship. Without it, the client remains “on guard” against further distress, thereby strengthening the neural circuitry one is attempting to “unplug” and release into life giving, health producing somatic neurology.

## 10. Course of Treatment



Given the historical duration or intensity of most trauma or distress patterns the kind of Neural Somatic Integration® we are seeking, will not likely occur quickly. It is possible that one could expect to spend a year in weekly NSI® work for every decade of life in order to work through the various distress complexes one might have, though this of course will vary from client to client.

However; at a certain point, it will become possible for the subject to become his/her own restoring practitioner. NSI® is not simply a “therapeutic” process; it is an life changing one, and clients can become attuned to their own body/mind in a new and restoring way, and begin to self regulate using strategies learned in formal NSI® sessions. In this sense, the restoring process is life long. Resolving old traumas and distress symptoms does not ensure that the client will not suffer new traumas or distress. However, once the dynamic and creative process of NSI® has been internalized, the client will have tools to respond to contemporary distresses in ways that will minimize the establishment of defensive complexes or relieve quickly those which occur.



# **Neural Somatic Integration®**

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**Neural Somatic Integration® Practitioner**

#### ***NSI Basic Training***

***The first year consists of 3 modules of 6 days each***



**Above all, the Basic Training serves to get to know the different principles of the work, and the tools that are available to them, in themselves and in the group, to understand, to feel and to integrate the effects. The successful completion is a prerequisite for the second year (advanced) with the goal of concluding the NSI ---Practitioner.**

- ❖ Getting to know, feelings (feeling physically), understanding and integrating the “10 Principles” of Neural Somatic Integration® (NSI) and how the instinctive and evolutionary behaviors of wildlife find themselves in our instinctive evolutionary human behaviors and body dysfunctions.
- ❖ Get to know the Steven Porges Polyvagal Theory and how it works in our every day life.
- ❖ Get to know, feelings (feeling physically), understand and integrate physical systems and their relationship to bodywork and Neural Somatic Integration® NSI (safety, Proximity, touch, Bonding).
- ❖ Getting to know, feelings (physically feeling), understanding and integrating the “4 bodies” (spiritual, physical, feeling and mental) as a tool to explore and change energetic pathways in our neural somatic body.
- ❖ Getting to know, feelings (physically feeling), understanding and integrating how unconscious facial expressions (“microexpressions”), body language and physiological movements reveal the inner truth of body wisdom and lead us back to the source of their physiological dysfunction (trauma) in their complex communication system located on the fibers of our neurological channels.
- ❖ Get to know, feelings (physically feeling), understand and integrate how the body transmits our neural messages, leading us to the “trigger areas” and their physiological disorders.
- ❖ Get to know, feelings (physically feeling), understand and integrate how repressed life experiences (trauma, accidents, education, attachments, childhood, relationships, origins, pregnancy, conditioning, evolution and other events) affect our body systems.



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- ❖ Getting to know, feelings (physically feeling), understanding and integrating the “implicit” and “felt sense” of physical body perceptions, safety, limitations, attachments, orientation, self-regulation and empowerment.
- ❖ Get to know, feelings (physically feeling), understand and integrate our natural “tracking” abilities using the “The Resonator” (rotating disk for: safety, grounding and the balance system). Learning physical sensations of the somatic body and how we find about turning, possibilities of discharge.
- ❖ Getting to know, feelings (physically feeling), understanding and integrating the body language, behaviors, defenses, implicit sensations, movements through music and “speaking from the heart”, as tools to communicate with others in a safe and respectful manner.
- ❖ Getting to know, learning, feelings (physically feeling), understanding and integrating how to work with the mirror and the video camera to recognize projections and experience that everything you think or say about others has to do with yourself.
- ❖ Getting to know, feelings (physically feeling), understanding and integrating the “Gestalt” --- language, behaviors, defense systems, implicit sensations, movements through music and “speaking from the heart” ( Nonviolent Communication according to Marshall Rosenberg), as tools to connect with others in a safe and respectful manner.
- ❖ Getting to know, feelings (physically feeling), understanding and integrating the feeling of immobility or frozen, escape, struggle and social connection.
- ❖ Getting to know, feelings (physically feeling), understanding and integrating how I can recognize / experience physiological, feelings, mental and spiritual boundaries.
- ❖ Get to know, feelings (physically feeling), understand and integrate how to integrate NSI into your own work / life.





# Neural Somatic Integration®

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#### *NSI Advanced Training*

*The second year consists of 3 modules of 6 days each*

**Above all, the purpose of Advanced Training is to deepen the different principles of the work with oneself, in oneself, in the group and with other people, to apply the tools that are available to them, to understand, to feel and to integrate them to learn and apply the bodywork. The successful completion entitles to the title “NSI - Practitioner”.**

- ❖ Learn about, feelings (physically feeling), understand and integrate the “ten principles” of Neural Somatic Integration® (NSI) and how the instinctive and evolutionary behaviors of wildlife find themselves in our instinctive evolutionary human behaviors and body dysfunctions.
- ❖ Continuing to explore the [Steven Porges Polyvagal Theory](#) and how it works in our every day life.
- ❖ Discovering, feelings (physically feeling), understanding and integrating the advanced, how unconscious facial expressions (“microexpressions”), body language and physiological movements reveal the inner truth of bodily wisdom and lead us back to the source of their physiological dysfunction (trauma) through their complex communication system which is located in the fibers of our neurological channels.
- ❖ Using the information and techniques of the first year of training to more thoroughly explore the deeper muscle layers, neural connections and physiological systems of retained and stored traumas, dysfunctions and visceral connections.
- ❖ Exploring deeper physiological systems (such as psoas, brain connections, bones, muscle groups etc.) with NSI and the “The 4 bodies” as a vehicle and portal for our experiences and techniques of bodywork.
- ❖ To get to know the advanced, feel (physically feel), understand and integrate the ability to follow (“tracking”), to ground, and further learning about the physical sensations and feelings in the body.
- ❖ Explore the advanced, feel (physical sense), understand and integrate the restoration of our responses, interactions, security, and balance to the interconnecting neural network of our physical body.



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#### **Neural Somatic Integration<sup>®</sup> Practitioner**



- ❖ Learn, Feel (physically feel) advanced, understand and integrate our natural “tracking” abilities using the “The Resonator” (rotatable disc for: Safety, grounding, the balance system). Learning physical sensations of the somaesthetic body and how we find about turning, possibilities of discharge.
- ❖ Learn, feel (physically feel), understand, and integrate the advanced, how to recognize projections by working with the mirror and the video camera, and experiencing that everything you think or say about others has to do with yourself.
- ❖ Learn, feel (physical), understand and integrate the “implicit” and “felt sense” of physical body perceptions, security, boundaries, attachments, limitations, orientation, self-regulation and empowerment.
- ❖ Continuing to incorporate the “Gestalt” language that establishes a relationship with the interior of the body and external communication with the environment.
- ❖ Learn, feel (physically feel) the advanced, understand and integrate the deeper levels of boundaries and their relation to psychosomatic disorders.
- ❖ Learn, feel (physically feel), understand and integrate how to integrate NSI into any therapeutic work or everyday life.
- ❖ Get to know, feel (physically feel), understand and integrate how to apply the learned NSI tools to the client on the treatment table.
- ❖ Learn, feel (physically feel), understand and integrate the advanced, how to bring the learned together and perform body therapy on the client.