

## The Brain, the Body, and the Roots of Emotional Regulation Video Resource Pack

Lisa Ferentz, Dr Gwen Adshead & Tom Higgins

Video Course  
CPD hours: 12 / CE credits: N/A



Online video access remains available for 1 year from the date you receive the video course.

The science is clear: trauma lives in the body, and emotional regulation begins in the nervous system. But how do we bring this knowledge into the therapy room in a way that's clinically useful — and grounded in theory as well as practice?

This highly integrative video bundle combines the thought leadership of Dr Gwen Adshead and Tom Higgins with the practical creativity of Lisa Ferentz. Together, they explore the neurobiology of trauma, the significance of right-brain development, the role of the vagus nerve, and the clinical application of both somatic and cognitive techniques for affect regulation.

In Part One, Adshead and Higgins explain how early attachment trauma disrupts brain development and why the right hemisphere is crucial for emotional regulation, relational capacity, and selfhood. Their training includes references to leading neuroscience thinkers such as Allan Schore and Iain McGilchrist, and offers clinical insights into how these theories translate into practice.

In Part Two, Lisa Ferentz guides therapists through an eclectic toolkit for working with depression and anxiety — drawing on CBT, breathwork, power posing, somatic interventions, and right-brain creative techniques such as art therapy and guided imagery. The combined programme not only deepens your understanding of how trauma affects the nervous system, but also equips you with embodied, compassionate techniques that support healing.

### What's Included:

- *Joining the Dots: Right Brain, Vagus Nerve and Trauma* — Dr Gwen Adshead & Tom Higgins (6 CPD)
- *Incorporating Left and Right-Brain Based Approaches to Depression and Anxiety* — Lisa Ferentz (6 CPD)

### Who It's For:



- Therapists working with trauma, mood disorders, or dysregulation
- Clinicians seeking a brain-body framework for understanding client behaviour
- Practitioners ready to expand their therapeutic repertoire with both neurobiological insight and creative tools

#### What You Will Learn:

- How early trauma and attachment disruptions shape the brain
- The functions of the vagus nerve and its role in regulating arousal
- Why the right hemisphere matters in therapy — and what happens when it's underdeveloped
- Tools for stabilising clients using breath, posture, movement, and creative visualisation
- Strategies for helping clients shift internal narratives through CBT and psychoeducation
- How to support clients in reconnecting with hope, motivation, and emotional resilience

#### Course 1

##### Joining the Dots:

##### *Right Brain, Vagus Nerve and the Treatment of Trauma*

Dr Gwen Adshead & Tom Higgins

CPD hours: 6 / CE credits: N/A

In the last 10 years, studies have confirmed the impact of the interaction between adverse childhood experiences and genetic variations on the development of mood regulation and other aspects of psychopathology. More recent research in neuroscience is exploring the links between exposure to childhood trauma and neuronal development, which clarify how exposure to different kinds of childhood trauma might affect brain development; and **how associated attachment difficulties might act as a mediator between childhood trauma and adult psychopathology.**

In this two-part workshop, Dr Gwen Adshead and Tom Higgins will explore what makes this research of particular interest to us as psychotherapists, psychologists and counsellors. They will **build on the work of Professors Allan Schore, Bruce Perry and Peter Fonagy**, to present information about normal infant brain development, the importance of when trauma happens and why some kind of adverse childhood experiences are especially toxic to psychosocial development. They will discuss some of the contemporary discussion about the importance of the **right brain development**, which develops ahead of the left brain and so **may be more susceptible to the effects of trauma**. They will draw on the work of Iain McGilchrist to explore why the right brain is so important to relational experience, and what happens if the left brain is functionally dominant.

We know that the right brain is important for affect regulation, mentalisation function and embodied awareness. In addition, there is now more understanding of the importance of the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS), in particular the vagus nerve, in affect regulation. The vagus nerve develops in childhood to connect the PNS with the central nervous system in brain; including the limbic system, hind brain and the HPA axis. The vagus has a role in regulating the PNS and supports a vital connection between the brain and body. **Greater understanding of vagal activity** can help us think about what happens in therapeutic encounters, and **help clients create emotional resilience, mitigate anxiety and stabilise Affect Regulation**. Finally, this recent research raises powerful questions about traditions in psychotherapy which focus on exploration of past trauma in ways that do not take account of present state experience.

Gwen Adshead will present on the theory of attachment trauma and its impact on brain development during the early years. Tom Higgins will present clinical vignettes that illustrate how attachment trauma and insecurity can impact transgenerationally; and also how therapeutic techniques need to be modified to include compassion focussed interventions and attention to embodied experiences.

In Session 1, we specially explore issues relating to:

- **the Neuroscience behind Trauma and Attachment Relationships**



- Why Childhood Trauma can make a client more vulnerable to Stress Dysregulation
- **ACES and Attachment**
- Why the right brain is important to the sense of self and others; and embodiment
- Affect regulation and the role of the vagus nerve

In Session 2, we **focus on the clinical implications of the neuroscience of brain development** and environmental hazard; and how this might affect our choice of therapeutic tools, and an improved understanding of therapeutic relationships.

We will discuss **neuroplasticity and how therapeutic conversation might help make changes at the level of the synapse in different neural networks**. We will also discuss dysregulation of affect and arousal and how embodied approaches may be helpful.

In particular, we use clinical vignettes to explore:

- How and why attachment insecurity in both client and therapist can be problematic, in terms of effects of brain bias in relationships and use of dysfunctional defences.
- Emerging themes about the treatment of the long-term effects of trauma
- How we can help our clients stay emotionally grounded
- Re-enactments of trauma
- **Why the Right Brain Is vital to the client's core sense of self and to therapist mentalising**
- On not ignoring anger

**Course 2**  
**Incorporating Left and Right-brain Based Approaches**  
**to Treating Depression and Anxiety**  
**Lisa Ferentz**  
**CPD hours: 6 / CE credits: N/A**

Globally, as somatic approaches, CBT, and right-brain based psychotherapeutic interventions have now shown exceptional efficacy in the treatment of depression and anxiety, there is an increasing focus on incorporating these modalities into treatment, either as an adjunct to pharmacology or in lieu of medication. Therapists are embracing cutting-edge somatic approaches and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques to deliver transformative results for their clients. These therapeutic approaches, when combined into a holistic mind-body intervention model, including exercise and an emphasis on adequate sleep, have proven highly effective in alleviating symptoms for both depression and anxiety.

At this practical and engaging webinar, we will look at four approaches specifically:

1. **Psychoeducation:** we will look at the diagnoses of depression and anxiety through the lens of hyper- and hypo-arousal, **giving both clinicians and clients a framework to understand the cognitive, emotional, somatic, and behavioural symptomatology that accompanies these affective experiences**. Teaching clients how to be in the “optimum window of tolerance” will give them a sense of empowerment in navigating their emotional stability
2. Long term research now shows that **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)** is an effective treatment strategy for depression and stands as a cornerstone of evidence-based psychotherapy, offering a



powerful framework for addressing negative thought patterns and behaviours. Through CBT, therapists equip clients with practical tools to challenge cognitive distortions, reframe limiting beliefs, and cultivate more adaptive coping strategies. We will explore **practical therapeutic interventions such as identifying cognitive distortions, cognitive re-framing, writing prompts, journaling, increasing gratitude, and enhancing self-compassion through positive self-talk.**

3. **Somatic approaches:** allow us to recognize the profound connections between mind, body, brain, and behaviour. In this webinar, we will **explore practical ways for utilising somatic resourcing, movement, and posture** that will help our clients to self-soothe, feel more grounded, and empowered, and create adaptive psychological, physiological, and behavioural changes.
4. **Creative, right-brain based modalities** can help clients to access and soothe both depressed mood and anxious feelings. **Participants will learn how to use art therapeutically, and how to incorporate guided imagery and visualization to dial down the intensity of anxiety, increase feelings of competence, and install a “future self”** that brings hope and healing to the work.

Participants will learn how to incorporate the above psychotherapeutic techniques into their skillset, so as to dramatically increase outcome efficacy. We will specifically learn tools for:

- **Breathwork Strategies:** Participants will learn and implement breathwork **techniques designed to address hypo-arousal in depressed clients.** These techniques draw on principles of mindfulness and regulation to promote emotional balance and well-being.
- **Somatic Resourcing and Power Poses:** Therapists will explore somatic resourcing techniques, including power posing interventions, to facilitate adaptive psychological and physiological changes in clients. By embodying confidence and strength, clients can shift their internal states and cultivate resilience.
- **Negative Self-Monologue Reduction:** Through cognitive restructuring and compassionate self-talk exercises, therapists can **help clients diminish negative self-monologues and foster a more nurturing inner dialogue.** By challenging self-limiting beliefs, our clients can cultivate greater self-compassion and emotional resilience.
- **Four-Quadrant Art Prompt:** Utilizing the transformative power of art therapy, therapists can guide clients through the four-quadrant art prompt, helping them to identify and celebrate moments of competence and achievement throughout the life cycle.
- **Increasing Self-Care:** We will discuss the importance of incorporating exercise, good sleep hygiene, and the **practice of “powering down,” to release endorphins, increase focus, and enhance mood regulation.** These lifestyle changes can augment the effectiveness of traditional psychotherapy interventions.
- **Promoting Gratitude:** Therapists will explore the role of gratitude in treating depression and anxiety, learning how to implement gratitude practices with their clients. **Cultivating a mindset of gratitude can enhance emotional resilience for our clients** and foster a more positive outlook on life.

During this webinar, we will:

- Learn how we can use a “parts approach” so depression and anxiety do not become synonymous with an all-encompassing identity
- Explain the impact that sleep deprivation has on exacerbating depression and anxiety
- Describe and implement at least two breathwork strategies designed to address hypo-arousal
- Describe and implement two strategies designed to address anxiety and hyper-arousal
- Identify and implement at least three strategies that incorporate somatic resourcing and Power Poses
- Implement a strategy to decrease a negative self-monologue and increase more compassionate and positive self-talk
- Incorporate the four-quadrant art prompt to help clients reconnect with feelings of competence and expand their self-narratives

- Implement a visualization to dial down the intensity of anxiety and panic
- Explain the role that exercise has in releasing endorphins in depressed clients
- Use the “future self-prompt” to promote hope in depressed clients
- Explain the role that gratitude has in treating depression and how we can implement it with depressed clients

Overall, this training programme offers an unparalleled opportunity for therapists to expand their therapeutic repertoire and dramatically transform their practice. By embracing somatic approaches, CBT techniques, psychoeducation, and creative modalities, participants can train to become transformative envoys of change in the lives of their clients.

#### Overall Programme Learning Objectives for two sessions:

- **Explain the Neuroscience behind Trauma and Attachment Relationships**
- Discuss why Childhood Trauma can make a client more vulnerable to Stress Dysregulation
- Explain why the right brain is important to the sense of self and others; and embodiment
- Discuss how and why attachment insecurity in both client and therapist can be problematic, in terms of effects of brain bias in relationships and use of dysfunctional defences.
- Discuss how we can help our clients stay emotionally grounded
- **Explain why the Right Brain Is vital to the client’s core sense of self and to therapist mentalising**
- Explain how we can use a “parts approach” so depression and anxiety do not become synonymous with an all-encompassing identity
- Explain the impact that sleep deprivation has on exacerbating depression and anxiety
- Describe and implement at least two breathwork strategies designed to address hypo-arousal and address anxiety and hyper-arousal
- Explain the role that exercise has in releasing endorphins in depressed clients
- Use the “future self-prompt” to promote hope in depressed clients
- Explain the role that gratitude has in treating depression and how we can implement it with depressed clients

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#### About the speakers

**Dr Gwen Adshead** is a Forensic Psychiatrist and Psychotherapist. She trained at St George's Hospital, the Institute of Psychiatry and the Institute of Group Analysis. She is trained as a group therapist and a Mindfulness-based cognitive therapist and has also trained in Mentalisation-based therapy. She worked for nearly twenty years as a Consultant Forensic Psychotherapist at Broadmoor Hospital, running psychotherapeutic groups for offenders and working with staff around relational security and organisational dynamics. Gwen also has a Masters' Degree in Medical Law and Ethics; and has a research interest in moral reasoning, and how this links with 'bad' behaviour.

Gwen has published a number of books and over 100 papers, book chapters and commissioned articles on forensic psychotherapy, ethics in psychiatry, and attachment theory as applied to medicine and forensic psychiatry. She is the co-editor of *Clinical topics in Personality Disorder* (with Dr Jay Sarkar) which was awarded first prize in the psychiatry Section of the BMA book awards 2013; and she also co-edited *Personality Disorder: the Definitive Collection* with Dr Caroline Jacob. She is the co-editor of the *Oxford Handbook of Forensic Psychiatry* (2013) and the *Oxford Handbook of Medical Psychotherapy* (2016). She is also the co-editor of *Munchausens’s Syndrome by Proxy: Current issues in Assessment, Treatment and Research*. Her latest book, *The Deluded Self: Narcissism and its Disorders* (2020) is out now with nscience publishing house.



**Tom Higgins** is an attachment based psychoanalytic psychotherapist. He is a teacher, training therapist and training supervisor at the Bowlby Centre. He has trained in multiple modalities including group analysis, EMDR, Compassion-focused therapy and Mentalisation-based therapy.

He has worked for 25 years in NHS mental health services including Child and Adolescent mental health services and in Peri-natal mental health. For the past 15 years, much of his work has been with clients with complex trauma many of whom are struggling to look after themselves and struggling to parent their children.

He is passionate about supporting parents to understand the impact of their own childhood trauma and breaking inter-generational cycles, so as to enable them to better attune to the psychological needs of their children.

He now works in private practice as an individual, couple and group psychotherapist.

**Lisa Ferentz** is a recognized expert in the strengths-based, de-pathologized treatment of trauma and has been in private practice for over 39 years. She presents workshops and keynote addresses nationally and internationally, and is a clinical consultant to practitioners and mental health agencies in the United States, Canada, the UK, Ireland and Israel. She has been an Adjunct Faculty member at several Universities, and is the Founder of "The Ferentz Institute," now in its sixteenth year of providing continuing education to mental health professionals and graduating several thousand clinicians from her two Certificate Programs in Advanced Trauma Treatment. In 2009 she was voted the "Social Worker of Year" by the Maryland Society for Clinical Social Work. Lisa is the author of "Treating Self-Destructive Behaviors in Traumatized Clients: A Clinician's Guide," now in its second edition, "Letting Go of Self-Destructive Behaviors: A Workbook of Hope and Healing," and "Finding Your Ruby Slippers: Transformative Life Lessons From the Therapist's Couch." Lisa also hosted a weekly radio talk show, writes blogs and articles for websites on trauma, attachment, self-destructive behaviors, and self-care, teaches on many webinars, and is a contributor to Psychologytoday.com. You can follow Lisa's work on her website, theferentzinstitute.com, YouTube, LinkedIn and Twitter.

**There is no known commercial support for this program.**

**This Video Resource Pack does not qualify for CE credits.**

**CPD certificates will be issued separately for each session.**

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