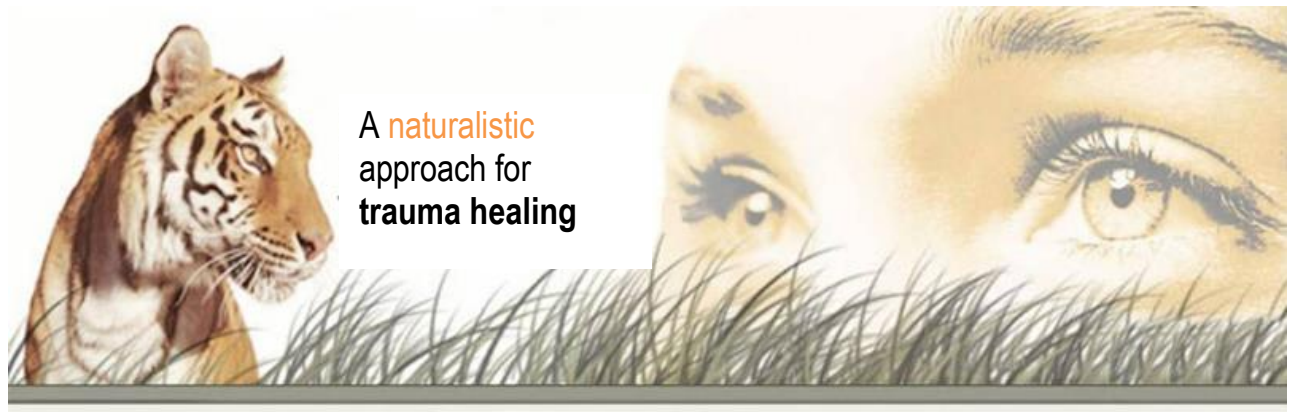


# Somatic Experiencing®

Hans Samson - SE-Practitioner



## What is Somatic Experiencing®?

Somatic Experiencing® (SE) is a psychosomatic method for trauma healing. This method is aimed primarily on the effects of trauma in the body (soma). Sensations are the language of our body. The experience of sensations is therefore the key to trauma healing.

### Features of SE are:

- it focuses specifically on trauma;
- it is based on scientific research in neurobiology;
- it is effective where trauma is in the nervous system;
- the trauma does not need to be experienced again;
- it is applied with good results in 12 different countries.

## Why Somatic Experiencing®?

Peter A. Levine PhD, the founder of SE (and author of "Waking the tiger" and "In an Unspoken Voice"), developed the approach (model) on his observations of wildlife. Animals are regularly threatened with death, still they rarely get traumatized. They know instinctively how to discharge and regulate the intense energy, released in survival circumstances.

We humans are equipped with almost the same regulating mechanisms as animals. However, these are restricted or blocked by our rational, grey mass in our brain (i.e. thinking). For example, we keep on ignoring the signals of our body believing we are the strong man or woman we are supposed to be. In behaving this way we block the stress discharge and get worse physically and or emotionally. This can lead to post-traumatic stress symptoms.

### Examples of these are:

- anxiety, panic, palpitations, shallow breathing, excessive alertness or irritability, restlessness, insomnia;
- depression, exhaustion, feelings of helplessness or powerlessness, loss of muscle strength;
- dissociation, feeling that (part of) your body is not yours, restricted range of feelings;
- denial: the trauma has not happened or is not important.

### How does Somatic Experiencing® work?

SE works with the so-called “felt sense”, the awareness of physical sensations to unload stress out of the body. Examples of these physical sensations include warmth, tingling, goose bumps, faster or slower heart rate or breathing. With the appropriate guidance to the embodied feeling your body is able to reactivate its healing ability.

SE helps the client to become more aware of his or her resources to support the process consciously. Examples of internal resources are: your sense of humor, contact with the ground, feeling of strength, creativity and intelligence. External resources may be any form of distinguished support, e.g. friends, family, a safe warm place and positive memories. These give the body a sense of confidence and relaxation that will break the vicious circle of persistent and self-reinforcing tension.

By paying attention to the body sensations on and off for very short periods of time the stress can be reduced while the client has a constant feeling of being in control of the process. The blocked survival-energy can be discharged gradually and safely in this way. After this discharge people often experience a strong decline in their stress-symptoms.

### What traumas can be dealt with?

A trauma in SE is defined as follows: any event or series of events that was/were too unexpected, too fast and/or overwhelming at that specific moment. Your nervous system was not capable of responding appropriately at that time: the nervous system became overwhelmed.

### The following categories are distinguished:

- an attack in which one could not escape: rape, sexual abuse, incest, violence, war, losing balance (fall, head injury, car accident);
- physical injuries: surgery, anesthesia, burning, poisoning;
- a constantly overloaded nervous system, for example caused by operations at a very young age, high fever, drowning, choking, birth trauma;
- natural disasters;
- witnessing a trauma;
- development trauma or emotional trauma, for instance neglect in early childhood, loss of a loved one, loveless growing-up.

SE works directly with the physical sensations, hence it is not necessary to know what the actual traumatic event was. If you recognize one or more of the mentioned symptoms, SE could be very supporting in successfully solving your problem(s).

### My role as a SE practitioner

A SE session lasts approximately one hour and begins with a brief introductory conversation that leads to an agreement on what we will investigate during this session *without judgment*. I support you on your path as much as possible, looking for a natural reaction in your body, without creating too much arousal (= disturbance of the relative relaxation in your body). You have the responsibility yourself to remain "on the edge of the trauma" and "not to jump into it." On that edge self-healing is invited to "lead the way". The path we will follow is one of curiosity that contributes to the profound and lasting liberation. Working with SE is a valuable addition to my work, helping people who want to follow their heart and – at the same time – sometimes encounter hidden pains or other emotions. These cause barriers for their lifestream or pushes them back to old and well-known patterns / reflexes (for example permanent alertness, compulsiveness, passing beyond the limits of well-being).

SE contributes perfectly to my knowledge and experience as a therapist, teacher, coach and healer. In 2011, I graduated successfully as a Somatic Experiencing® Practitioner, both in the Netherlands and in Germany. Therefore, I am authorized to offer individual SE sessions. Additionally, I apply this approach within my psychosomatic (physio) therapy sessions. Its value has proven itself over and over.