

## **The Rubenfeld Synergy Method®**

### **How does this method of somatic therapy work?**

Emotions and memories stored in our bodies often result in energy blocks, tensions, and imbalances. The Rubenfeld Synergy Method® uses many avenues, including verbal expression, movement, breathing patterns, body posture, kinesthetic awareness, imagination, sound, and caring touch, to access these reservoirs of feeling.

Together, the Rubenfeld Synergist and client make room for emerging feelings, integrating them with present experience. It's a psychophysical journey whose touchstones are acceptance, caring, trust, humor, and growth—and whose goals are wholeness, awareness, empowerment, and freedom.

RSM Synergists are trained to:

- Integrate psychophysical modalities
- Balance analytical and scientific approaches with intuition, metaphor and sensitivity
- Use "Beginner's mind" so that their practice is fresh and present for their clients, and for themselves.

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### **What modalities are used in RSM®?**

#### **USE OF TOUCH**

During their intensive four year training the Synergist learns the use of touch and other non-verbal interventions in an educational and therapeutic context. During an RSM session, clients are fully clothed and lying comfortably on a padded table or sitting in a chair. Learning how and when to touch requires practice, diagnostic skill, intuition, and a present sense of where the client is in his or her healing process. The use of body-focused psychotherapeutic modalities must always be employed with full consideration to the context of therapy and specific client factors, such as presenting problems and symptoms, personal touch and sexual history, personality, ability to differentiate types of touch, degree of functionality, and the clients level of ability to identify and protect his or her boundaries as well as taking into account the gender and cultural influences of both the client and the therapist.

Intention affects touch, and touch can be a dialogue with the unconscious, providing new gateways to emotional awareness, increased capacities for affect regulation, and healing of that portion of our brain—the right hemisphere—dominant for emotionality, intuition and empathy. As direct contact with the neuromuscular system, touch offers immediate feedback about the client's state of body/mind. The Synergist uses him or her self—their whole being—as a subtle instrument for this kind of inquiry and intervention.

#### **USE OF PSYCHOPHYSICAL MODALITIES**

Iiana Rubenfeld trained as a practitioner of the Alexander Technique and studied extensively with Moshe Feldenkrais, founder of the Feldenkrais Method®. The F.M. Alexander Technique and the Feldenkrais Method each deal with posture in a

dynamic relationship to gravity. Synergists learn aspects of both of these extremely important body/mind approaches as a means of using the whole Self. As Moshe Feldenkrais once said: "Movement is life, and life without movement is unthinkable."

Principal themes include: kinesthetic awareness, the use of words and image, how conscious control affects movement and how movement changes thinking, the re-education of the neuromuscular system, the vital importance of breathing while thinking and moving, and how movement in inner and outer spaces affects our intellectual and emotional capacities.

### **USE OF GESTALT THERAPY**

Iana Rubenfeld worked directly with Fritz and Laura Perls, developing a keen understanding of the use of Gestalt theory and practice. This therapeutic modality refines and deepens the Synergist's awareness and skills—their ability to enter the moment more fully as they become present, and better able to lead the client toward his or her own moment of awareness.

Major themes in Rubenfeld Synergy include: heightened awareness, contact boundaries, unfinished business, the concepts of foreground and background, dream work, co-creating experiments to intensify issues presented by the client, and appropriate use of timing in verbal and non-verbal interventions.

### **THEORY OF "NEUROPLASTICITY" AND THE BRAIN RESEARCH BEHIND RSM®:**

The total attention the Synergist/psychotherapist offers in therapy has a profound effect on another's brain. For psychotherapy to be effective it must change the brain, and the deeper into the brain the changes are, the more transformative and long-lasting those changes will be. According to current theories in the field of psychoneurology, getting "inside" the client's non-verbal, emotional right hemisphere can assist with neural regulation and integration. However, you cannot "touch" this part of the brain unless it is engaged and you are working with it in real time. (See literature reference hand-out on authors Dan Siegel, Antonio Dimasio, Candace Pert, Stan Tatkin, John Sarno and others)

In RSM, the unique use of a "listening" and gentle touch, movement, and Gestalt therapy can allow the client to experience change in the present moment, and assist in facilitating change from the inside, out.

Neuroscientist Candace Pert, author of the groundbreaking work "Molecules of Emotion", explains the efficacy of Rubenfeld Synergy: "All of our organs and tissues are storage places for emotional memory. Using both touch and talk therapy, the Rubenfeld Synergy Method empowers us to experience our feelings and the connection between our minds and bodies in extremely useful ways."

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*"The inner voices of the body want to speak to us, to inform us of the truths beneath the fixed surface of our external lives." —John Donahue*