

Energising Psychotherapy Practice with Advanced Integrative Psychotherapy (AIT)

by Heather Redington

After twenty years as a clinician in the NHS and in private practice I found I was in need of re-energising my practice. So, I began exploring and training in the various branches of energy psychology. I was interested by their claims to be able to alleviate psychological distress rapidly, gently and effectively.

The pioneering writings of Phil Mollon, psychoanalyst, psychotherapist and clinical psychologist proved to be a reassuring guide to the various modalities of these new and initially strange-sounding approaches. Underlying all of them is the utilisation of energy to help to clear the impact of trauma. Although acupuncture has familiarised us with the therapeutic usage of energy, or chi, it is only in recent decades that there has been an interest amongst mental health practitioners in its therapeutic application to psychological problems.

Of all of the energy psychology modalities I have found myself most drawn to Advanced Integrative Psychotherapy (AIT). Dr. Mollon describes it as 'one of the most comprehensive and

impressive of all the energy psychology modalities.'

A forthcoming AIT introductory seminar in Bristol summarises AIT as follows:

'Advanced Integrative Therapy was developed by Asha Clinton, a Jungian Analyst in the US and is the first complete psychodynamic body-centred transpersonal and energy psychotherapy. It clears energetic blockages in the body's energy system, which arise from unresolved physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual traumas, thereby dramatically accelerating and deepening personal growth. AIT works at the level of cellular memory, clearing the neural pathways of stuck traumatic energy, and providing profound and lasting relief from emotional pain and stuck relational patterns,

including ancestral, cultural and historical trauma. Through AIT's simple and effective method for clearing trauma, people can overcome self-destructive habits and negative beliefs and recover from the debilitating impact of sexual and other forms of abuse, as well as clear PTSD, and strengthen weak ego states. Through clearing trauma, people can develop access to clear states of consciousness and awareness.'

Since doing the Basics training three years ago, I have been using AIT in my clinical work with impressive results. I find that clients readily engage with its conceptual framework and its treatment components. The search for and treatment of originating traumas behind current symptoms, troubled states and traumatic patterns of relating is a deeply collaborative one, which contributes to a rapid and deeper engagement with clients.

Trauma is at the heart of AIT's conceptual framework and its treatment focus. Trauma is broadly defined and covers both

situational trauma such as rape, and developmental traumas such as deprivation and abuse. AIT's treatment methods utilise major energy centres in the body, which are thought to both hold and release traumatic energy. In treatment, the client is directed to hold each energy centre whilst focusing on a particular trauma or an aspect of it.

A key component of AIT and some other energy psychology approaches is muscle testing, through which it has proved to be possible to access the unconscious.

The basic premise here is that the human body stores information including unconscious memory, emotions, physical sensations and cognitions, and that these can be accessed through muscle testing. In muscle testing the client is invited to hold out an arm whilst making a statement e.g. 'An originating trauma behind my sense of shame was in utero/in my conception/in my ancestral history/my cultural history'. The therapist applies pressure to the outstretched arm, to establish whether the arm muscle remains strong or weak. Muscles generally are found to test strong to truthful statements and weak to untruthful or negatively-charged statements.

Muscle testing is clearly a major departure from traditional talking therapies and initially requires a willingness on the part of the clinician to take a leap into the unknown. My experience with clients is that they are quite willing to experiment with this and also quickly become actively involved in the exploration and treatment of trauma and traumatic patterns, which are impacting on

them in the present. The rapid relief from previously distressing memories, images, or emotions leads to deeper engagement with the process.

Although AIT has its own methodology, it is far from a 'stand alone' technique. AIT integrates psychoanalytic and Jungian theory, elements of CBT and behavioural approaches as well as its energetic treatment.


As in traditional psychotherapy, the therapeutic alliance, the interplay of transference and counter-transference and the value of the reparative relationship are crucial. Particular attention is paid to assessing and building ego strength before beginning to work on the deepest traumas.

Many AIT clinicians comment on an interesting phenomenon arising out of the energy treatment aspect of the work. It seems to enhance attunement between therapist and client. It is common for new intuitions to arise during trauma treatment.

Clients also often comment with surprise on the ways in which memories, buried emotions and even physical sensations (like pain or nausea) surface briefly into consciousness before clearing

One of the attractions of AIT for me has been the sophistication of its theoretical framework and the ongoing opportunities for further development. Seminars taught by Dr Clinton are offered twice yearly in the UK as well as in the US and Germany. After the Basics seminar, which is open to qualified mental health professionals, there are further seminars covering topics such as Depths (working on Archetypes) Anxiety Disorders, Character

Structure, Psychogenic Illness, and Attachment.

Through AIT I have discovered a renewed energy and commitment to my practice. I have found it to be deeply rewarding both in terms of the richness of its theoretical integration, its sophisticated treatment methods and the satisfaction which comes from the relief of suffering. 



Heather Redington is an integrative psychotherapist who has trained extensively in various branches of energy psychology and integrated them into her practice.

She is a teacher of AIT, a Jungian-based energy psychotherapy. She is also part of a small group of psychotherapists who have found these approaches to be enormously helpful in the relief of suffering and are working to promote knowledge and training amongst mental health professionals. (www.energypsychotherapyworks.co.uk)

REFERENCES

www.seemorgmatrix.org
Psychoanalytic Energy Psychotherapy.
Dr. Phil Mollon.