

# Integrative Somatic Psychotherapy

PRINCIPLES, BENEFITS, PRACTICES

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# About the presenter

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- ❑ Psychotherapist – Creative Transitions Ltd. – private practice – Arlington Heights IL
- ❑ Former attorney in Los Angeles
- ❑ Seven years as executive for Accenture (formerly Andersen Consulting)
- ❑ A.M. in Social Work, Univ. of Chicago School of Social Service Administration
- ❑ Certified Integrative Somatic Psychotherapist\*

**\*Contact me for information about ISP training program for licensed clinicians**

# Contact information

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# Agenda

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- ❑ What Integrative Somatic Psychotherapy (ISP) is and what it is not
  - ❑ Brief history of ISP
  - ❑ Key concepts, principles and healing dynamics
  - ❑ Its use in treating substance abuse
- ❑ Experiential learning
  - ❑ A sampling of ISP interventions
- ❑ Applications
  - ❑ Using ISP in talk therapy sessions
  - ❑ EAP-specific applications
  - ❑ A typical ISP session
- ❑ Q &A/wrap-up

# What Integrative Somatic Psychotherapy (ISP) is and what it is not

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## IS

- A mainstream clinical *psychotherapy* practice (licensure requirement)
- History goes back to Freud (ego as *body* ego)
- Freud could not figure out how to anchor his psychosocial theories in the body
- Wilhem Reich (Freud's protégé) figured out how to do it
- ISP evolved from Reich's work

## IS NOT

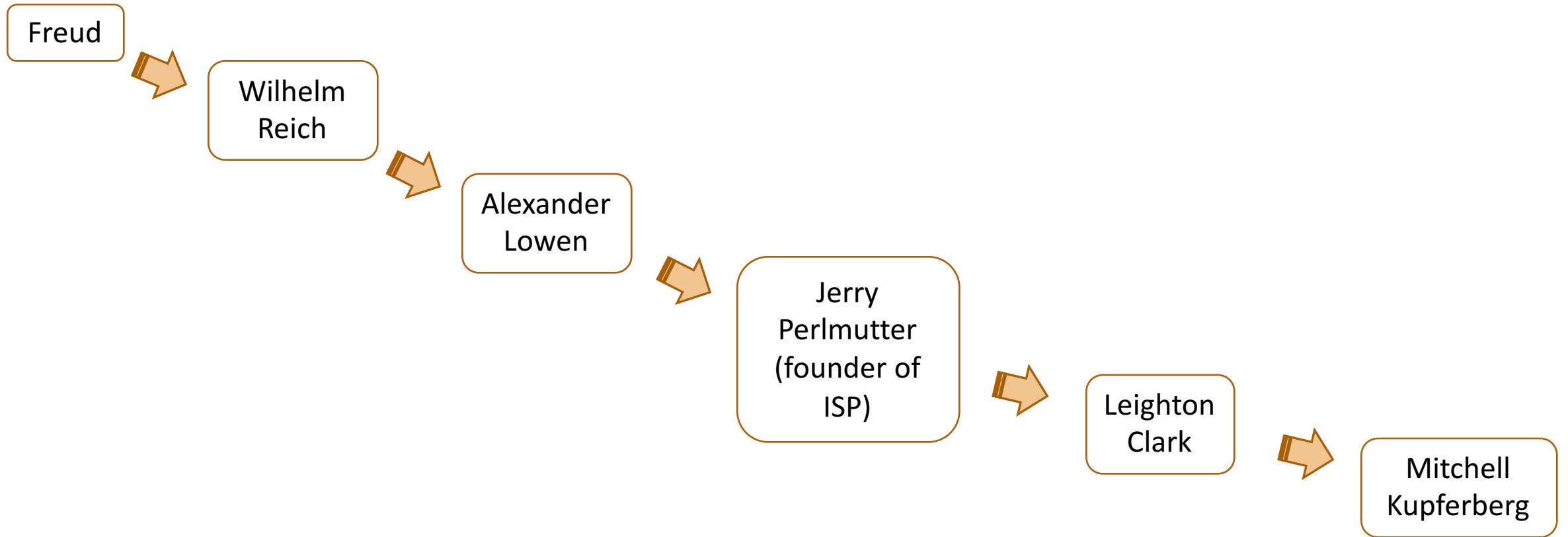
- New Age
- Massage/physical therapy
- Chiropracty
- Acupuncture
- Yoga (Traditional; Trauma-informed)
- Reiki, Hakomi
- Rolfing

# 4 Generations of Reichian Psychotherapy

Generation/Focus	Primary Developer	Key Contributions
1 <sup>st</sup> - Foundation Principles	Wilhelm Reich	Placed body at center of psychotherapeutic enterprise; armoring; systemized interventions based on posture + touch
2 <sup>nd</sup> - Body	Alexander Lowen, John and Eva Pierakkos	Elaborated and expanded Reich's interventions; made connections between patterns of armoring and behavior.
3 <sup>rd</sup> - Energy	David Boadella, Malcolm Brown, Ron Kurtz, Patricia Ogden	Boadella—Where is energy/lack of energy in your body? Brown—Significant focus on sexuality. Kurtz/Ogden—Mindfulness, sensing what is going on inside
4 <sup>th</sup> - Integration	Jerry Perlmutter (Integrative Somatic Psychotherapy)	Integrates and modifies (as needed) all of the above, with focus on <i>allowing</i> experience to emerge <i>organically</i> .

# My ISP Lineage

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# Other Important Professional Influences

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## **Winnicott/Bowlby**

- Holding environment
- False Self/True Self
- Attachment

## **Sándor Ferenczi**

- “Confusion of tongues”/inner child
- Empathy (“threads of hope”)
- Experience trumps orthodoxy (e.g. trauma)
- “Physician, heal thyself!”

## **Carl Jung**

- Shadow
- Synchronicity
- Dream work
- Body as Shadow (J. Conger)

## **Carl Rogers**

- Unconditional positive regard
- Healing power of therapeutic relationship
- Client empowerment

## **Men’s Work/Yalom**

- Experiential/healing power of groups
- Psychodrama
- Creating a safe “container”

## **van der Kolk/P Levine**

- Trauma and the body/mind

## **Schore/Siegel**

- Neurobiology and the unconscious

## **Erik Erikson**

- Lifecycle/developmental focus

**Systems theory/person in environment**



# Key concepts, principles and healing dynamics of ISP

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- Grounding
- Centering
- Breathing
- Armoring
- De-armoring
- Awareness
- Choice
- Process oriented
- Client-centered
- Therapeutic relationship
- Safety (physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual)
- Spontaneity (client *and* therapist)
- Pragmatic (is it working?!)
- Therapist *must* do own bodywork

# Use of ISP in treating substance abuse

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- ❑ Individuals recovering from substance abuse often lack body-mind awareness—they lack a connection to *themselves*.
- ❑ When they have achieved basic, long-term mastery over their addiction (i.e., they are sober), they are faced with this disconnection.
- ❑ This can be daunting and can lead to despair
  - ❑ “What now?”
  - ❑ “Is this all there is?”
  - ❑ “How can I live a meaningful life?”
- ❑ ISP helps individuals connect with themselves and their experience to find meaning rather than looking for their happiness from external sources.

# Experiential learning – some basic ISP exercises

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- Confidentiality
- Everything is optional (including sharing your experience with the group)
- Be gentle with yourself
  - Be aware of your limits
  - Lean into your limits

# Applications

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- ❑ Using ISP in talk therapy sessions
  - ❑ For yourself
  - ❑ For your client
- ❑ A typical ISP session
  - ❑ 70-75 minutes
  - ❑ Postures you just experienced are often the starting point
  - ❑ Client responses guide the therapist

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# Q & A