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DEALING WITH TRAUMA IN KINESIOLOGY CONSULTATIONS

In kinesiology consultations dealing with emotional issues, we are balancing two tasks -

1. **Rapport** - creating a safe and supportive environment where our clients trust us, feel comfortable to express themselves and have their thoughts and feelings validated.
2. **Confrontation** – to reach the painful and potentially confronting things that enable the session to be therapeutically useful.

A big part of the confrontation can be doing time-tracking (age recession) or regression work, where painful memories and experiences can be accessed. This can result in abreactions, also known as catharsis.

Abreactions (the release of stored up mental tension through intense feelings, speech and / or actions) are very real. These reactions can vary widely in intensity. Abreactions can be a few tears that are typical of many kinesiology sessions, often with very intense underlying feelings.

On some occasions, abreactions can be extreme - uncontrollable shaking, screaming and full body re-experiencing of past unresolved traumas.

At other times, abreactions can be 'acting in' rather than 'acting out'. At the milder end, these abreactions can be spaciness, disconnection, and memory blanks. In their extremes, these can be shutting down, going ice cold, being unable to talk and feeling paralysed. Clients effectively leave their bodies and dissociate from the trauma that is too intense to cope with.

Abreactions may include hyperventilating with difficulty breathing, pressure on the chest and pins and needles or cramping in the arms. These abreactions can be very frightening for our clients and for practitioners too, so it is important to remember our first task of needing to provide safety, trust and rapport for our clients.

Severe abreactions are not that common in kinesiology sessions. However, when dealing with trauma they occur often enough that we need to know how to handle them. It is part of our Duty of Care.

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How can we minimise the triggering of abreactions while still going deep enough to reach the trauma and work with it effectively? What can we do with abreactions if they do arise?

In this talk I will be going through techniques to minimise the likelihood of severe abreactions, while still dealing with the underlying traumatic issues. I will also be demonstrating what to do with specific types of abreactions if they do occur. These techniques are based on my many years of experience in working with clients and their past traumas. Many of the techniques have come from psychotherapy approaches and research that I have adapted to the kinesiology context. We'll be able to do some of these techniques together to get a feel for how they work.

Overcoming trauma is typically an ongoing process and needs to be carried through to our clients' daily lives. Empowering our clients with effective self-help exercises enables them to better manage remaining symptoms, and to implement changes to help post-traumatic stress become post-traumatic growth.

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Trained as an engineer then classical musician, Gordon found himself struggling with the stress of high-level performance as an orchestral clarinet player. Desiring to understand and work with the gamut of emotional issues, Gordon changed career to become a Naturopath, combining this with counselling.

Introduced to the fledgling field of kinesiology in the mid 1980's, he found a powerful biofeedback tool to add to psychotherapy techniques for working with emotional issues. Gordon developed Counselling Kinesiology™, blending mainstream counselling techniques with his own innovative approaches and practical exercises, within a kinesiology framework.

He introduced kinesiology and Counselling Kinesiology™ at leading complementary medicine colleges in Melbourne and Brisbane, then taught Counselling Kinesiology™ throughout Australia with his wife Debra.

Initially working with individuals, Gordon extended his approach to working with couples and then to the symptoms of mental health issues and personality disorders. A wonderful 18-month collaboration with Charles Krebs in his Applied Physiology clinic, helped identify neurological contributions.

Using the power of kinesiology to help individuals and couples work through their emotional issues and past traumas, remains Gordon's great passion.