

Glossary Of Hakomi Therapy Terms

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Introductory Note: The main teaching manual of the Hakomi Institute which explains the structure and process of the work is Hakomi Therapy by Ron Kurtz available through the institute in Boulder. The following glossary is provided as a convenience to the Forum reader who might not be familiar with all the terms used in the articles.

ACCESSING: The process of turning a person's awareness inward toward present experience in a mindful or witnessing state of consciousness.

BARRIERS. Beliefs which block the normal organic process of attaining sensitivity and satisfaction. *Insight* barriers block *clarity* about what is needed. *Response* barriers block *effective* action to attain what is needed. *Nourishment* barriers block the experience of *satisfaction* when something is attained. *Completion* barriers block the *relaxation* which functions to savor the need attained, release tensions, and to give further clarity about what other need the organism is now ready to reorient around.

CHARACTER. A chronic disposition in people, influenced by metabolic, psycho-social, and structural factors, to both experience and express themselves in a rigid way unaware of or unable to make use of a wider range of choices.

CHARACTER STRATEGY. The patterns, habits, approaches to the world a person has developed to achieve pleasure and satisfaction, given the nature of their particular core organizing beliefs about the world.

CHARACTER PROCESS. Any one of a number of characterological ways of being in the world that have been delineated in Hakomi and general psychological literature as having identifiable, predictable components. (See 'character' above). Referred to in Hakomi literature by both descriptive and classic terms: Sensitive/Analytic — Schizoid, Dependent/Endearing — Oral, Self-reliant — Compensated Oral, Tough/Generous=Psychopath I, Charming/ Seductive=Psychopath II, Burdened/Enduring — Masochist, Industrious/Overfocused = Phallic, Expressive/Clinging — Hysteric.'

THE CHILD. A state of consciousness in which a person is aware of their current adult status and at the same time is experiencing the memories, feelings, thought modes, and speech patterns of childhood.

CONTACT. The first stage of the general therapeutic process in which the therapist is in touch with the immediate experience of the client and able to communicate it to the client in a way they affirm. T: "A little sad, huh?" C: "Yah."

CORE BELIEFS. The level of consciousness, normally influenced by early childhood beliefs and decisions, that organizes and mobilizes experience and response *before* experience and response happen; the program that is running the computer: the level of creative imagination or filtering that makes reality available to consciousness.

DEEPENING. The process of helping a person stay with present experience in a mindful or witnessing state of consciousness long enough for it to lead to information about core organizing beliefs; how reality is being structured or limited.

HIERARCHY OF EXPERIENCE. A common shift in the course of the deepening process is from thoughts and ideas, to sensations and tensions, to feelings and emotions, to memories and images, to meanings and beliefs.

JUMPING OUT OF THE SYSTEM (JOOTS). Going from being in some automatic form of habitual behavior, to noticing the pattern, to the freedom to step outside the normal reactions.

MAGICAL STRANGER. The therapist as a compassionate adult who appears as if by magic when the client is experiencing a traumatic childhood memory, to support the child through the painful and confusing event.

THE METHOD. Refers to Hakomi Therapy as a specific form of psychotherapy with accompanying notions about character, therapeutic approaches, techniques, etc.

MIND-BODY HOLISM. One of the Principles which maintains that mind and body interact and influence each other. Beliefs originating in the cortex influence posture, body structure, gesture, facial expression, emotions, etc. through the voluntary musculature, hormone system, etc. Feedback from chronic bodily mobilizations confirm and reinforce belief systems. HT constantly explores the mind-body interface.

MINDFULNESS. A witnessing state of consciousness characterized by awareness turned inward toward live present experience with an exploratory, open focus that allows one to observe the reality of inner processes without being automatically mobilized by them. Also, a principle of the work that maintains the value of being able to step out of the habits and routines that normally control consciousness and observe the reality and organization of experience without being caught up in it, so that choices and change become possibilities.

NON-VIOLENCE. One of the principles of the work that respects the wisdom of living organic systems to know what is needful for themselves. A way of working that favors going with the flow, accepting what is, paying attention to the way things “want” to go, supporting rather than confronting defenses, and providing a safe setting in which clients will feel free to explore what is most urgent from their own perspective.

ORDINARY CONSCIOUSNESS. Normal, everyday, outwardly oriented, goal directed, narrowly focused awareness ruled by habits and routines in space and time.

ORGANICITY. One of the principles: the perception that organic systems have a “mind” of their own and have the capacity to be self-directing and self-correcting when all the parts are communicating within the whole. Hakomi Therapy assumes and nurtures these capacities as central to the healing process.

ORGANIZATION OF EXPERIENCE. The creative way in which the mind or imagination filters, structures, or transforms the givens of reality to control conscious and unconscious experience and expression in the individual.

THE PRINCIPLES. The basic, foundational assumptions of Hakomi Therapy concerning living systems in general and therapy in particular, taken from contemporary philosophy of science and ancient religious traditions. They are mindfulness, non-violence, organicity, mind-body holism, and unity.

PROBE. A Hakomi technique in which a verbal and/or non-verbal experiment is undertaken with the client invited to witness in mindfulness whatever spontaneous responses they become aware of. The usual form for a probe is, “What do you experience when I say... or “What do you become aware of when I do...”

THE PROCESS. Refers to the general stages Hakomi Therapy sessions normally progress through - making contact, accessing, processing, transforming around new beliefs, integrating and completing.

RIDING THE RAPIDS. A state of consciousness characterized by the loss of mindfulness, uncontrollable emotional release, spontaneous movements and tensions, waves of memory and feeling, and the use of tension and posture to control the flow of feeling.

SENSITIVITY CYCLE. Stages in the continuing flow of increasingly efficient functioning. Clarity leads to the possibility of effective action which sets up the possibility of organismic satisfaction which may lead to relaxation of tensions mobilized around the original need and the chance for greater clarity about what the next need may be that the system is ready to orient around.

TAKING OVER. A Hakomi technique in which the therapist takes over or does something as precisely as possible (that the client is already doing for themselves). Taking over can be physical (taking over the holding in of shoulders), verbal (taking over a voice a client hears inside themselves, “Don’t let others get close”), active (taking over the holding back of an angry punch), or passive (taking over a reaching movement with the arms). The technique is normally an experiment done while inviting mindfulness in the client except during riding the rapids when it is simply used to support spontaneous behavior.

TRACKING. The therapist paying close attention to spontaneous or habitual physical signs and changes that may reflect present feeling or meaning in the client at each stage of the process.

UNITY. The most inclusive of all the principles that maintains everything exists within a complex web of interdependent relationships with everything else and that there is a force in life often called “negentropy” which strives to bring about greater wholeness and harmony from component parts and disorganization.

THE WITNESS. That part of mindful consciousness that can simply stand back and observe inner experience without being caught up in it.