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Theme: «The integration of traumatic memories»

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Title: Integrating traumatic memories through an embodied experience of time with Lifespan Integration

Lifespan Integration therapy (2002, Peggy Pace) treats simple and complex trauma as well as attachment and dissociative disorders. Traumatic memories stay trapped in the subcortical regions, as they are too stressful and fragmented to be dated by the hippocampus/thalamus system (Lanius 2014).

Lifespan Integration allows integration of past traumatic memories through an embodied experience of time, using a chronological autobiographic “TimeLine” built by the client from trauma time up to present reality. Traumatized clients “*know*” the traumatic event is over, but do not *feel* so: *The body keeps the score* (van der Kolk, 2014); going through the timeline gradually helps clients to integrate past experience with present identity and knowledge.

The neural networks are activated through repetitions of the TimeLine and these data are processed through the cortical and subcortical brain regions, linking cognitive, emotional and visceral aspects. We observe a gradual release of the inherent somatic and emotional charge, progressing from shut down or distress to subcortical calming (Perry&Dobson).

We will present the theoretical model supporting Lifespan Integration as well as a clinical case illustrating the shift from the traumatic PTSD arousal state to the restoration of a feeling of coherence in time and space.