

My On Ramp to Sound Therapy

Almost two decades ago, I heard a psychologist talk about using bio-lateral sound via headphones with his teenage clients with great results. He would conduct the session with the volume low and playing in the background. The result was a more relaxed, less resistant and engaged teenager.

This led me on a journey of using bio-lateral and binaural beat (brainwave entrainment) music with my clients. My results were very similar. Couples were less reactive and more open hearted. Individual clients reported feeling more focused, relaxed and open.

This led to a more intentional use of brainwave music for my self-care with equally outstanding results (a decade long premature ventricular contraction went away). This sound work was also effective for emotional regulation and increased feelings of centeredness. I could see in my clients and myself an expansion in the Window of Tolerance.

Exploring sound therapy through workshops by Dr. Mitch Nur of 9-Ways Academy and other resources only increased my exploration. I began to explore using Himalayan Singing Bowls and Gongs with clients, which achieved even better results. This led to experimenting with other harmonic resonances such as drums, rattles, didgeridoos and Native American flutes.

Benefits of Sound

Sound therapy is an important addition to energy psychology because of its power to increase energy flow, balance the brain, create calmer emotional states and enrich the therapy hour. The harmonic resonance creates a wave of sound that is very relaxing. This state activates the parasympathetic nervous system (rest and digest) which counters the revved up sympathetic nervous system (fight or flight). The sonic stimulation helps to cut through the mental chatter and facilitates a meditative state of deep relaxation. Physical, mental, emotional and spiritual layers of the mind/body systems are impacted in a centering manner by sound therapy.

Clients often have no idea what deeper levels of relaxation can be experienced until they have received a 15-minute immersion in the harmonics of Himalayan Singing Bowls (or other instruments). This deeper experience of centeredness and reduced physical restlessness and monkey mind often leads clients to an increased motivation to intervene more quickly to mitigate the physiological reactions to stress. Over time, this increases their Window of Tolerance and makes changes in the way the mind/body responds to stress. One pastor/psychologist stated after his sound experience, **"...often you go through Spirit/Psyche to get release in the body – but the singing bowls relaxes the body and permits the deeper spiritual experience and enlightenment."**

Sound Therapy can also help clients to get out of their head or conscious thought to do deeper state of consciousness work. Using sound work in therapy can relax the nervous system which helps in opening the doors to the unconscious. It also helps shift and move energy through the biofield, chakras and meridians. This deeper place of centeredness helps clients to address and process core negative beliefs, blocked emotions, experiences and feeling. “Going Deeper” refers to a process of Sound Therapy that moves beyond emotional regulation and creating experiences of relaxation. By combining intention with therapeutic sounds, we can shift trauma, negative beliefs and get forward movement on personal transformation goals.

Books and Articles

- Anderson, Thomas Orr (2018) Essay: A Holistic and Scientifically Valid Approach to Sound Healing <https://www.phisonics.com/podcast-blog-research/>
- Drake, Michael (2009) *The Shamanic Drum: A Guide to Sacred Drumming*. Talking Drum Publications
- Gaynor, M. (2002). *The healing power of Sound: Recovery from life-threatening illness using sound, voice, and music*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Goldman, E. L. (2004). Neuroacoustics: The healing power of sound. *Holistic Primary Care Magazine*, 5(3).
- Goldsby, T. L., Goldsby, M. E., McWalters, M., & Mills, P. J. (2017). Effects of singing bowl sound meditation on mood, tension, and well-being: An observational study. *Journal of Evidence-Based Complementary & Alternative Medicine*, 22(3), 401-406.
- Landry, J. M. (2015). *Healing emotional trauma: Practical pathways to decrease anxiety, anger & lower blood pressure*. Balboa Press.
- Landry, J. M. (2013). Physiological and psychological effects of a Himalayan singing bowl in medication practice: A quantitative analysis. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 28(5), 306-309.
- Livnay, J. Shaul *The Issues Involved in Using a Gong in Psychotherapy and Hypnotherapy* <http://www.livnay.ws/en/Publications>
- Nur, Mitch *Considerations in Presenting 'Ambient Mode' Sound Therapy, part one*.rtf and part wo.rtf www.academia.edu
- Perry, F. (2014). *Himalayan Sound Revelation*. London: Polair Publishing.
- Punkanen, M., & Ala-Ruona, E. (2012). Contemporary vibroacoustic therapy: Perspectives on clinical practice, research, and training. *Music & Medicine* 4(3), 128-35.

Educational Resources

Facebook: The Art & Science of Sound Healing Public Group – Description: *“This group offers a forum in which to share and learn legitimate and reliable information about sound and healing, while maintaining the honesty of Science and acknowledging those aspects of Sound Healing that are better construed as Art.”*

9 Ways Academia <https://www.9ways.org/> Description: *“We are a private learning academy offering classes, workshops, and retreats on over 100 indigenous sound instruments, including Master Classes with Himalayan Singing Bowls, Gongs, and the Bonpo Shang. We are the foremost learning facility in North America when it comes to educating and elevating students in the areas of Sound Therapy. Dr. Mitch Nur has spent nearly 5 decades as a Achaeomusicologist, Sacred Sound Researcher, Practitioner and Teacher. Many refer to him as the “Indiana Jones of Sound Healing.”*

Sound Energy Healing Instructor Instructor: Diane Mandle - She has a nice workbook, **“Ancient Sounds for a New Age”** that I found helpful in my early years studying sound, as an introduction to Singing Bowls. Since then she has published a book entitled by the same name. Many instructional videos. <https://soundenergyhealing.com>

Meditative Sound Recording Resources by Greg Carpenter

- **Sound and Guided Meditation resources are available at no charge at** www.youtube.com/c/gregcarpenter
- **Native Flute album and Native Flute/Crystal Singing Bowl Sound Meditations are available for purchase (you can stream for up to 3 times at no charge) at** www.gregcarpenter.bandcamp.com