

## Therapy Chat Episode 295



Disclaimer: This is a verbatim transcript which may contain spelling errors.

[00:00:00] **Laura Reagan:** Therapy Chat Podcast Episode 295.

[00:00:04] **Announcer:** This is the Therapy Chat podcast with Laura Reagan, LCSW-C. The information shared in this podcast is not a substitute for seeking help from a licensed mental health professional. And now here's your host, Laura Reagan, LCSW-C.

[00:00:34] **Laura Reagan:** Thank you to Sunset Lake CBD for sponsoring this week's episode. Use promo code: "CHAT," for 20% off your entire order at [sunsetlakecbd.com](https://sunsetlakecbd.com). Sunset Lake CBD is a farmer owned, small business that shifts craft CBD products directly from their farm outside of Burlington, Vermont to your door. Sunset Lake CBD has something for everyone.

[00:00:54] They offer tinctures, edibles, salves, and coffee, designed to help with sleep, [00:01:00] stress, and sore muscles. Sunset Lake CBD customers support regenerative agriculture that preserves the health of the land and creates meaningful employment in the community. Farm workers are paid a living wage and employees own the majority of the company.

[00:01:13] Remember use promo code: "CHAT," to get 20% off your entire order at [sunsetlakecbd.com](https://sunsetlakecbd.com).

[00:01:23] Hey everyone. It's me, Laura Reagan. Just wanted to make sure that you know about what I've got going on this summer. I don't think I've really talked about it much here, which is silly, but in case you didn't hear, I did start a second podcast called Trauma Chat, which is really for anyone who wants to understand what trauma is and how it shows up in our lives.

[00:01:49] As you've heard me say, if you've listened to this show, I've mentioned a million times that people tend to think that trauma is something that happens [00:02:00] to someone else, something horrific, and unthinkable, unspeakable. And that is true, trauma is that, but it's also experiences that are very commonly shared among many of us. Most of us.

[00:02:14] On Trauma Chat I break down what trauma is in hopefully understandable language that's not stigmatizing. I know I couldn't have possibly captured every thought there is about trauma and every aspect of trauma and how it shows up, but I hope that

Trauma Chat will be helpful to people who really don't understand what trauma is, and maybe wondering, do I have trauma? You know, or wanting to better understand what someone they care about is going through. And most importantly, how to get help if you have experienced trauma, what to look for, how to describe your experiences, or how to find the words that name what you've been through so that you can then connect with [00:03:00] whatever type of resource support, whether it's therapy or a podcast that you'd like to listen to, to learn more about it, or an article, another website. This is my hope in creating Trauma Chat.

[00:03:13] And the second part of that is the new Trauma Therapist Network community that I'm creating. It's unbelievable to say this because I've been laboring behind the scenes to bring this to you for a long time starting in around 2018 is when I first had the idea.

[00:03:32] And then the process of getting from there to here has been slow and with many twists and turns, but I'm creating a community for people who have experienced trauma to find help. For trauma therapists, to find other trauma therapists to network with and refer to, and gather, and collaborate, and share ideas, and hopefully come together in person in, [00:04:00] in gatherings that I don't know if there'll be able to happen in 2021, but maybe by 2022, we can have in-person gatherings of trauma therapists to provide support to one another and combat the isolation of trauma work.

[00:04:15] Even if you work in a large agency or group practice, trauma work is so isolating. It's just part of the nature of it. And connecting with other people who get it is so valuable. The participants in my trauma therapists consult groups share how useful they find them to be because we're in our offices doing our work and then we go home, and it can be really hard to receive the same kind of support that you give to your clients.

[00:04:43] So I hope that Trauma Therapist Network will be a useful resource for you, whether you are someone who's trying to find more information about trauma, or if you are a trauma therapist yourself. To learn more, please go to [www.traumatherapistnetwork.com](http://www.traumatherapistnetwork.com). The [00:05:00] website is not live yet as of June 28th when I'm recording this, but it will be live by August 1st, if all goes well.

[00:05:09] And hopefully there may be even a soft launch before that, a beta version. So please go to [www.traumatherapistnetwork.com](http://www.traumatherapistnetwork.com) where you can find a free download and sign up to be notified as soon as it officially goes live, whether you are a therapist or just someone who wants to learn more about trauma, there's a download there for you, different ones for each group.

[00:05:33] And I hope that this resource that I've really created from the heart will bring healing to more people. I really want people who have experienced trauma to be able to find the right kind of support. And that's why I created the Trauma Therapist Network. I hope you will join me there. Like I said, you can get more information by going to [www.traumatherapistnetwork.com](http://www.traumatherapistnetwork.com) where you [00:06:00] can sign up to be notified as soon as the official website goes live, which will be in August of 2021. If you're hearing this after August 2021, go there and hopefully you will find the site and you'll see everything that it

has to offer. I cannot wait. This is such a labor of love, something that I've really poured my heart into. And I'm just so excited for you to see it.

[00:06:23] Thank you so much for your support.

[00:06:29] Hi, welcome back to Therapy Chat. I'm your host, Laura Reagan. Welcome back. It's good to be with you again. Today, I am very happy to be bringing you my interview with Dr. Pat Ogden. Pat Ogden PhD, who uses the pronouns she, her, is a pioneer in Somatic Psychology, the creator of the Sensorimotor Psychotherapy method, and founder of the Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Institute.

[00:06:55] Dr. Ogden is a clinician, consultant, international lecturer, and the [00:07:00] first author of two groundbreaking books in somatic psychology: Trauma and the Body: A Sensorimotor Approach to Psychotherapy and Sensorimotor Psychotherapy: Interventions for Trauma and Attachment. Her third book, The Pocket Guide to Sensorimotor Psychotherapy in Context advocates for an anti-racist perspective in psychotherapy practice.

[00:07:20] Her current interests include couples therapy, child and family therapy, social justice, diversity, inclusion, consciousness, and the philosophical and spiritual principles that underlie her work. I was very grateful that Dr. Ogden agreed to come back on Therapy Chat for this interview. And we had a very interesting conversation about her new book and the need for an anti-racist and anti-oppression update to psychology in general, which I think we, most of us are aware of, but in addition how it relates to Sensorimotor [00:08:00] Psychotherapy. So you're going to hear us talk about what her book is about and some of the ways that well-meaning therapists can do harm, and how we can all pay attention to what's happening inside of ourselves as therapists to guide us in anti racist, anti-oppressive, work.

[00:08:20] So let's go ahead and dive right into my conversation with Dr. Pat Ogden.

[00:08:29] Hi Welcome back to Therapy Chat. I'm your host, Laura Reagan. And today I am so thrilled to be speaking with Dr. Pat Ogden, who is a psychotherapist, author, and the founder of the Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Institute. Pat, thank you so much for being my guest on Therapy Chat today.

[00:08:47] **Pat Odgen:** Its a pleasure, thank you.

[00:08:49] **Laura Reagan:** I'm so glad to have you back. You were my guests back in 2018. And so today we're getting together to talk about your latest book, which is called The Pocket [00:09:00] Guide to Sensorimotor Psychotherapy in Context. So before we start talking about the book, can you just give our audience a little more info about who you are and what you do?

[00:09:10] **Pat Odgen:** Sure. Where to start? You know, I got interested in the body really in the seventies, I was teaching yoga and dance in a psychiatric hospital. And I, I noticed that

the patients who did this class seemed to get better faster. And it really peaked my interest in how the body could be a viable target of intervention for therapeutic change.

[00:09:34] So I started studying all kinds of body therapy approaches and began to kind of weave it together into this method that we now call Sensorimotor Psychotherapy. So I I've, I've written three books. I teach internationally and we have an Institute that teaches this work with I don't know, maybe 30, some trainers, you know, all over [00:10:00] the world to kind of spread the idea of the wisdom of the body and how it can be helpful in psychotherapy practice. That's kind of our mission.

[00:10:11] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah, and it's so beautiful, the method and the work and what can happen in accessing emotion in the body and healing through the body is so powerful. So, thank you so much for what you've created and how you've shared it around the world.

[00:10:30] **Pat Odgen:** It's been kind of a mission, you know, for me, like a calling, rather than just a job. So it's been an honor to be able to share it.

[00:10:39] **Laura Reagan:** In this book you're, you're talking about some different aspects of the work that are more relevant to a lot of what we've all been beginning to reflect on more deeply, I think in both, you know, the United States, throughout North America, but all over the world, the, the movement [00:11:00] to really end racism and oppression.

[00:11:03] And I think it's wonderful. I love the perspective that you bring. So, can you start off by telling us why you wrote this book and who it's really intended for?

[00:11:15] **Pat Odgen:** Sure. Well, I think it really has to do with my own naivety with, with these topics. I, I, um, you know, in the sixties I participated in civil rights, and I taught in an all black school. I was a teacher, and half my family's black and I naively thought I had a handle on racial issues and oppression. And then I think it was in 2015. I was instrumental in the UCLA Lifespan Learning Institute Interpersonal Neurobiology Conference. I've been teaching there for over a decade and I was on the board, and I suggested we do something on diversity and not realizing that [00:12:00] this was a group of white people and not realizing how little we really know knew about what it meant to be white or about the nuances of oppression and racism in the United States and throughout the world. And so, through that conference, I realized my own ignorance and really wanted to, to remedy it.

[00:12:21] So I started working with, uh, a think tank at the Institute, all people of color, except for me, uh, to, to, to really work with power, privilege, oppression dynamics, both in our group and with the Institute. Uh, and we were trying to really change our policies and our curriculum at the Institute. And, the book came out of this think tank, the, the people, I think that co-wrote the first chapter and then acted as consultants for the rest of the book. Cause I just realized that the implicit [00:13:00] bias in our profession has kind of filtered through really all methods of therapy in the Western world, including Sensorimotor Psychotherapy. And I wanted to bring that to attention and be able to take steps to remedy it. And I realize that it's not an end point.

[00:13:19] I see this as a lifelong process. I'm still learning. I think I'll always be learning.

[00:13:26] **Laura Reagan:** The, um, lifelong process prior to beginning to do that work that we've all experienced of, you know, the way that we've been in cultured to have these biases. You know, it's not, obviously it's not something that we can just undo with, you know, a day's work or even reading a book, but a lifelong process, like you said.

[00:13:47] **Pat Odgen:** Yeah, exactly.

[00:13:49] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah.

[00:13:49] So is this book intended more for clinicians only, or is it for a general audience?

[00:13:57] **Pat Odgen:** Well, it's intended for anybody [00:14:00] interested in psychology and kind of the imprint of eurocentric values, Western values, but it is geared towards therapists. It is geared towards clinicians. We had wanted to write it for all clinicians. And we realized at the end that we ended up writing it mostly for white clinicians. Although we hope that that people of color and other marginalized groups will find it valuable, but it's really white clinicians who need to address this because we don't have to, because we are not directly affected by racism and oppression.

[00:14:40] The only marginalized status I have is being a woman. Everything else I speak English is my first language, from the United States, I'm educated, I have enough money, um, and so forth. Well, now that I'm in my seventies, I'm elderly as well so that's a marginalized social location. [00:15:00] So I guess I have two now.

[00:15:02] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah but as you say, we, white people have been able to not reflect, and that's the privilege that we have by whiteness, even as we may be members of other marginalized identities, as you said.

[00:15:18] **Pat Odgen:** Yeah. That's right. That's right. And so I, I feel like we have to make that extra effort because we, we, we don't go out every day and walk the streets and get afraid that we're going to be stopped by the police or afraid we're in an elevator and everybody's going to clutch their purses, or we don't suffer these microaggressions and these constant stressors that other communities do. And so we have to take that extra step to, to care and to resonate with our fellow humans.

[00:15:55] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. So one of the points that you raised and you already touched on this a little bit is, [00:16:00] is that the Western view of attachment theory, um, is narrow and limited by the Eurocentric perspective of the field of psychology in general. Uh, can you talk about that problem and how clinicians can deal with that issue to avoid doing harm?

[00:16:17] **Pat Odgen:** Yeah, I'll try and address it a little bit. I think one of the things that I realized was that, you know, the practice of psychology, that whole field was started by

Europeans, and really designed for that society, White Europeans. And has been carried on in that way so that the ideas are really based in a Western Eurocentric, hetero- patriarchal perspective.

[00:16:45] And in that development, so many other voices and perspectives are silenced. And, there's the, the subtle kind of intention to apply these views universally to everybody, [00:17:00] no matter where they come from and that, that can do real harm. I mean, I love attachment theory. I've studied a bit about it. I think it's fabulous.

[00:17:09] And I think Bowlby and others with their emphasis on the relationship, it's just been a great gift and really revelation in the field. At the same time, it discounts other ways of parenting. For example, in some societies where infants are cared for by multiple caregivers, they don't have separation anxiety.

[00:17:33] They're not raised in a nuclear family. So the theory can't be really applied to them. They don't have stranger anxiety. They're not afraid of strangers because they deal with a lot of different people. So without that awareness, we can start to universally apply those concepts and theories to everybody, you know, in some cultures, for example, that are more collectivist- based, [00:18:00] it's the, the, the goals and the wellbeing of the whole of everybody in the culture is really paramount. Uh, for example, one of my colleagues, Raymond Rodriguez, who's on the think tank. He's a trainer for the Institute. I remember when he said we were talking about how we were raised, and I think that's what we were talking about.

[00:18:21] He said, I don't think in terms of, I said, I think in terms of we, and I thought that is so foreign to me, I was raised in this Western culture. I was supposed to be the best in my class, you know, and spelling bees. I was out to win. Cause that's what I was conditioned for. I wasn't thinking about the whole and how maybe everybody should learn to spell these words and I shouldn't try to take the limelight. I wasn't thinking about that, but Raymond does, uh, and attachment theory is really based on that perspective, you know.

[00:18:53] So we don't, we don't, we don't give enough attention or value [00:19:00] to cultures with other perspectives so that, you know, and, and this could come out with, for example, if you're working with a client who's from a collectivist culture, and they're not trying to achieve a really high status that could be seen as a lack of self-esteem or, oh, maybe they don't think they're worthy or this or that, rather than as a reflection of the person who's committed to everyone elevating, you know?

[00:19:27] So we, we have to examine what you said earlier, which was great about how we're inculturated to these kinds of biases and we are, and if we don't examine them, we won't recognize that. If we don't educate ourselves and really look at ourselves, we won't recognize it. So we could be misinterpreting our clients.

[00:19:49] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah, one of the things you were saying in that chapter was about how we can pathologize people's relational styles. Like for example, if that [00:20:00] collective group, you know, has a, if that collective culture has a way of raising children

where the community is, all caregivers for this child that could be seen in a Western view as this child has no safe attachments and, you know, no one safe attachment, right? So they don't have secure attachment, but really that child is like getting all the love and all of the, you know, the feeling of there's so many good people who love me and they're looking out for me and I can trust and I can see how that could be a much better way than nuclear family idea.

[00:20:38] **Pat Odgen:** Yeah, you really nailed it I think that's a good example of how we could impose attachment theory in a way that could pathologize someone like, yeah, well, they're not securely attached because they didn't ever develop that secured bond with one person.

[00:20:55] **Laura Reagan:** So, what are some of the ways that well-meaning [00:21:00] therapists, I know we all want to be helpful and good therapists, but what are some of the ways that we can do harm when we're working with clients who are members of marginalized groups, despite our positive intentions?

[00:21:13] **Pat Odgen:** Oh, I think there's so many ways. I think about in the sixties when I was working with marginalized groups and, and how we, we were actually taught at that time not to see color, we didn't call it color blind, but they were like, see everybody the same, don't see black and white, but really, they were teaching us to be color blind, which now we of course realized how damaging that can be.

[00:21:38] Because if you don't see differences, if you try to only see sameness, that can lead a therapist to not be able to acknowledge the trauma or the, the stress in the life of a marginalized person. For example, an example would be, I think we wrote about this in the book of, [00:22:00] of marginalized say a black client or Native American client worried about going to university and really afraid that they're not going to make it. And the therapist says something like, oh, you are so smart. You're fine. You're just brilliant. But that, that might be true, but you might be missing the point that black and brown people have to work twice as hard for the same achievement as white people. And if you don't know that that can be experienced as just not being seen you don't, you don't, you don't see me, you don't see the impact of being a, a black or brown person. So, I mean, we're always learning. I think we really have to educate ourselves, you know, and, and contextualize, being able to see the bigger picture. For example, with one client a black, young woman who was, she'd moved out of state, away from her mom to go to school [00:23:00] and she wanted to stay out of state and her mom was just freaking out. Like beyond what you would expect. And if, if you look at it through, uh, Western perspectives, you'd be going here's a mother who's clinging to her child, can't let her child go, won't let her child differentiate. And that's the problem. But if you look through the history of slavery and transgenerational trauma, separating children from their parents was the primary way that institution of slavery was kept going. And if we can't contextualize it in that way, we could end up again doing harm.

[00:23:40] So being able to contextualize and say, and I wonder, you know, if this could be a factor for your mom and exploring it more from that bigger picture perspective. One of the examples we give in the book, which was a composite case, and it's of a, a young African

American woman who didn't [00:24:00] get much sympathy at all, when she was raped as a teenager, by a white man. The mom said, just keep it to yourself.

[00:24:07] You know, don't tell anybody, you know, And, and again, if we look at that from a, uh, a Western White, eurocentric perspective, we're saying, well, this mother was not caring in the right way for her child, but if we look at it from a different perspective, we could say this mother's really protecting her child. Uh, think what would happen?

[00:24:28] What could happen, what has happened historically, if a black girl, a woman complained about being raped by a white man, you know, Uh, and so she's teaching her child how to adapt to this racist culture. So the lenses that we look through, I think it's just critical, not that any one lense is right or wrong, but if we only have the option of a Western Eurocentric lens, we can really end up doing damage.

[00:24:55] And I like what you say about therapists really want to help and we all want to do our best [00:25:00] and we're so well-meaning, and many of the things we say are, uh, uh, although well-meaning from us can be experienced as microaggressions by the client, simple things, you know?

[00:25:12] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. I was going to ask you about microaggressions. Um, can you talk about how microaggressions can show up in therapy sessions? I mean, I think you touched on it a little bit already but

[00:25:25] **Pat Odgen:** Yeah, there's so many ways. Um, I think of them in general as coming from therapists who are well-meaning, but do not, haven't delved into, um, uh, privilege, oppression, dynamics, racialized trauma, and so forth.

[00:25:45] So they usually emerge in ways where the therapist is trying to be kind and compassionate and kind even complimentary or, or to help a client understand like, like one example is, um, with a Native American [00:26:00] who was struggling with alcohol. And the therapist said, you know, I can understand that because that's a real problem with your people.

[00:26:08] Um, and, and that was experienced by the client as really offensive because it's just, it's, it's like saying, you know, all your people are like this, and so yeah, you fit in to that whole stereotype. Exactly. Exactly. Yeah. Um, and, and these stereotypes is so ingrained in us. You know, like, I think one thing we have to realize is that we recieved a Western Eurocentric education, so therefore we do embody those biases. So when we go to diagnose people, ect., we are responding not only from our training, but also from the bias in our culture. So we are more likely to embody those stereotypes in diagnosis. I mean, I often, when I'm talking [00:27:00] with my friends and colleagues, when we're explaining this, we talk a lot about how it learned racist, um, uh, stereotypes, um, from the media, alot from the media. And, uh, for example, one is black men are portrayed as violent and aggressive. So we from that bias will be more likely to interpret black male clients as aggressive or capable of violence. It's there's research that shows that, uh, uh, African American people are diagnosed much more with borderline personality disorder because their, their, their

culture might be more expressive, might have more freedom of expression then, then we have grown up with white culture. So these biases, they run really deep. And I think we have to accept number one, that we have them, that we can't avoid them, that they're inherent in our culture. Therefore we have embodied them [00:28:00] period, and it's not just black and white.

[00:28:02] I mean, women and men, who've also embodied bias about themselves and the opposite sex, you know, we're all socialized according to gender and race and so forth. So these, these biases are very much alive in all of us, I think one of the first steps is to accept that we have them because I think therapists and I know me too, I'm so, I don't want to make a mistake. I don't want to hurt anybody. I want to really resonate. I don't want to say things that might be offensive, so, but we're going to, we can't help it. And I think our biggest allies there are study and read and learn about microaggressions. I mean, there's so many just YouTube videos. So many books out about all this now, um, to work with other, to work with other white people and explore it. I've been exploring this in depth, in a study group that I've been [00:29:00] meeting with for decades. And that is really helpful because we're, we're calling each other as there's an article instead of calling each other out, we're calling each other in to, to examine these issues. Just in little ways.

[00:29:14] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah.

[00:29:18] Hey everybody. I wanted to take a quick minute to tell you about my experience with Sunset Lake CBD. I first tried CBD when my integrative doctor recommended it for chronic neck pain and tension that tends to wake me up at night. I really liked Sunset Lake CBD's products. The full spectrum CBD tincture is mild tasting compared to others I've tried and I find it works quickly. It doesn't feel sedating, but it does have a pleasant calming effect. And I also liked the CBD gummies. They taste good and they work well. So if you're looking for a craft CBD product that comes directly from a farm outside Burlington, Vermont, that's a producer for Ben and Jerry's ice cream, you're going to want to check out Sunset Lake CBD. And remember, Therapy Chat [00:30:00] listeners get 20% off using the promo code: "CHAT." So go to [tosunsetlakecbd.com](https://tosunsetlakecbd.com) and use the promo code: "CHAT."

[00:30:11] To that, I, you know, I was, I don't part of what I'm saying might not be from your book, but I was hearing someone recently it was Resmaa Menakem who you, I don't know if I pronounced his last name right but you quote him in your book too. But I was saw something he was talking about the other day where he was saying, you know, white people tend to read a book and then they get the knowledge and they're like, I got it.

[00:30:36] You know? And so what you were just talking about, about doing the work in a group, doing it collectively so that you can point out to each other, well, actually right then you just did XYZ.

[00:30:50] Yeah, exactly.

[00:30:52] **Pat Odgen:** And in the smallest ways. Like one of my group members was having a problem with his teenage son- well, he's, he's [00:31:00] 20 now actually. And the son is

wanting to do all these kinds of reckless things. And he said, I just hope you'd meet a nice girl and just quit all this, wanting to do all these things. And we all stopped and we go, well, that is putting a lot of responsibility on, on the girl, you know, and that is how women are socialized. Like they can reform the guy, they can, they're responsible to make sure the guy's settled and doesn't go wild. What a gender socialization burden that is for women and men. So, and these things are just so much a part of us

[00:31:37] **Laura Reagan:** Even that expectation that the, that the son wants to find a girl who's to say what his sexual identity and gender identity are.

[00:31:48] **Pat Odgen:** Yeah, absolutely. That's another wonderful point. Like this is one of my recent learnings. I've been doing some consultation on it about cis sexism and [00:32:00] how I, I think in terms of gender binary, I think in terms of male, female, I think that way, and, and therefore I'm, I'm at risk of mis-gendering, you know, gender nonconforming people.

[00:32:16] And so I'm trying to really study and learn about that. I have got a great book by Alok called Beyond the Gender Binary, for example, which is it, it really is a wonderful, it's very small, easy to read book about their experience and it, it it's, but we have to go that extra mile because of our own bias. Uh, and, and, and, you know, I started to realize how phenomenally disrespectful mis-gendering somebody is, but if you think in gender binary and male and female, you're really prone to it then so that's one of my edges.

[00:32:53] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Yeah. And it's like, we, we inadvertently do violence and all of us humans [00:33:00] because of, and you explain this in the book, how we what's happening in our brain, that makes us want to have in-groups and out-groups and how that helps us feel safe. But we don't, we don't want to do violence. So if we're not examining it, that's what is going to happen.

[00:33:17] **Pat Odgen:** Right, yeah. And we have to be gentle with ourselves. Cause, cause like you're saying we, our brains are wired to make categories, both for, to streamline our thinking and our reactions and, and for our own safety. So we're wired that way, but we can examine it and, and shift those, those biases.

[00:33:39] But we have to be gentle in the process. I think. I think one of the biggest things I've noticed with therapists is how hard they are on themselves. And how we are prone to judging ourselves when we make those errors. And so we have to be gentle. Much better to take the risk and make the error and [00:34:00] recover than not.

[00:34:02] And also another thing I've learned, like when I am confronted by clients or colleagues or students, And my first impulse has been to go, oh, I didn't mean it that way. You know, I'm so sorry. And that is, I've learned that discounts their experience because it doesn't matter if you meant it or not. You know, you said it and you need to, I've learned to immediately go well, I need to look at that, you know, thank you for the feedback. And, um, you're right. Rather than go oh, I didn't mean it and, and the way that you interpreted it.

[00:34:39] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. And one of the things you talk about is how it's that unwanted identity of, oh, I don't want to see myself that way so quickly deflecting. Oh no, no, no. That's I didn't, that wasn't what it was. Like you said you're just completely invalidating the other person, how they feel.

[00:34:58] **Pat Odgen:** That's right.

[00:34:59] **Laura Reagan:** One [00:35:00] thing I found very interesting in that beginning part of the book, when you talked about how we, and of course this wouldn't be just for therapists but how we can become aware of our own somatic responses indicating to us that our unconscious bias has been activated. And that's something that seems really valuable to me as a learning in this book.

[00:35:23] **Pat Odgen:** Yeah, I think it is because our bodies, really I could say that they are really the manifestation of our unconscious. Our body will often tighten up and stop breathing or pull back or clench long before we have a thought like, oh, I'm afraid or I'm uncomfortable.

[00:35:42] So if we can start to notice our bodies reactions, when we're working with cross-cultural dyads in therapy, you know, uh, even when we think about being a therapist for a person who's not like us. Um, and, and start to [00:36:00] notice our reactions and explore them, like, what are they saying to us? You know, like, does your body tighten up a little bit, just a tiny bit, or do you pull back a little?

[00:36:11] Do you want to sit a little bit further away or a little bit closer? Are you leaning forward more in an effort to resonate or please, you know, all those things. And, and also something that I, even though I've been studying the body for years, I wasn't really aware of how body language can reflect and perpetuate privilege, oppression, dynamics and status.

[00:36:38] For example, I'm pretty comfortable with my body and I'm pretty comfortable with touch. I used to teach massage, I used to teach structural bodywork, and plus touch just comes naturally to me. And, and then I started looking into the implications of that and how people of more status kind of have permission [00:37:00] to touch more than people of, of marginalized status. And I thought how many times, if I touched a student or even reached out to shake a hand of a client, how many times have I initiated touch? Uh, and, and was that interpreted in terms of privilege oppression? And was it a reflection of my privilege?

[00:37:23] So now I'm really examining my impulse to touch and looking at the context of it.

[00:37:30] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. That's something you talked about in the book too, about how, you know, so much of, you know, who's allowed to touch who.

[00:37:39] **Pat Odgen:** Yes, exactly. And who's allowed to initiate a closer proximity to move closer and who's allowed to set those boundaries, and who isn't.

[00:37:49] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. And so the person who has more status may think that they're sort of, they may assume consent from the other person without reading or [00:38:00] realizing that the other person isn't comfortable with it or that they, you know, that they really weren't consenting or yeah. I mean that's.

[00:38:09] **Pat Odgen:** Yes, exactly. And then it can perpetuate the privilege, oppression, dynamic, you know. Like I always thought of it as a friendly, warm, gesture. Not as a gesture that could keep me in a one-up.

[00:38:24] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. And there's that inherent power dynamic in therapy already that the therapist is the quote expert that the person came to get help with the problem that they couldn't solve on their own. You know, so, you know, and there's the financial exchange and so all of it.

[00:38:43] **Pat Odgen:** And so that's why, I mean, even if you don't use touch in your therapy to look at is to look at the proximity, uh, and the newness of your body to their body. And to start to in Sensorimotor Psychotherapy, we do explore that. Like [00:39:00] what, uh, degree of distance is right for you. How far away should I sit?

[00:39:05] How close should I be? So we do explore that, in Sensorimotor Psychotherapy, but looking at it from a privilege oppression dynamic, just adds another nuance to it.

[00:39:17] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Yeah. So I know that there's this book, which is a very valuable resource. And you also have on your website, you mentioned to me before we started that one of your co-authors of that chapter did a webinar with you that's available on your website. Is that a good resource for people who want to learn a little more about this?

[00:39:40] **Pat Odgen:** I think so, actually all the co-authors, there are five of us, they are all people of color, and we had worked together for years and this think tank so we wrote that first chapter together and, and I think it's, it's a good, it's a good webinar.

[00:39:55] It's it really talks about the issues that we've been discussing here [00:40:00] today and how we can kind of go beyond that cultural competence, which I like a lot, Anton Hart, he was a psychoanalyst in New York. He talks about radical openness because he says we can't, how can we really become competent in another person's culture?

[00:40:18] And I, I agree. We really can't. So we explore that in the, in the webinar, along with pitfalls and you know, many other topics. So that could be valuable.

[00:40:30] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah, I'll definitely link to that in the show notes and then everything you're doing right now would be found on your website. Is that right?

[00:40:40] **Pat Odgen:** Yeah, [sensorimotor.org](http://sensorimotor.org), that's right, yeah.

[00:40:43] **Laura Reagan:** Okay of course there's, you know, registration for the trainings, which are so wonderful, but you, you all have done a lot of courses and short like webinars throughout the pandemic that have been, I thought very informative.

[00:40:57] **Pat Odgen:** Yeah, we have, we've done some [00:41:00] free webinars that don't cost anything. And then others that are on a sliding scale. And, you know, we're really working to, uh, advocate for an anti-racist anti-oppression lens at our school. And yeah, it's, it's a work in progress. Lifelong endeavor as we said in the beginning.

[00:41:21] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah, well, Pat, thank you so much for coming back to Therapy Chat today I love talking to you about this and I'm really grateful that you were here.

[00:41:30] **Pat Odgen:** Thanks Laura. I always enjoy talking with you. So it's my pleasure.

[00:41:38] **Laura Reagan:** Thank you to Sunset Lake CBD for sponsoring this week's episode, use promo code: "CHAT" for 20% off your entire order at [sunsetlakecbd.com](https://sunsetlakecbd.com). Sunset lake CBD is a farmer owned, small business that shifts craft CBD products directly from their farm outside of Burlington, Vermont to your door. Sunset lake CBD has something for everyone.

[00:41:58] They offer tinctures, [00:42:00] edibles, salves, and coffee, designed to help with sleep, stress, and sore muscles. Sunset Lake CBD customers support regenerative agriculture that preserves the health of the land and creates meaningful employment in the community. Farm workers are paid a living wage and employees own the majority of the company.

[00:42:17] Remember use promo code: "CHAT" to get 20% off your entire order at [sunsetlakecbd.com](https://sunsetlakecbd.com).

[00:42:28] And for more information and resources on trauma and healing from trauma, go to [www.traumatherapistnetwork.com](https://www.traumatherapistnetwork.com). Trauma Therapist Network is a community for therapists and a place for anyone to go to learn more about trauma and find resources and connect with help: [www.traumatherapistnetwork.com](https://www.traumatherapistnetwork.com)

[00:42:51] **Announcer:** Thank you for listening to Therapy Chat with your host, Laura Reagan LCSW-C. For more [00:43:00] information, please visit [therapychatpodcast.com](https://therapychatpodcast.com)