



Writing A Somatic Case Study

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Traditionally, somatic therapists have been reluctant to write case studies. As a result, **touch work remains largely invisible** to the broader fields of psychology and psychiatry because practitioners have not shared their transformative work. Case studies provide valuable examples that illustrate how somatic practices and the therapeutic use of touch **facilitate healing and growth**.

Current research methods are grounded in traditional talk therapy, which relies on explicit verbal communication and on data collection and analysis, such as interviews and measurements. **These approaches overlook the nonverbal, implicit, experiential information** that arises in somatic psychotherapy and, consequently, do not accommodate the subtleties of touch.

The body holds **an untapped wealth of knowledge**, and somatic psychotherapy remains a mystery to many practitioners who **do not grasp the somatic dimension of self**. Body-centered approaches and touch practices can inspire new research methods and potentially enrich traditional research models that **have overlooked the right-brain bodily experience** alongside the left-brain verbal narrative.



Case Study Outline

These guidelines outline a standardized format for presentation.

Case studies are valuable records of your clinical practice.

■ Preparation

- **Informed Consent:** First, if you are writing about specific case content, obtain your client's consent. A consent form is included at the end of these guidelines.
- **Length:** Your finished presentation should be 3,000-4,000 words, with a maximum of 5,000 words.

■ Case Outline

1. **Title Page**
2. **Abstract:** *A summary paragraph overview of your case.*
3. **Introduction:** *What is interesting about the case or topic you have chosen?*
 - Key points and initial challenges
4. **Case Presentation.** *The basic information about your client*
 - The issue(s) that brought your client to therapy
 - Your therapeutic context
 - Essential information regarding the client's family and cultural background
 - Your initial clinical impression
5. **Treatment and Outcome.** *This is the substantive section of your case study*
 - Your treatment plan
 - Your psychological and somatic interventions
 - The client's reports on improvements, changes, and symptoms
6. **Discussion.** *Your clinical reflections*
 - Summary of the lessons learned
 - Questions the case raises for you
7. **Acknowledgments**
8. **References**



General Guidelines

■ Getting Started

Whether you are an experienced psychotherapist, coach, trainee, or body-centered practitioner, these guidelines will help you prepare a case study that serves a dual purpose: meet the requirements for your NeuroAffective Touch® Practitioner Certification and produce a publication-ready case study.

Before you begin, gather all materials relevant to your case: session, consultation, and supervision notes, outcomes, and other relevant documents. These materials will help you craft the story you intend to share.

You may determine that your case warrants deviating from these recommendations. If you choose to diverge and later seek a publisher, an editor *may* ask you to explain your alternative choice.

■ Please Remember

An important rule for writing case studies is to *adhere to the facts*. A case study should outline what actually occurred and provide an accurate account of the clinical events. Avoid speculation and lengthy theoretical explanations.

A case study chronicles a patient's progress. It is not an account of your therapeutic success, though you were hopefully successful. Promotional remarks do not belong in a professional case study, no matter how great your success or insight.

Share your story clearly and simply, letting the outcome speak for itself. Use straightforward language and avoid pseudo-medical or technical jargon.

A single case study by itself is not intended to demonstrate the overall effectiveness of a method or intervention.

■ Informed Consent and Confidentiality

If you have taken notes, they can help you shape your case study. However, notes are confidential and should not play a major role in your write-up. You can use brief quotes from your notes to better convey your client's experience.

Ethical considerations require that significant personal details be altered to safeguard client anonymity and confidentiality. Clients must also provide their informed, written consent. Presenting or publishing a case study without the client's informed knowledge and written permission is unethical. Clients should review and approve the final draft of the study before it is shared with outside sources.

A **consent form** is attached to the end of these guidelines. Keep the signed consent in your client's confidential case file and provide the client with a copy. Your manuscript should state that the client has given written consent for publication. Your case study will be available to NATouch students and graduates in our case study library and on the Forum, which is accessible only to NATouch students and graduates. If you wish to publish your case study, it is standard procedure for editors to request a redacted copy of the Client Consent before considering publication.

■ Types of Case Studies

There are several approaches you can take to writing a case study.

- A completed case, from beginning to end. This includes the presenting issue, the stages of your work, critical shifts along the way, and your client's status at closure.
- A focus on key aspects of a client's or a couple's journey.
- A moment-by-moment single session. For an example of a single session, please refer to Mary Bayles' account in the Forum documents, which outlines an approach to a single online session using self-directed touch.
- How you integrate the therapeutic use of touch in your specialty. This may include a series of detailed vignettes rather than just one case study.
- A reflection on how touch has been a vital, transformative element of your personal journey.
- Collaborating through touch in a group setting.
- If you have a creative concept for your case study and are unsure about its appropriateness, please contact me at aline@neuroaffectivetouch, and we can discuss it together. I will likely share your enthusiasm!

■ Choosing a Case

What do you want to convey that is significant to the cause of therapeutic touch?

- Why select this client or topic? What makes this case interesting? Is this a client with a particular condition that is especially interesting to you, an outcome that was meaningful, or a journey that had a lifelong impact?
- Is there a specific aspect of the case or a particular phase of treatment you would like to explore? Or would you prefer to share the entire story of your journey with a client or your personal experience?

■ Looking Through a Somatic Lens

NATouch integrates talk and touch; therefore, your case study should integrate **the body's story** with **the brain's narrative**. The interventions you describe should encompass both the cognitive narratives and the somatic cues that constitute the body's communication.

Touch elicits interoceptive and neuroceptive experiences that reveal new information and often unmask adaptive developmental patterns. It is this felt experience, symbolic imagery, and felt sense that emerge from the body that make touch therapy unique. It should include indicators that are typically not reported in traditional talk therapy but are essential when viewed through a somatic lens:

- *What you sense and feel with your hands as you touch your client's body.*
- *Your inquiries into your client's gestures and movements that reveal the energetic component of their story.*
- *Meaningful pauses and changes in the prosody.*
- *When does the narrative originate from the body, and when does it arise from the mind?*
- *Changes in breath indicate the presence of emotions that words may overlook.*
- *Changes in eye gaze and facial expression, especially when they do not match the words.*

Detailed Case Study Structure

1. Title Page

There are two common title formats:

- **A nominal title.** A single phrase, for example:
A Somatic Case Study Exploring How Anxiety Responded to Touch Interventions
- **A compound title.** Two phrases, for example:
Response of Anxiety to Touch Interventions
A Somatic Case Study

Titles typically contain 8 to 10 words. Additionally, include your contact information, academic qualifications, and professional position(s).

2. Abstract

An abstract is a brief summary of the entire study, covering the purpose, methods, results, and conclusions. Search engines and journal websites often display the abstract, and readers use it to decide whether to download the full study.

Abstracts should not exceed 150 words.

3. Keywords

Provide three to six keywords most likely to help find your case.

4. Introduction

A few paragraphs that provide a general overview of why your case is intriguing and beneficial.

- **Outline the purpose** of your study. Situate your case within a historical, psychological, or social context.
- **Highlight** any aspects that appear particularly challenging in the diagnosis, treatment, and management of your case. If you reference prior studies, cite them immediately after the mention—for example: (Rossi & Jones, 2020) or (Drew et al., 2015).

5. Case Presentation

Provide the fundamental details about your client and share your general clinical observations.

- **Context for the treatment**, including a brief description of how and where you saw the client—whether in a hospital, clinic, or private practice—and how they found you.
- **Describe the issues that led your client to therapy.** Quoting the client's own words can be helpful, along with describing your impressions of their embodied presentation—posture, gestures, body language, affect, and presence.
- **Significant information gathered from their background or history.** There's no need to include every detail—only information that guided you toward a direction, a therapeutic formulation, or potential diagnosis.

6. Therapy and Outcome

- **Your treatment plan**, including the frequency of sessions, any significant breaks or disruptions in the therapeutic process, and other important details.
- **Be specific in your description of the methods and interventions used.** Whenever possible, name the technique and detail the procedure. Your case study may be viewed by individuals who are unfamiliar with your type of therapy.
- **Include the client's own reports** of improvements, changes, or worsening symptoms. When possible, use a validated method to measure change.
- **If you are no longer working with this client, explain how and why therapy was terminated.** For example, did you end care, did the client withdraw from therapy, or did you refer them to another practitioner?

Note: Be cautious about using the word "treatment" because there are professional restrictions on who can use it. Its use can imply a level of success that is unproven.

7. Discussion

Remember that you are writing a clinical account.

- **Identify the questions your case raises** and provide explanations for your observations and your client's process.
- **Point out** instances where the integration of nonverbal communication with verbal language fostered the emergence of new options.
- **Include any established aspect of psychology**, bodywork, or pathology that sheds light on the case. Provide references.
- **In conclusion, summarize the lessons learned** from this case and, if applicable, any recommendations for further research.

8. Acknowledgments

Mention any significant input or feedback from mentors, teachers, supervisors, or colleagues. Include whether you have your client's permission to share their story and whether they have reviewed the final draft.

9. References

Include references in APA style. It is easiest to create your reference list while writing your case study, as it's common to use a reference and later struggle to trace its origin.

References

Tantia, J. F. (Ed). (2021). *The art and science of embodied research design*. New York: Routledge.

Young, C. (Ed). (2008). *Body psychotherapy case studies*. Galashiels, Scotland: Body Psychotherapy Publications. www.bodypsychotherapypublications.com

CASE STUDY CONSENT

I give my consent for information about my therapy sessions (or those of my child or ward) to be used to develop a case study for potential professional presentations or publication by:

.....
Author

.....
Manuscript title if known

- ☐ I understand that this case study will not disclose my real name or the name of any other person involved. The text will not disclose any specific details directly related to any individual involved, such as an address, birthplace, date of birth, profession, etc., and every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality.
- ☐ I recognize that complete anonymity cannot be entirely assured.
- ☐ I acknowledge that the case study may be utilized for professional presentations, may be published in print or electronically, may be accessible to the general public, and may also be translated into other languages.
- ☐ I will be given the opportunity to read the manuscript and approve it for presentation and publication.

Signing this consent does not waive my rights to privacy.

.....
Signature

.....
Print name

.....
Date

I may be reached at:

.....

Author's Declaration: I commit to making every effort to write this case study in accordance with professional ethical guidelines, ensuring the client's personal details remain confidential and unidentifiable.

.....
Signature

.....
Print name

.....
Date