

Client Info Sheet

Hakomi comes from the psychotherapy tradition. It is a method of **assisted self-study**. It is based on the understanding that '**core beliefs**', formed at an early age, drive many habitual patterns of response and reaction and actively shape our experience of the world. Usually out of our conscious awareness, many of these beliefs may be no longer relevant, true or needed and as such, they create much unnecessary everyday suffering.

Hakomi aims to assist clients gain a felt experience, of both the resources and constrictions held within their habitual patterns. The body is central to this work. In this **body-mind model** of therapy, we recognize the relationship between what happens in our minds, and what happens in our bodies. Bodies are seen as a resource. If we listen to them, we can discover valuable information that may not otherwise be consciously available.

Client and therapist work together to raise awareness of posture, feelings, sensation, habitual gestures and tension patterns. On the basis of these, **little experiments**, (e.g. a statement, slowing down a movement, physical support or touch) are created and carried out while in a **mindful state**. i.e. holding an attitude of openness and kindness and becoming calm and centered enough, to observe or witness your own present-moment experience as it unfolds.

The explorations or 'little experiments' are designed to safely evoke clear reactions and responses. Our responses often link to our unconscious beliefs. When a reaction is evoked, moments later memories, images and associations often emerge, which help make sense of the reaction. In this way we study the deeper processes that create and maintain our experience of the world and the people we are. Permission and cooperation of the client is sought moment by moment within this process.

This method is not about talking out your problems, or 'figuring out' solutions by thinking. We don't focus on long, speculative conversations about our troubles or emotional history. The idea is that our emotional history, the part of it that created the unconscious beliefs and habits with which we meet the world, is operating right now. **Our history is written in the way we do things every minute**. It is expressed by our style and defining characteristics. So together we look and listen for these and use them as part of setting up the explorations in mindfulness that are the core of the work.

As a client, at some point you will be supported to

- Find a calm, inward focused state and become relaxed enough to allow reactions.
- Stay focused on your present experience
- Maintain a gentle, curious attitude to whatever is present, as well as following and reporting experiences as they happen.
- If painful feelings arise, to be present with them and speak about them.

It also helps if you don't need to ask a lot of questions or feel like you must solve problems, explain yourself, justify your actions, have a conversation. And you'll need the courage to be open and honest.

The therapist will hold an attitude of **warmth, kindness and patience**. The vulnerability that mindfulness entails and the openness to unconscious material that's needed, require a very safe environment and a caring, non-judgmental space. Your therapist's role is to create this. The work may bring up intense emotions at times. At those moments, your therapist will help contain the process, provide comfort and help you understand what's happening. Once beliefs and memories are in consciousness, they are available to be studied and modified. With this comes increased understanding, relief from persistent painful emotions and behaviors and a greater sense of choice and ease with ourselves, as well as in relationship to others and the world around us.