**Embodied-Relational Therapy**

**2 Year Modular Training 2025 – Course Information**

Welcome,
This is an introduction to the 16th training in Embodied-Relational Therapy, beginning in June 2025, at the meeting place of relational, body, process, and social justice psychotherapy.

We are specifically aiming this training to appeal and be accessible to a wide range of practitioners, particularly those from marginalised communities, who are currently underrepresented in this field of work. We are particularly interested in working with those from BIPOC, LGBTQ+, neuro divergent, and disabled communities - those practitioners from minoritised groups who wish to train in an embodied and relational approach.

We are also particularly interested in hearing from practitioners, and particularly practitioners from marginalised communities, who might like to join the training, then join us on the Training for Trainers module to start to co-create a new diverse ERT Training Collective,. We believe that the current narrow base of lived experience of the training team, and of the field more generally, needs to widen, to meet the needs of trainees, and clients of trainees.
 We also want to take some action towards redressing the simple injustice of the extra barriers faced by skilled and experienced practitioners from minoritised communities who wish to work as trainers in the field.

**The History of ERT**
Embodied-Relational Therapy (ERT) has its roots in Reichian body work, process approaches including Process work , psychodynamic therapies and earth centred spirituality.

Initiated by Nick Totton and Em Edmondson in the late 1980s, ERT has continued to develop through the contributions of past and present ERT trainers; Nick Totton, Allison Priestman, Emma Palmer (author of Meditating with Character), Stephen Tame and Jayne Johnson, and the community of ERT trainees and graduates, our own trainers, supervisors and supporters, and the rich wider contributions of movers, thinkers, writers and feelers whom we continue to learn from...

At the core of Embodied-Relational Therapy is the study of our embodied relating to self, other and environment
Find out more about ERT [here](https://erthworks.co.uk/)

**The Approach of the Training**
ERT is an experiential, residential based post-qualification training, which focuses on the trainee’s own work on their embodied relating with self and other, now and in the past, before encouraging them to apply this with their clients.
The theme of relationality runs through the whole course; listening to our own feelings and responses as a key part of how we work both in the training and with clients, witnessing how we are moved around and impacted by our clients, yet remaining able to reflect on our working relationships.

ERT in training and practice depends on deep contact; achieving this is a large part of the work and takes great courage for both client and therapist. The training offers a held space to explore how deep contact impacts us.
ERT offers a profound trust that whatever is trying to happen in someone's life or in the wider world needs to happen.
Whatever needs to happen is already trying to happen, and the ERT approach in training and practice cultivates a playful and spontaneous response to whatever is trying to happen.
We see symptoms not as problems to be solved but as valuable stimulus to change.
We aim to support connection and integration between estranged aspects of ourselves, and between ourselves and the wider world – the earth, the sky, the wider communities of human and other-than-human. We therefore see this work as necessarily having political and spiritual dimensions. ERT values the wisdom and gifts of individual and group process, of the unspoken and unnamed, the peripheral and taboo.

There have been waves of development of ERT training...
Jayne, Stephen and Allison were all active in integrating eco-psychology and wild therapy ideas and practice, originating from Nick Totton's work, into the training... Movement and touch have come more to the fore. More recently we have begun to explore more deeply and better understand how we integrate working with embodied experiences of oppression, power and privilege in the ERT training.

The ERT training brings together:

-Embodying the 4-stage ERT process

-Reichian character structure

- ERT metaskills

-Working with our embodied experience of social injustice

 We work with connection, movement and stillness, proximity and distance, breath and tension, touch and body sensation, spontaneity, psychotherapy theory, wild therapy, and the impossibly complex & impossibly simple task of being human alongside other humans.

At the core of Embodied-Relational Therapy is the study of our embodied relating to self, other and environment. We will explore how our embodiment is shaped by this meeting with the other?
We seek to keep awake to rank, power, privilege and oppression - being curious and courageous about the intersections between our own experiences of oppression and privilege, and how they meet with our clients' experiences of oppression and privilege.

Our starting point is that therapy is political. In this training, we are integrating embodiment, relationship and social justice.

ERT draws a great deal from other therapies, particularly those from the body psychotherapy traditions, and brings these ideas and techniques into a new synthesis with its own unique flavour and values. We describe this in terms of seven metaskills: Awareness, Trust, Contactfulness, Spontaneity, Spaciousness, Relaxation and Wild Mind.

**ERT Training Process**
This is a robust and established training, which has appealed to practitioners from many different therapeutic backgrounds. It is primarily experiential; theory arises out of practice, and no written work is required, although handouts are provided, as well as online-access to papers and chapters.

Great attention is paid to embodied group process, since we believe that the kind of learning we are looking for can only take place in a safe space, where concerns can be expressed, and behaviour challenged. We want participants to learn on an embodied level, which entails being open to profoundly stirring experiences.
Group process can play a significant part in this learning. We work to support the creation and emergence of a learning community on the course. This supports a greater depth of relating in a rich and at times challenging environment. This community-building on the training feeds into the ongoing ERTA community.

**Who is this course for?**
This is primarily a post-qualification course aimed at practitioners who have already gained a qualification in counselling, psychotherapy, or some form of relational bodywork.
We are particularly interested to work with practitioners from marginalised communities. We are keen to learn with and support those with lived experience of oppression who have for too long been excluded from becoming therapists and receiving therapy themselves.

It is also sometimes used by people with considerable experience of therapy as a personal development experience.

Exceptionally, we may accept someone who intends to use the training to build on a related training which is not in psychotherapy or counselling, after exploring the issues this raises with them. Overall, this course is for people looking for support, nourishment, and challenge in their professional and personal lives.

**ERT Qualification**The training is two years long, the second year requiring you to have completed the first.
Each year stands on its own, and you can undertake Year Two at any point.
If you complete the first year to the satisfaction of the trainers, (for more information, do ask us for the assessment handout) you will receive a Diploma in Embodied-Relational Therapy. On successful completion of the second year, you will receive an Advanced Diploma in Embodied-Relational Therapy and be entitled to call yourself an Embodied-Relational Therapist. You will also then be eligible to apply to join the 2 residential Training for Trainers course.

ERT Graduation Celebrations

The Embodied-Relational Therapy Association is open to anyone who has successfully completed the two-year course. The Association meet once or twice a year, further developing the tradition, skills, and practice of Embodied-Relational Therapy.

ERT Practitioners are also welcome to publicise their ERT work and events on the [erthworks website](https://erthworks.co.uk/events/) and can also be included in our ERT mailouts.
 The ERT Training is not externally accredited.

**Course content and structure**

**ERT Diploma Training – Year One**

The first-year training should equip you to use ERT in your existing practice, working more deeply with your own and your clients’ embodiment; especially if you have an ERT supervisor.

In 2025 the first year of the course consists of five 4-day residentials.

We will be following a spiral curriculum, integrating the ERT four-stage approach with the ERT character developmental model, whilst building capacity to work with embodied experiences of power and oppression. Our approach is to offer you experiences, experiments, and to build learning and theoretical models around these embodied experiences.

All counselling and psychotherapy takes place within a cultural and political context. We feel it’s important to acknowledge and work with this, so we will be paying attention from the beginning of the course onwards to embodied experiences of social injustice - exploring and working directly with issues of rank, privilege and discrimination.

We will, over the year, cover the **Embodied-Relational Therapy 4 stage model:**

**Contact:**
Our ability to connect fully with ourselves, the world and other people - the fundamental skill and requirement of ERT

**Information Gathering:**
All the ways in which we notice and identify what is happening in the therapeutic space – in our clients, in ourselves, in the field between us and around us.

**Amplification:**
Supporting what is already trying to happen. In particular you will learn how to amplify body experience, for example, through movement, breath-work, body symptoms and internal body sensations, and to amplify relational material and dynamics.

**Integration:**
Making sense of the work, joining things up, both in therapeutic work and of the course itself

These therapeutic stages are taught in a spiral across the year – introducing, then later revisiting and deepening.

We also teach the **ERT character developmental model** across the year. This model derives originally from the work of Wilhelm Reich, and has been developed since that time, becoming an appreciative and dynamic approach, working with the denying, yearning and creative experiences in each position:

 - **Boundary** character position

- **Oral**, and **Control** character positions

- **Holding**, and **Thrusting** character positions

- **Crisis** character position (and boundary-crisis bridge)

These two models are integrated with each other as we explore them, for example;

- Paying attention to the contact styles for each character position as we introduce them
- Later we will pay attention to information gathering styles for each character
- Integrating amplifying with character
- Towards the end of the course we raise the question of how different character styles approach the task of integration

We are taking a spiral approach to the syllabus, in which we introduce, then revisit and deepen later - building the model and making links as we go through the course. We also pay attention to respecting and building links with trainees’ prior models, whether they be person centered counselling, Chinese Medicine, yoga, psychodynamic psychotherapy etc.

**ERT Advanced Diploma Training – Year Two**Five 4-day residentials, (Dates TBA)We support you to deepen your skills and confidence in working physically with clients, deepening your trust in your embodied-relational work. Explorations will be collaborative - building trust so that complex issues and vulnerable experiences can be explored.

The aim of the second year is to deepen the exploration of how to work with embodiment, relationship, social justice and wildness. Working to integrate the material from year one, particularly through group supervision and longer practice sessions. We will explore the body stage by stage, from head to foot, alongside this we will offer tools to work with embodiment in different channels, for example, movement, touch and breath-work. We will explore, in more depth, specific areas of oppression, for example; race, neurodiversity, disability and gender diversity.

The second year gives you the opportunity to embed the ERT approach into your work. If you successfully complete the second year, then you will become a member of the ERTA, which is both a referral network and an ongoing peer CPD space.

On the second year, a small number of ERT graduates are likely to join us for revision and training update, and to potentially join the training for trainers modules and help co-create the training collective. We are also looking at inviting ERT graduates to offer training sessions in particular areas of work. All will be expected to join the first residential of the advanced year, so that you get to meet everybody at the beginning of that year, therefore the first residential is likely to be a slightly larger group.

**Training for trainers: (Dates TBA)**

There will be a two-residential Training for Trainers at the end of year two - bringing together trainees from this and previous courses, building the foundations of a new robust and diverse ERT Training Collective. This is an exciting new project, and is likely to be more collaborative, and less training team led.

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 **A Note on a Related Training**
We see the Wild Therapy training as a direct extension of ERT: Relating through the body leads to relating with the world: when we are in touch with our capacity for embodied relating, this flows into relationship with the other-than-human, and also into a spontaneous approach to the therapeutic encounter in general. So the Wild Therapy training is an exploration and celebration of therapy's wildness, its capacity to transcend the limitations we place on our own creativity and connectedness.
The Wild Therapy training consists of three residentials, and one non-residential weekend. Many practitioners have undertaken this course on completion of ERT training. Visit the Wild Therapy website for fuller details.

Wild Therapy group - by the river

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**ERT Practicalities**

The first year comprises of five 4-night residentials - Thursday evening till Monday lunchtime. **Dates:**
**12-16 June 2025**
**11-15 September 2025**
**13-17 November 2025**
**15-19 January 2026**
**12-16 March 2026**

**ERT Trainers:** The first year training facilitators will be Allison Priestman and Stephen Tame – the current ERT training team. We hope to include training sessions in the second year from ERTA members with specialist areas of interest.

**Venue:**
This year we will be basing the first year of this experiential residential training at [Eden Rise Retreat Venue](https://networkofwellbeing.org/eden-rise/) - consisting of two beautifully converted barns in the lovely Devon countryside near Totnes. The 200-year-old property has two large workspaces, a spacious kitchen/dining area, underfloor heating throughout the building, rear garden with large fire bowl and BBQ, enclosed courtyard garden with campfire, outdoor seating areas, and even a separate woodburning sauna facility! There is access to the adjoining land for walks and other outdoor meeting areas.

Depending on group size, some participants may sleep in bell tents on the land, or in a holiday flat nearby, during the residentials. (Camping or bringing a campervan to the venue are also options, should you wish). Our experience is that it is possible for trainees to have the right accommodation they need. Please contact us for information and support regarding access needs.

**Food:** We will be making our own meals from mainly organic vegetarian wholefood ingredients supplied. We have considerable experience in supporting trainees with restricted diets.

**Course Cost:**
**For year one of the training the fee is offered on a sliding scale: £5000 to £3000 for the full year one course.**

(The second year will be a similar rate)

If this is unaffordable for you, then please contact us - we are keen to make the course accessible.

The fee will be based on your ability to pay. Please contact Stephen for a conversation about your payment for the training.

The price covers:
-All teaching, including the interview and selection meetings, Stephen and Allison’s contact time, group-holding, planning, teaching, supervision, tutorials, etc.
-Access to handouts and online reading folders
-The entire cost of your accommodation, use of all the facilities, the venue, the land etc.
-All food, which will be local, vegetarian, organic where possible
-All admin costs, including the time of our training administrator, Paul Crummay

We ask for an initial non-refundable deposit of £500.

We are committed to making the course as affordable as is possible. We can offer a flexible approach to payment plans. It is possible to pay upfront, monthly (from time of booking if helpful), at each residential, or we will agree other payment plans to suit you.

**Access needs:** Please contact us if you have particular access needs we can support you with to attend the course.

**For more information:** The first step if you are interested, is to read the information on the training page, including the selection process and application questions:
…and then register your interest, and any questions or queries via our admin email.

We expect all applicants to have attended at least one workshop or webinar prior to entry onto the course, so that we can see you work and vice versa. We are offering various workshops and webinars in 2024/5 - details of these will be found on the erthworks website at: [www.erthworks.co.uk](https://erthworks.co.uk/events/). We also recommend that you take a look at the individual websites of the ERT training team - details at the end of this document.

**ERT Testimonials**

*"I found the training an open and welcoming space where multiple truths could be held with curiosity, warmth and gentleness.  Over the two years a space of belonging and real community emerged, unlike anything I have experienced elsewhere."
More than the actual taught content of the training it was the way the training was held that I learned the most from.  I would describe it as playful, open, curious and deeply nourishing."*Kimcha 2024

*"I valued how Allison and Stephen embodied an integrity and a commitment to inquiry, mutuality and safety for all participants, particularly the  appreciation that the conditions for safety may be very different for different people. It created sufficient trust in the training for us to explore, down to the subtlest levels, how power, privilege and otherness show up in our bodies as we encounter each other in the world. I was able to explore, express and integrate aspects of my experience and identity that few other therapeutic spaces have been interested in or able to hold and tolerate. It has empowered me to work more freely with issues of power and justice in my practice.”*Susannah 2024

"The training was a magical experience for me. I felt we were really welcomed to come as we were, and unfold however we unfolded. It made playfulness, curiosity, getting it ‘wrong’, vulnerability, and so much more possible - an absolutely unique and transformative experience. I didn’t want it to end!"
Soph 2024

*"I love the invitation to ‘be the therapist you are’ and explore what that can mean. To have the space to explore different channels and less familiar places and do it more! To get braver in our vulnerability and find a deeper trust in our innate ways of being to unfold.”* 2021 Marianne

*"I have finally found in ERT a training that will see my weaknesses as strengths to build on as a therapist.”* 2021

*"ERT has completed a cycle for me. ERT offers an unconditional team of trainers, who walk their talk and see the potential in their trainees from the first meeting. The ERT training has given me a significant piece of my jigsaw puzzle. ERT training has helped with the ground of my being, and with the relational aspects of my life."* Sue

*"This course has personally been a deeply embedded release and introducing of non-verbal immanence I truly didn't think I'd find. Not in an analytic, probing way, but a held way, always allowing whatever wants to happen, happen! Bringing this 'way' into my work with others lets me see new doorways in the body; and now all I want to do is knock and see who comes out to play. A huge bonus and necessity is that I have also found a group of supporting friends for life."* Rosie

**The ERT Training Team**

 **Allison Priestman,** I am a cis gendered woman, living with and exploring both my disability and my ableism. I have been working as an Embodied-Relational Therapist for over 20 years. I'm continually being woken up, challenged and nourished by my contact with clients, supervisees and trainees.

At this time of climate, diversity and equality crises, I’m interested in being part of a collective understanding of their interwoven causes, and part of a wider societal search for ways forward. [www.allisonpriestman.co.uk](http://www.allisonpriestman.co.uk/)

**Stephen Tame**
After many years of practice, I still love working as an ERT psychotherapist, supervisor and trainer, with humans young and old, in Bovey Tracey, Devon.
I have passion for contact, movement, humour, despair and aliveness. My core training in Embodied-Relational Therapy has been deepened and enhanced by various trainings since that time, most recently in Radix, and various trainings in anti-oppressive practice. Working with oppression has become alive in new ways for me in recent years - something to be more willing to be painfully close to, and my own privilege has become less an intellectual idea, and more an embodied experience to grapple with. A resonant question for me at this time is: *What am I prepared to give up?*
[www.stephentame.co.uk](http://www.stephentame.co.uk/)