



About the Foundation

The foundation was established in 2020 by Heinke Sofka with the Caritas Community Foundation in the Archdiocese of Berlin (Caritas-Gemeinschaftsstiftung im Erzbistum Berlin) as its sponsor. The main focus of the foundation is to promote Somatic Experiencing® – a form of trauma therapy developed by Dr. Peter Levine. The foundation supports children, adolescents and young adults who have experienced trauma and would otherwise have no access to therapy.

Other areas of support and interest include providing trauma therapy interventions for first responders, such as police officers, fire-fighters and nurses, as well as for teachers and other professionals in the educational field.

The Foundation is deeply committed to raising awareness of the causes and effects of trauma to improve public perception of trauma treatment and healing. It also seeks to illustrate the concept of trauma as understood by Peter Levine and his colleagues, as well as from the perspective of polyvagal theory.

Traumatic experiences can be integrated and can therefore be healed.



If you would like to learn more about the Foundation and its fields of support, please do not hesitate to contact me, Heinke Sofka, by e-mail or phone. I appreciate your interest and look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Foundation for Trauma Therapy
Heinke Sofka
Bucher Chaussee 5
13125 Berlin

📞 +49 176 26113521

☎ +49 30 94413580

✉ +49 30 94413581

info@stiftung-traumatherapie.com



www.stiftung-traumatherapie.com/en



TRAUMA THERAPY

According to
the Neurobiological
Approach
„Somatic Experiencing (SE)®“

A trauma is processed and integrated when you can think and talk about it without your nervous system going into stress mode. It becomes an experience that no longer dominates your life.

Dr. Peter Levine



<< directly to
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How you can support us

Your donations support children, adolescents, and young adults in overcoming developmental trauma, enabling them to grow into self-confident individuals guided by their innate strengths and a strong sense of self.

Your support also helps prevent trauma before it takes hold, by allowing us to offer workshops and training programmes that teach trauma-sensitive approaches and effective intervention techniques.

Stiftung für Traumatherapie Heinke Sofka

Pax-Bank

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You will, of course, receive a donation receipt.

The Biology of Trauma

Trauma occurs when the body continues to react to a past event as if survival were still at stake – even though the danger has long passed. Often, the smallest triggers are enough: a sound, a glance, a memory. Beneath these reactions lie old survival responses that have become “stuck” in the nervous system – the freeze response (a state of immobility or shutdown), alarm, or withdrawal. These can appear both physically and emotionally: a pale face, panic, immobility, or an outburst of anger.

Trauma reshapes the brain and disrupts the body’s physiology. Even in the absence of danger, the nervous system remains on high alert. The world is perceived as unsafe, and emotions such as fear, helplessness, or anger dominate. The survival energy held in the nervous system seeks release, and symptoms such as irritability, panic, or dissociation are the body’s adaptive attempts to restore balance.

Somatic Experiencing (SE)[®] works directly with these patterns – gently, body-oriented and step by step. At the heart of this approach is a process known as pendulation – the gentle movement between stressful sensations and stabilising inner resources. Nothing is forced; instead, attention is placed on what is happening in the body: What impulses, feelings, inner images, or thoughts arise? And what is strengthening you in this moment?

The aim is to release the frozen survival energy in small doses – without overwhelming or re-traumatising the individual. This gentle process unfolds at a pace the body can safely manage, allowing what was once blocked to move again. As the freeze response softens, a renewed sense of agency emerges: “I can’t” becomes “I can.”

Early and complex trauma – such as developmental trauma – often requires more than a purely body-oriented approach. SE can be effectively combined with other methods, such as Ego State Therapy or the Internal Family Systems Model (IFS) developed by Richard Schwartz.

SE can also be used when memories are absent or the subject feels too overwhelming to approach directly. The body remembers – and it can have healing new experiences even decades later. It is never too late for a new beginning.

This process unfolds slowly, in small steps – exactly at the pace the body can handle. This prevents retraumatisation and allows the freeze response to gradually give way to the ability to act again.

SE is also possible without detailed storytelling – the body remembers. And it can heal.