

Hakomi is a body-centered, mindfulness-based psychotherapy method that is influenced by humanistic therapy approaches such as Gestalt therapy, and by Buddhist meditation traditions. Hakomi is experiential, i.e., it focuses on experiences in the present moment to deepen the therapeutic process and facilitate change. Its goals are to undo the ingrained defenses that limit people's vitality and ability to find fulfillment in life.

Hakomi is a multifaceted system of therapeutic principles and techniques aimed at helping psychotherapy to go deeper and create more far-reaching results. One of many therapeutic methods to emerge from the hugely influential Human Potential Movement in the 1960s and 1970s, it draws heavily on both the Gestalt Therapy of Fritz Perls and Zen Buddhism. Like Gestalt, it is a largely experiential method, interested more in generating experiences in the moment to access the unconscious and initiate more profound change. Its overarching goals are to undo the ingrained characterological patterns of defense that restrict the unfolding of a client's innate vitality, or organic self, and foster greater aliveness and fulfillment. With the body awareness and mindfulness that Hakomi uses as tools for self-exploration, clients who are feeling as though they've reached a plateau with traditional insight-oriented, talk therapy are often able to go deeper into their core issues and achieve more lasting, transformational change.

The heart of the Hakomi Method are the five Principles, which Hakomi therapists are taught not to employ just as techniques but to integrate into their way of being. The five Principles are: mindfulness, non-violence, organicity, mind-body connection, and unity. In Hakomi, mindfulness is both an internal attitude of the therapist and a technique for accessing deeper material. Since the therapist is working to get below the surface of the defenses, she is often more directive than in psychodynamic or person-centered approaches, but because of the principle of non-violence she strives to be less forceful than the sometimes very intense Gestalt approach.