



CSF

Core Science Foundation

Core Energetics Online

Summary

In this survey we explored the pro's and the cons of online therapy in relation to Core Energetics (CE); a body orientated psychotherapeutic approach with specific concepts like Mask, Lower Self and Higher Self. The Corona pandemic and the social (physical) distancing that comes with it, has majorly impacted Core practitioners in their approach, which normally contains elements of physical closeness or physical contact.

Core practitioners were asked to fill out a short questionnaire, that surveyed their findings and experiences with giving online sessions, and they were asked to formulate recommendations based on their experiences. According to the outcome of this survey, Core practitioners manage to move along with the societal measures. They are very willing to keep supporting their clients in this time where all of us must cope with fear, loneliness and the big "not-knowing". Core practitioners intend to support their clients in accepting feelings, releasing them, helping them staying connected with reality and taking health(y) responsibility.

Working online has its restrictions in comparison to live sessions and asks for more creativity, but most practitioners are determined to keep offering sessions online. They value the contact with their clients and want to be available for them in these difficult times.

It's too early to conclude yet, but maybe our experiences from working online in this Corona era will have an impact that changes our attitude to working online and changes our work (partly) forever.

1. Introduction: The contribution of Core Energetics in times of Corona

The Corona pandemic is triggering a lot of emotions in people worldwide: fear, terror, sadness, anger, rage and grief but also happiness and satisfaction. Working with the body has been proven to be very helpful to come in touch with emotions and to process them. CE practitioners are used to effectuate this by offering their presence and creating a safe space where clients can contact their emotions. They do this by means of different techniques like grounding techniques, breathing, energizing emotional blocks and helping clients to either express their feelings and emotions or learn how to contain them. By embodying emotions, owning them and releasing them clients become empowered. They get (back) in touch with their 'core' and back into reality, what makes them less susceptible to fear and disintegration. Grounding and containing are considered essential skills to develop in these uncertain times.

This crisis also confronts a lot of people with a lot of uncertainty, which brings them into “the unknown”. Core Energetics as a modality sees the value of this not-knowing and can help people to contain this. Working with the effects of this actual crisis, also brings up the opportunity to release old pains, fears, tensions and blocks evoked by earlier crises in their lives. The concepts of Mask, Lower Self (LS) and Higher Self (HS) are very helpful to navigate people towards finding their truth in this confusing world, instead of being overwhelmed by fear for or feeling restricted by measures taken against the Corona virus. Furthermore, CE helps clients to find meaning in this crisis in their individual lives¹, the so-called universal life plan.

In this time where the need for physical contact might be stronger than ever, working online is an extra challenge. It frustrates the need for contact, which can be a challenge for the client but not in the least also for the practitioner. However, how contradictory it might sound, in fact it also seems to create a perfect opportunity to explore this pain. Feeling the need for physical contact, feeling the pain around this need not being met, contacting the client’s history around this need and looking for other ways to have satisfying contact.

With this survey, first of all, we intend to hear about ideas around the unique contribution of Core Energetics (CE) in this crisis. It is clear that we, as CE practitioners, are inspired therapists with inspiring ideas about our contribution to our client’s wellbeing. Following you’ll find a summary of the results. We hope to do justice to all of your answers, and we must say, that we loved to read about our colleagues from all over the world with this Core connection.

Can we bring our intentions and our expertise to the world in an online way?

2. The survey

1. Motivation for this survey

During the Corona pandemic Core Energetic Therapists have been looking for safe ways to keep supporting their clients now live sessions are not always possible. Live sessions are being hampered by the 1,5-2m distance rule and carry a risk of infection that not every therapist or client is willing to take. Recently we, as the Core Science Foundation, have noticed that more and more colleagues have switched to also offering sessions online, and we became interested in this development. We would like to know more about how our colleagues are experiencing this way of working, and we would like to support them by presenting an inventory of experiences. The aim is to learn from each other’s experiences and to stay inspired to keep offering Core Energetics therapy in times when physical distancing has become the new normal.

2. Questions for this survey

We looked at the possibilities and impossibilities of online therapy, experienced for Core Energetics. What are “tips and tricks” concerning the CE method online and concerning the technical side of online working.

3. Research design

The survey consisted of 10 questions, mostly open and some closed (see Appendix for the survey). It took about 12 minutes to complete.

196 Core practitioners were sent an invitation by email. Some of whom passed the survey on to other colleagues, so unfortunately, we don't know exactly how many therapists in total have received it. Eleven days later we closed the survey; by then 30 persons had completed it. The respondents came from all over the world: Netherlands (13), Belgium (2), USA (6), Slovenia (1), Germany (1), United Kingdom (2), Mexico (1), Brazil (2), Italy (1), Turkey (1). We don't know if the therapists who have completed the survey have more affinity with online working, in that case we might have a bias of an online-minded part of our Core colleagues represented here.

3. Results

1. Effects of Corona measures (meaning: social distancing) on our work

The Corona measures had at least a great influence on the amount of work.

Group work was no longer allowed, although there are some initiatives in working with groups online. The problem is that the group dynamic work seems not working very well online. You could only work simultaneously (i.e. bodywork) or one by one, the others listening.

A lot of individual clients postponed their sessions to when it is over. Most of the people saw their work decrease by half. A very few stopped totally with working with clients.

2. The online alternative

Most practitioners work online (29 out of 30) and in case they still offer live sessions they keep at least 1,5m distance. The preferred method of online contact seems to be videoconferencing (23 out of 29), followed by phone calls (8 out of 29) and more occasionally by mail or chat (2 out of 29). Videoconferencing is the preferred method of choice because practitioners value the importance of visual cues, like seeing the clients face and body while talking or guiding a client into a (bodily) process.

Platforms that are used for videoconferencing are: WeSeeDo, Zoom, Skype, Facetime, Therapieland, Click Doc.

Many respondents (17 out of 30) report to take measures concerning the protection of confidentiality, storage of data (recording) and privacy, by choosing an AVG/GPDR proof platform or by using a password. One respondent replied that his/her clients are taping sessions now and he/she wonders where they store it and he/she is looking for support or advice in this.

Fifty percent of the respondents report problems. They encountered problems with the connection, difficulties in visibility and audibility. Some reported clients having difficulty to arrange a save, spacious place with props and tools around. Sometimes clients were disturbed by housemates or were reluctant to express themselves because of the neighbors. Therapists seem to have learned to instruct clients more precisely prior to sessions now. Although sometimes with some hesitation, 17 out of 30 respondents also started doing intakes online. For some the advantage was that the client felt safer in his/her own

environment. The disadvantage mentioned was that it is more difficult to feel the energy, and that you can easily miss some nonverbal cues.

One respondent mentioned that the efficacy of an online session depends on the ego strength of the client to connect with him/herself. Another mentioned that working online needs more care to prevent the client from getting overwhelmed.

Clients were often positively surprised by the effects of an online session.

Part of the practitioners reported to experience online working as more tiring and less effective. They missed the possibility of touch and physical proximity. For one practitioner this took away part of the possible transference in the session

3. Disadvantages of working online in greater detail

Obviously, the practitioner's own office is well equipped for the work. It has space, props and tools and gives room for expression and making noise. These conditions are not always possible working from home. The responses we received are:

Practical:

- Technical problems that disturb or distract, like a bad WIFI connection or faltering applications;
- The position of the client in front of the camera;
- The room where the client is situated does not always fit in terms of noise (both directions) which leads to disturbance and distractions;
- Props and tools are not always present and there's not always enough space to move.

The therapeutic process:

- It's harder to see the whole body;
- Working from a screen makes it more difficult to observe and attune to what is happening in the client, subtle movements, breathing, eyes;
- Touch is impossible (neither in live sessions on 1.5 m);
- When the client is in crisis or becomes overwhelmed, it is harder to give him/her the experience that the practitioner is really present;
- Difficulty with deeper connections;
- It is harder to create physical and experiential exercises to deepen the process, to move stuck energy;
- Looking for each other's eyes is difficult, that is why I close my eyes more;
- Play rolling is more challenging and less direct;
- It is harder to use myself as therapist as an object of transference;
- Not possible to touch and give a holding on a non-verbal level;
- Clients stay more easily in the mental/narrative level.

The clients' disadvantages didn't come forward in the answers, but practitioners reported a lot of clients postponing their therapy because they didn't believe it is possible to create an online equivalent of CE therapy, with touch and contact like it normally has.

We also received a report from one client, a student from the Dutch Institute. She wanted to share her experiences from the client side. She mentioned that for her it was very important

to know that she already had a strong relationship with her therapist, before working online. She also remarked that it was important for her that she already had learned how to stay in her body. She reported that sitting on a chair during an online session instead of sitting on the floor, was a big trigger for her to stay in her head instead of landing in her body. But with kundalini yoga, her own consciousness and the patience of the therapist she could come to her body and stay there. It was a good experience for her to be able to do this even 'at a distance' from her the therapist. But in her opinion the experience of the earlier live sessions was a condition.

The practitioners experience:

- Looking at the screen gives tension, sometimes I close my eyes, that works better;
- Harder on my body, I don't move around like in my office;
- I have the tendency to talk more, however you need your voice more to let know you are present;
- Individual it works, although different, with groups there is no solution yet;
- Online is more tiring than face to face;
- Because I am online with the client, sometimes the client makes more contact via Whatsapp. Boundaries are less clear;
- Physical contact is best, but this is second best.

4. Advantages of online working in greater detail

There are a lot of advantages reported; practically, for the process, for the practitioner and for the client.

Practical advantages:

- I can have my notes in front of me;
- I can combine it more easily with housekeeping;
- I don't have to prepare the room for the client, it saves me time;
- Transference to home-situation might be easier;
- Both therapist and client don't have travel time. That makes it easier to plan, more flexible. No cancellations because of planning or traffic problems;
- If you want to, you can record.

Advantages for the process:

- Once the discomfort is overcome, the client can feel freer in a way;
- Clients learn to help themselves better: finding creative solutions like hugging a pillow or a pillow in the back. You can teach them to do bodywork themselves, touch themselves etc.;
- Some clients feel more save behind the screen, deeper processes, deeper feelings, more intimacy possible because of the distance, less social anxiety. Clients can be freer to express the transference;
- Our distance brings us quickly in the topic;
- Slower sessions because you need to take more time for the narrative part;
- Seeing the client in their homes feels more intimate and gives new information. Clients often like to show their house.

Advantages for the client (from the viewpoint of the practitioner)

- In giving online sessions you show your goodwill not wanting to infect the client and still wanting to stay in contact;
- For some clients it seems that it makes the step to therapy easier;
- Some clients could stay better focused than live. In both cases they were primarily fragmenting, so perhaps it is safer remotely.

Advantages for the practitioner:

- I am less drained; I don't take their stuff to the same degree as I might if our auras were actually touching;
- It stimulates my creativity to do things different;
- I use more breath and meditation;
- I am more aware of voice and prosody information;
- It is a different way of sensing the shared energy field;
- I tend to be more attuned to the spiritual aspects and bring this to the client;
- Not really but better than no sessions.

5. Findings around CE concepts and techniques

Body reading

Less than half of the respondents (12 out of 29) reported to have done body readings, 16 did not. One respondent skipped the question. Quoted:

- I will not ask someone to take off clothes before the camera;
- Difficult, especially when you never saw the client live. It is a bit more 2 dimensional than live. The client needs a lot of space to be able to see the whole body. To see parts you need to ask to come closer with these parts;
- I do less body reading;
- I am always looking at the body;
- I only work with posture and level of energy, more than with specific body qualities;
- I looked at left-right differences in face and hands with one client;
- I use the information clients give me from doing body scans. I ask where they feel tightness, tension, or armoring;
- I look at the breath;
- Stay grounded and connected with myself is even more important now.

Charge Discharge

Two respondents reported not to have worked with charge and discharge online, twenty-six replied positively.

- Everything is energy and consciousness so in a way everything is charge and discharge;
- I am incorporating more movement than ever to keep the energy supply up;
- Be aware of whether the person is overcharged and needs to discharge or whether they are undercharged and need to learn to build and sustain their charge;

- Move along with your client, support by making sounds and coaching. They seem to need more of you moving along with them. There is the tendency to stay stuck in the chair;
- Standing up, dancing, jumping, shaking, stretching, hitting, shouting, hitting a pillow, kick on the bed, wring a towel, hit with a towel on the couch, towel in the mouth to scream;
- Demonstrate what you want to see. Short clear verbal cues. Sound. Support in going on;
- I use charge-discharge through breathing. Self-touch, moving body parts in order to charge them. Discharge sometimes gentle, sometimes strong. In my limited experience, I see that it is very well possible to work with charge and discharge. I use my verbal guidance a lot to help the client go through cycles of charge and discharge;
- Take enough time to discharge and cool down. Ask more how the person is feeling, welcome the feelings. Make sure that at the end of the session the client really feels grounded and in a good place to continue with daily life.

Somatic Resources (posture, breath, boundaries, reaching out, nurturance, touch, etc.)?

Twenty-six respondents reported to have used somatic resources, two didn't.

- For sure, it is hard to imagine Core sessions without using these tools;
- Breath, nurturance, touch;
- Again demonstrate;
- Asking someone to come into the waterfall or the bow, self-touch, touching an object, self-massaging, holding a pillow;
- Posture (helping the client to get a sense of it and how they can make changes in it, in order to feel stronger, more vulnerable, more present, etc.);
- Self-hug and group hug, by laying our arms around the computer. A visualization asking what client needs and would like and then playing that. Like with cushions around you as the group. And stay in this long enough;
- Pat Ogden's webinar was helpful, she came up with ideas as doing push-ups, pulling on a rope, attached to the chair, working with distance, breathing, posture, touching yourself, or touching attributes, guided meditations;
- Ask more about sensations and ask the person sometimes if they can move a little bit so I can see them better through the camera;
- Many possibilities of creative work are possible. Because touch is not possible, I work a lot with self-touch. Clients become more aware that they always live in a "relational" and "connected" field. When they do self-touch, it is also informed by their experience with other touch. I am aware that for some clients it is really necessary to work with "live" touch, because they are so touch deprived and speak a very limited non-verbal "touch language";
- Having the client (or me) lean in or out of the camera/screen. Using energetic touch.

Traumatic memories

Eight respondents did not work with traumatic memories. Arguments mentioned:

- None surfaced;

- Never had anyone flood in an online session, it is more about connecting with a memory and work with child consciousness;
- Not deeply. One client avoided it specifically as it felt not safe being alone in the house. We take it slowly; things surface in their own time. I trust this;
- I try to avoid it. I want to be in the same space with them to give the proper support and help with containing. Of course, it also depends on what you see as traumatic memories;
- Not so much.

Twenty respondents did work with traumatic memories:

- Yes, and deep grief. To be there, let it happen, speaking comforting words like “it’s okay, its welcome”. My client gave me the feedback, although there were deep emotions, she felt seen and accepted. She also felt my trust in the process, that really helped her;
- Hear the client. Do not shy away from the pain. Do not over exaggerate;
- Hold the energy, stay with the person, let them know you are there, that they are safe, I use trancework combined with core, very powerful;
- This comes up as parts of peoples work at some point;
- Yes, but just easily available memories. Be careful with what client can handle in this situation;
- It helped that the client was in her safe space, her own room so there was safety;
- Go slower than normally, stay grounded;
- You need to make sure that there's enough attunement and resonance;
- Traumatic memories have come up in clients. I am working with the concepts of “window of tolerance”, “titration” and “pendulation”. I give a lot of trust to the client basically that they are able (on the condition that I am making myself present for them in the here and now) to regulate what is happening inside them. It is necessary that as a therapist you know how to be “presencing” and how you can stay in the “here and now”;
- Presence is key here. Letting the client know verbally that I am here, asking them to make eye contact, using usual grounding techniques;
- I trust that I can help them regulate them.

Props (e.g., cube, roller, bataka/sword, therapy balls, pillows, ropes for boundary work) available to both practitioner and the client

Three respondents replied to have worked without props, twenty-three however did use them:

- Instead of a cube, used the sofa, also by bumping towards it with the pelvis. She was surprised by her power. I used the cube as example. Roller, we both have. A towel with a knot on the bed as a bataka;
- Be mindful of their living situation (roommates, spouse, children);
- Use what you can depending on what is available in their homes, be creative;
- All of them;

- Cushions can fulfill lots of roles and are safe. To hug, to protect, to symbol a person in a whole system, to symbol a goal they want to achieve but are feeling blocked towards, to symbol mask, HS, LS, to symbol different voices in the client, Gestalt dialogues etc. Cushions to hit with fists or stamp on it;
- A bed/matress to kick on;
- The floor itself;
- Towel: to strangle, wring or hit the couch with. To bite, or to muffle sound of vocalizations;
- Dogs, cats, other pets, to hug;
- stones or other small objects as “transitional objects”;
- Some clients have an exercise ball.

Penetrating the mask

Twenty-four respondents penetrated the mask in their online sessions, three did not do this. Two respondents skipped the question.

- This is so central to much of the work and I could go on and on. Identify as quick as possible when the person is in their mask and call it out-with as much compassion and care as possible-and to encourage the person to call themselves out (I'm judging, I'm blaming etc.) and let them move that as we shift them toward the lower self;
- Pay attention to verbal patterns or reported behavioral patterns. Right now with the pandemic a lot of hero presentation and hiding of anger and fear;
- Be cautious, *rapport* is a little less online, can be taken the wrong way, I use humor to penetrate if I can;
- Similar as normal. But I tend to be kinder and more patient now, I guess I take less risks with clients I am less familiar with;
- Naming when someone is in positive transference with me; asking them if they did not like or understand something I asked them to do in terms of an exercise. Question why they are not angry if I think there could be a reason to be angry;
- Energizing it just like in a live session;
- Mostly facial;
- This was basically to talk about the existence of the “mask layer” and explore with clients what are the real and authentic feelings they can contact under the surface of the mask. All clients were and are able to relate to the idea of a mask. I use my own authenticity to help them drop the mask as well. Being in an authentic relationship with the client is very important also online. I have asked clients to look at me through the camera. This helps “connecting” and so dropping the mask. The problem with the screen is that they and I never know where to look: the lens of the camera or the screen? This is brain gymnastics in the end, but the “idea” (the notion, the concepts) for the client that it is about connecting is the main thing in the end;
- I use the chair technique Pierrakos recommends.

Transforming the lower self

Twenty-three respondents managed to transform the lower self in their online sessions, four respondents didn't get there. Two respondents skipped the question.

- You may need to demonstrate for the person, a lot of people can't differentiate mask from lower self, blame is mask, teach lower self as a destructive force --- I will kill you, etc.;
- This has been a challenge since I often rely on physical and energetic interventions to open the LS. I have found that having people claim their NO verbally and in direct connection to the topic and to whatever feelings are trying to be avoided has been helpful;
- I work with energizing the negative intent or the pleasure of the LS, working with props/voice/jaw;
- I'm recommending to write/journal more;
- More as an inward process;
- It is important to create safety and security in the online format so that the client can own and express his/her real feelings, their truth. Once that is established, I have found that clients can work with their negativity and how they hang on to it. I have found actually that in this crisis people essentially have been very, very positive!! One client who is really stuck in the negativity and also isolated at this point wanted to stop therapy. I had to come across really strongly that I am there for him and support him and that he does not need to go through all this alone;
- I use directed attention to allow the lower self. I use the chair technique;
- The work is more verbal, and for the neighbors less loudly;
- I often use humorous fantasies about being mean or taking revenge, as a way of letting out LS and bring it into consciousness

Centering in de higher self

The majority of respondents (25 out of 29) managed to work with the higher self, two respondents did not and again 2 respondents skipped the question.

- This one is easier when you have been working for a while with a client. Harder to do with a new client that I just started with;
- Help people raise their vibration;
- After expressing the LS is always the opportunity for people to pray for and invite their HS and to stay with their real sensations, feelings and vibrations;
- I have been assigning people to meditate, especially meditation for three voices;
- I like to work with visualization, prayer, breath and pleasurable sensation through comforting self with touch;
- As in mask and LS, we can just do easily the inner dialogue work and the centering in adult ego or higher self;
- Just like in a life session;
- I have done several online sessions from my garden in nature. This actually helped to connect with the positive. A higher self without a deep connection with nature is impossible. We are part of nature - we are nature. I could use several metaphors from nature to help clients connect with the beauty of their flowering and growth and interconnectedness;
- I explore how to embody the Higher Self/presence;
- Feeling body sensations like space, peace, quietness, an open heart.

Universal life plan

Thirteen respondents replied positively. Fourteen respondents replied they did not work with the universal life plan, or where not there yet.

- This is a big question at this time, what is the meaning of my life, what is the meaning of this pandemic, where do I fit in, how can I help and make a difference;
- This has actually come up more than expected. I think the whole crisis is bringing out what is most important to people and of course right livelihood and the life plan are where that leads;
- Mainly about installing a spiritual practice that would benefit this particular client;
- I see that many people take the corona crisis to deeply reflect on themselves and what they are doing in life. It is too early to know what is really going to change in people and in the world, but I think it is going to be big. My recommendation is to stay present!

4. Discussion

What we can learn from this qualitative quickscan is that Core practitioners are willing to go beyond their own discomfort and maybe inexperience with online working, in order to keep supporting their clients in this pandemic.

The first shortcoming of this survey is the short period of time that we granted the population of Core practitioners to fill it out. We are aware that this fact might have influenced the number of respondents. Like every research there always is risk of bias, which in our case could be that practitioners with either experience in or a preference for working online might be more willing to fill out the survey than their colleagues who feel more inadequate in this field. And also, could internet access for either practitioner or client be a reason not to work online; since we have practitioners in many different countries the selection of respondents might be one from places with a stable internet connection.

Since more and more practitioners are offering online therapy nowadays, future research could be aimed at the recipients' side of the therapy, a client-based research to investigate how clients experience online sessions.

Appendix

Core Science Foundation Survey :

“Core-Energetics in times of Corona”

The current corona crisis has a significant impact on the lives of masses of people.

With this survey, we as the Core Science Foundation want to map the impact of the corona crisis on the practice of Core Energetics.

With this survey we can also learn about how practitioners use technology in a human, emotionally containing and meaningful way as a response.

Please mail this document to Tanja Konig, secretary of the core Science Foundation:

tanja@coresciencefoundation.com

All data will be processed anonymously.

A remark about your privacy

This survey is anonymous

The data received in this survey do not contain any information that can be tracked back to you.

1. In which country do you practice Core Energetics?
2. How has the Corona crisis affected your work as a therapist?
3. What do you think is the contribution of Core Energetics in this crisis?
4. Are you offering online therapy?

- Yes
 No

Do you have recommendations from your current experience?

5. When using videoconferencing, have you encountered technical and personal issues (concerning the setup of the room of the client and of the therapist, yours or the client's digital literacy and access to IT tools, the angle of the camera, connection problems, payment, etc.)

- Yes
 No

Which problem do you remember most? Do you have recommendations from your current experience?

6. Have you taken on new clients doing online sessions?

- Yes

No

If Yes, how was it?

7. Did you take extra or specific measures concerning the protection of confidentiality, storage of data (recording) and privacy using Videoconferencing.

Yes

No

Please formulate your recommendations:

8. Which disadvantages have you encountered doing videoconferencing sessions until now?

9. Have you found any advantages doing videoconferencing sessions? Please give example(s).

10. During your online sessions have you worked with:

- (a) "Body Reading"?

Yes

No

How was that? Please formulate your recommendations when working from a distance:

- (b) "Charge/Discharge"?

Yes

No

How was that? Please formulate your recommendations when working from a distance:

- (c) "Somatic Resources" (posture, breath, boundaries, reaching out, nurturance, touch,)

Yes

No

How was that? Please formulate your recommendations when working from a distance:

- (d) "Traumatic Memories"

Yes

No

How was that? Please formulate your recommendations when working from a distance:

- (e) "Props" (e.g., cube, roller, bataka/sword, therapy balls, pillows, ropes for boundary work,...) available to both you and the client

Yes

No

How was that? Please formulate your recommendations when working from a distance:

(f) "Penetrating the Mask"?

- Yes
- No

How was that? Please formulate your recommendations when working from a distance:

(g) "Transforming the Lower Self"?

- Yes
- No

How was that? Please formulate your recommendations when working from a distance:

(h) "Centering in the Higher Self"?

- Yes
- No

How was that? Please formulate your recommendations when working from a distance:

(i) "Universal Life Plan"?

- Yes
- No

How was that? Please formulate your recommendations when working from a distance:

Footnote

1. Eva Pierrakos, *"The spiritual meaning of crisis"*. Pathwork lecture no. 183, Jun 05 1970, (See: <https://pathwork.org/lectures/the-spiritual-meaning-of-crisis/>)