

# NeuroAffective Touch<sup>®</sup>

Why is  
touch  
important?



## Dr. Aline LaPierre

Dr. Aline LaPierre is the creator of NeuroAffective Touch® and director of The NeuroAffective Touch Institute. She is currently Vice-President of the United States Association of Body Psychotherapy (USABP) and Deputy Editor of the International Body Psychotherapy Journal (IBPJ).

Dr. LaPierre is the co-author of the bestselling *Healing Developmental Trauma: How Trauma Affects Self-Regulation, Self-Image, and the Capacity for Relationship*, introducing a body-mind integrative approach to treating developmental and relational trauma. It is now available in ten languages.



## What is NeuroAffective Touch?

**NeuroAffective Touch®** is a professional somatic training that introduces psychotherapists and bodyworkers to the use of touch as a vital bridge to body-mind integration.

NeuroAffective Touch addresses developmental and relational deficits by communicating directly with the body at the nonverbal level where we all receive our first imprints. By highlighting the primary role of the body and emphasizing its equal importance to the mind, NeuroAffective Touch addresses emotional, relational, and developmental deficits that cannot be reached by verbal means alone. NATouch™ trainings develop practitioners' palpation skills to contact the sensory impulses that arise bottom up and interact with top-down cognitive and verbal narratives, thus supporting a reciprocal, interpenetrating exchange between soma and psyche.



### One of the best in the field

“I look forward to continuing to be mentored by one of the best in the field, who I have no doubt will be known for years to come as a pioneer in integrating bodywork and psychotherapy.”

**Karen Bauman, MA, NMT, SEP**

# Why Is Touch Important?

**Touch is at the foundation of our relational experience. Not only is it a fundamental mode of communication in the infant–parent relationship, but caring touch is a lifelong need. Loving, respectful touch that conveys a sense of belonging is essential for secure attachment and healthy development in childhood, and vital for a fulfilled adult life.**

There is now solid scientific evidence indicating that touch is critically important for normal brain maturation, and socio-emotional and cognitive development.

A baby needs nearly constant physical touch, rocking, and cuddling in order to thrive. When physical affection drops below the threshold necessary to stimulate the

production of growth hormones and activate the immune system, an infant’s fragile body begins to shut down. Nurturing touch has proven essential to support the repair of unfulfilled preverbal needs, and bring back hope to a body in despair that has never experienced respectful loving touch.

### FROM FELT-SENSE TO FELT-SELF

Emotions are experienced in the body as well as in the mind. Because touch speaks to the sensory aspects of emotion, it can directly address neurological deficits, dissociation, and dysregulation, as well as somatic bracing and collapse patterns. Connecting body to mind and mind to body, it facilitates the emergence of the nonverbal self, assists self-experience, promotes reflection and self-organization.

### OUR BODIES TELL THE STORY OF OUR STRUGGLES TO LOVE AND BE LOVED

By addressing what to do when there are no words, when words are not enough, or when words get in the way, the therapeutic use of touch transcends the limitations of talk therapy.

### TOUCH AND THE RELATIONAL MATRIX

Issues of somatization are rooted in failures of infant–caregiver attunement and imprinted in an individual’s implicit-procedural memory. Therefore, healing emotional and relational distress and trauma requires an integrated body-mind approach. To build new possibilities for adaptive emotional regulation, the therapeutic relationship must include implicit forms of knowing and problem-solving, in addition to cognitive recall and recount. Somatic-trained relational psychotherapists can synchronize their touch to their client’s sensory impulses, thus engaging in touch dialogues that affect tissue coherence and the associated qualities of mind.

[neuroaffectivetouch.com](http://neuroaffectivetouch.com)



# NeuroAffective Touch Training

## Renegotiating Developmental and Relational Trauma

The body cannot be touched without engaging the mind, and the mind cannot be engaged without affecting the body. An important focus in NeuroAffective Touch® is the body-to-mind and mind-to-body bidirectional flow of information. NATouch™ engages the body on its own terms, at the deepest biological level, and invites the mind as a collaborative partner.

### 1. Move beyond the traditional psychodynamic understanding of identity as residing in the mind

By helping clients move beyond the false safety of an encapsulated mind, the therapeutic use of touch and bodywork fosters an embodied understanding of how the body, emotions, and thoughts work together as a unified, regulating whole.

### 2. Develop the key somatic and bodywork skills necessary for working with attachment deficits

Working with developmental trauma starts with establishing a bottom-up foundation based in trust and care from which a new mindful top-down narrative can emerge. Students practice attuned resonant touch to address the three essential self-states necessary for secure attachment and emotional well-being: “I exist,” “I am loved,” and “My needs are important.” Support the capacity for loving connection often deeply buried by relational trauma.

### 3. Explore the primacy of the heart and the polyvagal energy centers

NATouch is a polyvagal-based model. Students learn intentional touch that offers the vagal centers—gut brain, heart, throat, and face—regulating experiences of safety that stabilize the affective signals shaping the brain’s implicit narrative and decision-making.

### 4. Deconstruct trauma-based survival adaptations

NATouch addresses the effects of family abuse and neglect that are at the root of Complex PTSD. Early abuse and neglect disrupt identity formation by forcing children to focus on shoring up their survival skills. This undermines the stability of the nervous and endocrine systems and leads to struggles with anxiety, lack of confidence, shame, self-hatred, depression, anger, and failed relationships. Communicating directly with the body, students learn to access the unconscious somatic patterns established in childhood that maintain adult hypervigilance, mistrust, and isolation.

### 5. Expand your embodied presence with personal psychobiological exploration


The training brings special attention to the personal somatic development of the practitioner. To work with a client’s body, therapists must know their own and be able to sense and feel unspoken communications. The training therefore includes a focus on personal psychobiological awareness to help practitioners develop an embodied presence that heightens their capacity for sensory attunement, interpersonal resonance, and clinical effectiveness. Stimulate your own neuroplasticity and open new neural pathways.



### Integration of relational and somatic models

“The integration of relational psychodynamic and somatic models makes the work especially useful for what most of my clients struggle with: an arrest at one stage or another of their development.”

Rick Lepore, LMFT



**Transform Your Practice**

Explore  
NATouch™  
Training

**NeuroAffective Touch®**

The NeuroAffective Touch Institute, Inc.  
Los Angeles, CA, USA

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