SOMATIC SYSTEMS INSTITUTE

Prime Somatics
think • move • feel • live

CLINICAL SOMATIC EDUCATION
PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM ™

PROGRAM PROSPECTUS

FULL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
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CONTACT INFORMATION

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for more information, including schedules & tuition
– or to apply to the training program – visit us today at

somatics.org/training
Dear Prospective Student,

On behalf of the entire faculty at the Somatic Systems Institute, I would like to thank you for your interest our Prime Somatics Professional Training Program®.

As you may already know, Prime Somatics (also known as Clinical Somatic Education™) is the direct, hands-on method developed by the late Dr. Thomas Hanna for teaching voluntary, conscious control of the neuromuscular system to persons suffering involuntary muscular disorders.

Whereas conventional wisdom relies on prescribing braces and pain medication to mask chronic pain, Dr. Hanna understood that constricted movement and diminished awareness of one’s body were at the very root of the problem.

Prime Somatics promotes improved well-being by teaching our muscles new ways to react to stresses. Founded on a wealth of scientific evidence, it has even been proven to aid in speeding up the recovery time from weakness, soreness, and distorted body movement. Dr. Hanna’s research has also led to a solution for compromised weight distribution — which in as many as 50% of cases has been misdiagnosed and is typically mistaken for arthritis, bursitis, or herniated disks by practitioners of traditional Western medicine.

For over a decade, it has been the Somatic Systems Institute’s mission to bring awareness of Dr. Hanna’s groundbreaking work to fellow health care professionals and clients all over the northeast. We are proud to continue this tradition by offering development sessions of the highest caliber and integrity this year in Northampton, MA.

Taught by licensed instructors including those trained by Hanna himself, the Prime Somatics Professional Training Program is dedicated to helping passionate students like yourself master the mind-body link to pain and recovery. Best of all, we are now pleased to offer the increased flexibility of our innovative Modular Training schedule, enabling you to more easily complete your studies without disrupting your current professional and personal commitments.

We hope the information here will help you learn about the great experience and opportunity provided both by the Prime Somatics Training Program and the career that awaits you afterwards. We look forward to hearing from you if we can answer any additional questions, or to help you get started on your application.

Best regards,

[Signature]
Steven Aronstein
Executive Program Director
Somatic Systems Institute

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Prime Somatics (also called Clinical Somatic Education™) is the direct, hands-on method based on the work of Thomas Hanna for teaching voluntary, conscious control of the neuromuscular system to persons suffering involuntary muscular disorders. Founded on a wealth of scientific evidence, Prime Somatics promotes improved well-being and aids in speeding up the recovery time from illness. This is achieved by creating an awareness and means of acting upon the body’s warning signals. In Hanna’s words, “It is the most advanced system known for relieving chronic disorders which, otherwise, are untreatable by either medical or traditional therapeutic means.”

It was Dr. Hanna’s discovery that perhaps as many as fifty percent of the cases of chronic pain are caused by what he termed sensory-motor amnesia (SMA). This is a condition in which the sensory-motor neurons of the voluntary cortex have lost some portion of their ability to control all or some of the muscles of the body. Problems such as poor posture or a bad back then occur when the ability to contract or relax a muscle group has been surrendered to subcortical reflexes — leading to weakness, soreness, and distorted body movement or compromised weight distribution that can cause secondary pain typically diagnosed as arthritis, bursitis, herniated disks, etc.

Prime Somatics shows us that half of all chronic pain exists because the body becomes powerless to relax certain muscles. Simply put, the “conscious” or voluntary cortex of the brain has lost or forgotten how to do so and must be recalibrated.

The foundation for Hanna's work was published in his 1970 book Bodies in Revolt: A Primer in Somatic Thinking, which demonstrated the relation between sensory awareness and physiological efficiency. Much of Hanna's work is originated from Feldenkrais' sensory-motor training, introduced in the United States in 1975. The theoretical background of this tradition is outlined in Hanna’s 1980 publication The Body of Life.

The major clinical techniques of this work have been developed out of the neurophysiological foundations of self-regulation training and biofeedback. Dr. Elmer Green, the illustrious pioneer of self-regulation training and founder of The Menninger Clinic’s Voluntary Controls Program, says that Hanna’s contribution to this field “is a milestone on the way to this understanding and to better health. If I could, I would put [Hanna’s book] in the hands of every neurologist, internist, nurse, psychophysiologic therapist, and clinical psychologist in the country. What is explained in the book is not part of their regular medical education. To be complete therapists, though, they need to include, or incorporate, this information in practice.”
THOMAS HANNA

Thomas Hanna, Ph.D., was a philosopher and somatic educator, who founded the field of somatics in 1970 with the book *Bodies in Revolt: A Primer in Somatic Thinking*.

He received his doctorate from the University of Chicago for his dissertation on existential phenomenology, later published as *The Lyrical Existentialists*. Hanna taught at Hollins College, where he became Chairman of the Department of Philosophy. He was also writer-in-residence at Duke University and the University of North Carolina in their Cooperative Program in the Humanities.

From 1965 to 1973, Hanna was Chairman of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Florida, where he had been hired to create the department’s first doctoral program in philosophy. Hanna was elected a Fellow in the American Council of Learned Societies, which in 1969-1979 subsidized his writing of *Bodies in Revolt: A Primer in Somatic Thinking*. In 1971, he was elected the first President of the newly created Faculty Senate of the University of Florida.

Hanna came to San Francisco in 1973 to become Director of a noted graduate school, the Humanistic Psychology Institute. During this time, he founded and directed the first training program in the Feldenkrais Method, Functional Integration, taught by Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais from 1975 to 1977.

Subsequently, Hanna founded the first Institute devoted to the field of Somatics in 1975, as well as the magazine, *Somatics* in 1976. In his practice of somatic education at the Institute, he saw clients from all over the world.

He was the author of eight books, including *Somatics: Reawakening the Mind’s Control of Movement, Flexibility and Health*, which has been published in English, French, German, Russian, Hungarian, and Spanish. Although Dr. Hanna passed away in 1990, his teachings and techniques live on at the Somatic Systems Institute’s annual training program.

PROFESSIONAL PRAISE FOR PRIME SOMATICS

“Thomas Hanna’s subtle exercises offer the exciting possibility that we can continue to be supple and graceful. Highly recommended for those who hang on past 30s.”

—Arthur J. Deikman, M.D., University of California, San Francisco; author, *The Observing Self*

“One of the most profound revolutions in our thinking concerns the fundamental connections between body and mind. Now that we begin to understand something of our inner healing powers, along comes Somatics to give form and shape to our new-found knowledge.”

—Paul DuBois, Ph.D., Executive Director, Association for Humanistic Psychology

“The missing link between many doctors and their patients can be rediscovered if both parties understand what Somatics is really about; how wisely and wonderfully we are organized to live a better life than many of us do.”

—Mark Schmid-Neuhaus, M.D., Chief Physician, Munich Health Park
MORE PRAISE FOR PRIME SOMATICS

“If you have the slightest to most severe back problem, and want to learn and apply yourself, you can gently work miracles of realignment and pain relief with [Prime Somatics] — it is truly and absolutely a miracle-worker. I was told there was no help but surgery, and no hope but deterioration for my condition — but it ain’t so!”

“[Prime Somatics] really changed my life. I used to suffer from shoulder tendonitis and other muscular ailments, but by using the material in this book I’m now 99% pain free. In addition, Somatics taught me about the causes and cures of muscular tension, ‘aging’, and poor posture. By applying what I learned in Somatics, my body has become much more supple and relaxed, making activities from walking to playing tennis to doing the dishes much more enjoyable.”

“In a very short period of time, Somatics has dramatically improved the quality of my life. [Somatics] can help people understand how to alleviate chronically contracted muscles that cause them pain — it's as simple as that. People can do this for themselves each day, like I do, if they learn how to do Somatic Exercises...

Prime Somatics is both transformative and restorative. Somatics has given me improved flexibility and range of motion which has had a number of benefits — a higher quality of life and sense of well being (I am pain-free after struggling for years with bad posture and related stiffness in my back, neck and shoulders from desk work); improved athletic performance and shorter recovery time after strenuous exercise and lastly, a rapid and complete recovery from hernia surgery.

Imagine starting and ending each day feeling like you’ve just had a fantastic massage. 20 minutes of somatic exercises a day can do this for you. Suffice it to say that I’m telling everyone I know about [Prime Somatics] and how [it] can help them improve the quality of their life.”

“If you have any structural pain that just won't go away, if you want to better your bodily awareness, and especially if you are a healthcare professional, [Prime Somatics] is worth more than its weight in gold.”

“This is the first set of exercises for my back that has ever had any effect at all. My back began feeling better within a matter of days, and has just gotten better and better. If you’ve had back trouble that you can’t get rid of, try this.”
Testimonials from Students & Graduates

**Physical Therapy Assistant**

I've been a Physical Therapy Assistant for 24 yrs and a Massage Therapist for 2. This is the first course I've taken where I was able to and expected to apply the knowledge and techniques I was learning on the instructors. As a result it's totally changed the way I've approached working with my clients. I can actually go out feeling solid and comfortable working on people right away, rather than wondering if I'm applying the techniques properly.

—Nancy Graham, Physical Therapy Assistant, 24 Years, Keene, New Hampshire

**Martial Arts Teacher**

The training staff is excellent. Good chemistry between them and a well balanced sharing of the teaching labor. Everyone is fun and personable which makes for an excellent learning environment. I'm feeling confident and well prepared to offer my services in the community as a Prime Somatics Educator, even as a student-in-training. I'm seeing more clients (paying clients mind you) than I would have imagined at this stage of learning. And I'm getting results. Clients are referring others in for sessions. I can't wait to learn more.

—John Loupos, Martial Arts Teacher, 35 years, Cohasset, Massachusetts

**Biotech Researcher**

The Somatic Systems Institute Prime Somatics Professional Training Program was an unbelievable experience. I was amazed at the unbelievable sense of freedom I experienced in my own body after only the first 9-day module. It was fascinating to experience even my thoughts shifting to a greater sense of freedom and feeling open to solutions and avenues that I didn't even see before. I don't know if I could ever fully explain this – everyone just needs to experience it for themselves. Looking back, it feels like I was living my life with my emergency brake on before this training.

From a professional standpoint, the training module was excellent. I left with a solid foundation of understanding the basis for the work of Prime Somatics and complete confidence in performing a Prime Somatics session with a client. I completely recommend this course to anyone looking to improve their own lives and those looking to help others improve the quality of their lives.

—Patrick Flanagan, Biotechnology Researcher, Upton, Massachusetts

**Pain Management Clinic Manager**

[Since returning from my very first module of the Prime Somatics Training Program.] I've done about 10 protocols this first week. Reactions have ranged from moderately pleasant surprise to unrestrained elation. I've done it on two ladies with significant chronic pain and they danced around shaking their hips (one said she hasn't been able to do that since 1991).

I'm looking forward to [the next module in] January. We have a great class and it will be fun to help everyone else develop into world class practitioners.

—Paul Hayman, Engineer and Pain Management Clinic Manager, Rapid City, South Dakota
“Where did this come from?” I kept asking myself, after recently participating in a Prime Somatics movement weekend workshop. I was more than surprised — shocked! — to find that I immediately experienced an almost miraculous recovery from chronic long-term tight muscles and pain! That’s all it took: The following week I restructured my whole life to take this training [to become a professional Prime Somatics practitioner].

A week later I found myself standing in front of the Somatic Systems Institute getting up the nerve to take that first steps into my beginning semester of training, to become a Clinical Somatic Educator myself.

The training was profound, precise. The academics were well thought out, organized, and paced in way that allowed me, with “only a martial arts background” to get more than I could ever have imagined. It was the fastest 9 days I have experienced, and ended too soon. But I was ready to practice what I was given. I now have the beginning tools to explore and “hone” new skills, before the next module of studies. I was a little torn having to leave newfound friends and the support of the teaching staff, but was happy to find the support staff are also our personal mentors in between semesters, and fellow students are just an email or phone call away, to chat, talk about our experiences, or resolve the “Big Question”... Which is the best restaurant in Northampton?

—Dave Bilyeu, Designer, Providence, Rhode Island

How has Somatic Systems Institute affected my practice? Heavens! How has it not? The mentoring I had from my faculty advisor was one of the most important tools I received. I started working right out of the box after the first semester....and I had some difficult cases. I sent her photos online and she sent back her input as to what my assessment was — it was like clinic with her watching. Had that not been in place, I would have had more trouble learning to “see” the client.

Somatic Systems Institute has sent me out into the world highly trained, supported by on-going mentorship (how often have I called the Director for help and guidance!?!?!) and deeply rooted in the principles of Clinical Somatic Education. Because we do so much work with ourselves somatically (in daily movement class), I’m better able to “see” what is going on with clients and to guide them to sense their bodies, movement and progress. The passion and enthusiasm, not to mention the technical expertise in training on behalf of the staff, has everything to do with the success of my practice. Somatics has changed my life; the way I perceive what happens with and to my body and the way in which I use my body. It has given me back my sense of physical independence and Somatic Systems Institute has helped me to get there!

—Martha Peterson Bixler, Massage Therapist, 18 years, Maplewood, New Jersey

One of the students said that not only had he discovered a wonderful healing tool but also he had found a new family. I feel the same way. [There were] wonderful conversations and bonding moments during meals and during practice sessions.

The faculty's teaching skills are superb.

I feel it an honor and a privilege to be a part of such wonderful exciting education. This new field has such potential to ease human suffering in such a huge way. I am thrilled to be a part of such a spiritual and monumentally important learning field.

—M.V., Yoga Teacher, Louisiana
The program is conducted in three semesters, with each semester consisting of two intensive 9-day modules. The two modules of each semester total approximately 125 hours of class time. The three semesters constitute 500 hours of training, providing an ideal balance of academic discourse, experiential learning, and clinical practice.

**SEMESTER 1**

The first semester of the program is concerned with somatic functional problems of the trunk and vertebral column. Students will learn somatic educational techniques that are consistently effective in eliminating fundamental disorders such as chronic back and neck pain, chronic headaches, sciatica, scoliosis, etc. The program includes lectures on kinesiology and the phenomenon of sensory-motor amnesia. Students also learn diagnostic techniques based on recognition of the typical postural disorders of the Landau Reflex, Startle Reflex, and Trauma Reflex. During the first semester, students undergo a written examination on their knowledge of the field of kinesiology.

**SEMESTER 2**

The second semester focuses on somatic functional problems of the shoulder joints and arms and of the hip joints and legs. Students will learn procedures for eliminating such problems as carpal tunnel syndrome, tendinitus, frozen shoulders, chronic hip and knee pain, pronated or supinated feet, etc., and attend lectures on neurophysiology. During the second year, students write an examination paper on their knowledge of the field of neurophysiology.

**SEMESTER 3**

The final semester is largely devoted to expanding the clinical skills of the students and to deepening their understanding of neurophysiology. Students enhance their ability to help clients solve functional problems related to the extremities, walking/gait, balance, and other conditions. Those who successfully demonstrate competence (via examination at our training site) in Prime Somatics and who have completed all assignments are certified as approved clinical practitioners of Prime Somatics and authorized to practice in the profession, in private practice or in any number of clinical, academic, and academic settings.

**SUPERVISED CLINICAL EXPERIENCES**

Throughout their training, students are provided with practice in clinical settings with public clients. Real-world experience with expert supervision and guidance mean students develop advanced professional skills rapidly.

**OUTSTANDING STUDENT SUPPORT**

As part of our mission to train competent and confident practitioners, the Training staff at Somatic Systems Institute is committed to providing all students with the support they need both in and out of the classroom. Throughout class sessions, faculty and support staff are available for clarification of material and techniques, and further discussion of theory and research. Between modules and semesters, students have access to a full-service Mentoring program where faculty and support staff are ready to discuss difficult cases, review academic concepts, or simply check in about problems or progress with their independent study of the material. Additionally, with email lists, online forums, and study groups, you’ll never feel left on your own with new or difficult material!
PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

Upon successful completion of Somatic Systems Institute’s Prime Somatics Professional Training Program’s coursework, assignments and requirements, students will stand for their certification exam to demonstrate their competency in the material learned to qualify for full Certification in Prime Somatics / Clinical Somatic Education.

CLINICAL SOMATIC EDUCATION SOCIETY™

Certified practitioners automatically become Certified Members of the Clinical Somatic Education® Society (CSES), the organization that is the official professional support and public education agency for the field of Prime Somatics. Certified practitioners are listed in the Certified Prime Somatics Practitioner Directory, the only official listing of its kind, available in print and online.

Society Membership Benefits

Active Certified Members are entitled to an array of benefits and support services, including:

- Certified practitioners’ names are listed in the Society's roster of certified practitioners provided to the public, including an searchable directory on the web.

- Your membership allows you to shape the future and vision of Prime Somatics throughout the world.

- Active members have full support of the Society, which develops, researches, and sponsors Somatics resources, courses, standards, etc. to support its members in benefiting the public and promoting public welfare.

- Members benefit professionally and personally from the Society's promotional efforts; marketing materials and opportunities; web listings of member workshops and other events; individual web pages and service directories for members; a complete online community including professional message boards and discussion groups; annual conventions; and a variety of other services that enable practitioners to maintain relationships with the Prime Somatics community worldwide.

PREMIERE STUDENT BENEFITS

In addition to our innovative training experience, Somatic Systems Institute students enjoy benefits that include:

- 25% discount on most educational products sold on our web site or at any of our retail locations.
- Wholesale pricing on retail Somatics products for sale to your clients and customers.
- Full-time Mentoring program and access to faculty and other support staff year-round throughout the course of your training program and beyond.
- Online support tools, such as student-practitioner forums, so you can find professional & personal help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Optional study groups and practice weekends hosted throughout the year between training modules.
- Group rates for premium insurance specialized just for our industry.
- Discounted membership in Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals association, for access to and affiliation with an international community of health care practitioners.
- Lifelong friends and community.
The program employs team teaching to enrich the student’s learning experience. Team teaching provides greater intellectual stimulation and closer supervision during clinical practice time. In addition, between semesters each student communicates with a mentor from the teaching team. Mentoring helps assure that students receive personal attention with regard to assignments, issues with clients, and staying on track for completion of the program by the end of the final semester.

**TRAINERS**

Training of Prime Somatics practitioners may only be conducted by certified Somatic Educators licensed to do so by the Somatics Board of Accreditation. Our trainings are conducted by these licensed instructors.

Our faculty are fully licensed trainers who have been continuously active in the training program for over a decade and have been instrumental in developing the training program and curriculum. They are certified practitioners who maintain private practices and offer periodic workshops open to both the lay public and health care professionals. Following is a partial listing of our training faculty.

**Karen Hewitt** is a certified Somatic Educator trained in the first program ever conducted by Thomas Hanna. She was the first Training Coordinator of the training program after Thomas Hanna. She has an extensive and distinguished background in classroom education, professional training, corporate training, and mathematics education. Karen is a founder and senior member of the Somatics Board of Accreditation, the international organization responsible for licensing and certifying Somatics programs and practitioners. Karen is a founding and Charter member of the Clinical Somatic Education Society, and has been in private practice in San Jose, California since 1990.

**Pam Bladine** is a certified Somatic Educator trained in the second program ever conducted, and has maintained a practice in Texas for over a decade. Pam is also a Massage Therapist licensed in both Texas and Oregon, with additional training in a wide variety of modalities including Zero Balancing, Polarity, Trager, Orthobionomy, Myofascial Release, and Cranio-Sacral Therapy. She has a strong interest in the arts, and has even served as events coordinator for the Old Chicken Farm Arts Center in San Angelo, Texas. In addition to her bodywork expertise, Pam has a Masters in Juvenile Correction, a background in dance, and over a decade’s experience in Hollywood motion picture and television production.

**PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

**Steven Aronstein** is the founding Director and President of the Somatic Systems Institute. A certified Somatic Educator trained in the second program ever conducted, he has been in practice in Western Massachusetts and the Northeast for more than a decade. Steven is the first person accredited to operate a Somatics training program after Thomas Hanna’s death. He is President of the Clinical Somatic Education Society, the official professional guild of Prime Somatics. He has worked in K6 education; and works with the High/Scope Foundation’s Education Through Movement program. Steven has studied Aikido, Tai Chi, and Qigong, and pursued a professionally tutored study of holistic Japanese medicine. He takes a special interest in chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, nutrition, and related matters.

– teaching personnel information continued on next page –
In addition to our fully licensed faculty, the training program is also staffed by a number of Trainers’ Assistants (TA’s). TA’s are certified Somatic Educators who are in training to become Trainers. They are involved in a multi-year process of apprenticeship and intensive hands-on work. To become a TA, practitioners undergo an application process and acceptance through both Somatic Systems Institute and the Somatics Accreditation Board, the certifying agency for Somatics.

Somatic Systems Institute strives to provide a premium experience for its students. All TA's working in the Somatic Systems Institute Prime Somatics training programs are experienced TA's who complete additional TA training at a separate, dedicated training course.

TA's offer the students in our training program even greater support. Rather than decreasing the contact between students and the primary faculty like in many graduate programs, they add significant program human resources to greatly increase the already uncommon level of personal support and one-on-one interaction. In addition to offering additional expert feedback, improving the team’s ability to directly monitor student strengths and difficulties, and enhancing small group classes and practice sessions, our TA's perform ancillary program duties which frees up primary faculty to work more closely and more frequently with students.

Training Location & Student Housing

The Training Program is held at SSI's national headquarters in Northampton, Massachusetts. The classrooms, practice spaces, and offices are located right in downtown Northampton, in the “Pioneer Valley” of Western Massachusetts. Northampton is nestled in the foothills of the Berkshires to the West and bordered by the banks of the Connecticut River to the East.

The Northampton-Amherst area in the center of the Valley is called the “Five College Area”, home to “Five College Consortium” of Hampshire College, Smith College, Amherst College, Mount Holyoke College, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst (the state university’s flagship campus). More than a dozen additional colleges abound to the North and South, providing students with a wealth of educational and cultural resources.

The Institute and the rest of the Five College area is located less than an hour from Bradley International Airport in Hartford, Connecticut; and less than 2 hours from Logan International Airport in Boston, Massachusetts and T.F. Green Airport in Providence, Rhode Island. Convenient shuttle service and mass public transportation is available from Airports. By car, we are approximately 3 hours from New York City; 1 hour from Worcester, MA; 2 hours or less from Boston; and 2 hours or less from Providence, Rhode Island.

SSI encourages students to stay in Northampton while attending the training so that they have the opportunity to spend more time and further explore concepts and ideas with fellow classmates who are all learning this new material. We have found that the more sharing, meeting, and group practicing students do, the stronger and faster their skills and connection to the work grow. To this end, for most of its programs SSI recommends affordable accommodations near the Institute, generally providing the most economical housing choices available.