

Youth Worker's Compass



CHILD PROTECTION TOOLKIT: PREVENTION OF BURNOUT, STRESS RELIEF, TRAUMA PREVENTION, AND TREATMENT

This publication was created as part of the Youth Worker's Compass Erasmus+ project.



Funded by
the European Union

Published by Szülők Háza Közhasznú Alapítvány (Parents' House Public Benefit Foundation)

The professional sections were written by: Annamária Sándor



**Funded by
the European Union**

The Youth Worker's Compass: Tools for Youth Protection project, ID number 2023-3-HU01-KA153-YOU-000177998, and this publication were realized with the support of the European Union in the framework of the Erasmus+ program.

The contents of the publication do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the funding authority can be held responsible for the content of this publication.

CONTENTS

01

About the Project

04

Introduction

08

Methods for Preventing and
Managing Burnout and
Stress Relief

87

Methods for Preventing and
Treating Trauma

97

Closing Remarks and
References

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Within the framework of the Youth Worker's Compass (NOMLEB 2.) Erasmus+ project, we held two six-day training sessions for 30 youth workers living in Hungary or Romania who have experience working with children and young people in state care.

During the training, participants had the opportunity to deepen their knowledge in the fields of child protection and youth work using creative, non-formal learning tools.

The project was implemented by the Szülők Háza Közhasznú Alapítvány (Parents' House Public Benefit Foundation) in Balatonfenyves, Hungary, in collaboration with the Romanian Asociația Pro Agriensis. The training sessions took place in June and September 2024.

The goal of the training was to support the mental well-being of child and youth protection professionals. Throughout the process, participants became familiar with various methods and tools to support their own mental health, as well as techniques they could apply in their work with young people. The participants were actively involved in the project from the preparation phase to its conclusion.

The training process focused on a trauma-informed approach as well as on stress management options and burnout prevention for professionals.

This training process was a continuation of our 2023 project titled No One Must Be Left Behind. You can read more about its results here: <https://tegyeljot.hu/hatarok-nelkul-ka153/>.



The first training unit of the process took place in June, consisting of a one-week training session focused on a needs-based worldview, specifically the prevention of burnout and stress management.

This was followed by the second training unit, during which participants had the opportunity to practice various stress-relief, stress-management, and need-fulfillment techniques, tools, and methods that they had learned during the first training week.

The third unit of the training was the second training week held in September, where participants shared their experiences from practicing the techniques over the summer. The main theme of the second training week was a trauma-informed approach, centered primarily on learning and practicing Peter A. Levine's 12-step technique.

At the end of the training process, participants compiled the outcomes of the three training units in this publication, which we are making available to the public in both Hungarian and English.

This publication provides support options and methods for addressing and managing acute threats to physical and mental balance as well as filling unmet needs.

Our method collection includes everyday, self-awareness, therapeutic, and energetic techniques, all of which have been personally tested and validated by one or more participants.



Our publication does not aim to provide a comprehensive overview of all available methods or to explore the scientific basis of these techniques. Rather, our goal is to present a wide spectrum of possibilities based on personal experiences—possibilities that can offer valuable support to professionals working with young people, both for themselves and for the young individuals they reach.

However, **none of the everyday or energetic methods we recommend should be considered as substitutes for therapies conducted by psychologists, psychiatrists, or psychotherapists.**

The descriptions of the individual methods were created by the participants of the training, so the tone, style, and language of these descriptions vary and to some extent reflect the individuality of the contributors.

We hope that this linguistic diversity will help readers find the methods that currently resonate most with them and perhaps even inspire them to try some of these techniques.

We wholeheartedly recommend this publication to anyone interested!

The participants of the program

...Because every life is precious!



INTRODUCTION

– ON THE NEEDS-BASED WORLDVIEW AND THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF UNMET NEEDS

Every emotion originates from both an external and an internal cause. On the one hand, there must be an external stimulus; on the other, an internal signaling system identifies motivations, values, and priorities for us. By understanding the aspects of a situation and ourselves that trigger a particular emotion, we gain greater control over our experiences. It is therefore essential to connect our emotions, thoughts, and behaviors—to know why things happen.

The impulses behind our emotions are rooted in physical, mental, and spiritual needs.

Everything that evokes an emotion in us can be traced back to whether our needs are satisfied or unmet. Put simply, our emotions continuously signal the degree to which our needs are being met.

Needs or demands are the resources required for the functioning of the human being: basic physical, mental, and spiritual states that can be expressed in a word or two, such as satiety, housing, elimination, health, tranquility, peace, security, intimacy, inspiration, creativity, spontaneity, responsibility, adventure, autonomy, trust, and so on.

As adults, we are responsible for meeting these needs ourselves. The ways or methods by which needs are fulfilled—referred to as need-fulfillment strategies—can be restricted or defined by our environment or societal structures. However, by not clinging to a single method deemed “good” by ourselves or others, we can discover new possibilities for fulfilling our needs.

We aim to provide support so that everyone can recognize their own needs and access an increasing variety of tools to replenish themselves.

Basic human needs are always valid and are everyone's inherent right. It is both our right and duty to ourselves to ensure that our "fuel tank" is full—physically, mentally, and spiritually.

The mere fact of unmet needs generates negative emotions, while the fact of fulfilled needs generates positive emotions.

Thus, emotions function like a car's fuel gauge, indicating the level of fulfillment of a person's needs.

WHEN OUR NEEDS ARE MET WE MAY EXPERIENCE FEELINGS SUCH AS:

- awe,
- reverence,
- trust,
- happiness,
- pride,
- peace,
- wonder,
- cheerfulness,
- liveliness,
- vitality,
- energy,
- determination,
- freshness,
- liberation,
- gratitude,
- excitement,
- calmness,
- delight,
- balance,
- restfulness,
- satisfaction,
- curiosity,
- enthusiasm,
- emotionality,
- being moved,
- relief,
- serenity,
- joy,
- freedom,
- passion,
- love,
- cheerfulness.

WHEN OUR NEEDS ARE UNMET WE MAY FEEL:

- worry,
- sleepiness,
- hunger,
- sadness,
- uncertainty,
- unhappiness,
- vengeance,
- guilt,
- disappointment,
- discouragement,
- numbness,
- anger,
- despair,
- pain,
- fatigue,
- outrage,
- fear,
- tension,
- rage,
- fright,
- irritability,
- dejection,
- desperation,
- disillusionment,
- exhaustion,
- distress,
- loneliness,
- shock,
- annoyance,
- restlessness,
- panic,
- terror,
- anxiety,
- shame,
- helplessness,
- disgust,
- suffering,
- confusion,
- agitation,
- numbness.

Any situation in which one or more of our physical, mental, or spiritual needs are acutely and strongly unmet—or less intensely but for a prolonged period—can act as a potential stressor, triggering the response we call stress.

The following life situations inevitably involve physical and emotional strain, and consequently, heightened need deficiencies compared to what is considered “normal”:

- Loss: the loss of an emotional object (such as an important person, community, beloved pet, or even a transitional object for young children).
- Change: changes in long-term life circumstances (moving, changing schools or jobs, starting a family, the arrival of a new family member or pet, a new relationship, deepening intimacy, spiritual growth, the emergence of a new skill or role, etc.).
- Emotional or physical neglect: being endangered or having one’s real needs disregarded.

When the perception and fulfillment of needs or resilience are insufficient, or if the processing mechanism (such as coping with change or grieving) is absent or functioning inadequately, one of the following acute symptom clusters may develop:

- Stress
- Crisis
- Burnout
- Acute physical illness
- Trauma

If a person's sensory system is disrupted or misaligned due to conscious or unconscious beliefs, injuries, traumas, or neurological traits, they may not feel certain sensations or emotions (such as hunger, sadness, or pain), or they may feel them excessively (e.g., sensory hypersensitivity), or they may misinterpret them (e.g., feeling hunger or craving chocolate when the actual need is for attention and love).

The deficiency indicated by the sensation, however, remains real—even in such cases. The challenge lies in its interpretation, which demands more energy and attention.

Annamária Sándor

METHODS FOR PREVENTING AND MANAGING BURNOUT AND STRESS RELIEF

The technological advancements of the 21st century pose immense challenges for both our bodies and personalities. We live under the constant pressure of information coming from television, phones, and social media.

The expression “information flood” aptly captures this phenomenon, which is as dangerous as an actual flood. Even without additional stress factors, technology and the often unavoidable multitasking that accompanies it place a significant burden on us. Over time, our brains struggle to process the overwhelming stimuli, leading to a state of over-arousal where it cannot fully “switch off” even when we want to rest.

The inability to process information can result in attention disorders, while the brain’s constant switching can lead to sleep disturbances. Both symptoms contribute to the development of psychological illnesses.

When addressing attention disorders, solutions may include focusing on smaller, specific tasks or becoming more mindful—consciously engaging in our lives. By focusing on what is happening in the present moment, we can avoid being led astray by thoughts that shape our reality, such as ruminations about the past or fears of the future. This approach allows us to let go of these mental traps and embrace the treasures of the present.

As we strive to adapt to our rapidly changing world, we may realize that our previously effective coping strategies no longer work or function only partially. A certain level of tension is beneficial for the body, as it generates a state of readiness toward the external world—a concept referred to as “tone” in medical terms.

Without tone, our bodies would be as limp as pudding. Thus, tension plays a crucial role in keeping our bodies functional. However, we must differentiate between beneficial and harmful tension. Beneficial stress causes our muscles to tense up, and once the emergency passes, they relax again. If we cannot relax afterward, however, a state develops that can have severe long-term consequences.

Successfully managing stress-inducing situations requires understanding the physical and mental mechanisms through which these situations affect us. By observing and identifying the processes within ourselves, we can handle these states more effectively, maintaining both our physical and mental health.

Additionally, it is essential to learn tension-relief techniques for handling everyday stressful situations effectively and swiftly, even in the short term. Alongside regularly using such instant techniques, it is advisable to undertake a complete overhaul of our lifestyle and mindset. This involves persistent but compassionate self-exploration to better understand our personality, strengths, weaknesses, tendencies, and needs.

One of the most important tasks on this journey is maintaining and nurturing our physical and mental well-being, with a focus on questions such as:

- How does the body influence the mind, and vice versa?
- What role do dopamine and serotonin play in the onset and resolution of stress?
- How can we reduce tension in our bodies through healthy eating, adequate hydration, quality sleep, regular exercise, and conscious breathing? How can we personalize these practices for ourselves?
- How do deficiencies in vitamins, sleep, or exercise contribute to mood deterioration?
- What patterns do we follow, and how do we behave in conflict situations?

Our collection of methods and practices offers answers to these questions, guiding individuals toward better stress management and burnout prevention.

COLLECTION OF SPECIFIC METHODS

THE JOY OF SPENDING TIME OUTDOORS

According to the biophilia hypothesis, observing animals—whether in real life or through images—has a calming effect on humans (O’Haire, 2010). Animals capture and hold our attention, helping us divert our focus from stressful situations to something pleasant, which fosters a more relaxed state. Regular experiences of relaxation contribute significantly to maintaining overall health.

Scientific research increasingly highlights the importance of our connection to nature as a key component of well-being. Experiencing nature and spending time outdoors enhance mental health, providing a sense of calm, joy, and an opportunity to absorb sunlight, which aids in vitamin D production—benefiting mental health.

As early as previous centuries, it was observed that proximity to nature helps alleviate symptoms of depression, reduces anxiety, and even offers physical health benefits. Spending just a few hours in nature can lower blood pressure and support recovery from respiratory, cardiovascular, and other systemic illnesses.

Nature positively influences self-esteem, vitality, positivity, commitment, and compassion. The Benefits of Nature:

- Boosts energy levels.
- Strengthens the immune system.
- Enhances brain performance and creativity.
- Reduces blood pressure and heart rate.
- Calms the nerves.
- Evokes feelings of wonder and gratitude.
- Promotes harmony between body, mind, and spirit.
- Mitigates stress, anxiety, and depression symptoms.
- Improves focus and concentration.

Nature holds countless wonders, encouraging open-mindedness and regular outdoor walks to discover its beauty.

THE BENEFITS OF PET OWNERSHIP AND INTERACTION

Research has confirmed that pets have a positive impact on mental health. Whether living in spacious houses with gardens or in cramped apartments, people happily welcome companion animals into their lives. These animals require care and attention, but they reciprocate with abundant affection, which in turn benefits our mental well-being. Companion animals accept and bond with us despite our flaws and weaknesses, forming a unique connection with their owners that differs from relationships with other people. Certain animals—especially dogs—also encourage the development of social connections, as owners regularly need to take their pets for walks. This routine not only gets them out of the house but also involves physical activity, which can improve mood.

Emotional Effects: Engaging with animals has a positive impact on emotional development, benefiting both children and adults. In therapeutic settings, interacting with animals boosts self-confidence and improves mood. Participants experience the unconditional acceptance and love that animals offer, which is deeply fulfilling. For instance, studies show that petting a dog for just a few minutes can increase the production of serotonin, prolactin, and oxytocin—hormones that enhance feelings of happiness. A dog's love is never conditional. It greets its owner with the same enthusiasm, whether they've had a bad day, are struggling financially, or are dealing with other personal challenges. Dogs are also capable of recognizing human emotions and responding empathetically. They can share in their owner's sadness or grief, offering comforting companionship.

Pet ownership and working with animals help individuals, whether children or adults, to develop perseverance, purposefulness, discipline, and a sense of responsibility. Since much of the communication with animals occurs through body language, interacting with pets can also make people more sensitive to the nonverbal expressions of others.

Social Effects: Pets provide excellent companionship and significantly reduce feelings of loneliness. Pet owners or animal enthusiasts often form communities characterized by a sense of unity and belonging. For example, walking a dog not only encourages social interaction but can also create opportunities to connect with others in similar circumstances, building friendships and strengthening the feeling of being part of a group.

SLEEP

The relationship between stress and sleep is mutually reinforcing. Stress impacts the quality of sleep, while sleep deprivation can increase stress levels. Sleep plays a critical role in processes such as cellular regeneration and the recovery of the nervous system. The quality and quantity of rest significantly influence our mental and physical performance the next day.

A poorly rested nervous system has a much lower threshold for stimuli compared to its normal state, leading to quicker and more severe stress responses throughout the day. Without sufficient, restorative sleep, our vulnerability to stress increases, and our ability to handle tense situations diminishes.

This cycle creates a vicious loop: sleep regulates the body's stress response, and a lack of sleep activates this response, leaving us more frustrated and stressed. Sleep deprivation can also lead to irritability, anxiety, mood swings, and reduced concentration.

Sleep deprivation elevates cortisol levels in the body as it attempts to compensate for the missing energy. This heightened cortisol production impairs our ability to manage stress, tipping the balance away from rational thinking toward stronger emotional impulses.

Adequate and high-quality sleep is one of the most effective—and cost-free—remedies for stress, contributing significantly to maintaining overall health.

SHADOW WORK – SELF-AWARENESS

Without darkness, there is no light, and thus, I believe that in the long run, our research work can only be effective if we are willing to "vivisect" our less illuminated parts—delving relentlessly yet compassionately into the psychological contents that operate within us and drive our actions. By doing so, we can become better friends and "physicians" to ourselves. Through this self-education, we not only progress on the path of moral perfection but also extend a helping hand to our fellow human beings in our daily lives and/or professions.

Our "darker" parts are referred to by Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) in his analytical psychology as the Shadow (Jung: Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious).

The Shadow encompasses those repressed, denied, and unconscious aspects of ourselves—our traits and sides that are not integrated into our conscious identity. Left unexamined, the Shadow can make us unwell, but confronting it can lead to healing. Jung expressed this by stating that to confront someone with their Shadow is to bring them face-to-face with their light, thereby allowing them to discover their spiritual roots and True Self.

The Shadow, then, is everything we do not want to be, everything we refuse to face or identify with. However, these psychological contents ensure that despite all efforts, we are confronted with the very opposite of what we desire. These unacknowledged aspects of the Shadow are "projected" outward onto the external world—onto an anonymous evil, perhaps—because we are afraid to acknowledge that we are their source. Projection means making these "disliked" internal contents external because we cannot accept them as part of ourselves.

In this inner excavation, the Shadow often manifests itself in physical symptoms, which eventually compel a person to live out and confront their disowned aspects. Therefore, it is not enough to merely accept the Shadow; it must also be loved. The qualities and psychological contents we have judged as hostile hold the key to unlocking the fullness of the world.

By recognizing that every one of our fellow human beings faces the same struggles, we can shed the rigid behavioral patterns we have forced upon ourselves and, instead, become truly ourselves.

The rigid regulation of behavior can indeed provide us with many comfortable roles—like garments we can put on to cover our reality depending on the situation. However, in the long run, it can alienate us from our fellow human beings and turn into a life of deception. This stage of development, instead of involving the constant exchange of false self-identifications and masks, can become the key to living an authentic life and to truly helping others with love.

But how can we become healers of this wounded part of ourselves, the part that leads us to our True Self? Rüdiger Dahlke's book *The Shadows of the Soul* serves as an excellent guide in this endeavor. In addition, it is essential to recognize that one can only heal by awakening their feminine self. By doing so, we can cultivate feminine qualities such as compassion, patience, respect, kindness, release, care, and sensitivity, all of which support our development. Non-acceptance is a survival strategy of the small self, the ego—a defense mechanism against reality that forms a kind of mental shell or armor. While it may protect us from emotions that seem threatening, it also traps us in a state of comfortable numbness.

Awakening and exercising these qualities are equally crucial when we respond to external rejection with inner rejection—whether this rejection is directed at us by others or is something we impose on ourselves.

Thus, by awakening our feminine side, the child within us can also heal and become the key to our development. This cherished childlike soul is instinctive, trusting, intuitive, intelligent, creative, imaginative, passionate, curious, open to wonder, playful, energetic, enthusiastic, lively, spontaneous, gentle, and sensitive. Moreover, it is ready to connect, express its feelings and desires, and turn toward itself and others with love and trust.

AUTOGENIC TRAINING

Autogenic training aims to reach the soul through the body and thereby relieve stress. It was developed by the German psychiatrist Johannes Heinrich Schultz (1884–1970) and is part of relaxation therapies.

The term comes from the Greek words "auto" (self) and "gen" (developing). The physiological background of the method is that our body not only receives information from the brain, but also from various organs, which then feedback to the brain centers and influence perceived emotions.

The doctor researched hypnosis for a long time, so he had an in-depth understanding of the effects of suggestion. The method is based on the realization that the human body and soul can function and react independently of each other, meaning they are mutually capable of influencing one another.

During autogenic training, by switching over the body's vegetative functions, we are able to bring our body into a state of calm. Autogenic training (AT) is a form of self-hypnosis performed on a mental level, aimed at relaxing the body by focusing attention on it, thus allowing the soul to also take a deep breath. During the practice, blood pressure decreases, and breathing and pulse slow down. In this way, we are able to relieve the stress that accumulates during everyday life.

The method can be helpful for almost everyone and is effective in cases of overload, headaches, breathing difficulties, sleep disorders, depressive states, psychosomatic diseases, and many other health conditions. The exercises in phase 1 of autogenic training are focused on the body, while phase 2 involves a so-called "waking dream" technique, in which we can bring images to life in our imagination. These images then find their way to our conscious mind, allowing them to be illuminated by consciousness.

Autogenic training can be learned from a trained specialist.

Autogenic training is recommended for anyone who wishes to lead a more balanced life, but it is especially beneficial in the following situations:

- Panic disorder or panic-like symptoms,
- Stressful workplace,
- Everyday tension,
- Frequent irritability or fatigue,
- Difficulty concentrating,
- Trouble falling asleep,
- High blood pressure,
- Digestive disorders (e.g., reflux, frequent diarrhea).

The essence of the method lies in achieving physical and mental relaxation through exercises performed with internal focus and passive attention directed towards oneself. In this relaxed state, which borders on sleep, the mind can influence the body's self-regulatory system. This system controls circulation, heart rhythm, and breathing and allows stress reduction through the relaxation of the autonomic nervous system.

The physiological basis of the method is that our body not only receives information and instructions from the brain but also provides feedback to brain centers based on the state of the heart, lungs, and muscles, which influences perceived emotions. When we relax our muscles, the brain receives a signal that it is a time for rest, prompting the body to enter a "low-power mode." As a result, blood pressure decreases, breathing and pulse slow, and the emotional state shifts towards calmness. This creates a feedback loop similar to the principle of "vicious circles" (*circulus vitiosus*), but in this case, it works in a positive, reinforcing manner.

Autogenic training incorporates elements of yoga (postures, breathing techniques) and hypnosis (sensations of heaviness and warmth). It is a self-suggestive method, meaning that once the technique is mastered, the training can be practiced independently.

To achieve the desired positive effects, regular practice is essential. It is important to understand that autogenic training alone is not sufficient to treat severe physical or mental illnesses and does not replace medical or psychological treatment provided by professionals.

To learn the technique, it is recommended to practice with a qualified trainer, preferably in a group setting. During the learning phase, it is necessary to dedicate at least 20 minutes twice a day to home practice.

The exercises should be performed in an undisturbed environment and in a comfortable, relaxation-promoting position. It is advisable to learn them in a seated position, as this allows the exercises to be performed at any time.

To master autogenic training, the following are essential:

- Exclusion of external stimuli,
- Reduction of internal urges,
- Repetition of learned visualizations in the mind,
- Passive concentration.

The technique of autogenic training can be learned by almost anyone. With sufficient practice and mastery of the skill, the method can be performed anywhere, and external noise will no longer disrupt the process.

The Exercises in Autogenic Training

Autogenic training begins with general muscle relaxation and calming, followed by six core exercises:

1. The heaviness exercise,
2. The warmth exercise,
3. The heart exercise,
4. The breathing exercise,
5. The abdominal exercise,
6. The forehead cooling exercise.

Since autogenic training induces a modified state of consciousness, the exercises are followed by a "return phase." This includes tensing the muscles, gradual stretching, small movements, and only then opening the eyes to conclude the practice.

With consistent practice, once the method has become a daily routine, it generally takes about 2-3 months to see the disappearance of symptoms and the establishment of physical and mental balance.

Sources:

- <https://bhc.hu/magunkrol/cikkek/2012/autogen-trening>
- <https://www.neurologen-und-psiater-im-netz.org/psychiatrie-psychosomatik-psychotherapie/therapie/entspannungsverfahren/autogenes-training/>

Books:

- Jakab Margó: Gyakorlati útmutató az autogén tréninghez - <https://www.semmelweiskiado.hu/termek/643/gyakorlati-utmutato-az-autogen-treninghez>
- Autógén tréning (ANimula Kiadó) - <https://animula.hu/konyv/autogen-trening>
- Dr. Kai Kermani: Autogén tréning - Mozgósítsuk tudatunk erejét testi és lelki egészségünk védelmében! - https://bookline.hu/product/home.action?_v=Dr_Kai_Kermani_Autogen_trening_Mozgo&type=20&id=406708

INNER SMILE – TAOIST PRACTICE

On our journey, increasing inner joy can also bring us closer to ourselves. Many people wake up in the morning with a sense of "anxious energy depletion," and this can be alleviated by thoughts that serve as "healing joy mantras."

The inner smile directs the energy of smiling toward our vital organs and glands.

In the morning, when we wake up—whether still lying in bed or after getting up but remaining calm—dedicate a few minutes to the following practice:

Close your eyes and visualize your body in front of you.

Choose a specific body part, organ, or system (e.g., brain, heart, lungs, liver, pancreas, intestines, spine, nervous system, etc.).

As you focus on it, simply smile at it genuinely, letting your mouth form a smile, radiating love and warmth toward it.

When your attention wanders, redirect it to another part of your body, smile at it too, and send it love and gratitude for the work it does within you.

A sincere smile radiates loving energy, activating healing power, increasing energy levels, and balancing the entire body, including organs, endocrine glands, muscles, and the nervous system.

What can we gain from this practice, beyond feeling better physically and emotionally by generating serotonin in our body and love in our heart?

True joy enables us to embrace positive energies, to confront our fears, and to cultivate additional positive emotions, thereby raising our energy levels. It can cleanse our thoughts and enhance our intuition.

Time required: about 5 minutes, or as much time as you are willing to devote.

BUBBLE BLOWING

Bubble blowing is a simple yet effective method for self-awareness and stress management. This activity is not only entertaining but also offers deeper emotional and mental benefits. Bubble blowing can be beneficial for all age groups.

It helps reduce stress and find emotional balance. Since deep breaths are required during the activity, it naturally slows the heart rate and reduces stress hormone levels. Additionally, blowing and observing the bubbles aids in focusing on the present moment, promoting mental clarity and inner peace.

Target audience: Bubble blowing is beneficial for all age groups but is particularly recommended for children, young adults, and adults with stressful lifestyles.

For children, it offers a playful way to manage emotions, while for adults, it provides a simple but effective stress-relief technique.

Self-awareness: During bubble blowing, individuals can become more attuned to their emotional state. Blowing and observing the bubbles fosters mindfulness and emotional awareness, promoting inner peace.

Stress relief: The deep, rhythmic breathing involved in bubble blowing naturally slows the heart rate and lowers stress hormone levels. This activity helps with relaxation and reduces anxiety.

Creative self-expression: Experimenting with different techniques, sizes, and shapes of bubbles helps release inner tension and facilitates emotional processing.

Specific examples of practical applications:

- Child therapy: A school counselor uses bubble blowing to calm anxious or stressed students. Children can learn to manage their emotions and stressful situations in a playful manner. The bubbles can serve as metaphors for understanding and managing emotions.

- Family or community entertainment: Bubble blowing is an excellent family activity. Shared bubble-blowing experiences strengthen family bonds while everyone enjoys the activity together.
- Workplace stress management: Some companies have introduced bubble blowing as a stress-relief activity in the workplace. Short bubble-blowing breaks—similar to smoke breaks—can help employees refresh and refocus.

QIGONG

Qigong (traditional Chinese: 氣功, pinyin: Qigong) is a comprehensive system of knowledge developed within Taoism and the main Chinese philosophical traditions, focusing on psychological and physical well-being. Broadly speaking, qigong is the art of maintaining and enhancing health, as well as a science, philosophy, mindset, and a method for exchanging information and energy with the universe. It is used for relaxation, self-healing, meditation, self-cultivation, and martial arts training.

The term qi refers to energy or life force, while gong means cultivation or practice. Technically, qigong practice is divided into three main components:

1. Tui Na ("energetic massage"),
2. Dao Jin (general Eastern gymnastics),
3. True Qigong ("working with energies").

Today, the beneficial effects of qigong exercises are recognized all around the world. Various styles have been spread by Chinese qigong masters to different corners of the globe. This globalization was facilitated partly by China's openness to the outside world and partly by the restrictions still imposed on such practices within China, leading many masters to leave their homeland. Currently, a new movement is emerging in China, Europe, and the United States aimed at preserving the values of qigong in the Western world, while supporting its development with modern scientific methods.

When it comes to the scientific foundations of qigong, many Western doctors reject it alongside other alternative healing techniques. At best, they regard it as a beneficial and healthy form of exercise. This contrasts with Chinese medicine, where qigong enjoys full recognition and legitimacy.

Qigong and Martial Arts

Qigong forms the foundation of all Eastern martial arts. In this context, it is used to develop internal strength and to neutralize opponents with the power of the mind.

Here is an English-language video demonstrating this concept. A Chinese master explains and showcases the technique to skeptical American reporters: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nu99GRUUN6Y>

In martial arts, circular movements are always present because they draw up the internal "qi" (energy, life force) from what is known as the "lower dantian" (dandien). A skilled martial artist never relies on muscular strength but instead utilizes this internal energy along with the opponent's own force. Perhaps the most well-known style is Shaolin Kung Fu, but Tai Chi Chuan also belongs to this category.

While qigong consists of gentle movements, tree postures, and meditation aimed at gathering energy and clearing energy pathways, Tai Chi and other martial arts apply this internal strength/energy in practice. This is why every martial art includes qigong training, as it provides the foundational skills necessary for combat.

The movements practiced in qigong improve balance, coordination, flexibility, muscular strength, and endurance. Deep breathing, synchronized with the movements, promotes relaxation and enhances the connection between body and mind. By regulating the breath, one can gain control over certain bodily functions typically not governed voluntarily, such as the heartbeat.

In Chinese philosophy, Qi is the bioelectric energy that sustains our physical and mental well-being. When this energy is balanced through qigong practice, everything flows smoothly and in harmony, leading to physical, mental, and spiritual health. Qigong ensures that all of the body's bones, joints, and muscles are engaged. For beginners, the primary goal is to integrate regular movement into daily routines.

Qigong can be practiced by anyone, regardless of age, gender, body size, or even physical disabilities.

Specially designed healing energy exercises, combined with proper breathing techniques, significantly improve cardiovascular health, flexibility, coordination, reflexes, and self-control. Additionally, it aids in weight management, boosts self-confidence, and reduces stress. Beyond these benefits, practitioners have the opportunity to master a fascinating art while learning highly practical self-defense techniques that also promote better health.

Resource Requirements:

- Equipment: A calm environment
- Time: Ideally one hour, at least once or twice a week
- Expertise: It's recommended to learn the basics from a qualified instructor

SOLITUDE

Spending time alone, also known as "me-time," boosts creativity and indirectly reduces stress, as well as the risk of depression and anxiety. Being alone doesn't have to mean feeling lonely. Learn to make the most of your me-time to do amazing things for your body and mind. Sometimes, there's nothing better than spending the evening alone on the couch, watching TV, journaling, or skipping group workouts in favor of a long trail run.

There's a significant difference between choosing solitude and experiencing loneliness due to circumstances. In the former case, it's easier to embrace the positive effects, but even in the latter, it's possible to shift perspectives.

Even more distinct is the contrast between solitude and loneliness, as the two are not directly related. You can be alone without feeling lonely and experience loneliness even in a partnership or community. Loneliness is often an inner feeling of lack, disconnected from external realities, and it causes stress.

Humans are social beings, yet everyone needs time alone. Solitude has many benefits: it recharges the brain, boosts creativity, improves performance, enhances empathy, and strengthens the desire to help others. Solitude is time that could be spent with someone else but is instead chosen to be spent with oneself.

Throughout most of your day, you work, socialize online or in person, or talk on the phone. If you think about it, you're rarely alone. Social media offers even more ways to avoid solitude. Yet, when you are alone, your only company is yourself. You can reflect, potentially surprising yourself with realizations—such as discovering dissatisfaction with your current situation. These feelings shouldn't be avoided but gently worked through.

The people you truly love are always with you in your moments of quiet solitude. This reveals who you carry in your heart and who you leave behind. Your soul belongs, in pieces, to others—your family, friends, or partner. In moments of solitude, these emotions intensify, showing you which friends bring peace or frustration and which family members you feel compelled to please.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplation is deep thinking, ideally in calm, pleasant, peaceful surroundings, alone, with distractions removed. It can be seen as the detailed, meticulous analysis of a specific situation, event, tension-causing element, or stress factor, its repeated consideration, and, when necessary, the search for solutions. It is important not to pressure ourselves to find an immediate solution.

We should look for similar situations in our lives that we have successfully resolved, or similar stressful situations we have overcome. Reflect on how we acted then, try to feel the relief we experienced when the issue was resolved, and consider the current stress factor in this positive context.

The solution or relief is unlikely to come immediately. It may happen that we fall asleep during contemplation. Don't resist! Not only at night but even during the day, a little sleep can be a good advisor, and it is not only relaxing but also helps relieve stress.

Another effective form of contemplation may involve completely detaching our thoughts from the present and trying to mentally return to a time or place where we felt happy, safe, and wonderful. Relive a joyful hug, gaze at a beautiful landscape, look at old photos, or relive pleasant moments. Future beautiful plans can also have a calming and relaxing effect on our restless thoughts and agitated state, or they may uplift us, filling us with optimism. Those who make plans feel that there is a tomorrow, there is a way out, the world won't fall apart today, and the current situation is temporary, soon to pass or be resolved.

How it Works: Ideally, if we have the opportunity to contemplate in a calm state, it can have a relaxing effect on both the body and the mind. However, if we are thinking about solving a problem, the process of reconsideration may stir us up, much like tearing open an infected wound. It may hurt at first, but it is the only way to clean it. Through contemplation, we become a little like our own psychologists. If, after several attempts, we still cannot reach a solution, we should turn to a professional for help.

Tool Requirements: Contemplation can be done anywhere and anytime, as long as we are not engaged in mental work, but to be effective, we need to create the right conditions. It is good to be in a place where we can feel safe and at ease: a pleasant room, the park, nature, or anywhere that feels like our favorite environment.

Time Requirements: Set aside time for contemplation! Contemplation is not a particularly time-consuming activity; we can contemplate for a few minutes or even hours.

Expertise: Contemplation does not require expertise in itself, but solving situations often does. When we feel like the waves are crashing above our heads and our knowledge is insufficient to stay afloat, when it is not enough to find a solution, we should look for the right expert.

FOREST BATHING

Although forest bathing is an ancient stress-relief method, it has only recently emerged as an extraordinary innovation on the commercial market. According to the organizers of relaxation practices, it is necessary but not mandatory to do it under guidance; it can also be done alone. The method is effective even if we do not believe in it, and there is no need for someone to explain feelings to us. These will naturally surface during a pleasant walk in the woods combined with focused attention.

Forest bathing is more than just a simple walk in the forest; it is a deep, complete immersion in nature that engages all the senses. The mindful and conscious (possibly guided) relaxation walk is about reconnecting with nature and our inner natural being, returning to a fuller, more meaningful life.

It helps us find our place in the world and the cycle of life. Forest bathing, which is becoming increasingly popular worldwide, is a wellness, relaxation, and health-preserving technique based on the Japanese Shinrin-yoku method, combining ancient wisdom with modern techniques.

Primarily, walking in the forest is a form of physical exercise, and we need it. Walking in a forest is a unique experience, but forest bathing is more than that; it is a meditative activity that emphasizes full presence in nature, facilitating a connection with nature as we become one with it. Shinrin-yoku, also known as forest bathing, is a form of therapeutic relaxation or nature therapy, an immersive sensory experience in nature, especially in forests, where all our senses are engaged to absorb the natural environment: listening to the rustling of leaves, focusing on the green foliage, smelling the scents of the earth, feeling the texture of the bark, and tasting elements such as forest berries.

The traditionally recognized forest bathing has three basic principles:

- Mindful presence, meaning focusing on complete immersion in the natural environment, engaging all our senses, and concentrating on the forest's sights, sounds, smells, and textures.
- No goal setting; the focus is on immersion in nature.
- A deep and meaningful connection with nature.

If we have enough time, we can incorporate many new meditation elements to clear our minds and fill our bodies with positive energy. While forest bathing is primarily interpreted as a summer meditation and relaxation activity, nature-based breathing exercises are effective in all seasons, promoting the purification of our blood and overall physical being, regulating our pulse, and ensuring proper oxygenation of the brain.

If possible, walking in a dense, higher-altitude pine forest, where the air is rich in ozone, has a positive effect not only on the respiratory system but also on the nervous system.

The colors of the seasons affect us differently, but soothing and life-enhancing colors are always present.

Green represents life, hope, and trust in the future. The blue of the sky symbolizes infinity and the essential water for life. The brown of the earth and tree trunks, while seemingly somber, awakens gratitude in our souls: gratitude for being, for living on Earth, for existence, and for the nurturing sustenance the Earth provides.

The autumn forest colors are so rich that they fill us with joy and make us feel as if we want to wrap ourselves in the colorful foliage. It is a magical sight when snow freshly covers the forest in winter. Recharge from it! White is the color of purity, offering honesty, trust, and a pleasant sense of calm. The fresh blanket of snow often leads us into a dream world. Let go of unpleasant thoughts at these moments.

The forest is an inexhaustible source of energy, enriching us with many positive experiences.

- If you walk in the forest, lie down on a soft moss blanket and feel how the earth's energy flows through your whole being. A few minutes of sleep on the ground, even on a thin blanket, can be more restorative than a full night's sleep. Lean your back against the trunk of a tall tree. The tree absorbs both the earth and cosmic energies, purifying the energies, retaining only the positive ones, as only positive energies nourish life. It transmits this vital energy to you; you only need to accept it.
- If you are in the mountains or on rocky terrain, sit on a stone. These stones are made of minerals and crystals, washed by the purest rain or spring water, energized daily by the sun, moon, and earth. It is beneficial to sit on these stones and reflect. Let the energy of nature fill your entire being, and recharge yourself with as much positive energy as possible!

- On a hot summer day, a mountain stream can almost fill you with new life. Sit on a smooth stone in a quieter part of the stream, dangle your legs in the crystal-clear water. The water not only cleanses the body but also the soul! Meanwhile, admire the green leaves of the trees, gaze at a tiny waterfall, listen to the birds chirping, smell the strength of the forest, and let nature penetrate your body and soul through all your senses! The stream cools and calms, but you can recharge from these memories for a long time, even in winter when you're cold, you can recall those sunny summer moments when the sun shone warmly on you.

What need does it fulfill, and what is it good for?

Proximity to nature, physical exercise, breathing, oxygen, ozone, light, color effects, silence, the "music" of nature, drawing energy from the earth and cosmic forces, forgetting, contemplation, and positive thinking.

How It Works: Pleasant stimuli affect our senses, the oxygen-rich air cleanses the respiratory system and the blood, which, combined with physical exercise, improves circulation, positively impacting overall physical well-being. The effect of vital energies provides complete mental renewal for someone who is physically well.

Resource Requirements: A forest is necessary, clothing suitable for the weather and terrain, love for nature, and attunement to it. Occasionally, a guide may be required, but it can also be done independently.

Time Requirements: A forest bath requires at least half an hour, but if possible, we should dedicate as much time as we can, as often as possible.

Expertise: One could say that this relaxation technique doesn't require much expertise, as it is very effective even when done in detail, but a guided forest bath would likely reduce stress more significantly in a shorter period than if we walk through the forest on our own. Both forms can yield significant results. The guide needs specialized knowledge, while the individual forest bather needs a love and understanding of nature.

NONVIOLENT/COLLABORATIVE COMMUNICATION

"Nonviolent communication (NVC) or collaborative communication is a method developed by Marshall Rosenberg, an American clinical psychologist, aimed at helping people communicate with greater empathy and clarity (with fewer misunderstandings) and, if possible, create win-win relationships.

In NVC jargon, nonviolent communication is often referred to as giraffe language, in contrast to the jackal language commonly used by nearly everyone in everyday life. An important aspect of NVC as a method is that its application does not require the communication partner to know or want to communicate nonviolently."

(Source:

https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Er%C5%91szakmentes_kommunik%C3%A1ci)

Key concepts that NVC works with: empathy, meaning compassionate attention to the other, honest self-expression, "objective" observation instead of subjective viewpoints based on judgments and prejudices, emotions, needs, requests, strategies for fulfilling needs, and the intention to connect.

One of the central themes of NVC is the question of clarifying repeatedly, both with ourselves and in relation to others, what level and intensity of connection we intend to have with the person at a given time and place, or even more generally.

If there is an intention to connect, then, in case of conflict, the NVC four-step model is the most effective way to establish this connection.

The four steps of NVC are: observing the situation, acknowledging emotions, identifying the unmet needs based on these emotions, then formulating these needs, and making a request either for ourselves or our partner.

The request should always be in the present tense, positive (what to do, what the partner should do), preferably easily actionable and clear. If our request is fulfilled, we should thank and express gratitude – not only to show appreciation but also because this simple positive feedback reinforces the partner's intention to cooperate.

Reading books on NVC (see the bibliography) can also have a significant impact on those who want to communicate consciously. However, to bring the knowledge to a practical level, it is worth taking a course with a trained instructor.

PAINTING, DRAWING

Whether we enjoy painting, drawing, making music, or writing poetry, practicing different forms of art has a positive impact on us. Unfortunately, most people only engage in these activities during childhood, but they can still benefit greatly from them as adults.

Painting is a visual language, and visual language is the most effective communication tool for spreading knowledge, increasingly taking precedence over verbal communication. Our creations convey thoughts and values and tell stories about our time or the inner world of the artist. Today, enjoying painting is no longer a privilege for a few. Many of the artistic styles and masterpieces we encounter in school or through various media are now on display in exhibitions. Developing creativity using effective artistic tools, including painting, is crucial. Painting also contributes to the development of thinking and sensory perception; without thinking or sensory awareness, a person cannot stand their ground in the world.

The developmental effects of painting: Painting enhances visual creativity, but it's also worth immersing oneself in it for the joy of the creative process. Trying out various painting techniques is an exciting adventure with countless sensory experiences. While painting, imagination takes flight, the curiosity to experiment grows, aesthetic sense, fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, concentration, and taste all develop.

Group creation further deepens social skills. Painting is a creative activity where we can thrive, contributing to maintaining order in our minds and regulating our nervous system. Like all arts, painting helps us connect with our emotional world, and by painting and expressing our experiences and feelings through colors, we communicate, thereby also developing emotional intelligence.

Drawing and painting are not only hobbies or pastimes but also tools that can help with the following:

- Relaxation: Drawing is an ideal opportunity to divert our attention from everyday stress and problems, helping to avoid burnout.

When we immerse ourselves in a creative task, such as painting a landscape, our brain can easily enter a flow state. This means that we can fully concentrate on the task at hand, which in turn makes us think less about the things in life that might otherwise trouble us. This is not something to be taken lightly when considering our quality of life and overall well-being. The greater the challenge the task represents, the more likely we are to achieve this favorable state.

- **Improved mental health:** Numerous studies have shown that creative hobbies can reduce and even prevent stress and anxiety. This is partly due to the flow experience mentioned above, but such activities also help alleviate stress and can give us an energy boost. Moreover, engaging in the arts reduces anxiety, which can prevent more serious mental health issues such as depression. This happens because we can express and thus process negative, troubling emotions and experiences in a creative, productive way. This is especially useful when we cannot put our feelings into words. Drawing and painting can create a meditative state, aiding in anxiety reduction and coping with life's difficulties.
- **Influencing brain function:** Engaging in creative activities activates different parts of the brain, which can improve various cognitive functions. Creating art offers the opportunity to learn new skills, grow personally, and enhance memory and concentration.
- **Positive effects on physical health:** Several studies have pointed out that practicing creative activities strengthens the immune system, reduces the risk of chronic diseases, and generally improves physical health. This is attributed to the fact that creative activities stimulate the production of endorphins, also known as the "happiness hormones," which provide us with a natural sense of well-being.
- **Helps with openness:** If socializing is difficult or if it's hard to open up to others, the arts can still be of assistance. This is important because social connections positively affect our overall well-being and long-term life quality. Communities related to drawing and painting can help in making new friendships. Creative hobbies don't necessarily need to be done alone; we can share them with others who have similar interests. For example, we could attend a painting or ceramics workshop, practice together with other musicians, or even join a book club. Whatever we choose, the key is to enjoy what we do – in that case, we will experience all the benefits mentioned above!

Finding a passion: Finding a passion that fills our free days with excitement and joy, giving our life new purpose.

Effects: stress relief, quietness, calmness, focus

Drawing and painting present a challenge for those who never thought they were capable of doing so. The joy of creating and the pride of producing something lasting helps develop creativity and self-expression, provides a sense of accomplishment, boosts self-esteem, and allows us to prove to ourselves and others what we are capable of.

What need does it satisfy: health, rejuvenation, rest, creation, flow, courage, peace, trust, security, purpose, quiet, solitude, equal opportunity, balance, acceptance, recognition, meaning, growth, attention, harmony, faith, authenticity, inspiration, playfulness, presence, adventure, connection, perseverance, creativity, visibility, independence, self-confidence, self-acceptance, bliss, self-expression, flexibility, spontaneity, freedom, beauty, learning, clarity, awareness, patience.

Resource requirements: Tools: any paint, surface, or painting/modeling tool can be used – the only limit is our imagination. Time requirements: there are creative activities with time constraints, but it can also be done freely for as long as feels right or until we finish our creation. Expertise: While it's helpful to have some knowledge, we can also rely on our intuition. Nowadays, the internet offers many techniques or tools, even in the form of tutorial videos.

COOKING THERAPY OR CULINARY THERAPY

Cooking therapy, also known as culinary therapy or kitchen therapy, is one way to "feed your mind and nourish your soul" at the same time. As a form of self-care, it can help relieve anxiety and is accessible to everyone. More and more therapists are using cooking to help people struggling with burnout, anxiety, and other mental health issues.

Mostly, it is a practical therapeutic session where you can cook alongside a therapist. As the session progresses, the person involved in the therapy opens up, whether through conversation or non-verbal communication. Cooking is used to treat a variety of mental health issues, including grief and loss, anxiety, and depression.

Preparing food is an activity anyone can do at home and can be incorporated into treatment plans in mental health institutions as well.

Why is Cooking Good for Mental Health?

- It requires concentration, so it can provide a healthy distraction, allowing one to slow down and "get out of their head."
- It can be a form of mindfulness.
- It awakens your senses, requiring you to focus on the present moment.
- It can help you enter a "flow state" as it is both challenging and enjoyable.
- It encourages the learning of new skills and expanding knowledge.
- It breaks the monotony of the daily routine, as you constantly need to try new recipes.
- It can improve the quality of life.
- It can reduce anxiety and emotional overload because, literally, the person cooking is in control. It also fosters a sense of accomplishment and success, bringing joy. Additionally, if we take time to appreciate and enjoy what we've made, it serves as a way to practice gratitude and can boost self-esteem. It allows us to create tangible results through a creative process.

- Additional benefits of cooking include fostering connection with others, healthier eating, and saving money.
- The positive effects of cooking can be enhanced by using healthy ingredients such as vegetables, nuts, whole grains, and fish.

THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE

Therapeutic massage is performed by a therapeutic masseur or physiotherapist for healing and rehabilitation purposes, typically for spinal issues or other musculoskeletal complaints.

In terms of technique, therapeutic massage is mostly Swedish massage, but it can also include connective tissue massage, fascia massage, periosteal (bone membrane) massage, and specialized manual lymphatic drainage massage for lymphoedema-related issues.

However, beyond its physical therapeutic effects, therapeutic massage can also have a relaxing and revitalizing impact on our entire being.

Resources:

- Equipment: Massage table
- Duration: 20-30 minutes
- Expertise: Therapeutic masseur or physiotherapist

CLAY MODELLING AS THERAPY: A TOOL FOR CREATIVE SELF-EXPRESSION AND DEVELOPMENT

Clay therapy, also known as clay art therapy, is an art therapy method in which people work with clay to express their feelings and thoughts. Clay modelling, as a therapeutic method, is gaining increasing popularity in the fields of psychology and pedagogy. This simple but versatile activity is not only a fun pastime for children and adults, but it also provides numerous mental, emotional, and physical benefits. During clay modelling, participants create various shapes and figures, offering opportunities for creative self-expression and the development of different skills.

Clay modelling as therapy is a simple yet effective tool for promoting mental, emotional, and physical well-being. It can enhance attention, reduce anxiety, and increase creative self-expression. Whether for children or adults, the sensory and creative experiences offered by clay modelling can contribute to a better quality of life and more complete self-realization.

The therapeutic effects of clay modelling are particularly evident in children, for whom play and creativity are natural ways of exploring the world. For children with autism spectrum disorder, clay modelling can be especially beneficial. The tactile experience of shaping and moulding clay provides sensory stimulation and develops fine motor skills. The soft, malleable nature of clay allows children to freely experiment while creating at their own pace and according to their own rules.

Clay modelling can trigger several positive emotional and psychological effects. Some of these include:

- **Stress Reduction:** Clay modelling can have a calming and relaxing effect, helping reduce anxiety and stress.
- **Joy and Satisfaction:** Creative activities like clay modelling can bring joy and satisfaction, especially when the end result provides a sense of accomplishment.

- **Tension Relief:** Pressing and shaping the clay can help relieve physical tension, which positively affects one's emotional state.
- **Concentration and Focus:** Clay modelling can help improve concentration and attention, enhancing immersion and the sense of presence.
- **Self-esteem Improvement:** Creating something with one's hands can contribute to increased confidence and self-worth.
- **Playfulness and Creativity:** Clay modelling offers opportunities for creative self-expression and experiencing playfulness, which can evoke positive emotions.

These effects can all contribute to better emotional well-being and improved daily life quality.

Here are some specific examples of applying clay therapy:

1. For Children:

- **Emotional Expression:** A child who is anxious may model shapes that symbolize their anxiety, such as a monster or a closed box. During the creation process, the therapist helps the child understand and process the causes of their anxiety.
- **Trauma Processing:** A child who has experienced trauma may work with clay to reconstruct the traumatic event. Re-enacting the experience with clay allows the child to process it in a safe environment.

2. For Adults:

- **Stress Reduction:** An adult struggling with high stress can find relaxation through shaping clay. Focusing on the clay model can help divert attention from stress-inducing factors.
- **Self-awareness:** A person participating in therapy for self-awareness may create a self-portrait or other symbolic objects with clay that reflect their feelings and thoughts about themselves. The therapist helps them gain deeper self-understanding through analyzing the creations.

3. In Group Therapy:

- **Team Building:** A group working together on a clay project can learn the importance of communication and cooperation. For example, the group can build a shared sculpture symbolizing their unity and common goals.

- Conflict Resolution: In group therapy, participants can represent conflicts and the dynamics causing tension within the group using clay. Analyzing these creations together can help the group understand and resolve conflicts.

SINGING BOWLS, SOUND THERAPY

The use of singing bowls is becoming increasingly popular as an effective self-awareness and stress-relief technique. This method not only promotes relaxation but also offers deeper emotional and mental benefits.

Singing bowls, or sound therapy, is an alternative healing method that relies on the healing effects of sound and vibrations. The aim of this method is to promote physical and mental balance, reduce stress, and improve overall well-being. During sound therapy, various instruments, such as Tibetan singing bowls, gongs, or chanting mantras, are used to aid relaxation and meditation.

The vibrations of the sounds affect both the body and the mind, stimulating cell regeneration, improving blood circulation, and reducing pain. In addition, singing bowls can help in the treatment of anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders. During sessions, participants often lie on the floor while the therapist uses different instruments, creating a meditative state that allows for deeper self-awareness and the discovery of inner peace.

Singing bowls not only have an impact on the physiological state but also on psychological well-being. The harmonious combination of various sounds and frequencies can help release blockages and restore inner harmony. Furthermore, group sound therapy sessions can enhance communal experiences and foster deeper connections among participants.

Singing bowl therapy, or the use of Tibetan singing bowls, is a holistic healing method aimed at harmonizing the body and mind. Below are some potential emotional and physical effects of sound therapy:

1. **Stress Relief and Relaxation:** The sounds of singing bowls can have a calming effect on the nervous system, reduce stress, and promote deep relaxation.
2. **Mental Clarity and Focus:** The sounds can help achieve clearer thinking, improving concentration and focus.

3. Emotional Balance: Sound therapy can assist in processing and releasing negative emotions, promoting emotional equilibrium.
4. Improvement of Energy Flow: The vibrations of the singing bowls can stimulate the flow of energy in the body, contributing to better well-being and vitality.
5. Improved Sleep Quality: The therapy can help in treating sleep disorders, as the relaxing sounds ease the transition to sleep and promote deeper rest.
6. Pain Relief: Some reports suggest that the vibrations from the singing bowls can alleviate physical pain, particularly chronic pain.
7. Enhancement of Meditation Experience: Singing bowls can deepen meditative states, contributing to spiritual growth and inner peace.

These effects may vary from individual to individual, and the effectiveness of sound therapy depends on personal sensitivity and openness.

Target Audience: Singing bowls can be beneficial for people of all ages but are especially recommended for those who lead stressful lives, suffer from anxiety, or seek deeper self-awareness. Children, adults, and the elderly alike can enjoy the soothing effects of singing bowls.

Uses:

- Self-Awareness: The use of singing bowls helps individuals gain better insight into their emotional state. The sounds and vibrations foster emotional awareness and inner peace.
- Stress Relief: The deep, calming sounds emitted by singing bowls naturally slow the heartbeat and reduce stress hormones. This activity helps people relax and decrease anxiety.
- Creative Expression: Using singing bowls provides a creative outlet. Experimenting with different sounds and vibrations helps release inner tension and facilitates emotional processing.

Concrete Examples of Applications:

- **Meditation Practices:** The use of singing bowls during meditation helps focus on the present moment and achieve deeper relaxation. The sounds and vibrations promote mental clarity and inner peace.
- **Therapeutic Sessions:** Therapists often use singing bowls to treat stress and anxiety. The sounds help patients relax and establish a deeper connection with themselves.

Group Sessions: Singing bowls can also be effective during group sessions. Group sound therapy strengthens group cohesion while everyone enjoys the activity and reduces stress.

PRAYER AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation, and the use of sacraments can impact us in many ways. Prayer has been a core practice since the establishment of religions, serving as the method for maintaining a connection with God. According to Christian theology, prayer is the dialogue between earthly mortals and God. Christian prayer is based on the certainty that an individual can always reach out to God. At any stage of a believer's life, or in any situation, they can communicate with the Lord.

It is important to distinguish between religious practice and prayer. Religious practice refers to communal rituals, including church attendance, participation in ceremonies, communal life, spiritual retreats, and confession. Prayer, on the other hand, is an individual act, a form of self-expression that can be an expression of thanksgiving, supplication, or intercession. Prayer is as old as religion itself, one of humanity's most ancient spiritual and intellectual creations. In prayer, a person can honestly express feelings, thoughts, and desires that are private and not meant for others to know.

For believers, prayer is perhaps the highest form of activity. The individual withdraws into silence, reflects on themselves and their actions, and tries to bring these before God in the light of faith. Through this self-examination, their self-awareness may grow, and their self-identity may be strengthened, allowing them to truly connect with God. Prayer is a way for individuals to express gratitude and seek guidance and help. Most people find comfort, peace, and strength in prayer. There is no set time or limit for how often we should pray in a day, nor is there any restriction on how many requests, wishes, intercessions, or thanksgivings we can include in our prayers.

Religion is one area or manifestation of human culture. Just as cultures resemble and differ from each other, religion bears these characteristics as well. In the life of a believer, religious practice is based on faith traditions, giving structure to life, and is marked by cyclical events. Church holidays are often observed at home by believers within their families, sometimes with a day off from work.

A believer accepts their creation and lives with the awareness that God has a plan for them, always, under any circumstances, and this can provide the answer to the meaning of life: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born, I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5).

IMPROVISATION

Improvisation is the act of creating something unforeseen, an action without prior planning, taking place in the here and now. It can appear in movement, music, dramatic action, or any creative or performative process.

IM - without

PRO - before

VISION - image

In other words: action without a pre-existing plan.

It frees spontaneity, thereby opening up vast spaces for creativity to unfold.

The practice of improvisation also helps maintain continuous focus, develop flexible responses to possible changes in stage or musical situations, and improve collaboration with colleagues.

Improvisation can be initiated from many different foundations: it could start with a text (such as a short dialogue, a verse excerpt, or a news item), a real or imaginary object, a location, specific character types, a particular plot outline, etc.

From a formal perspective, improvisation can be verbal or non-verbal (movement or dance); depending on the number of participants, it can be individual, paired, or group-based; depending on its outcome, it can be open or closed (in the former, the players explore how a scene may evolve, while in the latter, they focus on how to reach a desired endpoint).

Improvisation as a tool has gained significant importance in education and self-awareness: it is widely used by professionals in psychodrama, drama education, and theater pedagogy, and its role is increasingly prominent in music, visual arts, and other educational fields.

GAMES FOR STRESS RELIEF AND SELF-AWARENESS DEVELOPMENT

1. MIRROR GAME

Imitating movements, sequences of movements, and facial expressions in a playful way.

Target group: Children from 10 years old and adults.

Participants stand facing each other at a distance where their outstretched arms/fingertips touch. One person becomes the "leader," who can move, make faces, and gesture. The partner's task is to act as a "mirror" and replicate the leader's movements as accurately as possible. Starting with slow hand gestures, progressively the movements can become faster and even include full-body actions.

For example: "Stand facing me! Now you are my reflection. Do what I do! Watch closely, because you need to imitate every move exactly!"

Start with simple movements like touching the nose with the right index finger, pulling the earlobe with a hand, placing hands on hips, squatting, bending knees, standing with legs apart, jumping, etc.

Some sequences: clap – shoulder grasp, clap – shoulder grasp – nose touch, clap – shoulder grasp – nose touch – stomp with one foot, clap – shoulder grasp – nose touch – stomp with one foot – jump, etc.

Facial expressions: imitating different human emotions, such as smiling, sadness, sniffing, surprise, pain, etc.

Objectives:

- Pay attention to each other's movements.
- Imitate each other's movements.
- Strive for effective cooperation.
- Enjoy the game.

The Mirror Game has developmental effects in several areas: it primarily develops self-awareness, knowledge of one's body, improves observation skills, memory, and recall (thinking processes). The game also fosters emotional development through the expression of emotions and offers an opportunity to build and improve social relationships through cooperative play.

2. TRUST OBSTACLE COURSE

Target group: Children and teenagers

Required materials:

- Blindfolds
- Chairs, tables, or any items that can be used to create obstacles.

Game Description: The room is arranged to simulate a busy street, and the children are involved in the task. A route is designated, with a starting and ending point. One volunteer has their eyes blindfolded and must navigate through the obstacles with the help of a partner.

The guide can only direct their blindfolded partner using their palm.

The guide must adapt to the random obstacles and lead their partner along the "street."

Objectives during the game:

- Focus on each other.
- Build mutual trust between the players.

Game goal: The game aims to increase awareness and develop trust. Children experience what it feels like to depend on others and be less reliant on themselves due to external factors.

Game closing: The children can freely try out different roles. The game concludes with a discussion where participants can talk about their experiences, discussing how positive or negative the experience was.

Reflective questions for closure:

- How did you feel during the game?
- Which role did you enjoy more?
- When your eyes were closed, how did your guiding partner behave? Did they guide you gently? Did they ask if they could help? How did they lead you? Did you trust them easily?
- What was it like being the guide? Did your partner trust you easily and follow you?

3. PUZZLE SOLVING / SUDOKU

Description: The most common Sudoku is a 9 * 9 grid, which consists of nine 3 * 3 blocks. The numbers 1 to 9 must be placed in the cells so that each number appears exactly once in every row, column, and block.

The puzzle is usually partially filled, and the challenge is to fill in the remaining cells according to the rules. Proper Sudoku puzzles have a unique solution and no contradictions.

Requirements: Learning

Effects: Brain maintenance

Feeling: Determined, optimistic

Resources:

- Tools: Puzzle book, computer
- Time: 15–30 minutes
- Expertise: Not required

4. NEEDS MONTAGE

The game starts by gathering physical and emotional needs, which are written on a board, flipchart, or paper.

Afterward, everyone selects the 10 most important needs from the list and forms groups of 4-6 people. Each group creates a collage on an A3 sheet of paper using images from magazines, depicting the group's needs.

The most universal needs should be in the center of the image, and less common needs should be placed towards the outer edges. Each group gives a title to their collage.

Materials required: Large paper, flipchart, or A4 papers and pens for gathering needs, creating a personal 10-item priority list, glue, magazines, scissors, markers, and 1 A3 sheet per group.

Time required: 20 minutes to 1 hour, recommended for ages 10 and up.

This game addresses creative self-expression, collaboration, self-awareness, and the need for play.

Expertise: No expertise is needed.

5. “YES, AND...” TECHNIQUE

This increasingly popular technique in scientific research and project planning is based on allowing the mind to fully explore ideas without judgment.

The core of this technique is that during brainstorming, you do not allow your mind to dismiss ideas but simply accept them with “yes.”

Then, you continue the idea with “and...,” allowing the thought to evolve freely.

For example, if the problem is that you don’t have a garden or balcony, but you want to eat home-grown tomatoes, the idea may be to grow them in balcony boxes.

The correct application of the "yes, and..." technique would be: "Yes, let's grow tomatoes in balcony boxes, and let's find a variety that grows well in containers, ensuring that the box size allows the use of the corridor, and we can ask the building community if anyone else would be interested in growing tomatoes this way."

6. POPPING BUBBLE WRAP OR CLICKING

Description: Simple methods for relieving tension, preferably done alone, as they may disturb others.

These techniques provide immediate relief from stress in the moment, but it is important to note that they are merely "symptomatic" and typically offer only short-term comfort.

Need: Patience, choice

Effects: Calming

Feeling: Calm, composed

Resources:

- Tools: Pen, bubble wrap
- Time: 2–5 minutes
- Expertise: Not required

7. SPONGE THROWING

This game can be done alone, in pairs, or in groups. It is recommended for ages 4-5 and up, and can even be done daily.

A dry dish sponge is thrown at the ground with full force for 15 minutes. You pick it up and throw it again, continuing until the time is up.

This practice involves the entire body and helps relieve daily stress and tension.

Materials: Dry dish sponge, flat surface (possibly a blanket), timer

Time required: 15 minutes

GARDENING

The healing power of gardening has long been known. Therapeutic possibilities in gardening have been observed since the early 19th century. Worldwide, methods in which patients engaged in various outdoor activities were used to treat people with mental difficulties. Today, many countries have so-called horticultural therapies, where clients, under the guidance of a trained leader, generally work together with others to plant, water, weed, prune, or pick fruit.

Not only spending time in nature but also working with plants and making contact with the earth has a specifically healing effect, reducing tension and relieving stress. Research has shown that daily gardening relieves stress; stress levels have been measurably reduced in those who spend two hours a week outdoors, and hospital patients whose windows overlook greenery recover faster.

When we engage in planting or caring for plants, we break away from the daily rush, slow down, become quiet, and focus our attention on the small details. This focus helps us detach from stress-inducing thoughts and temporarily free ourselves from the burdens weighing on us. The meticulous work, the prolonged fiddling, calms and replenishes us with energy.

Engaging with plants, in addition to relieving the stress within us, has a significant anxiety-reducing effect. When we garden and focus our attention on the task at hand, there is no space for anxiety. As we are swept up in the joy of work, we break away from anxiety or even prevent the onset of the negative, self-reinforcing cycle.

Gardening also has a community-building effect, as it provides an opportunity for multi-generational family members to work together, and the time spent together emotionally revitalizes both the young and the elderly.

The stress-relieving and tension-reducing effects of sports and physical labor are well known; half an hour of outdoor exercise a day sets the foundation for our freshness throughout the day. Gardening, unnoticed, moves every part of our body.

Last but not least, gardening allows us to practice mindfulness, living in the present, as we typically focus on specific tasks. Moreover, caring for a plant gives us a sense of purpose, teaches patience, and, in the case of successful blooming, fills the caregiver with satisfaction, all of which contribute to better self-esteem.

CRAFT ACTIVITIES, HANDICRAFTS

The fast pace of modern society and the challenges of daily life often cause significant stress. Many people are seeking various effective methods to cope with stress. One such method is crafting.

Craft activities include embroidery, knitting, crocheting, ceramics, painting, and beadwork. Crafting not only provides a creative outlet but also has significant stress-relieving effects. Handicrafts induce a meditative state, offer an opportunity for creative expression and self-expression, strengthen social relationships, and improve time management. It also brings mental benefits, contributing to an overall improvement in quality of life.

Handicrafts as meditation: Knitting and crocheting require repetitive movements and concentration. This type of craft promotes calm and relaxation. The repetitive motions have a soothing effect on the nervous system and help enter a meditative state.

The role of creativity and self-expression: The creations made during handicrafts provide an opportunity to express our inner world in a visible form, which has significant stress-relieving effects.

Handicrafts and the communal experience: Shared crafting, such as in a crafting club or ceramic workshop, provides an opportunity to form connections and experiences, reducing isolation. In the past, women and girls attended spinning circles, organized in cultural centers two to three times a week. At these places, participants received support and encouragement from each other, contributing to maintaining a positive emotional state.

Crafting and time management: When someone commits to a craft project, it makes their daily life more organized. The process and completion of crafting projects provide time frames, helping reduce stress and create a schedule. The time allocated for crafting gives a stable point in the everyday routine, around which we can plan our day.

The physical and mental benefits of handicrafts: Crafting also has beneficial effects on physical health. Crocheting and ceramics develop fine motor skills. While crafting, the brain produces happiness hormones, which have a natural pain-relieving and mood-enhancing effect.

The resource needs of handicrafts: Crafting doesn't require significant financial investment, as the materials are relatively inexpensive and can often be reused. Craft activities don't necessarily require special training; most of them are based on traditions passed down from one generation to another.

SHOUTING

The practice of shouting was part of traditional Chinese medicine and folk culture, as it was believed to be beneficial for the lungs and liver.

Shouting, also known as scream or yell therapy, became popular in the 1970s. American psychologist Arthur Janov scientifically studied the health effects of yelling and screaming. He argued that by giving voice to long-suppressed emotions, old patterns begin to be released and cleansed.

It is not therapy if we regularly yell at someone at home or at work—it is much more destructive to our relationships and ourselves. However, if we shout in a controlled manner, with the proper setting, and without frightening or disturbing others, it can be specifically purifying and liberating.

Shouting works similarly to crying, as afterward the person feels better. Its advantages include being free and available to anyone. It is especially recommended for those who tend to suppress their real emotions, traumas, and true selves.

Shouting allows a person to engage with negative emotions, feel them, and then scream them out. Screaming activates the sympathetic nervous system, calming the mind and body.

Shouting can release endorphins in the body, and this hormone helps us feel better when we are stressed or anxious.

If long-term effects are expected, it should be used as part of a therapy with the help of a professional. In therapy, yelling, combined with self-examination and psychotherapeutic tools, helps uncover what may be behind certain mental problems.

A consciously released scream helps release the accumulated stress within us, making us much more balanced.

The need for shouting, however, is not only triggered by negative emotions: people also scream and shout when they are extremely happy or experiencing intense joy, such as at musical or sports events. People tend to respond more to joyous screams, which strengthen social bonds, and there is evidence that positive shouting brings people together.

CONTACT IMPROVISATION

Contact improvisation is a contemporary dance form that combines technical elements (rolls, touches, weight transfer and reception, tilts, falls, jumps, balance positions), body awareness, communication, self-expression, and creation.

Contact improvisation is the dance of touch, attention, and existence in the present. It involves physical communication, spontaneous events, responses to sensory situations, and a dialogue between bodies.

Contact dance is based on communication between moving bodies and their shared relationship with the physical laws that govern their movements (e.g., gravity, momentum, inertia, friction).

The term "contact improvisation" was coined by Steve Paxton in 1972. It was greatly influenced by Eastern martial arts (aikido, tai chi, yoga, release techniques) and various body-awareness methods (Body-Mind Centering, Alexander Technique).

Contact dance is an open, dynamically changing form that continues to renew, evolve, and develop to this day.

For more information:

- <http://www.tanc.hu/tancstilusok/kontakt-tanc>,
- <https://foldvarieszter.wordpress.com/a-kontakt-improvizaciorol/>
- <https://www.szazope.com/tancstilusok-abc-je/kontakt-improvizacio/>

CREATIVE WRITING

Creative Writing: When something happens to me or my acquaintances—something that can be joyful, tragic, educational, or interesting—I write it down in an appropriate form, slightly embellishing it. It's a useful hobby with a therapeutic effect.

"Creative writing" is a literal translation of the English term, referring to forms of writing that go beyond scientific or technical writing. In Hungarian, it typically carries a literary connotation. The term in this form usually pertains to a specific, teachable subject or group of subjects aimed at preparing individuals to create independent literary works or pieces on the boundaries of literature, intended for publication. This category includes fiction and nonfiction, narrative, dramatic, and poetic works, as well as essays and certain literary genres of journalism.

Source: <https://hu.wikipedia.org/>

"Creative writing is a well-developed formula, a precisely designed writing strategy. The development, practical implementation, and application specifically with the right hemisphere of the brain are linked to Vidi Rita."

Source: <https://kreativiras.com/mi-a-kreativ-iras/>

It energizes, relieves tension, makes you laugh, and makes you think. The ultimate goal is to unfold creativity. Moreover, it's very useful as it develops individual expression and imagination. It promotes the expression and understanding of emotions, which—as we know—are crucial for a healthy and balanced life.

Resource Requirements

Tools: Pen, paper, pencil, or laptop, computer...

Expertise: None required, but learning the method is worthwhile.

CIRCLE DANCE (SACRED CIRCLE DANCE)

Circle dance is a community experience in which we can experience the joy of dancing together. In ancient cultures, it formed the foundation of special occasions and holidays, created to strengthen community and unity.

Sacred circle dance is a dynamic, dance- and art-therapy method that creates deep, meditative, communal experiences without expectations, in an accepting, non-judgmental atmosphere, while dancing ancient steps to the music of various peoples. It is through movement that self-awareness and healing effects arise. The positive energy of the community has a multiple effect on the individual.

The spread of the circle dance movement worldwide is associated with Bavarian ballet master Bernhard Wosien and his daughter Maria-Gabriele Wosien. They collected the ancient, traditional dances of various peoples to help people reconnect with their ancient knowledge through dance. In the 1970s, they passed these dances on to the Findhorn Community in Scotland, and the first circle dance teachers brought this knowledge worldwide.

In circle dance, the steps and choreography are simple and easy to learn. The focus is on creating a space where we can experience the liberating power of the dances.

It is a way of expressing inner processes when speech has no place, when we would simply express what is going on inside us through movements. The emphasis is on enjoying the dance, not on dance skills. Sacred circle dance creates space for healing processes in the soul. It begins with a courageous step, and when we taste the magic the dance offers, we can reach a state of elevation.

This magic cannot happen without the community. Holding hands is fundamental and essential in the circle. The flow of energy and the transfer of elevated energy in all of us is the essence. In the circle, everyone is part of the same unity, no one is different from the other; we do not look at age, origin, or religion. We accept each other as they are, in their true selves.

Source: <https://tanc-coaching.hu/szolgalatasok/kortanc/>

RESEARCH

Research is nothing more than persistently, purposefully searching, learning, and discovering something new on a topic that interests us.

For it to become a stress-relieving method, it is important that we conduct research on something that personally occupies us, rather than just doing it for material gain or out of obligation. If there is a financial interest involved, it should be secondary; otherwise, this activity may become an additional stress factor.

For example, during local history research, we may discover things about a place or people that fully capture our attention, enhance our interest in the topic, dispel negative thoughts, and, in most cases, fill us with pride.

In research, we establish a theory or goal based on an assumption and then search for a path that leads to the result or understanding. We develop a technique that seems like the best way to achieve the desired outcome, but this may not always yield the expected results.

In such cases, we keep searching for new methods until we get closer to the result. If we are inspired by written sources, it's advisable to examine information from multiple sources to ensure accuracy. A single misleading source could compromise the outcome of our work.

If possible, it's worth verifying even if the information source is a scientific work, as different documents may contain contradictory statements on a topic. This adds another phase of work, as we need to determine what is true, as scientific research cannot rely on guesswork.

If the final result seems distant, we must not be discouraged or underestimate partial results, as their sum will eventually provide the successful solution!

- Need Fulfilled: Curiosity, exploration, attention diversion, discovery, satisfaction, pride.
- How It Affects: Captures attention, excludes stressors, diverts negative thoughts, and the nearing or achievement of the result may induce euphoric happiness.
- Resource Requirements: Varies depending on the type of research. Sometimes curiosity and a few books or sources are sufficient to achieve significant results, while other times large sums of money may prove insufficient. It is essential to maintain interest and positive thinking. Never begin research with the thought: "I will never be able to do this or find this." This mindset will negatively impact both the result and our mental state.
- Time Requirements: Depending on the topic, research can take anywhere from a few hours to years, or even across generations.
- Expertise: Every research project requires expertise, training, knowledge, and a willingness to constantly evolve. However, it also develops these abilities, always adding more to the base, bringing joy, satisfaction, and positive mental states to the researcher.

BREATHING TECHNIQUES

Among our life processes, breathing itself represents life. By breathing consciously, we are also able to regulate our emotional world, which is no coincidence, as the words “soul” and “breathing” are derived from the same root in several cultures.

We can significantly influence our well-being with breathing, and on a cognitive level, we can redirect destructive thought patterns (such as fears, worries, etc.) away from the past and future, allowing us to remain in the present.

In the present moment, we can access our earthly energy reserves and connect to the forces of the Universe. The synchronization of breathing and heartbeat also contributes to a better mood, stimulates life processes (digestion, detoxification, etc.), making it an indispensable tool for enhancing performance.

Proper control of inhalation and exhalation is one of the simplest and oldest ways to relieve stress. Breathing exercises focus on the diaphragm located below the lungs, aiming to maximize the amount of oxygen entering the body and regulate internal combustion processes.

It is essential to learn, master, and practice abdominal breathing regularly. The simplest way to start is by lying on a surface of appropriate hardness (not too soft but also not uncomfortable). Place a weight (e.g., a sandbag) on your stomach that conforms to the shape of your body so it doesn't slide off. Take a deep breath, focusing on keeping your shoulders and chest still, while raising the weight as high as possible with your stomach. Repeat this exercise until it becomes almost reflexive. This forms the basis of breathing exercises.

With this knowledge, rhythmic inhalation and exhalation help regulate the oxygen supply to the brain, relieve stress, and induce a state of calm. Sometimes, just a few deep breaths are enough to relax, while other times, performing the exercise for 3-5 minutes is beneficial.

Find a quiet place, sit comfortably, or stand with your feet shoulder-width apart for stability. Close your eyes, focus on the present, and block out distracting thoughts. Focus solely on your breathing. Inhale through your nose while counting to five, slowly. After counting to five and inhaling, exhale through your mouth as slowly as possible while counting to five again. Repeat this cycle for 3-5 minutes.

Let's sit down in a quiet place and make ourselves comfortable, or stand with our feet shoulder-width apart, in a stable position, possibly holding onto something for support. Close your eyes. Focus on the present moment, and let go of any distracting thoughts. Pay attention only to your breathing. Inhale through your nose while counting to five. Do this slowly. It won't be easy since we are tense. Once you've counted to five and taken in the air, exhale slowly through your mouth, making sure that the exhalation takes at least twice as long as the inhalation. Repeat this exercise several times in a row without taking breaks. Inhale – exhale, for at least five minutes, or as long as necessary.

Another method, perhaps more widely known, is breathing in for a count of four, followed by exhaling for a count of four. This is guaranteed to be effective, but the 4x4 technique may provide even more benefits. Inhale for a count of four, hold your breath for a count of four, exhale for a count of four, then hold your breath again for a count of four before repeating. To promote easier sleep or to achieve a deeper state of calm, use a breathing rhythm where the exhalation is slower than the inhalation: inhale for 4-6, 3-6, or 4-8, and you can increase the time for holding your breath in or out. It's important to focus fully on your breathing throughout.

Both the physical body and the mind, as well as the entire nervous system, need oxygen to function properly. This practice benefits physical health, the oxygen-absorbing capacity of the cells, the lungs, and the blood circulation. It also helps bring the body and mind into a state of calm and maintain that state. It increases and regulates the oxygen supply to the body, captures the person's attention during the exercise, improves concentration, and diverts thoughts away from stress-inducing factors.

It's good to have a quiet, comfortable place where you can be alone, but this practice can be effectively done even without such a space. Perform the exercise for 5-10 minutes daily, or more frequently if needed. With minimal preparation, anyone can learn this technique.

MOVEMENT AND DANCE THERAPY

Movement and dance therapy can provide support in:

- building connections,
- establishing trust,
- finding personal space,
- refining self-image,
- enhancing perception,
- developing body awareness,
- improving improvisational skills and spontaneity,
- changing communication and self-expression,
- deepening emotional experiences,
- strengthening self-acceptance and authenticity,
- processing losses and traumas, and
- increasing self-confidence.

As a method, movement and dance therapy evolved in the 1940s, particularly in Germany and the USA, based on modern dance. The developers of various dance therapy approaches incorporated contemporary psychological theories into their methods. Today, numerous dance therapy schools operate worldwide.

In Hungary, the first attempts began in the 1980s, aimed at treating patients with severe conditions such as schizophrenia in psychiatric departments. This method was used in social therapy, both as a standalone or complementary therapy, and today it is commonly used in outpatient self-awareness and therapeutic settings, as well as in addiction treatment. It can be applied in both group and individual therapy sessions, with adults and children, either as a therapeutic or therapy-like activity.

This practice creates a modified state of consciousness that is conducive to image-based thinking, emotional accessibility, and the refinement of spatial perception, with a dominant role of the right hemisphere of the brain.

The experience of existence (self-experience) strengthens, while ongoing self-perception and self-discovery occur within sensory and movement activities. Body-awareness work offers an opportunity for differentiating the internal body image, expanding movement repertoire, and developing improvisational skills. For instance, simple movements can sharpen our perception of sight, hearing, skin sensation, muscle tone, spatial awareness, and balance.

Reflective body-level functioning opens the way to previously inaccessible experiences and emotions. In paired or trio movements, shared experiences take place based on the movement form, muscle tone, direction, speed, and spatiality, creating real emotional safety.

This shared experience forms a space for different modes of connection and disconnection, making implicit memories accessible. The verbal processing of movement experiences allows for the recall of associations, memories, and thoughts.

As the group process evolves, it may include the development of personal stories, dream processing, and shared group narratives, facilitated by the therapist's interventions and interpretations.

Source: Merényi Márta: Mozgás- és táncterápia

READING

Reading is one of the best ways to relax. Psychologists also agree with this theory because when we concentrate on reading and the text, we essentially enter another world. Our muscles relax, and our hearts calm down.

In addition to relieving stress, reading has many benefits:

- It improves concentration
- It develops memory
- It expands vocabulary
- It can be a conversation starter
- It enhances emotional intelligence
- It helps acquire new knowledge
- It keeps the brain in shape
- It improves communication

Reading can be an imaginary journey, starting from childhood, such as traveling with Nils Holgersson, Tom Sawyer, or exploring adventures with the Native Americans.

Books can also bring vacation time to life, offering new landscapes, people, and situations to experience. You can feel the vulnerability of Jane Eyre or accompany a difficult, young girl's journey to happiness.

Reading can give us strength for our own struggles and provide heroes to admire, such as in Egri Csillagok by Géza Gárdonyi.

MORNING JOURNALING

Morning journaling (also known as "morning pages") is a technique detailed in Julia Cameron's book *The Artist's Way*. While she primarily recommends it to overcome creative blocks, I wholeheartedly suggest it to anyone who wants to start their day calmly and more focused.

It involves waking up, grabbing a piece of paper (or a notebook) and a pen, and writing down everything that comes to mind, just as it comes.

Benefits of Morning Journaling: One of the biggest advantages of this technique is that it helps clear your mind of the swirling thoughts, so you can start your day fresh and not be preoccupied with them throughout the day.

By writing out the fragments of thoughts that emerge from your subconscious, you can approach the day with a clearer mind, better focus, and greater calm. Think of it like opening a window in your bedroom to let in fresh air – it has the same revitalizing effect on your mind.

How to do it:

The rule is that there is no rule. You can write about anything, really anything. It doesn't matter if the text is coherent or if it's made up of nicely rounded sentences.

Feel free to jump from one thought to another, you don't need to finish a thought if something else comes to mind, just write it down, let it flow!

Don't worry about spelling or writing beautifully, just let whatever wants to come out, flow onto the paper freely.

This technique will be most effective if you use it in the morning, right after you wake up, because at that time your mind is still not fully awake. This way, you'll be engaging your creative right hemisphere of the brain, rather than the more rational left hemisphere.

That's why this journaling technique is great, especially if you are in a creative slump or if you want to bring your ideas to the surface, but feel like they're getting lost somewhere in your head amidst your daily tasks.

Julia Cameron recommends writing three A4 pages, but this can be adjusted to personal needs and possibilities. The morning journaling usually takes 15-20 minutes, which fits comfortably into your time. This is important because this method will be most effective if you write regularly, every morning—meaning you make journaling a habit.

The focus is more on consistency than on length. If you have 40 minutes for the full three pages, great, but if you only have 10-15 minutes, that's enough to get the most important thoughts out of your head.

Here are a few tips to make morning journaling even more effective:

- Since you'll be writing quite a bit, it's a good idea to choose a pen that you enjoy writing with and that feels comfortable in your hand. It may seem like a small thing, but after a few days, you'll feel the difference, especially if you don't write by hand regularly. We're so used to typing and entering everything on our phones that writing by hand often feels awkward. You can write in a notebook, on regular A4 paper, anywhere that feels comfortable, and where there's space for your "daily dose" of morning writing. Since this isn't the kind of journal you need to keep, and in most cases, you won't even read it back, you can use any paper that's handy and will fit your writing.
- The best time to do this is right after you wake up, integrating it into your morning routine. If you're the type of person who takes a while to wake up after getting out of bed, this method might be ideal for you, as it gives you time to "wake up" while writing.
- The secret to this method lies in its consistency, so it will only be truly effective if you do it every day. For me, it has become such a part of my morning routine that I look forward to writing right after I get up. Afterward, I can continue my morning tasks with a clear mind, and it's much easier for me to concentrate during the day.
- Start with whatever comes to your mind first, as soon as you put the pen to the paper. It could be what you dreamed about, what you did the previous evening, how you feel when you wake up, how you slept, etc. You can write about what you feel, something that's bothering you or weighing on your soul, or even what you see if you look out the window. You can also write completely random thoughts.

You could make a to-do list or a shopping list, vent, brainstorm, or just write about whatever feels good that morning. You can write about anything, really anything that comes to your mind. The essence of this technique is to allow the thoughts to flow freely, without limiting yourself in any way—just write whatever comes to your mind.

The key is not to overthink it, just write down what feels good. After a few weeks, you will start to notice the effects of morning journaling, but it's possible that after just 1-2 days, you'll already feel some changes in yourself.

Source: Julia Cameron: *The Artist's Way*

RELAXING MASSAGE

- Purpose: Stress and tension relief
- Goal: Achieving physical and mental harmony
- Target audience: All ages
- Benefits: Stimulates the skin and tissues, lowers pulse and blood pressure, enhances muscle performance, relieves stress and anxiety, improves sleep quality.

A foot massage is an effective way to rejuvenate tired feet, refreshing both body and soul.

The primary goal of a relaxing massage is to relieve tension, both physically and mentally. It is also used in couples therapy.

This type of massage is mainly used to relieve the stress and nervousness accumulated during daily life. During the treatment of specific body areas, endorphins are released, which have proven mood-enhancing and pain-relieving effects.

Although the massage cannot change our bad habits, it can be a great help in maintaining the health of both body and mind in the long run. Many people, alongside its well-known positive physiological effects, overlook the psychosomatic therapeutic benefits of regular massage.

After a massage, we feel refreshed and liberated, ready to face obstacles while preventing various diseases in the long run. The primary goal of the massage is to release the tension accumulated in both the body and mind. It can significantly lower the pulse and blood pressure, normalize cortisol and insulin levels, and help relieve tension. Muscles relax, and endorphin, serotonin, and dopamine production in the body increases, which are responsible for pain relief and a pleasant sense of well-being. The result is a calm, relaxed state and a rested nervous system—these together contribute to overcoming stress.

Beyond stress relief, massage enhances tissue oxygenation, improves circulation, relaxes tense muscles, and opens up skin pores. Thus, accumulated toxins can be eliminated from the body more quickly.

Massaging the head and neck area effectively reduces migraines, dizziness, and eye strain. Even a few treatments can release energy blockages, restoring harmony to the body and its self-healing abilities. Our immune system becomes stronger, and we feel much more liberated.

To enhance the effectiveness of the process, it is recommended to drink plenty of fluids before and after the relaxing massage.

WALK

The health benefits of walking are positive whether we choose a route near our home or one outside the city. A walk in the forest, with the proximity of nature, is also soothing to the nerves.

Goals: Preserving health, mental rejuvenation, increasing physical fitness, maintaining mental balance

Target audience: Anyone

With just a half-hour to an hour-long walk every day, all of this can be achieved. Walking is suitable for increasing physical fitness, regulating heart rate and breathing, and maintaining body weight. Moreover, a walk can also be a mental refreshment, especially in good company. An ideal companion is someone with a positive mindset, making it possible to experience the wonders of nature together: the blooming flowers, the cool shade of the trees, the chirping of the birds. Walking is also suitable for deepening relationships and can improve our communication skills.

We can also participate in city sightseeing tours in various parts of our country, or even abroad. Many interesting things unfold before our eyes, and we are confronted with living history. This way, walking also develops our intellectual abilities. A walk can even be part of a pilgrimage route, during which we give thanks for overcoming a difficult obstacle.

For example, if we direct our steps towards the Szamos river in our city, we can see how the river, surrounded by rustling poplar or willow leaves, flows peacefully. The sun sparkles on its surface. In summer, low water levels create small rocky islands—ideal places for pigeons to land and drink, even bathing in the shallow water.

And perhaps we would like to stop and savor the moment. In our hearts, we carry the hope of a new encounter. This is how we walk home.

STRESS BALL

A stress ball is a soft, typically sponge-like ball that is easy to squeeze. Its greatest advantage is that it is small and portable, so it can be used anywhere and anytime to relieve tension.

Using it is simple: just hold it in your hand, squeeze it for 1-2 minutes, then transfer it to the other hand and repeat the process. The repetitive squeezing and releasing of a soft object distracts attention from the stressful situation, helping to promote relaxation by focusing on something else. This works primarily for short, tension-triggering episodes or temporary stress. In longer-lasting stressful states, it can aid in relaxation, but it is not a standalone solution.

Other positive effects of using a stress ball include improving concentration, especially in stressful or anxiety-inducing situations, strengthening the muscles of the hand and forearm (which can be especially useful for individuals dealing with arthritis), and helping to stay present in the moment, making it a great mindfulness practice.

The effectiveness of stress balls can vary from person to person and is significantly influenced by the specific situation and the causes of the tension.

Some people find it helpful to hold the ball for a few seconds while squeezing it, then release and repeat several times, while others prefer continuous movement.

COMPUTER GAMES

Mobile, computer, or video games can be effective ways to manage and overcome stress—provided we play the right type of games, in the right way, and in moderation. Research supports that gaming and media use have stress-reducing, mood-enhancing, and rewarding effects, as games allow individuals to quickly and effectively regulate and suppress their frustration, uncertainty, and fears.

The basic function of various stress-relieving games is to distract the mind, disconnect stressful thoughts, and thereby calm the nerves. They also keep the hands occupied, reducing anxiety-driven substitute behaviors such as fidgeting, nail-biting, or finger-tapping.

One of the strengths of computer and mobile games is that they give players a sense of power, enabling them to experience their own strength in specific situations. Moreover, they positively influence coping skills by proving to players that they are capable of more than they think, and that their situation is not hopeless—they can grow and improve.

Some games are specifically designed for therapeutic purposes. These are also helpful against loneliness, as they can foster a sense of belonging to a community, which is crucial in combating mental health challenges (e.g., Minecraft, EndeavorRx). Certain games have been shown to help prevent heightened anxiety in children. Games shift focus toward joy instead of harmful thought patterns. Their effectiveness lies in the fact that the age group most affected by mental health issues is the one actively playing these games, and players voluntarily spend time on them rather than perceiving it as a task.

Games have certain psychological effects that can help reduce stress. One such effect is the flow experience, a state in which individuals become fully immersed in an activity that provides the right balance of challenge and skill. Video games are particularly built around this experience, helping individuals achieve this state and detach from stressful situations.

Another effect is the sense of control. One of the central phenomena in overcoming stress is increasing the feeling of control over our lives. Games directly address this by allowing players to gain a sense of control within a virtual world, often enabling them to progress at their own pace.

During online gameplay, people often communicate and collaborate with one another. These positive social interactions can also reduce stress, as it is human nature to seek contact with others and find comfort in connections. This process also helps in sharing and collectively solving problems, which decreases feelings of stress.

The positive physiological effects triggered by video games further demonstrate their effectiveness in stress reduction. Playing video games can stimulate the release of endorphins, which promote a sense of well-being and calm, directly lowering stress hormone levels.

It is important to note that the role video games play in stress reduction largely depends on the type of game and on how and how much time an individual spends playing.

Games that encourage exploration, creativity, and take place in calming environments contribute to stress relief, while violent or highly competitive games tend to increase stress levels and are more likely to lead to addiction.

Sources used:

- https://www.hazipatika.com/napi_egeszseg/orvosnal/cikkek/maganyosabb-lehet-a-gyerek-ha-teljesen-eltiltjuk-a-tabletto
- <https://digipedia.hu/cikk/igy-segitenek-a-jatekok-mentalis-problemaikon>

COUNTING

Counting is one of the simplest and most well-known methods for alleviating anxiety, although it doesn't work for everyone. The method of counting sheep before falling asleep has been known since the Middle Ages and is still used by those suffering from insomnia today.

The primary function of counting is to prevent our thoughts from wandering. The key is to focus on the counting, shutting out the outside world, and staying patient and calm. It works very simply: it's a monotonous, non-demanding activity that gradually relaxes us.

There are several counting techniques:

1. One method is simple counting, where we close our eyes in a quiet place and slowly count to ten. If necessary, we continue counting beyond ten until we feel that our anxiety has eased. It may happen that relief comes fairly quickly, but it can also take some time to calm down. The key is to count at a steady pace.
2. Another possibility is counting even or odd numbers. It's important to concentrate solely on the counting and not think of anything else during the practice.
3. Counting backward works similarly to meditation in terms of how the brain processes it. It gives enough focus to the brain to prevent our thoughts from dwelling on everyday stress, helping us step away from the thoughts we tend to ruminate over.
4. Some counting exercises are combined with different breathing techniques. One such technique is box breathing (or square breathing), where 4 seconds of slow inhalation are followed by 4 seconds of breath retention, 4 seconds of slow exhalation, and 4 seconds of holding the breath out. Imagining a square and following its sides during the practice helps with focusing and diverting thoughts.
5. Another method is the 4-7-8 breathing technique, which is based on slow, deep breathing. In this method, you inhale for 4 seconds through the nose, hold the breath for 7 seconds, and then exhale slowly through the mouth for 8 seconds while making a "whooh" sound.

TAIJI (TAICHI)

TaiJi is a Chinese martial art that emphasizes the principles of relaxation and letting go, both in its applications and in daily life. Practicing TaiJi develops inner strength and balance through the coordination and relaxation of the body and mind. The external aspect of TaiJi is the art of health and self-defense through movement.

TaiJi is one of the most popular and fastest-growing movement systems in the world, as it is a great way to preserve or regain both physical and mental health. With a history of hundreds of years, it has excellent health benefits, and certain styles have maintained their martial value as well. However, the goal is not to defeat others, but to create harmony between the body, mind, and spirit and to develop oneself.

It is a form of movement meditation, where calmness exists in the movement itself. During practice, breathing is steady, the mind is clear, and the consciousness is calm. Performing the flowing movements (forms) develops concentration and coordination skills, increases inner strength, and enhances flexibility and agility. It harmonizes the functioning of the left and right hemispheres of the brain and increases mindful presence in daily life.

The advantage of TaiJi is that almost anyone, regardless of age or health condition, can practice it, as there are both simpler and more complex movements.

Sources: <https://yangtaichi.hu>, www.dao.hu

TÁNC

"Dance is often whimsical, and it benefits us all." (Edward Derby)

Target Audience:

- Dance Has No Age Limit

Objective:

- Creating physical and mental well-being.

Goal:

- Achieving physical and emotional harmony.

Numerous Benefits:

- Positive impact on health
- Improves physical fitness.
- Promotes emotional development and the formation of social connections.
- Enhances creativity.

Dance in Our Lives:

Dance has been part of our lives since early childhood, as it has been shown to support physical and emotional development, as well as creativity.

Starting from a young age, children have the opportunity to join folk dance groups. Beyond its role in preserving traditions, it also plays an important part in building relationships and developing emotional intelligence.

Community-Building and Uplifting Effects:

Due to its community-building power and uplifting nature, dance is an integral part of both family and national celebrations.

It can bring a new spark to a marriage and help release the tension of everyday life.

Dance as Art:

Dance appears in art and theater, providing opportunities for self-expression.

Dance in Popular Culture:

The connection-building power of dance is well illustrated in the film *Shall We Dance?*, starring Susan Sarandon and Richard Gere.

WEIGHT-FLOW CONTACT

The Weight-flow Contact basic training is a 3-day group training consisting of individual, paired, and group exercises. It helps participants realize what is necessary for creating harmonious human relationships through physical experience.

The method is derived from contact improvisation, TaiJi, and independent theatrical creative living.

The term "weight" primarily refers to the body, our present physical self. Weight refers to the force with which the body is attracted towards the Earth. This is gravity. We have weight because we have a body and live on Earth. "Weight" therefore signifies that we live on Earth in our bodies, and this is one of the most defining pillars of our current human reality.

"Flow," on the other hand, refers to movement, the ever-changing process of life, and the quality of experiencing it freely and joyfully. Here, "flow" means giving direction to our actions in harmony with the laws of nature and the constant changes, consciously and yet spontaneously, so that we exist in a state of effortless flow, present in every moment of our own life. "Flow" is thus the quality of active Presence in the Now.

"Contact" refers to human relationships. We are all constantly connecting with each other. This is an inevitable cornerstone of human life and humanity. We work with relationships on three levels: our relationship with ourselves, our relationship with others, and our relationship with the world.

Through the exercises, we can safely experience the loss of balance and realize that this, in itself, does not threaten the relationship; on the contrary, it can give momentum to collective experimentation and the joint discovery of a new balance. In the process, we may also realize that balance is not a constant, immovable state, but is, in fact, dynamic: it is created through continuous shifts and returns.

“Practicing Weight-flow Contact helps dissolve our ingrained roles, allowing us to experience our true personality and continuously teaches us to root the foundation of our deepest essence in the present moment.”

The course is led by a trained instructor.

Source: www.weight-flow.com

LISTENING TO MUSIC

I often listen to music in my daily life, usually while driving or when I'm doing DIY projects in my free time. One of the best-documented benefits of music is its ability to reduce stress.

It is well known that listening to music can positively influence mood and reduce symptoms of depression. Joyful, energetic music can stimulate dopamine production, the hormone responsible for the feeling of happiness. In contrast, melancholic music can help manage sadness and depression by facilitating the expression and processing of emotions.

I often find that while listening to music, I relax, feel better, and experience less stress. Music also has a positive impact on cognitive functions, as regular listening can improve memory, attention, and problem-solving abilities.

The social bonding power of music is also remarkable; just think of shared music listening experiences or attending concerts. Shared musical experiences can enhance the feeling of belonging and positively affect the quality of social relationships.

Listening to music is an excellent way to relax and recharge.

The beneficial effects of music on our health are extensive and multifaceted. From stress reduction to pain relief, and even improving cognitive functions, music can contribute to both our physical and mental well-being in numerous ways.

I believe that in our profession, it is very important to feel mentally well, which enables us to cooperate more effectively with children. Music has numerous positive effects and is increasingly recognized and applied in everyday life and healthcare.

ZENETERÁPIA

In our fast-paced world, we are increasingly disconnected from the natural rhythm of life, leading to dissonance. The unnatural acceleration of our lives, our (often parallel) activities, and our speech make us victims of "mis-tuning." The healing power of the pure, resonant human voice has now been scientifically proven.

Both scientific research and practical experience confirm that music and making music are essential for balanced personal development. The skills developed through music positively influence an individual's socialization, emotional enrichment, and performance. But how?

Music bypasses our logical and analytical filters, affecting us in multiple ways. Melody, rhythm, and pitch can bring memories to life, stimulate our imagination, and awaken strength. Moreover, music forms a direct bridge to our emotional world, allowing our hearts to open and possibly unlocking repressed pain and sorrow.

The Healing Power of Sound

Sound, at the level of atoms and molecules, is essentially movement. When we sing, we perform movement exercises at the microscopic level. Similar to musical instruments, our body also functions as a resonating box: it is affected by volume, pitch, and rhythm.

Sound emission is a simple and effective way to dissolve blocks and tensions in the body. This process operates on a principle similar to ultrasound, though our voice has a different frequency. There is no need for "external intervention"; with our own voices, we can dissolve tension points created by the subconscious in the body.

Music and sound therapy help manage stress, alleviate pain, improve memory and communication, reduce fear, and promote physical rehabilitation. It can also be used to develop verbal and non-verbal communication skills in autistic children. In music therapy, music is employed to develop sensory issues, autonomy, learning and observation skills, as well as motor skills.

It can significantly reduce tension, improve mood, and foster socialization and cooperation in daily tasks. Children's interest can be more easily stimulated, their attention better motivated and directed, while they experience success, liberated joy, and relief from anxiety. As a result, it is an effective developmental method for children facing communication, cognitive, behavioral, or psychological challenges, as well as for those with learning disabilities or intellectual impairments.

In schools, music therapy provides an opportunity for comprehensive personality development: it develops both non-verbal and verbal communication, cooperation skills, emotional expression, self-expression, attention, concentration, movement coordination, social skills, creativity, and more. It complements and supports educational, nurturing, and rehabilitation processes.

“The human voice and music are among the oldest, most sensitive means of communication, reaching the deepest layers of our being. Sounds literally touch us and penetrate the boundaries of our bodies and souls. In the flow of music, rhythm, and sound, the distance between 'I' and 'you' disappears, and within us, the physical and the spiritual, the visceral and the intellectual, the ancient and the eternal, the infernal and the transcendent meet.

Through sound, music, rhythm, and movement, we connect with ourselves and each other, with the deepest and highest layers of our being, with the full spectrum of our emotions, but perhaps most importantly, with that intangible play from which music itself is born: our creativity, our creative force, the pulsating source of our existence – and our joy, knowing that we can compose and orchestrate every note and every phrase of the symphony of our lives.” (Dr. Anna Fekete in: Rondo - Music Therapists Answer, 2006)

METHODS FOR PREVENTING AND TREATING TRAUMA

Trauma: A negative, dangerous, or seemingly dangerous event (traumatic event) that causes intense fear, horror, and helplessness in a person, and this reaction does not resolve but remains trapped, causing recurring symptoms. Trauma, therefore, is the failure to process the stress created by a traumatic (dangerous or perceived as such by the individual) event, or the "incorrect" processing of this stress, resulting in a "pocketed injury package."

Traumatic events can be classified into two main categories, and there may be complex events that fall into both categories:

- Abuse-violence
- Abandonment-loss

Common causes of trauma may include the following:

- Car accidents, routine surgeries, loss of loved ones, and the stagnation of the mourning process
- Natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis, floods)
- War, animal attacks, etc.

Traumatic experiences and memories can have a serious impact on emotional well-being, and they can manifest in various ways because not everyone reacts the same way. Possible emotional effects may include anxiety, depression, anger, discouragement, distrust, or even issues with self-esteem.

What causes trauma is, on the one hand, unique to the individual, and on the other hand, there are events where the failure to process them almost inevitably causes trauma.

For a child, certain circumstances, such as falling off their bike, can cause trauma. Situations that traumatize are always those that the individual perceives as threatening to themselves or their loved ones at that moment.

Common traumatic events for everyone may include: physical or psychological abuse, abandonment or neglect in childhood, experiencing sexual advances from an adult or older child during childhood, witnessing the abuse of a parent or sibling, or surviving a life-threatening situation or a situation that causes bodily harm, whether as a victim or as a present witness.

Connections Between Needs Deficiency, Stress, Crisis, and Trauma:

- Every stressor is also a situation of need deficiency (a stressor is a subset), but not every need-deficient situation causes stress, meaning not every such situation becomes a stressor (needs deficiency is the larger set).
- Every trauma is based on a stressor, but not every stress becomes trauma (trauma is a subset, stress is the larger set).
- Every crisis is also a stressor, but not every stressor leads to a crisis. A crisis can lead to trauma, and a traumatic situation can also cause a crisis.

Inherited or Transgenerational Trauma: This refers to trauma experienced not by the individual, but by an ancestor, yet the individual reacts to certain situations or exhibits symptoms as though the trauma had happened to them personally.

It is also possible for the effects of trauma to remain hidden for years.

“...The essence of trauma is that we lose connection with ourselves, our bodies, our families, others, and the world around us. This loss of connection is often difficult to recognize because it does not happen immediately. It can unfold slowly, gradually, and sometimes we adapt to these subtle changes without even noticing them. These are the hidden effects of trauma, from which we may only perceive that something is not quite right with us, but we do not know what is happening within us; or it becomes clear that something is gradually undermining our self-esteem, confidence, well-being, and our relationship with life. Slowly, our world narrows as we avoid certain people, situations, and places. The gradual loss of our freedom leads to the consequence that our vitality and our ability to realize our ideas, fulfill our desires, and live our life fully diminishes.”

(Quote from Peter A. Levine’s Healing Trauma.)

When addressing trauma processing, always seek professionals with appropriate knowledge and training.

Peter A. Levine’s 12-step method is usable by anyone for self-healing or healing those close to them.

SYSTEMIC AND FAMILY CONSTELLATION (HELLINGER APPROACH)

Family constellations is a self-awareness method that can be applied in group or individual sessions. It can be effective in resolving inherited or transgenerational traumas.

Every community, such as a relationship, family, organization, or society, is also a system. The essence of family constellations is that the client's community (family, organization, society) is represented in space based on a question formulated by the client.

In group work, the representation is done with group members, while in individual work, objects are used. The physical sensations, feelings, and thoughts of the representatives of the displayed people provide insight into the system's dynamics (who sees whom, who looks at whom with ease, how each person perceives others, whom they fear, and who they would approach). Additionally, by changing their positions and performing certain rituals, the development potential of the system becomes revealed.

The system to be set up can be an organizational system, such as workplace, political, ideological, social, etc., and is referred to as organizational constellation. It can also be a family system, in which case it is called family constellation.

“There is a depth where everything merges. This depth lies beyond the boundaries of time. Life is like a pyramid. Up there, at the very tiny top, everything we call progress or history happens. Down in the depth, the future and the past blend. There is only space there, no time. Sometimes, a situation arises when we come into contact with this depth. At that moment, we recognize a hidden system within it, and our soul can shift toward something greater.” (Hellinger)

Healing begins when the client respectfully accepts the past, their ancestors, or other significant people in their life, returns the responsibilities of others placed upon them, takes responsibility for themselves, and thus becomes open to the future. They will then be able to take on the risk of making decisions between the possibilities of the present moment.

The process is guided by a trained family constellation facilitator. The time required for an individual session is at least one and a half hours, while for group family constellations, it depends on the number of participants, ranging from half a day to a full day.

Source: Thomas Schäfer: Was die Seele krank macht und was sie heilt

CHILD PSYCHODRAMA

Child psychodrama is a group method based on play, developed for therapeutic purposes and derived from psychodrama. In these sessions, children act out their own fairy tales or stories while dressed in costumes. The method offers an opportunity to address a wide range of psychological issues, including anxiety, stress, psychosomatic symptoms, and behavioral or social integration problems. It has a personality development effect and can provide support in crisis situations, such as divorce, mourning, or social exclusion.

In line with an individual-psychological perspective, the therapeutic process supports the children's ongoing self-creating and self-healing efforts, as well as the development of a sense of community. It promotes cooperation, acceptance, and understanding among the participants.

The groups are recommended for all children, focusing on personality and creativity development.

Play is useful for relieving everyday stress and processing both current and past conflicts.

Child psychodrama can also help address various psychological issues. It has a particularly positive effect on anxious, insecure children or those struggling with social integration. It can provide support in difficult life situations and is also suitable for processing trauma.

The sessions are also recommended for children who experience conflicts in somatic form, such as bedwetting, nail-biting, or sleep disorders.

Source: <https://www.gyermekdrama.hu/>

PETER A. LEVINE'S SOMATIC EXPERIENCING® 12-STEP PRACTICAL PROGRAM (TRAUMA HEALING)

Trauma is a part of life, but it doesn't have to be a life sentence – says Dr. Peter A. Levine, one of the world's leading trauma experts. Based on decades of research and clinical work, Levine developed the pioneering Somatic Experiencing® program, which allows for the natural healing of both post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and emotional and early childhood trauma wounds.

This program, which mobilizes the body's natural self-healing processes with simple and effective tools, is based on the realization that wild animals, though often facing life-threatening situations, rarely become traumatized. This is because they use instinctive, innate mechanisms to discharge the enormous amounts of energy mobilized for survival, allowing them to quickly return to a state of balance.

Humans also possess similar regulatory mechanisms, but the rational part of the brain often overrides the instincts, preventing the complete release of survival energy. The unresolved, trapped energy can lead to anxiety, depression, various psychosomatic issues, and behavioral disorders. Unprocessed trauma can alter our habits and perceptions of the world, leading to addictions, catastrophic decision-making, and damaging human relationships, potentially even prompting self-destructive lifestyles.

In the Somatic Experiencing® program, we can heal our traumas both physically and mentally with exercises developed by Dr. Levine, without having to verbally discuss painful experiences, which often feel impossible to articulate.

Peter A. Levine's book *Healing Trauma* and the associated online audio materials (narrated by award-winning actor Tamás Dunai, who interprets Dr. Levine's words and exercises) guide participants through the 12-Step Trauma Healing Program.

PSYCHODRAMA

Psychodrama is a self-awareness and therapeutic method applied in individual or group settings, which primarily focuses on the possibility of spontaneous and creative action. In a safe environment, participants have the opportunity to experiment with what happens when they respond differently to a situation, providing new reactions rather than the usual ones. It allows for the processing of painful past situations on the "psychodrama stage," where one can receive comforting (internal) responses by conversing with deceased loved ones, ask for and offer forgiveness, view situations from different perspectives, and try out social roles. The dramatic tools often provide a deeper insight, experience, and understanding than a conversational therapy session.

J.L. Moreno, the "father" of psychodrama, based his method on his childhood play experiences and observations gained as a young adult on the playgrounds of Vienna. In his view, psychodrama "shows the truth of the soul through action." It is an action-based catharsis that makes possibilities, which we missed, tangible; it unlocks creativity and can bring to the surface ancient experiences that are only stored in movements.

According to Moreno's understanding, personality is only interpretable in a social context, where it is present through behavior, i.e., through the sum of its roles. He differentiates four categories of roles: somatic, psychic, social, and transcendent roles, which build upon each other like the layers of an onion. Development takes place through encounters and interactions. At birth, a child enters an unfamiliar environment, where it must spontaneously figure out how to survive without any predefined behavioral patterns. Every step is new for the child. The child connects to its environment through somatic impulses, and the adequate responses of people in the environment are vital for its survival.

In the early period, the most important helper ego is the mother. Through interactions, the child develops further roles, and by the end of this process, a somato-psycho-social unit is formed, to which are connected the roles that Moreno calls transcendent. Beyond its everyday meaning, this term refers to our relationship to religion, morality, human knowledge, and humanity as a whole, as well as our view of the world.

In psychodrama, illness is seen as the absence of wholeness; health, in turn, is the harmonious interconnection of role structures. Any disruption at any level of the structure affects the other levels as well. A physical illness will change our psychic, social, and even transcendent roles, just as a mental problem will affect not only our relationships and worldview but also our somatic functions and roles. This also means that wherever the disruption occurs, if we succeed in creating a harmonious role structure, we can establish a healthy balance. For example, we can keep a physical disability in balance with appropriate social or even transcendent roles. According to this perspective, psychodrama never just treats current diseases or specific problems; it always focuses on the whole personality, including its social atom. Psychological disorders arise from deficits in the social atom, which are functional consequences of problematic interactions with the microsociological environment.

At this point, it becomes crucial that psychodrama is fundamentally a group therapy method. The group represents the microsociological environment in which individuals must develop their behavior and roles. Through this process, there is an opportunity for correction. The structure of group sessions is regulated, and what happens in the group depends on the participants, but the process is guided by the psychodrama leaders according to the rules of the method.

In small groups, mutual choices create the sociometric network that shapes the group dynamics. The sociometric image regulates the operation of the group as a whole. The group has its own life: it is born, develops, creates, and disbands.

In self-awareness or therapeutic psychodrama groups, individuals with close relationships, such as boss-subordinate, close family members, or those with strong emotional connections, cannot participate together. For example, if a romantic relationship develops between two group members during the process, one of them must leave the group for another one.

Groups typically operate in a closed format, with 120-150-250-hour sessions led by two psychodrama facilitators. The operation of therapeutic groups may differ, and their leader is a psychodrama psychotherapist.

Source: Vikár András: Pszichodráma - a komoly játék

PERSON CENTERED COUNSELING (ROGERIAN THERAPY)

During a helping conversation, the therapist (helper) supports the client in uncovering and amplifying the innate potential for personal growth and in overcoming obstacles that hinder the development of their strengths. To this end, the helper's task is to promote the client's growth, development, and maturation, allowing the client's inner, hidden values to surface, unfold, become conscious, and be better expressed or function more effectively.

The goal is to discover human values and uncover internal resources, with an emphasis on the individual's self-concept and self-development.

The consultation takes place in an individual format.

The communication style of the helper is characterized by non-directivity: through questioning and emotional reflection, the helper encourages the individual to find their own answers to their problems.

Throughout the process, the client experiences unconditional acceptance, genuine attentiveness, and the opportunity to openly express their thoughts and issues. The helper's role is to act as a mirror while the individual explores and analyzes their own problems. By asking open-ended questions, the helper facilitates problem exploration and offers an external perspective.

This specific questioning method also supports the client's self-reflection, helping them to view their problem from a different perspective. As a result, new solutions can emerge—solutions previously hidden by a one-sided approach.

The client may also gain insight into the perspective of another participant in a conflict situation, which fosters understanding, empathy, acceptance, and the discovery of new, constructive solutions. Through this process, the client's personality is strengthened.

This method is based on the premise that every individual possesses the motivation and capacity for change and that the individual is the one who can decide which direction of change is most suitable for them in the present moment.

The practical application of Rogers' theory is very broad and can be implemented in any profession where social interaction is required.

It emphasizes empathy—understanding the motives, motivations, and desires of others—while ensuring that one's behavior remains authentic and self-aligned.

Human beings have an innate desire for personal growth, maturity, and positive change. A fundamental motivating force is self-actualization—the drive to realize and fully develop all of one's potential abilities.

Sources:

- Carl Rogers: On Becoming a Person
- Karoline Erika Zeintlinger: Kompendium der Psychodrama-Therapie: Analyse, Präzisierung und Reformulierung der Aussagen zur psychodramatischen Therapie nach J. L. Moreno

CLOSING REMARKS

In summary, we can say that one of the key factors to success in stress management may be the true understanding of our own Self. On our journey, communication, our social relationships, and the discovery of personalized, ideal forms and durations of quality time spent with others and with ourselves, rather than in isolation, are of paramount importance.

Sensory isolation experiments conducted in the 1950s revealed that deprivation of stimuli disintegrates the personality. According to Dr. Béla Buda, social interaction is just as important as breathing. (Dr. Béla Buda: Mentálhigiéné)

A person who has "detached" from their peers may face relationship difficulties. This could be a source of conflict, leading the individual to avoid failures and eventually "detach" from their social networks, creating a "rarefied space" around them, which could eventually become a source of depressive states.

Mária Szepes writes about this: "The negative radiation of a personality in a state of separateness necessarily lasts as long as it transmits disturbing, repulsive, harmful currents towards others, weakening the relationship between people and the world, making it appear as they experience it. However, if the individual can unfold from the personal, the current they perceive transmits the immortal energies of the Universe's intellect." (Mária Szepes: A szerelem mágiája)

"Interacting" with others is also a tool of internal self-regulation, while simultaneously serving as a sustaining force — the mere presence of others motivates and drives action. Furthermore, feedback from others is essential for accurately assessing our situation and correcting our behavior.

Feedback such as acceptance, recognition, attention, help, or love is part of human information and relational exchange processes, within which our inner world can unfold, and in which we can find our sense of self.

In the aforementioned book, Dr. Béla Buda emphasizes that the more densely woven and multilayered the network of communities surrounding the individual, and the more intense the communication links, the greater the psychological safety of the personality. Thus, **in a community, an individual's strength is multiplied.**

We hope that our collection will help as many people as possible, whether in child protection or other fields, to live fuller lives by seeing and trying out certain opportunities, and to offer suitable stress-relieving or trauma-healing methods for their environment, thereby enhancing both their own and their environment's physical and mental well-being.

The participants of the program

SOURCES USED:

- Rüdiger Dahlke: A lélek árnyai
- Susanna Ehdin: Az öngyógyító ember
- Dr. Joe Vitale: A kulcs
- Dr. Buda Béla: Mentálhigiéné
- Erika J. Chopich – Margaret Paul: A gyógyító gyermeki én
- Mantak Chia: A belső mosoly és a hat gyógyító hang
- Szepes Mária: A szerelem mágiája
- Perczel-Forintos Dóra: Hogyan éljük túl önmagunkat posztmodern korunkban?
- <https://www.wissenschaft.de/geschichte-archaeologie/teenager-multitasking-klappt-noch-nicht/>
- Carl Rogers: Valakivé válni - A személyiség születése
- Peter. A. Levine: A trauma gyógyítása
- Vikár András: Pszichodráma - a komoly játék
- Kende B. Hanna: Gyermek-pszichodráma
- Thomas Schaefer: Ami a lelket mmegbetegíti, és ami meggyógyítja
- Marshall B. Rosenberg: A szavak - ablakok vagy falak
- Vianna Stibal: ThetaHealing
- Julia Cameron: A művész útja
- C.G. Jung: Az archetípusok és a kollektív tudattalan
- Dr. Fekete Anna in.: Rondo - Zeneterapeuták válaszolnak, 2006
- Merényi Márta: Mozgás- és táncterápia
- Karoline Erika Zeintlínger: A pszichodráma-terápia tételeinek elemzése, pontosítása és újrafogalmazása J. L. Moreno után

SZÜLŐK HÁZA
KÖZHASZNÚ ALAPÍTVÁNY

(PARENTS' HOUSE PUBLIC
BENEFIT FOUNDATION)

2024

www.tegyeljot.hu
szulokhaza@szulokhaza.hu
[@tegyeljot](https://www.instagram.com/tegyeljot)



Funded by
the European Union

Youth Worker's Compass



www.tegyeljot.hu
szulokhaza@szulokhaza.hu
[@tegyeljot](https://www.instagram.com/tegyeljot)



Funded by
the European Union