



A Body-Oriented Journey

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Greetings from Turku



Minna Martin

- Physiotherapist
- Psychologist
- Psychotherapist
 - Breathing School
 - CAT
 - Body-oriented psychotherapy
 - Mentalization-based treatment
- Supervisor
- Teacher
- Author



The integration



- Graduate theses: The Interpersonal Experiences of Women with Somatization Disorder.



- Breathing School: A body-oriented short-term group therapy method.



- The Finnish association of body-oriented psychotherapy.



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Breathing

as a Tool for Self-Regulation and Self-Reflection



ROUTLEDGE


Breathing
as a Tool for
Self-Regulation and
Self-Reflection

Background of Breathing School



- Created for patients with anxiety, hyperventilation, panic disorder and somatic symptoms.



- Short-term group therapy.

- Individual therapy.



- Applications to different groups and individual work.



Breathing as a tool for therapist



- Understanding the connection between breathing and interaction gives the possibility to improve
 - the safety and quality of the relationship,
 - the wellbeing of the patient and the professional him/herself,
 - connection to emotions.

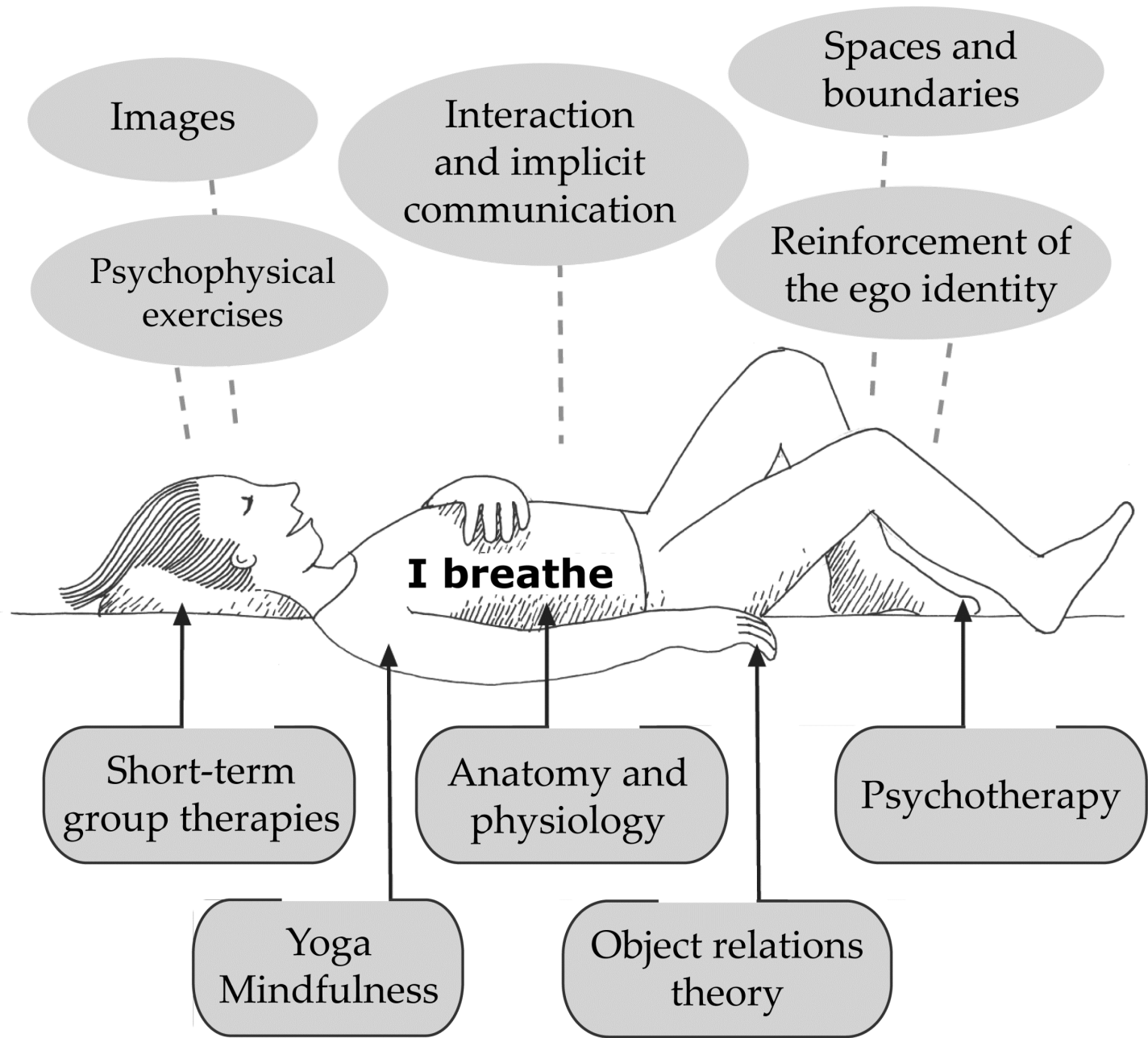


Theoretical basis

- An integrative therapeutic method.
- The psychophysiology.
- The influence of the (early) relationships to our developing breathing patterns.
- There is a close union between breathing, interaction and emotions through out our lives.

Theoretical basis

- Based on Donald W. Winnicott's concepts
 - being and doing
 - boundaries between inner and external reality
 - transitional object/space
 - potential space
 - play



Embodied internal object relations



- Our early experiences are coded and saved to **bodily reaction patterns** and **sensual-visual-based images**:



- *Our memories of being with the other: the other's facial expressions, way of breathing, way of holding and touching, melody of voice - and our own feelings and sensations during this.*



The body remembers and repeats



- The body repeats our early experiences and reactions.



- Learning and teaching is unconscious.



- Later repeating is automatic, "a reflex", without conscious selection.



The remembering can be about



- how safe we felt ourselves,

- how we were soothed,



- the experiences of enjoyment, closeness, intimacy, touching in a caring and loving way,



- the experiences of stressful, traumatic or unresolved situations.



Breathing and the inner image of the other



- Breathing patterns function as a representations of the inner images
 - early experiences
 - realistic relationship to self & other
 - unconscious (and often unrealistic) images of self & other

Breathing is a part of implicit emotional communication

Calming down and feeling secure is mediated mainly through non-verbal communication.

- Rhythm and tempo
- Breathing patterns
- Tone and melody of the voice
- Touching patterns
- Movements
- Postures
- Facial expressions
- How we look at the other
- Giving or taking room etc.

Breathing regulates and affects

- The state of the body
 - Intensity of stress and anxiety
 - Intensity of emotions
 - Expression of emotions
 - Interaction and relationships
-
- Breathing mediates our experiences through physical, physiological and psychological pathways.

The regulation of breathing



- **Balanced breathing**

physiological needs met, connected to secure enough relationships, ability to self-reflect and soothe oneself.



- **Dysfunctional/unbalanced breathing patterns**

physiological imbalance, anxiety, fear, not being able to soothe oneself, dysfunctional / disconnected relationship experiences.



How to work with breathing



- Not knowing better how one should breathe.



- No right way to breathe.

- No teaching the right technique.



- No teaching how to use the diaphragm or other muscles.



- No counting or otherwise controlling the breathing.

Working with breathing



- Secure therapeutic relationship: balanced breathing is difficult to learn alone.



- Learning to observe oneself from the inside – self-reflection improves.



- Learning to respect one's own way of breathing and own rhythm – self agency improves.



- Being curious and interested together – joined attention.

Being the soothing other in a therapeutic relationship

- Promoting security
- Breathing peacefully
- Slowing down
- Taking pauses
- Giving space
- Listening
- Being present
- Good enough mutual rhythm, synchrony, attuning

Working with breathing in therapy

- At the beginning: *"just being"*.
- Learning to breathe out: letting go (the air, the tension in muscles, the thoughts...).
- Learning to find a **pause** after breathing out.
- Active exercises, using the force, voice.
- Boundaries and space.
- Breathing in.
- Therapist supporting the reflective process in relationship.
- Tools: awareness, images, movement, voice, touch, playing, stories, poetry, cards, drawing, music, silence.



Body and Mind -
an introduction to
psychophysical
psychotherapy

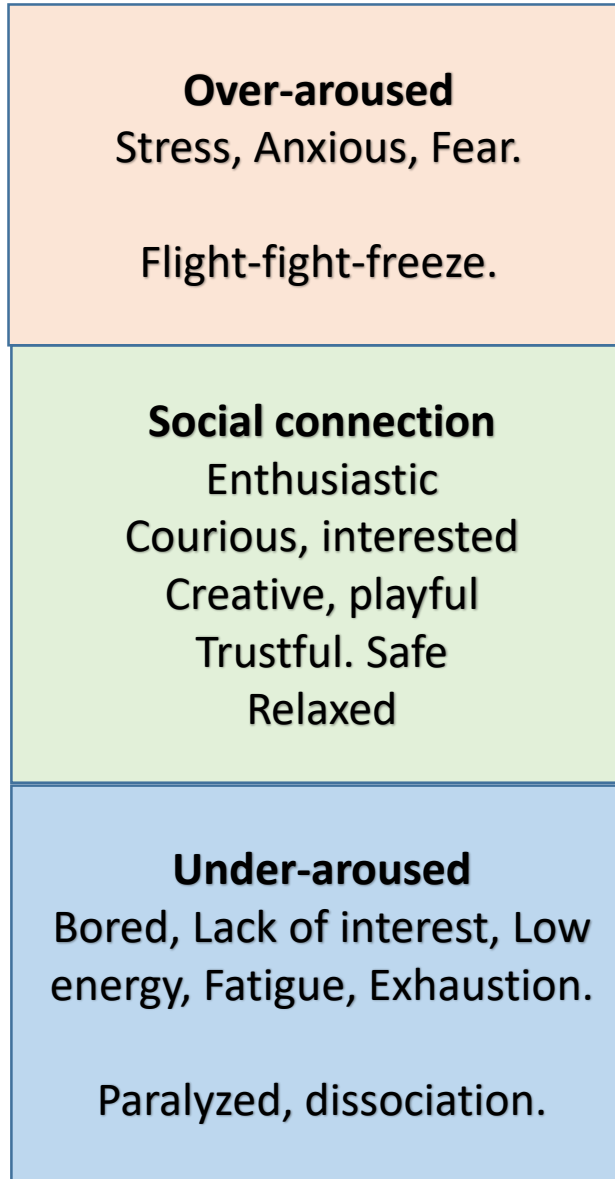
Body-oriented psychotherapy

- Based on George Downing's method and life's work.
- Originally based on object relations theory.
- Nowadays influenced by theory and method of CBT.
- Integrative body-psychotherapy method.
- Can easily be combined with CAT.

Body-oriented psychotherapy

- In addition to talking, working with bodily methods and interventions.
- Attention is paid to body-awareness and nonverbal interaction.
- Understanding the functioning of the autonomic nervous system.

Autonomic nervous system & state of alertness



Sympathetic
nervous system
active.

Balance:

Sympathetic and
frontal Vagus.

Frontal and
posterior vagus.

Posterior Vagus
active.

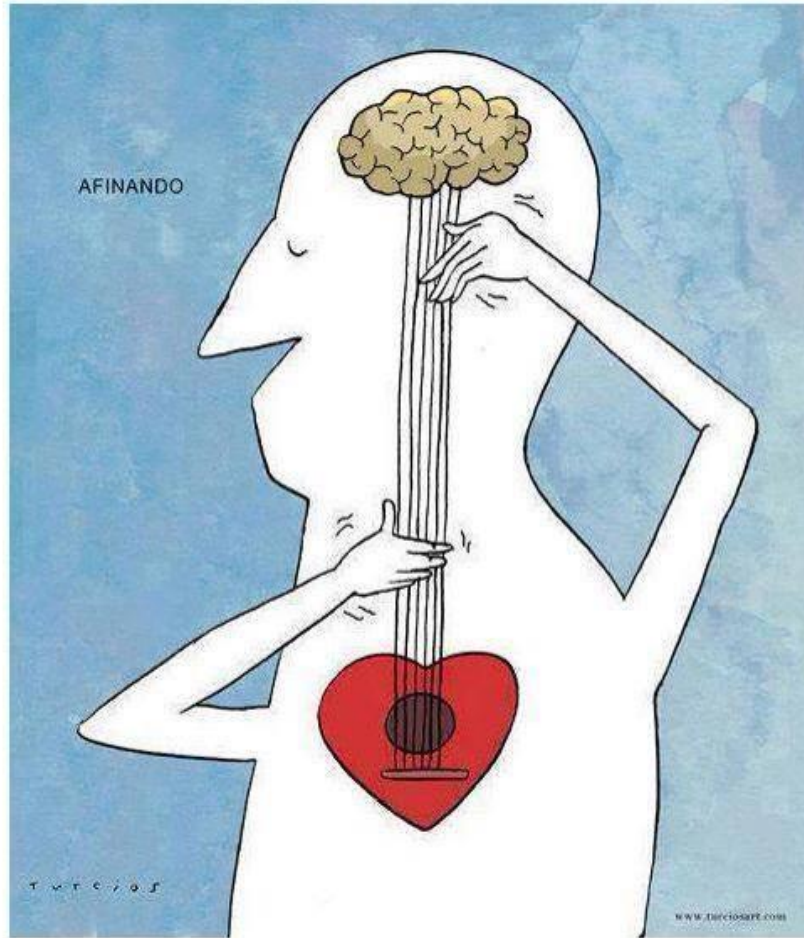
Body-organizing

- At the center is the concept of **body organizing** (BO).
- BO refers to the subtle structuring and change that takes place in the body in all activities and interactions.
- These small changes take place as a continuous flow.
- BO manifest in positions, movements, gestures, facial expressions, tones of voice, muscle tone, breathing etc.
- BO is procedural information and largely unconscious.
- It is possible to become aware of these small movements and the feelings and thoughts associated with them.
- The patterns of BO are developed in early childhood and are further modified during childhood and adolescence.
- By adulthood, we all have certain models overused, others underused.

Body-oriented psychotherapy

- Models that have been necessary in an early stage of life may no longer work.
- It is possible to increase awareness of one's own ways of organizing the body and interacting with the others
- To learn more appropriate models for current life.
- Goals: self-regulation emotion regulation skills, flexibility and wider spectrum of BO.

Thank you!



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Welcome to Embodiment and CAT -workshop!