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### **Integration of working with body and breath in music therapy**

Music and breath traditionally are used for healing and selfexploring. Many phenomena are common: rhythm, pause, dynamic, vibration. The union can be felt in the voice as sounding breath. They both needs a body for manifestation. During the ontogenetic development the earliest impressions are experiences with the body and hearing sounds. In the intra-uterine period these experiences are not already separated. The fetus can hear his mother's heart beating, her breath and other sounds, not only as accoustic phenomenas, but he is swinging, vibrating, growing in it. Being born brings a marked change: the individual breath starts flowing, a movement outside becomes a movement inside.

In the preverbal period the semantic content of language is not important. The child listens to the sound of it. The field of interaction consists of the accoustic atmosphere and the way of being touched. In this way the basic patterns of personality are developed - by relationship! The ideal therapeutic way for coming into contact with those basic experiences and to initiate growth is therefore combining elements of body- and breath-therapy, receptive and active music therapy.

In the beginning, improvisations with movement, voice and instruments help to create a trustful atmosphere and set going the group process in an expressive way. In the next phase we offer much time for individual self-awareness. Stretching, yawning, groaning, expressions of vividness wake up breath and vital energy. By focusing ones attention to body and breath, the capacity of perception becomes more intensive and sensible. Experiences in different body positions (sitting, lying, standing, moving) draw the attention to different zones, their light and dark psychic themes. The breathing at last passes into vocal improvisations, free or bound to special vowels or consonants. This again intensifies the experience.

After that, the participants are resting on a blanket and there is time to incorporate. Than we choose a sound, corresponding to the specific breath experiences in the preceding phase. In this state of sensibilisation the reception of special musical phenomenas may confront the listeners with psychic areas which are beyond the normal states of consciousness. We prefer instruments with an elementary character like monochord, gong, temple bell, didjeridoo, musical bowl, rattles, drums etc.

After a talking round about the experiences we again offer free improvisation. Now this gives the chance to express the deep feelings which can be touched by working with body, breath and listening to archaic sounds - and to which words often do not reach. According to the process in the group we offer exercises for pairs with body and breath (so that the participants come into body-contact with each other) as well

as all kinds of music therapy offers: dialogues, portraits, sound-imaginings (“Atmosphere in my family”, “My house”...). Elements from music- and breath-therapy are also used for single work and crisis intervention. Another medium to express the inner experiences are paintings of the participants. They can help to find first words after a long nonverbal period.

By working with the different elements in groups for some years, we developed a holistic method of therapy with a concrete structure. In summary:

**Working with body and breath** focuses the attention, wakes up and intensifies the capacity of perception and opens for a transformation process .

**Reception of musical elements or specific music** condenses and deepens this state.

**Free improvisations** with movement, voice and instruments give chances to express and communicate on a nonverbal level. They are like bridges between the unspeakable of the inner experiences and the reality of human interaction.

**Talking rounds** connect by words the innerpsychic and the social reality.

**The therapeutic relationship** is finally the basis, on which therapeutic effect happens.

All factors together allow an intensive encounter with oneself. The therapeutic service is to accept and accompany all kinds of experiences, the participants may have. This helps them to accept and - if necessary - to let go old structures on which they are suffering. In this way transformation can happen.

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