

# PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF A SOMATIC PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL (SPP) PROGRAM AMONG HEALTH PROFESSIONALS: EXPLORATORY STUDY

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## BACKGROUND

Developed in Europe during the 1980's, "somatic-psychopedagogy (SPP) is a field that studies how people learn and grow in awareness through a richer and deeper experience of their body", (Berger, 2006, p. 12). Characterized as a type of mind-body medicine, SPP helps build a better sense of Self and in so doing, promotes a fine tuned sense of others as well as of one's environment, all of which are desirable qualities for health professionals.

Four intervention methods enable learning in SPP: manual therapy, sensory gymnastics, sensory introspection, and verbal interviews focused on body experience.

Large (2009) concludes that a particular quality of presence is built amongst SPP participants. He also notes an ability to better externalise:

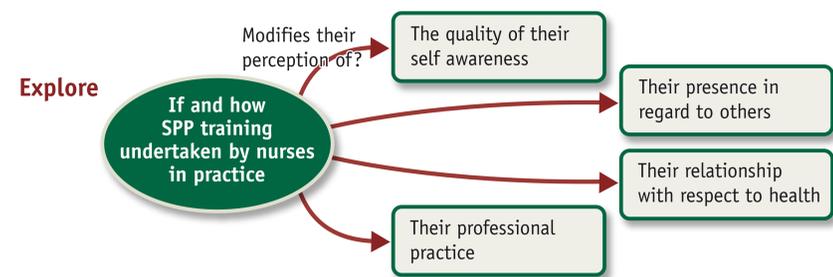
- SPP participants are closer to their interiority;
- they are more able to verbalize their feelings to others;
- they set actions into motion that express what they are in the process of becoming.

Large (2009) also reports changes in participants such as: increased adaptability, autonomy, stability; deeper sense of self esteem; increased assertiveness, while being more approachable toward others.

Bois (2007) notes a change in the representation of ideas, values, self-image and perceptual relationships. Other researchers report a change in participants' conceptions of health (Duval, 2010; Cencig and Humpich, 2009). The same researchers have also noted that the reason for consultation tends to change, moving from a realm of care giving, towards one of life schooling.

Given the above literature, we wanted to explore the effect SPP training might have specifically on nurses and their professional practice.

## PURPOSE



## METHODS

### A two phase qualitative research project

Phase 1- Three (3) nurses trained or being trained in SPP (this presentation)

Phase 2- Six (6) medical doctors (to be conducted)

### Data collection methods

A semi-structured audio recorded interview including comprehensive questioning (Kaufmann, 2011) and elicitation questioning (Vermersch, 2010, 2012), (duration 90 to 105 minutes) was conducted with each nurse.

In addition, a second interview was conducted with participant B at the end of their second year of training.

### Data analysis

Demographic information related to the participants training and professional activities

Thematic analysis of transcripts

Categorisation of themes (Paillé and Mucchielli, 2012)

## FINDINGS

### Socio-demographic data for the 3 participating nurses

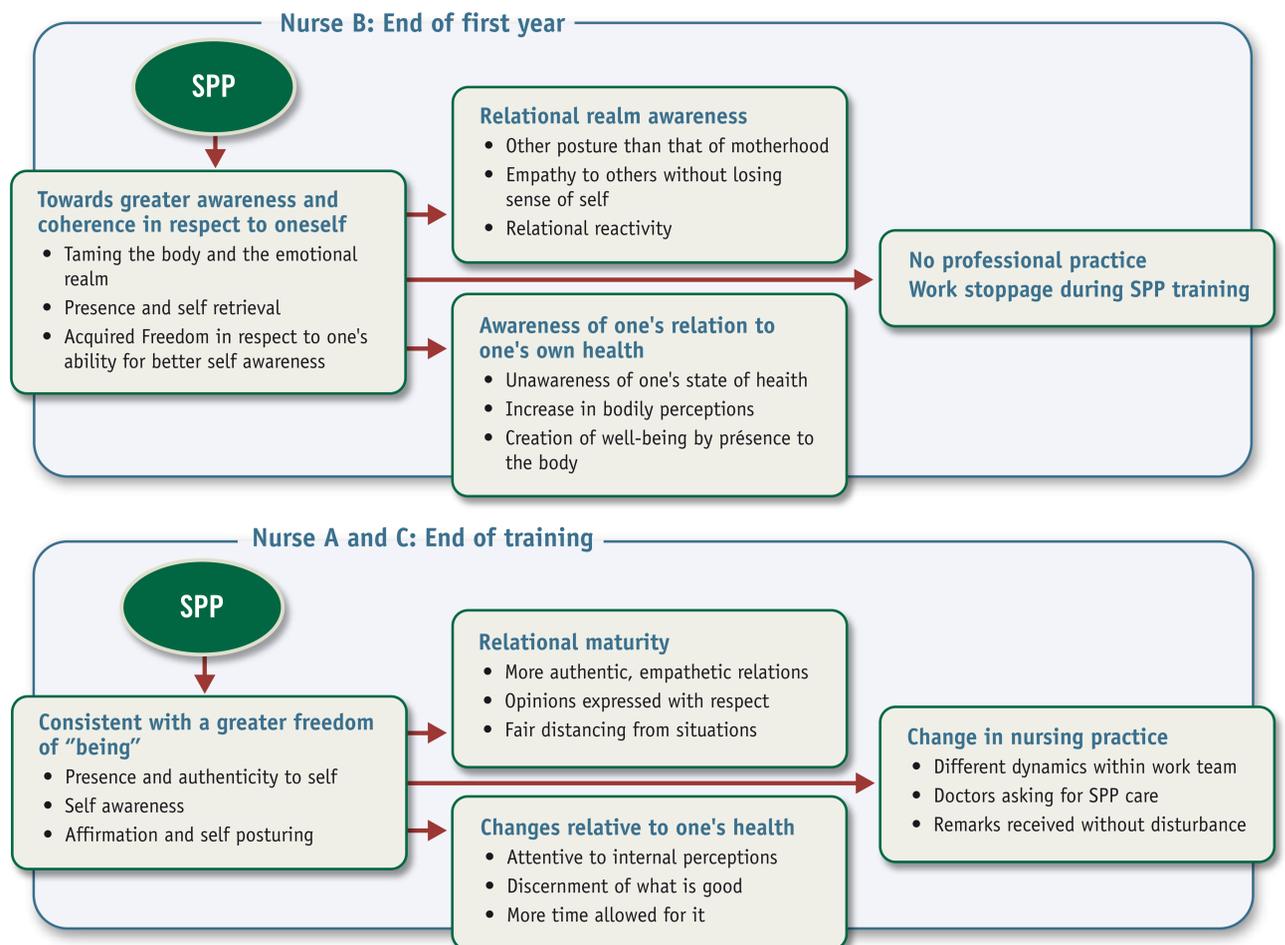
Participants	A	B	C
Age	37 years	50 years	58 years
Work experience	12 years	15 years	13 years
Work context	Intensive care	Pediatric intensive care	Rural hospitals, religious healthcare centers, geriatric nursing homes
Years of training (4 year course)	End of training	End of first year End of second year	End of training

### THE NURSES PERCEIVED A CHANGE

- *in their quality of presence with respect to themselves and to others (family, colleagues and patients);*
- *in the nature of the relationships they have with their patients, colleagues and healthcare team;*
  - *relationships are reported to have evolved with more recognition and a better quality of exchange between individuals;*
- *in their ability to express their opinions in both their personal and professional lives.*

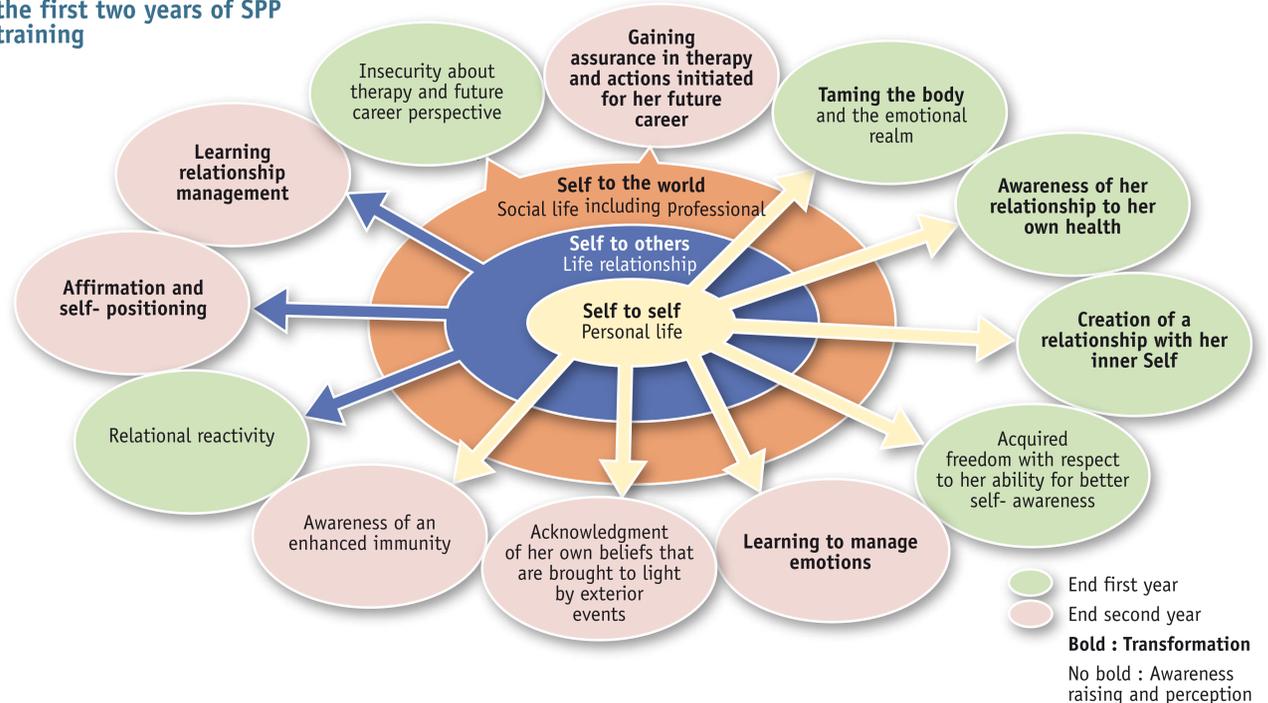
## FINDINGS

### NURSES' PROFESSIONAL EVOLUTION PATH



### ZOOM IN ON NURSE B'S EVOLUTIONARY PATH

#### Nurse B: Representation of changes during the first two years of SPP training



## CONCLUSIONS

Limits : This study is based on a limited number of cases and is context specific.

Interesting transformations among participants are presented in their report to their bodies, themselves, their health, relationships and in their healthcare practice confirming the relevance of Phase 2 of the project.

This latter phase will permit to identify whether physicians trained in SPP experience changes similar to those of the nurses and if so, whether they perceive these as having an impact on their practice.