

PERCEIVED EFFECTS ON HEALTH PROFESSIONALS OF A MIND-BODY MEDICINE PROGRAM: EXPLORATORY STUDY WITH PHYSICIANS

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BACKGROUND

- Developed in Europe in the 1980s, Awakening the "Sensible" Being (ASB) is a formative practice geared toward care giving and support. It examines how the experience of the body and its movement allows for the development of one's awareness, sense of self and of others, all of which are desirable qualities for health-care professionals.
- Four (4) intervention methods enable learning in ASB: 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 ASB participants. He also notes an ability to better externalise. ASB participants:
 - are closer to their interiority;
 - are more able to verbalize their feelings to others;
 - 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 closer to 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 learning.
- Given the above literature, we wanted to explore the effect that ASB training might have on physicians and their professional practice. To our knowledge, there have been no previous studies in this regard.

PURPOSE



METHODS

A two-phase qualitative research project

- Phase 1- Three (3) nurses trained or being trained in ASB
- Phase 2- Six (6) physicians having completed ASB training (500 hours over 4 years) -this presentation

Data Collection Methods

- A semi-structured audio-recorded interview with each physician (90-105 min duration)
- Use of comprehensive (Kaufmann, 2011) and elicitation questioning (Vermersch, 2010; 2012)
- Socio-demographic information obtained related to the participants' training and professional activities
- Data collected in 2012 and 2013

Data Analysis

- Thematic analysis of transcripts
- Categorisation of themes linked by items and sub-items (Paillé and Mucchielli, 2012)

RESULTS

Participant profiles

Participant (pseudonym)	Graduation				Reason for ASB training
	Year of graduation and field of Practice	Age at graduation	ASB Training	Age at graduation	
Suzanne	1989 General Practice	27 yrs old	2010	48 yrs old	Desire to change profession.
Marie-Hélène	1992 General Practice	30 yrs old	2012	50 yrs old	In search of a healing process for victims of torture.
Nathalie	1996 General Practice	32 yrs old	2011	47 yrs old	Personal quest.
Isabelle	1989 General Practice	33 yrs old	2008	52 yrs old	Looking for a manual approach that suits her personality.
Philippe	1977 Cardiology	30 yrs old	2008	61 yrs old	Curiosity: to understand this approach which resonated with him.
Eva	2007 General Practice	26 yrs old	2005	24 yrs old	Was looking for a manual approach as a complement to her training in medicine.

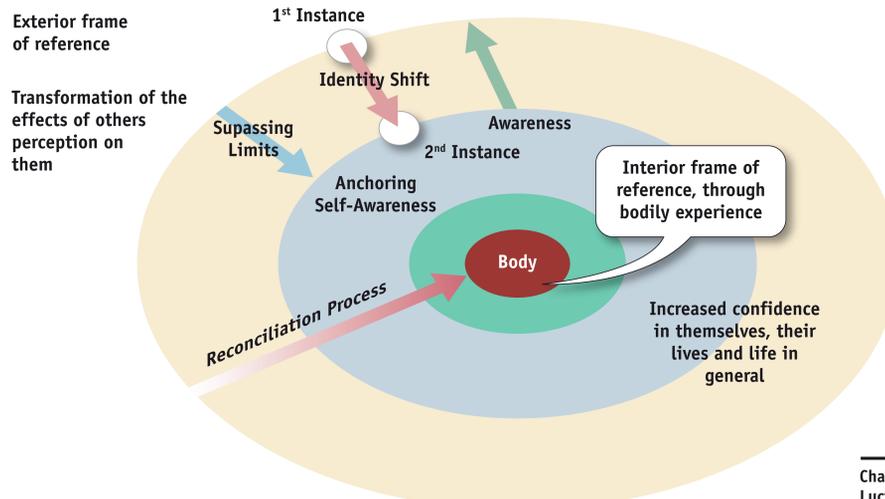
Anchoring self-awareness through the body : an opportunity for consciousness and for self-improvement

ASB training seems to enable participants to gradually ground their presence through a bodily experience.

Participant (pseudonym)	Anchoring Self-Awareness Through the Body (Transforming their relationship to their body)	Opportunity for Consciousness (Awareness - Enhanced Presence)	Self-Improvement (Limits Surpassed)
Suzanne	Listens to her body	Is now aware of her body and depressive state	Fear of making mistakes
Marie-Hélène	Feels her body	Feels the exact state of her body; has a feeling of unalterable existence	Fear of touching
Nathalie	Comfortably expresses herself through her body	Better presence; the importance of having a good mind-body balance	State of panic
Isabelle	Feels her body	A need to make the choice to be incarnate	Unable to move forward in her life
Philippe	No transformation	No reported change in self-awareness	Limited level of touch
Eva	Perceives with her whole body	Became aware of a lack of active implication in therapy and in her speech	Neutrality in her verbal dialogue and in her dialogue with the body tissues

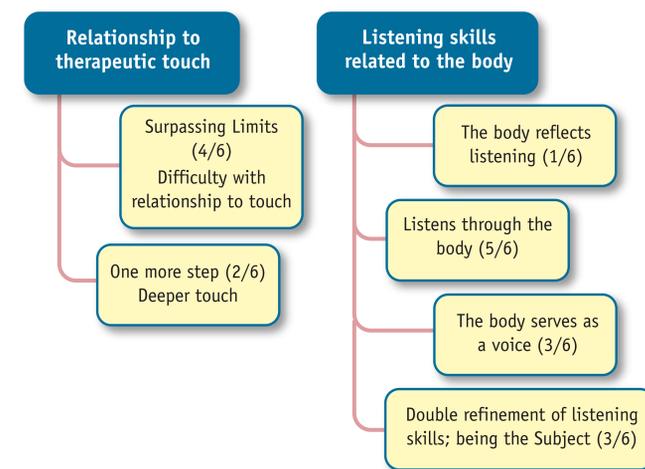
Centering of the Person through bodily Experience

For some, the training process enabled the emergence of awareness (centering of the person) and a movement towards self-reconciliation, with individuals learning to make choices based on their needs (both personal and professional).



Listening Skills and Relationship to Therapeutic Touch

Overall, participants reported having transformed their listening skills and their relationship with therapeutic touch - actions that transformed them personally and professionally.



Participants' Relationship With Respect to Health

Participant	Change in Their Conceptualisation of Health
Suzanne	No reported change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is more in tune with the real meaning of health Participant is reconciled with health and her practice: "I have moved back closer to health in the sense that I realized that, in fact, I have always liked taking care of people and that this is really what I wanted to do."
Marie-Hélène	Broadened conception <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "[...] for me, the absence of suffering is extended to the point of also considering the suffering that is represented by the fact of being estranged from oneself and not knowing the Self. Some people are really sick, but they regain a certain quality of living because they find meaning in their life."
Nathalie	Broadened conception <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The training program confirmed my conceptualisation of health." However, during the interview, the participant realized that mind-body integration is an element to be included in the definition of health.
Isabelle	Broadened conception <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASB brought to her consciousness that health is not just the absence of disease and that even when all medical tests are negative, an individual may still not be healthy.
Philippe	No reported change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> However he now reports having new tools to help him perceive his patients' state of health
Eva	Broadened conception <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of health is linked to an individual taking an active part in his/her health and to a greater coherence in the person's life, a better body-mind integration as evidenced by whole person care.

Conclusion

- Interesting transformations among participants are presented in their rapport to their bodies, themselves, their health, their relationships and their healthcare practice. Learning a mind-body approach such as ASB appears to bring about changes in physicians on a personal level. It also may help them better understand the patient's perspective, leading to certain practice changes, specifically regarding the therapeutic relationship.
- Limits: This study is based on a limited number of cases and is context-specific.