

Perceived Effects on Health Professionals of a Mind-Body Medicine Program: Exploratory Study With Physicians

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Purpose: Developed in Europe in the 1980s, Awakening the “Sensible” Being (ASB) is a formative practice that examines how use and movement of the body allow for the development of one’s awareness, sense of self and of others, which are desirable qualities for healthcare professionals. Our goal was to explore if and how ASB training followed by healthcare practitioners modifies the quality of their self-awareness, their presence to others, as well as their relationship with respect to health and their medical practice.

Methods: Based on two types of semi-structured interviews (comprehensive and elicitation) the project was conducted in two phases. Phase 1: exploratory interviews with three nurses trained or presently being trained in ASB. Phase 2: interviews with six physicians having completed their ASB training (500 hours over 4 years). The content of the interviews was first analyzed thematically then grouped by categories. Results of Phase 2 are presented here.

Results: ASB training seems to enable participants to gradually ground their presence through a bodily experience. Results suggest a difference between participants who were in harmony with themselves prior to training and those who weren’t. For the latter, the training process enabled the emergence of awareness and a movement towards self-reconciliation with individuals learning to make choices based on their needs (both personal and professional). Overall, participants reported having transformed their listening skills and their relationship with therapeutic touch - actions that transformed them personally and professionally. Participants in general were increasingly in line with their vocational identity and, for many, the concept of health broadened.

Conclusion: Participants report transformations in their relationship with their bodies, themselves, their health, their relationship with others, and in their healthcare practice. ASB training allowed them to refocus on themselves, thereby bringing about changes in their personal and professional life.