



## **Relaxation and symboltherapy**

- Autogenic Training-Therapy-Psychotherapy

### *Fields of application and main principles of Autogenic Training*

Autogenic training, as an individual method - that could be chosen according to its levels or wide spectrum treatment - is applicable both in individual and in group form in a wide circle of indications.

It is among the most appropriate *preventive methods*. It could be a short, *focal method in acute situations* and besides it is a *long, deep, processing psychotherapy* that touches the whole personality. It could be also *built in a complex therapeutic process*, complementary to other methods. It's an especially flexible method that could be well adapted to the therapeutic needs.

In the therapeutic process we always use autogeny as a principle, that is to invite the patient into his own therapeutic process. Autogenic training has a building nature. In the process of the therapy a determined sequence and well formed experience – processing is used. The building nature is also true for the therapeutic aim that is conceptualized not as the lack of illness or symptom, but as recovery, regaining health, development and harmony.

In Relaxation and symboltherapies the instructions (formulas and inviting pictures) can and do evoke a lot of non-verbal experiences from the body – sensations and proceeding appearance of inner images, but they are processed verbally. The main tool for psychic work is the presentation and transformation. The individual grabs his own experiences with receptive attention (passive concentration) puts them into words and fixes them with writing down. This well formed experience – field present a basis for therapeutic processing.

The realization of the building nature of the method is promoted by its multi-aspect structuredness: the inviting words and images have direct therapeutic effect based on their imperative nature, the verbal and image presentation of experiences have transformativ and initiative effects and through the psychological processing of the experiences, symptoms, manifestations it influences the problem indirectly.

The required regular practice has a summarizing effect, it creates a new level of self-regulance, and with a well-based motivation it builds in into the lifestyle, preserved after the end of therapy too as a tool for health promotion for a lifetime that can provide harmony.

As a result of the basic exercises the deepening of the therapy could be done in different directions based on the acquired and controlled organismic switch, altered state of conscientiousness and passive concentration: aimed organ trainings, focusing as the equipment for situative solutions and the psychotherapeutic work with the invited images in the altered state of conscientiousness: meditation and imagination.

The integration of the symbolic interpretation into psychotherapy could be done in a way where a strict sequence of work is needed, where direct interpretation should be avoided. The right way of giving meaning to symbols must be strict, differentiated and complex in order to function as a living energy-transformator.

*The realization of the building nature of the method - multi-aspect structuredness*

*Structure in methodology:* Autogenic Training basic exercises involve 7 stages that consist of the general relaxation and the 6 basic exercise: heaviness, warmth, formulas to the heart, breathing, inner organs and head. At advanced level (Symboltherapy/Meditation) the work with the inner pictures is also structured with the sequence of the images from the simple to the more complex ones, from the surface to the depth and by the work on the different layers of the processing of the images, from associations to analysis.

*The structure of the therapeutic setting and process:* The specificity of the *spatial setting* is given by the special body position in relaxation that creates a projective surface for special emotion transitions where their interpretations could be integrated to the therapeutic work. Concerning the *time frame*, the therapy itself becomes more structured by its duration and the stages of the method. The structured time of psychotherapy strengthens the motivation and the stay in psychotherapy. The strong structure in time gives an excellent opportunity for the appearance of the different oppositions - these could be well interpreted as situative oppositions (against the therapeutic situation or against the consequences of the unfolding of the psychic connections) or thematic oppositions (when the exercises or images touch sensitive points that are hard to face). This structure in time promotes the faith in the

successfulness of the therapy and the sense of solution based on the invested work of the individual. The *thematic structurednes* gives a guideline to the therapeutic work.

*Layers of personality and basic framework*

The healing while building and building while healing nature of Autogenic Training involves different layers of personality:

*Body layer – psychosomatic dimension* (basic exercises, aimed organ trainings, transformation exercises connected to the body sensations, focusing); *Soul – emotion – psychodynamic dimension* (associations to the basic exercises, different self-developmental target formulas, inviting images in meditation – imagination, psychotherapeutic work with the three layers); *Mind – moral – transpersonal dimension* (images aimed at finding one's self, self actualization, wholeness, themes of (re)structuring values, finding personal answers to philosophic questions); *Energetic dimension* (regular exercising, transformation in the therapeutic work –like the presentation of the sensations, giving words to the inner images, the written or other forms of presentation of them – the dynamics of the inviting images. The relaxation and the altered state of consciousness helps reaching the inner sources of power).

The deepening in the layers of consciousness is vertical. The organismic switch in relaxation creates an altered state of consciousness, that together with the permissive, recipient attitude and with the passive concentration makes the border between conscious and unconscious permeable, shows the personal over the common unconscious contents, makes the personal resources available such as the joy of recall, recognition or insight and the experience of knowledge, wisdom and finding ourselves.

There has been a change in psychotherapeutic thinking, that places the individuals partaking in psychotherapy in the foreground and besides providing the therapeutic setting and framework, considers the negative sensations, lack of success and difficulties as an immanent part of psychotherapy that should be the raw material of the therapeutic psychic work. This conceptual change has lead the method to the state of a matured psychotherapy, because it became clear that the experienced body sensations are the carriers of deep psychological connections and by revealing them we could initiate deep recovery and development. Today's variations of inductions are based on this concept.

The main tool and raw material of relaxation and symboltherapies are: representation and transformation. The freedom of representation is provided by the strong therapeutic framework. The therapeutic work in the relaxation and symboltherapies builds on the individual's devotion and motivation to the psychotherapy. But even single therapeutic sessions or meditative-imaginative picture invitations can give relief from the tension of anxiety or induce psychodynamic changes, so in this complex method provides the possibility from the simple symptom treatment through the deep revealing psychotherapy to the development of the whole personality. Autogenic Training integrated in the lifestyle of the person makes positive contribution to the individual's quality of life as a whole.

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