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Abstract

Psychomotor therapy is defined as a method of treatment based on a holistic view of the human being that is derived from the unity of body and mind. Assessments (observation and/or evaluation) are essential to achieving concrete psychosocial objectives methodically. Psychomotor therapy uses movement, body awareness and a wide range of movement activities to optimize movement behaviour as well as the cognitive, affective and relational aspects of psychomotor functioning (i.e. the relationships between physical movements and cognitive and social-affective aspects). Consequently, the approach to this type of therapy integrates the physical, cognitive and emotional aspects of functioning in relation to the capacity of being and acting in a psychosocial context in order to achieve clearly defined goals in consultation with the patients. Psychomotor therapy framework consists of three different approaches: a health-related approach, a psychosocial approach and a psychotherapeutic approach, which can be embedded in several psychotherapeutic approaches. Through the implementation of both systematically planned evaluations and individually targeted interventions in group, the psychomotor therapist strives to broaden the general action competences and specific skills and to stimulate a positive self-image and personal well-being in balanced social relationships. Today, there is sufficient evidence that psychomotor therapy has a major contribution to both well-being and mental health of patients with severe psychiatric problems. In Flemish psychiatric hospitals, psychomotor therapy is imbedded in different treatment programmes. In this chapter, the theory behind this approach and some practical examples will be provided.

Keywords: body image, physical activity, mental health disorders, psychiatry, psychotherapeutic accent, movement therapy, psychomotor therapy


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