

# **The Effect of Basic Body Awareness Therapy (BBAT) in a Group of Person-centered Psychotherapists: Towards a Broadening of Both Psychotherapy and Physiotherapy Perspectives**

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## **Synopsis**

Body awareness and movement quality are the key points of Basic Body Awareness Therapy (BBAT), a physiotherapy approach dealing with movement quality and awareness. This study addresses the impact of BBAT method on psychotherapists in terms of addressing their own well-being and broadening their health perspective; furthermore, it highlights the subtle aspects in similarities and differences in BBAT and psychotherapeutic processes and the ways they could interact complementary to each other. A mixed study design was chosen, collecting quantitative and qualitative data.

**Keywords:** Body awareness, BBAT, psychotherapy, body psychotherapy

## **1. Background**

Basic Body Awareness Therapy (BBAT) is a physiotherapy approach that aims to establish new movement habits and a new way of being. It introduces a movement quality model [1],[2] based not only in strictly biomechanical but also in physiological, psycho-socio-cultural and existential movement aspects [1]-[3]. Originated by the French Movement educator and psychotherapist Dropsy back in the 1960's with influences from various western and eastern movement awareness traditions, it was introduced to the physiotherapy world by physiotherapist Dr. Roxendal in the late 1970s [3]. Ever since it is continuously developing in clinical practice and theory through evidence-based research by the International Association of BBAT teachers [4]. The impact of the method has been a research subject for different population. There has never been research into the impact that BBAT would have on a population very closely linked to mental health: psychotherapists, those who play a central role in the group of mental health professionals.

## **2 Purpose**

Two research questions were explored. The first was whether BBAT method could be useful to psychotherapists in terms of addressing their own well-being and broadening their health perspective. The second was whether, according to psychotherapists perspectives, BBAT and psychotherapeutic processes could interact complementary to each other.

## **3 Method**

This study utilized both qualitative and quantitative research design.

Regarding the quantitative research design, data was collected using the quantitative part of Body Awareness Rating Scale-Movement Quality and Experience (BARS-MQE), measuring movement quality based on therapist observation in accordance with defined criteria [5],[6]. Regarding the qualitative research design, data was collected during the part two of BARS-MQE, during the reflective talk in all twelve BBAT sessions



as well as during the semi-structured interviews, which took place after all the BBAT sessions were completed. The interviews were analyzed using the Systematic Text Condensation (STC) which is considered as most appropriate for use in a student level [7]

#### **4 Results**

The quantitative part of the analysis indicates that the participants' movement quality was significantly promoted through BBAT. The qualitative results indicate that BBAT, either as a live session or given online, was sensed as a salutogenic, process-oriented and holistic approach that can be used as a mean of deep self-reflection and personal growth and thus can play a complementary role to traditional psychotherapy/medication.

#### **5 Conclusion**

All the mental health professionals got significant benefits from the BBAT sessions in all BBAT perspectives and aspects. They become aware of bodily functions and sensed their movement more centered, released and with less pain. They all agreed that BBAT can be used as a mean of deep self-reflection, personal growth and as an effective tool for mental process. All of the participants stated that BBAT would be a very rich therapy to include in mental health care in Greece, clarifying how physiotherapy and psychotherapy could be complementary but noted it will take time for Greece to integrate for reasons that have to do with the mentality and also the socioeconomic status of the country.

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