



Sophrology academy

A Centre of Excellence in Sophrology

**Sophrology Practitioner
Diploma
Level One**

Course Workbook

2026-2027

Contents

MODULE I – Sophrology Fundamentals	2
ORIGINS, THEORY AND CONCEPTS	2
1- Definition	2
2- Origins	3
3- Sources.....	5
4- Aims and Uses	5
5- Three Key Theories	6
6- Four Fundamental Principles.....	10
7- Two Fundamental Laws.....	14
STRUCTURE OF THE METHOD	16
8- Overall Structure of the Sophrology Method	16
9- Structure of a Sophrology Session	18
10- Techniques used in Sophrology.....	20
11- Common Patterns of Exercises in Sophrology	22
12- Terminology used in Sophrology	23
MODULE II – History, Sources & Science.....	24
1- Summary of Sources.....	24
2- Relaxation	25
3- Phenomenology	30
4- Eastern Practices: Yoga, Buddhist Meditation, Japanese Zen.....	33
5- Mindbody Practices and Science	40
MODULE III – Dynamic Relaxation Level 1	44
1- Body Consciousness	44
2- Concentration.....	44
3- Summary of Level 1	45
4- Level 1 Dynamic Relaxation Protocol.....	46
5- Level 1 Specific Techniques/ Present Exercises	51
Appendix 1 – Physiology of the different systems.....	60
Appendix 2 – Table of all exercises	68

MODULE I – Sophrology Fundamentals

Learning outcomes:

- Explain what sophrology is; the origins and development of the method
- Describe the three key theories including the central model of states and levels of consciousness
- Recognise, in theory and practice, the Sophro-Liminal Level (SLL)
- Explain the fundamental principles of sophrology and illustrate how they are applied in the method
- Describe how sophrology works with reference to the two fundamental laws
- Understand the structure of the sophrology method both in a session and overall
- Know and use the terminology specific to sophrology

ORIGINS, THEORY AND CONCEPTS

1-Definition

The word sophrology derives from the Greek:

SOS: harmony

PHREN: consciousness

LOGOS: study of/ science

It literally means the “study of consciousness in harmony”.

Below are a few of the ways sophrology is defined and described:

“A healthcare philosophy made of very practical physical and mental exercises aiming at an alert mind in a relaxed body.” (Florence Parot)

“A mind-body training to develop serenity and wellbeing.” (Natalia Caycedo)

“Sophrology is a science that studies consciousness in balance, and a discipline for the development of a person’s values, inspired by existential phenomenology” (Epistemologie Sophrologique Fondamentale)

“Sophrology is a science studying human consciousness, its changes, and how to alter it for medical, social and educational purposes, to enable man to be in harmony with himself and his environment.” (Bernard Santerre)

“Sophrology is a uniquely structured mind-body practice for self-development, enhanced performance, and overall health and well-being.

- It works by strengthening the mind-body connection using simple breathing, relaxation, mental imagery and concentration exercises which can be easily incorporated into daily life. Regular practice leads to increased self-awareness, the ability to regulate stress, emotions, and experience more balance and harmony
- Developed in the medical world, sophrology draws on western philosophy, positive psychology and eastern meditation practices. The method has a 60+ year track record in several countries in Europe where it is still widely used today.”

(The Sophrology Academy)

Most importantly sophrology is an experience and a practice. The Sophrology Academy’s teaching emphasises this experimental and experiential approach. Instead of trying to define it with words, we encourage you to live it.

2-Origins

Professor Caycedo (of Spanish Basque origin, born in Bogota, Colombia in 1932- died in Barcelona in 2017), neuropsychiatrist, created sophrology in 1960 while practicing medicine at the University of Madrid, Spain.

He originally set out to find a way of healing depressed and traumatised patients by leading them to health and happiness with the least possible use of drugs and psychiatric treatments. He also wanted to study human consciousness and the means of varying its states and levels.

He started looking into clinical hypnosis, phenomenology and Western relaxation techniques: Jacobson’s Progressive Muscle Relaxation, Schultz’s Autogenic Training. From Jacobson, he mainly drew on the ability to reduce anxiety by relaxing muscular tension. No suggestion or psychotherapy, just muscular relaxation for mental peace Also the idea of differential relaxation: use only the minimum muscle tension necessary to do something. With Schultz, which is a more “mental” method, he was inspired by our ability to get relaxed by imagining it, by visualising it. In October 1960, he created the word “sophrology” and opened the first department of clinical sophrology in the Santa Isabel Hospital in Madrid.

In 1963, he married a French yoga enthusiast. He started looking into Eastern techniques around that time. Between 1963 and 1964, he worked under the psychiatrist and phenomenologist Ludwig Binswanger (who had studied with Husserl and Heidegger) in Switzerland and was very much influenced by his work.

Then, intrigued by the works of yoga and encouraged by Binswanger, he travelled to India and Japan from 1965 to 1968 where he studied yoga, Tibetan Buddhist meditation and Japanese Zen. He approached each discipline, theory and philosophy with the intention of discovering what, exactly, improved people's health, both physically and mentally, in the fastest possible time and with lasting results.

He first travelled to India where he discovered Raja Yoga in the ashram of Swami Sivananda and Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga. He then travelled to Dharamsala to meet the Dalai Lama and study Tibetan Buddhism. Lastly, he went to Japan to learn Zen in several monasteries.

On his return, he created the first three levels of what he called Dynamic Relaxation. From then on, sophrology started to move away from clinical hypnosis and concentrated more on body work and the presence of the body in the mind. His idea was to help the Western mind use Eastern methods in a simple way, leaving aside the philosophy and religion, not mimicking those techniques for which he always had the utmost respect but to enable people to experience easily new ways of working on their levels of consciousness.

On his return to Spain, Professor Caycedo settled in Barcelona where he started expanding sophrology. He initiated a sophrology group work in Paris and spread the word at scientific conferences in Spain, Switzerland and Belgium.

In Switzerland, Dr Raymond Abrezol discovered the unique benefits of sophrology and brought it to the attention of the general public. In 1965, having just finished his sophrology studies, he tried to help a friend with whom he was playing tennis regularly. His performance and concentration developed quite dramatically. Abrezol then helped another friend with his skiing performance. A dramatic improvement there again. In 1967, a national ski coach, having heard about it, asked his help to train four ski champions for the Grenoble Olympic Games of 1968, all in great secret. Three of them ended up on the podium with Olympic medals. They were the only Swiss champions to get medals at the Games that year. The athletes revealed their sophrology training to the press. The press was ecstatic and Abrezol ended up training the whole national team from the next season. Medals started pouring in for Switzerland. Funnily enough, after the world championships in 1970, the Ski Federation asked Abrezol not to stay with the skiers at starting point, arguing he had too much influence on them and was « creating a disadvantage for other nations »! Abrezol went on to train many other athletes in sailing, boxing, cycling, tennis, water-polo, golf, etc. Athletes coached by Dr Raymond Abrezol between 1967 and 2004 won over 200 Olympic medals.

Following this success, sophrology grew rapidly throughout the French-speaking world. Although initially used only in medicine, sophrology then opened to other areas: sports of course but also prevention and promotion of health in the corporate world, in education, in arts, etc. Dr Abrezol ran trainer training programmes for a large number of influential doctors and sports coaches, many of whom now run Training Centres

throughout France. His enthusiasm and his success with athletes opened doors for sophrology to be taught in many areas of life.

During his stay in Colombia in 1985, Caycedo created the fourth Level of Dynamic Relaxation and the “social” branch of sophrology. In 1988 he moved to Andorra and created the notion of « Caycedian Sophrology ». In 1992 he started the following levels and created a Master’s Degree. In 2001, the twelve levels of Dynamic Relaxation were finished but the first four remain the most commonly used.

For Caycedo, (in 1970 during the first International Sophrology Conference):

“Sophrology:

- intends to study scientifically human consciousness,
- is both a philosophy and a way of life,
- is both a therapy and a personal development technique.”

He later said: « Sophrology is learning to live ».

3-Sources

Sophrology can therefore be seen to draw primarily on the following sources:

- Relaxation techniques (Autogenic and Progressive Muscle Relaxation)
- Phenomenology
- Yoga
- Buddhist Meditation
- Japanese Zen

4-Aims and Uses

Sophrology is now a very popular method in France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland and Belgium and is used in a large variety of fields:

THE MEDICAL BRANCH

- Obstetrics: pre-natal & post-natal
- Complementary to psychotherapy
- Depression, anxiety, phobias, panic attacks.
- Addictions
- Eating disorders
- Surgery: preparing for an operation
- Sleep disorders
- Pain management and palliative care
- Oncology
- Chronic health conditions such as fibromyalgia, IBS, chronic fatigue syndrome, Parkinson’s disease, multiple sclerosis, etc...

In these areas, sophrology sits alongside other complementary therapies, as a technique in the field of mind-body medicine.

THE SOCIAL AND PREVENTIVE BRANCHES

- Sports: self-confidence, performance, concentration, motivation, team building, managing energy levels, preparation for competitions, technical difficulties and preparation, nerves and pressure, mental recovery from injuries.
- Performing arts and artists: self-confidence, creativity, stage fright management, memory, expression.
- Education: concentration, motivation, memory, learning capacity, self-esteem, preparing for exams, adapted to work with children and teenagers.
- Business and work: stress and burnout management, performance, focus, motivation, managing energy levels, wellbeing, team building, repetitive strain injuries, preparing for interviews, public speaking, change management and resilience, self-development and interpersonal skills, creativity.
- General wellbeing: stress management, personal development, emotions management, performance, focus, motivation, managing energy levels, self-acceptance, self-confidence, life events

In these areas sophrology is usually an alternative or complement to training or coaching.

5-Three Key Theories

FUNDAMENTAL THEORY: STATES AND LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Caycedo's theoretical framework of consciousness distinguished between STATES of consciousness and LEVELS of consciousness.

The levels of consciousness represent levels of awareness or wakefulness from being deeply asleep to being fully awake. The different levels of consciousness correspond to different patterns of electrical activity in the brain (beta, alpha, theta and delta waves).

He named sophro-liminal level the level of consciousness which is between being fully awake and asleep. It is a level consciousness in which sophrology exercises are practiced.

States of consciousness are qualitative and range from pathological consciousness to sophronic consciousness.

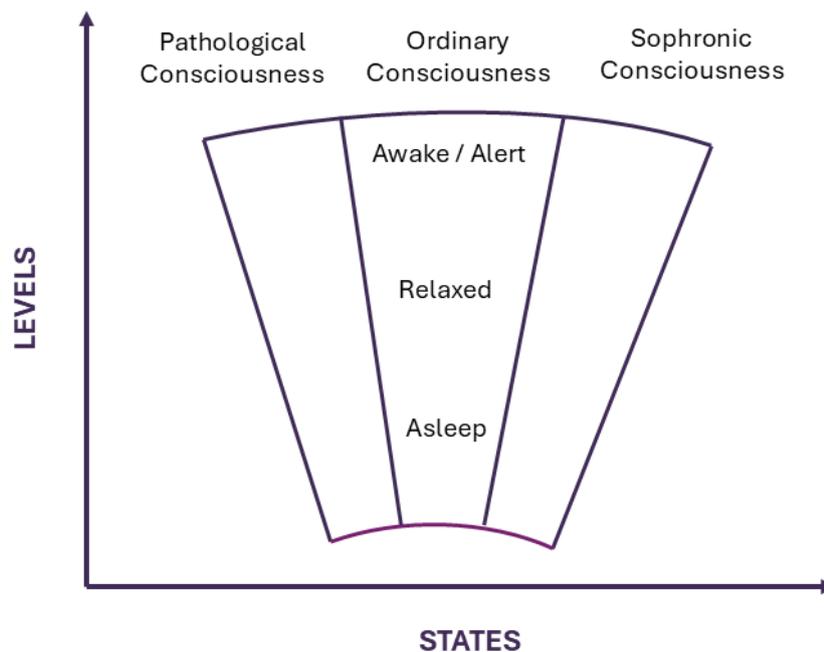
Pathological consciousness describes mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, paranoia, neurosis and other psychological disorders for which professional therapeutic care is required.

It's interesting to note that schizophrenia derives from the Greek *skhizein* "split" and *phren* "consciousness" and literally means a split mind or split consciousness. Caycedo was working on a method that would allow patients to progress from a split consciousness to a whole harmonious consciousness.

The ordinary state of consciousness describes most people living their day to day lives in "automatic" mode.

Sophronic consciousness is a state in which your body and mind are in perfect harmony, a state where you feel connected to who you are, revealing your full potential and embodying this in your daily life.

Fan of Consciousness model: States and Levels of Consciousness



The concept of consciousness is key in sophrology.

Consciousness is not limited to "mind" stuff. Instead, it is viewed as an integrative force, or energy. It combines both body consciousness, mind consciousness as well as the space in which body and mind meet.

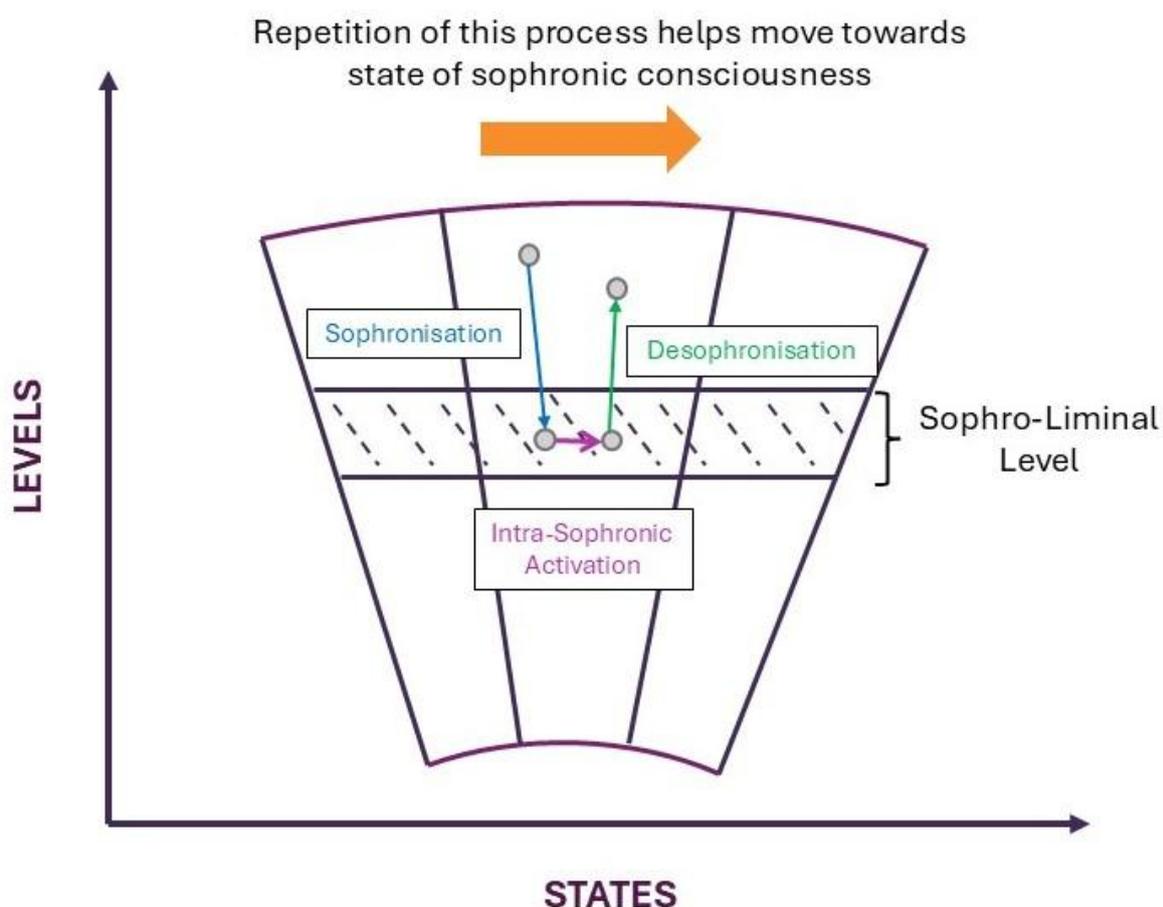
Consciousness in sophrology represents a dynamic process that is constantly evolving and expanding through our repeated experiences in the Sophro-liminal level.

SECOND THEORY: THE SOPHRO-LIMINAL LEVEL

Caycedo observed a level of consciousness as described in the Fan of Consciousness model which facilitates relaxation and receptivity. Here we are more open and creative, perceptions and sensations are heightened. At this level, we have more access to, or contact with, our minds and bodies. and we can explore our own consciousness. Mind and body can work together and activation of the positive is facilitated. Integration of lived experiences is easier in the sophro-liminal level than in a normal level of awareness.

This is the space of training in sophrology. Inhabiting this level is the best path to the 3rd state of consciousness. Each occasion of dropping down into sophro-liminal level, experiencing a positive activation, and returning again during a sophrology exercise moves a person closer to sophronic consciousness.

Fan of Consciousness Model: Transformation with Sophrology Practice



THIRD THEORY: THE SYSTEMS

In sophrology, body, mind and consciousness are one and united. To help people reach this experience of existential unity, Caycedo used different subdivisions of the body. Progressively, through the repetition of the experience and pheno-descriptions collected from the people he worked with, he eventually settled on dividing the body into five parts or five systems, with the whole body being the integration of those systems into a sixth system or mega-system.

Each system is considered as a whole, what it feels like, what it is made of, how it is perceived when becoming aware of this part of the body. Each system is linked to specific vital organs and each system has an integration point which puts us in direct contact with that system.

The division of the body into systems uses language that allows us to put aside preconceived ideas and experiences linked with usual names of body parts. The aim is to develop body consciousness through this repeated living experience of parts of the body as they are.

System		Integration point	Organs
1	Head + face	Forehead	Brain Sensory organs
2	Neck + shoulders + arms & hands	Base of throat	Thyroid Vocal chords
3	Chest + upper back	Sternum	Lungs, heart thymus
4	Abdomen + lower back	4 cms above the belly button	Digestive system, liver, kidneys, pancreas, spleen
5	Lower abdomen + legs	4 cms below the belly button	Reproductive organs Bladder/ End of digestive system
6	Whole body	Belly button	All organs

The use of the term 'system' is not essential but can help a person to approach their body in a new way, without the preconceived ideas that come with naming the anatomical parts of the body.

A NOTE ON MAIN PHYSIOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS

In Appendix 1 there are some details about the various physiological systems in the body. However, sophrology is not about anatomy or physiology. The most important for you and your clients is how the body and organs are lived, perceived, sensed or imagined. It can sometimes be useful to explain in simple terms to clients how certain organs or glands work and where they are located in the body. As per usual in sophrology, adaptability is key. For instance, avoid focusing on thyroid if you know your client had their thyroid removed.

You'll need to do further research to understand the consequences and malfunctions of certain organs in the body depending on the clients you work with. The NHS website is a useful source of information <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/>

6-Four Fundamental Principles

The first three are considered the main principles of the sophrology method with the fourth added a little later.

BODY CONSCIOUSNESS

The concept of body consciousness refers to how one feels and perceives the body here and now in all its dimensions (physical, mental and emotional). It is not about visualising the body, the mental perception one has of their body, or body image, but a lived reality of the physicality of the body and its sensations. This is why sophrology uses systems and why the first level involves so many movements. Generating sensations and focusing on those helps develop one fundamental aspect of consciousness: the corporeality or true existence of the living body.

A few quotes to reflect upon:

"Take good care of your body if you want your soul to feel like living in it."
Chinese proverb

Jack Kornfield: After the ecstasy, the laundry

"Before enlightenment we have to live with our body. After enlightenment we still have to live with our body."

Jack Kornfield: A path with heart

"You may have heard of "out-of-the-body experiences", full of lights and visions. A true spiritual path demands something more challenging, what could be called an "in-the-body experience". We must connect to our body, to our feelings, to our life just now, if we are to awaken."

Zen Master Dainan Katagiri says, "The important point of spiritual practice is not to try to escape your life, but to face it – exactly and completely."

Eduardo Galeano:

"The church says: The body is a sin.

Science says: The body is a machine.

Advertising says: The body is a business.

The Body says: I am a fiesta."

POSITIVE ACTION

Any positive experience in our body and/or mind will start a positive chain reaction inside our whole being. We can go through the mind to heal the body (top-down) and through the body to support the mind (bottom up).

Also, in sophrology, we do not focus on the problem itself or its causes. It does not mean we ignore the problem. To help with the issue, we concentrate on the positive elements or resources we have in us and in our past/present/future. Resources that will enable us to move forward, to strengthen and reinforce the self, to discover and reach our full potential. With repeated focus on sensations perceived as positive (positive does not mean pleasant), positive perceptions begin to dominate and we build inner strength and resilience.

We ask ourselves: What makes me feel great? What brings me joy? Where do I take my energy from? And we use that knowledge.

Quotes to reflect upon:

Pascal Gautier, former Director of the Rennes School of Sophrology :

"Through an everyday practice, sophrology aims at harmony in human beings: quite a feat! In practice, it does not mean seeing life through rose-tinted glasses but putting an end to an unrealistic or negative vision of life to see things as they are (as much as possible) and reinforce whatever positive we have in us."

Alfonso Caycedo:

"Any positive action on part of our consciousness affects our entire being."

Sophrologie Dictionnaire des concepts, techniques et champs d'application:

"The notion of the positive in sophrology is not synonymous with pleasant."

OBJECTIVE REALITY

The principle of objective reality refers to seeing things as much as possible as they really are, accepting reality around us and others as they are, without judgment, ready-made ideas or assumptions.

We apply this principle in each session, as we try to put what we know (or what we think we know) into brackets for the time of the session. We welcome sensations and messages as if for the first time without interpretation.

Objective reality is key to establishing the alliance in sophrology, the relationship of trust between the sophrology practitioner and the client. A sophrologist must at all times be aware of the fundamental principle of objective reality. Judging is a human habit that leads to automatic reactions, but to be able to offer a true sophrological experience to a client, one must learn to suspend judgment and be as impartial as possible. The sophrologist must also always work within the limits of their field of competence and refer a client to another professional when needed.

Quotes to reflect upon:

Richard Davidson: The Emotional Life of your Brain

“Open, non-judgmental awareness: this is the capacity to remain receptive to whatever might pass into your thoughts, view, hearing, or feeling and to do so in a noncritical way.”

Bhante Gunaratana: Mindfulness in Plain English

“When you seek to know reality without illusion, complete with all its pain and danger, real freedom and security will be yours.”

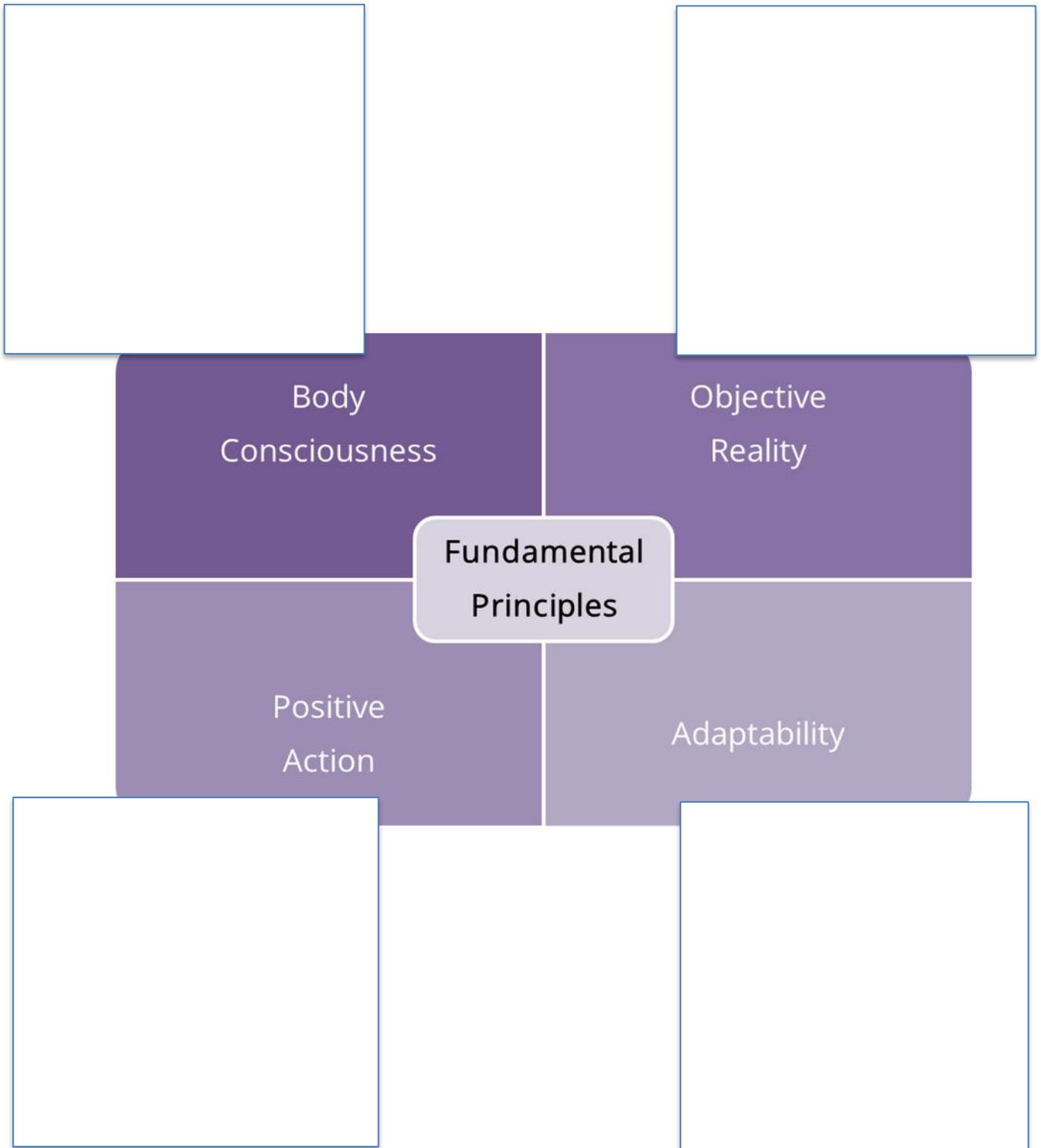
ADAPTABILITY

We adapt the method to the situation and the client, whatever his or her abilities. It is by integrating the method, and ongoing regular practice, that sophrologists are able to adjust and adapt as needed. There is room for creativity in the method whilst always staying true to the fundamental principles, the phenomenological orientation and preserving the alliance with the intention of empowering the client.

Some schools include a 5th principle of Existential Choice which refers to the idea that we are in charge of our own existence. Whatever the external circumstances that we may not be able to change, we have a choice in how we react. Through the application of the above principles, we are aiming to discover this freedom and responsibility.

We apply the principles in each sophrology session. Through repetition, we start becoming aware and applying them consciously in our daily lives.

THE PRINCIPLES IN ACTION IN A SOPHROLOGY PRACTICE



7-Two Fundamental Laws

LAW OF VIVANCE

This law states that inviting sensations, perceptions (phenomena) and noticing what arises without judgement or interpretation promotes the discovery and integration of consciousness.

'Vivance' is a word created by Caycedo meaning: the living experience of what's happening inside -

- that which is being felt, sensed, experienced
- Not 'lived' (past/passive); Not 'alive' (a state)
- The presence of life in the process of living itself within my being
- Translated from 'vivencia', a Spanish term coined by Jose by Ortega y Gasset to describe a lived experience: 'Everything that arises in my being so immediately that it becomes an integral part of it'. He had translated from the German 'Erlebnis': lived experience; the act of experiencing mobilised by the choice we make to orient our consciousness on that which we are in the process of living.

"Act of consciousness, deep meeting between mind and body that can happen in the time of integration and totalisation pauses". (Alfonso Caycedo – 1997).

Vivance (Sophrologie – Lexique des concepts, techniques et champs d'application): Au fil de l'entraînement, le vécu du sophronisant se modifie. Ses sensations sont plus nombreuses, plus fines. Le corps est vécu comme un véritable « moi ». De la même façon, les pensées sont moins nombreuses, moins accaparantes. Elles sont plus conscientes et plus constructives. Le mental est mieux géré. On parle alors de « vivance » : ce que le sujet est en train de vivre, dans toutes les dimensions de son être et de façon consciente et existentielle (d'abord lors des pratiques, puis dans la vie de tous les jours).

= As they practice, the person's experiences evolve. Sensations are more numerous and refined. The body feels like a true "self". Similarly, thoughts are fewer, less obtrusive. Thoughts are more conscious and helpful. The mind is better managed. That's what we call "vivance": what a person is experiencing, in all aspects of his/her being, consciously and existentially (first while practicing then in everyday life).

A vivance is activated by a sophrology exercise, and experienced during the time of pause in a sophrology practice. Over time it is experienced in everyday life.

THE LAW OF VIVANTIAL REPETITION

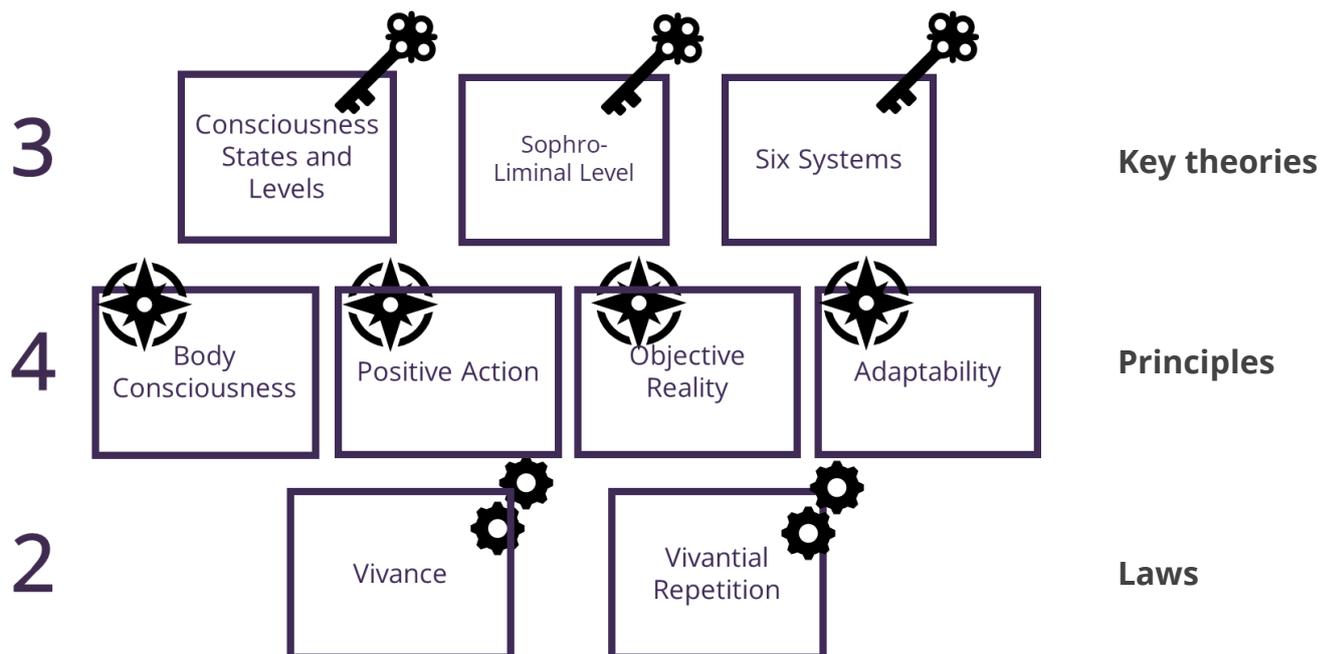
Vivantial: from vivance.

Repetition is how we change. Just like learning a musical instrument where regular practice is required to be able to play. For transformation to occur, where a new way of

being becomes a default in everyday life, repetition is required. Repetition is a key principle of neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to adapt and change through life.

Adding to the first law, this law states that the repetition of practice in sophrology enriches and deepens the vivance, and leads to a progressive transformation over time. The process moves through three phases, starting with discovery, then mastery, and finally transformation through integration into daily life.

SUMMARY

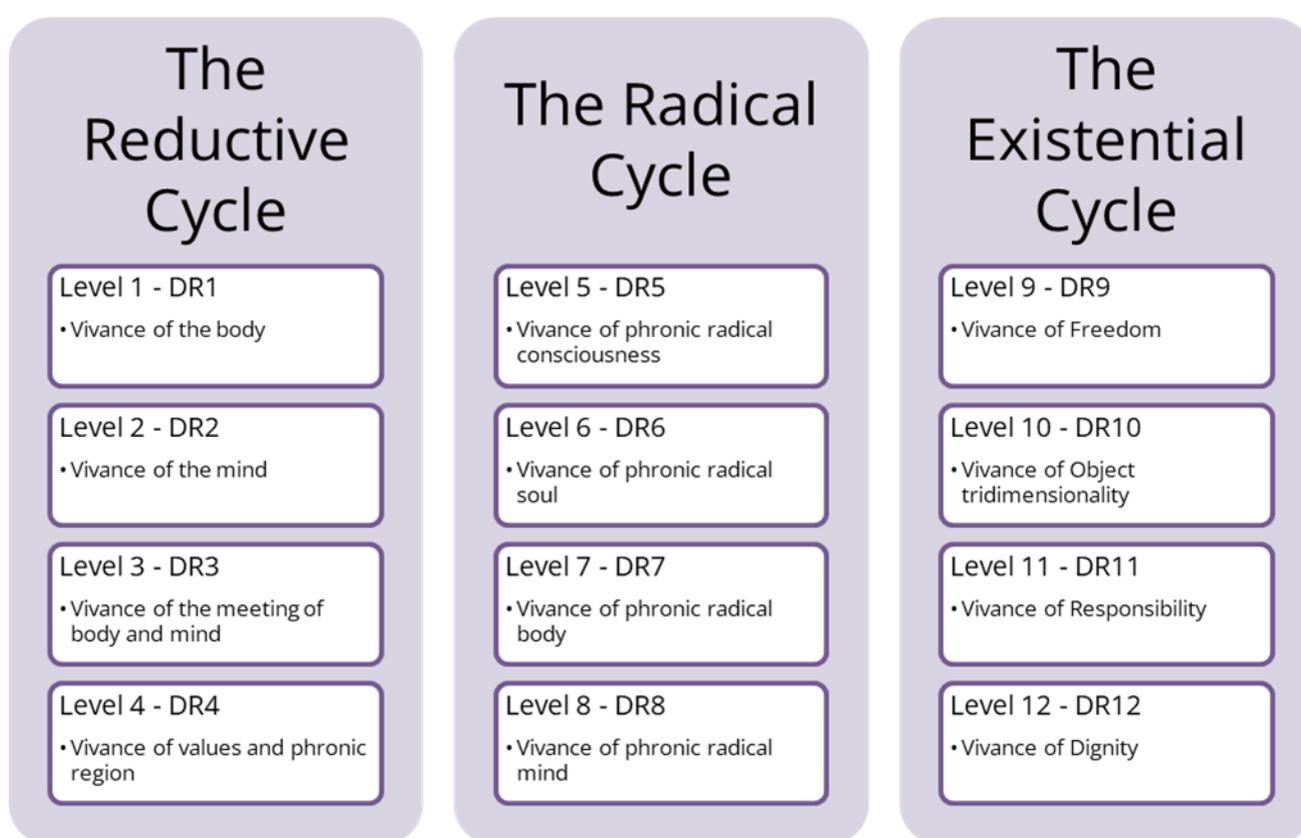


STRUCTURE OF THE METHOD

8-Overall Structure of the Sophrology Method

Caycedo structured the sophrology method into three cycles. Each cycle is composed of four Dynamic Relaxation (DR) levels.

TWELVE DYNAMIC RELAXATION LEVELS



1st cycle - THE REDUCTIVE CYCLE

DR1 to DR4 are the four main Dynamic Relaxation levels that are seen in the Foundation Programme and Practitioner Diploma and contain all the exercises that will be used with clients.

Through the reductive cycle a person develops an increased awareness of their body, mind and develops the harmonious connection between the two. The aim of the first four levels is to expand one's consciousness and to fully live in accordance with one's own values.

2nd cycle - THE RADICAL CYCLE

DR5 to DR8 use sounds (the voice) to activate the body, mind and spirit.

Focus: awareness of the vibrations in different parts of the body down to cellular level, strengthening the essence of the self (radical, i.e. going back to the roots).

3rd cycle - THE EXISTENTIAL CYCLE

From DR9 to DR12 one learns to live in full consciousness and to understand and be fully aware of the existential values of: Freedom, Tridimensionality, Responsibility and Dignity. We continue to train to be fully present in each moment in time, but also to be aware of all the dimensions of space and time and to be fully in tune with ourselves, the world around us and the universe.

DYNAMIC RELAXATION

At the core, forming the 'backbone' of each level is a Dynamic Relaxation protocol, or suite of particular exercises in a particular order.

Regular practice of the Dynamic Relaxation exercises is aimed at the progressive discovery, development and ultimately transformation of the Self through unveiling consciousness.

Caycedo developed and updated the Dynamic Relaxation protocols several times over the years. This means that different schools have taught different protocols and you should be aware that we are teaching you one of the updated versions from 2001.

SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES

Each Dynamic Relaxation level has an associated set of 'specific techniques' connected with past, present or future. These techniques can be used for particular areas of client need and are aimed at developing capacities to adapt optimally to life conditions. They complement Dynamic Relaxation but can also be used independently or 'mixed and matched' with Dynamic Relaxation exercises.

THE THREE KEY TECHNIQUES

A subset of Specific Techniques are referred to as 'Key Techniques' as they are commonly used at the beginning of a session (BVS, SND, SVA).

Sophrology is a method that took years to develop. Initially Caycedo used the Basic Sophronisation (body scan), taken from relaxation, as a way to get into sophro-liminal level.

Later on he developed the technique of Basic Vivantial Sophronisation (BVS), involving the systems. Rather than being focused on relaxation, it is more focused on the experience of the presence of each part of the body, and more truly sophrological.

He also started to use the combination of three exercises at the start of his updated protocols and at the start of each sophrology session. These three key techniques are:

- Basic Vivantial Sophronisation (BVS) +
- Sophro Negative Displacement (SND) +
- Sophro Vital Activation (SVA).

When they are used at the start of a dynamic relaxation protocol or session the three exercises are usually guided quite quickly and last no more than 10 minutes. They are used to get into sophro-liminal level. Similarly, a session could be made with only these three key techniques and last 20 to 30 minutes. Finally, each of these exercises can also be used on their own as a standalone exercise in a session's protocol.

9-Structure of a Sophrology Session

Sophrology is a structured method, based on techniques such as concentration, breathing, relaxation, visualisation and simple movements. Sophrology considers the person as a whole, body and mind, it is a holistic method. The exercises are simple and easy to use in everyday life. The aim is to find the techniques that work best for a given person so that they can easily re-use these exercises in their own daily life to help improve their lives.

In group sessions, people discover the basic method and are able to start using some of the techniques on their own after each session. The aim is usually to discover and improve general well-being

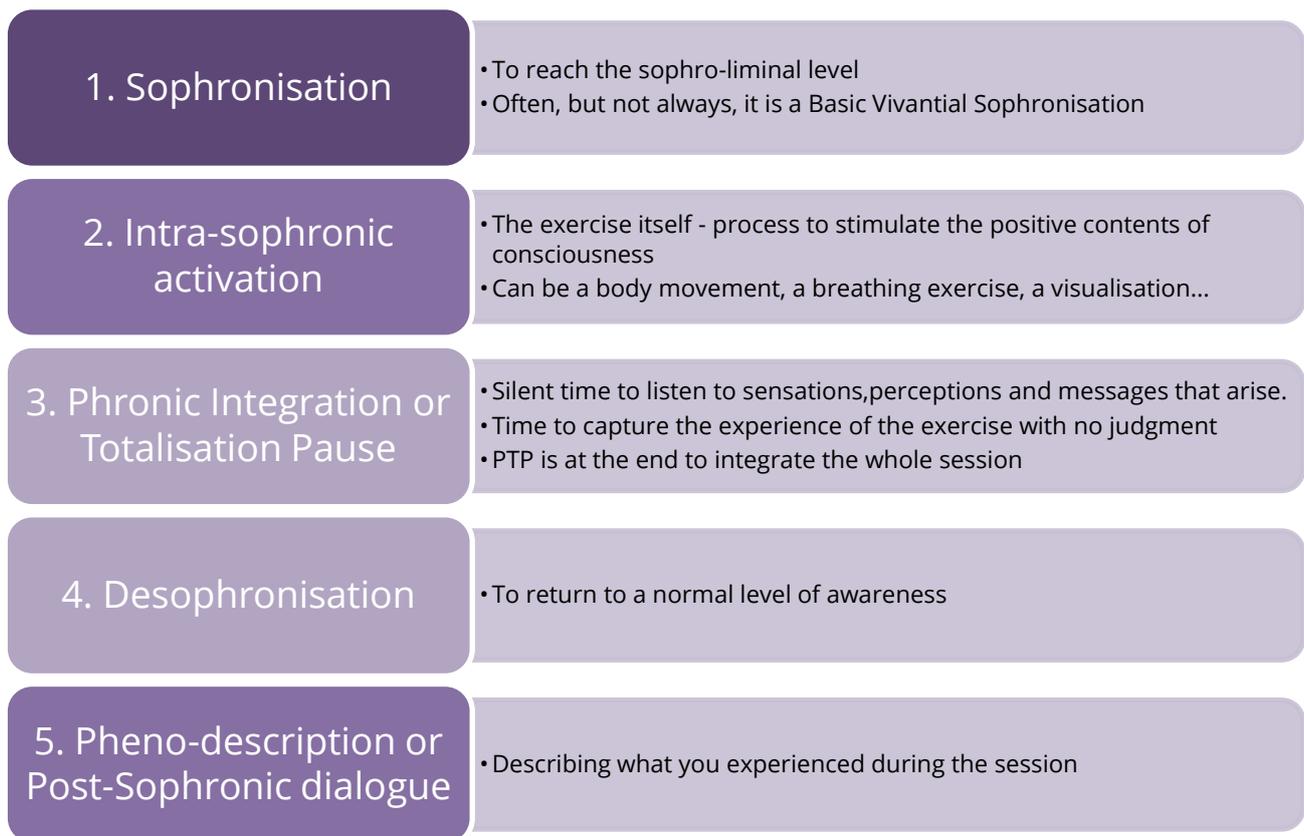
In one-to-one sessions, the aim is to deal with a specific goal or problem the person is facing.

HOW IT WORKS:

By relaxing the body, you can calm the mind. By calming the mind, you change your physiology and access a deeper level of consciousness.

You reach the "sophro-liminal level" where the mind is so calm that the intellect won't have its say. The inner « mind chatter » quietens down in order to connect with our wiser intuitive mind.

A typical session will always include these 5 steps:



Basic Vivantial Sophronisation or body scan is often used as a way to get into the sophro-liminal level but there are other ways. For instance, by focusing for several minutes on our breathing or visual people can reach that level by focusing on an image. Kinaesthetic people are more likely to reach the sophro-liminal level if a dynamic exercise involving body movement precedes a body scan.

Of course, a session can contain several exercises that will be separated by Phronic Integration Pauses before a Phronic Totalisation Pause at the end of the session. Sophrology sessions would usually last 15 to 30 minutes depending on the objectives of the session and the client(s). Sophrology exercises can be used to be both creative and receptive.

INTEGRATION PAUSES

The pauses in sophrology are moments to simply listen and observe potential sensations, perceptions, messages that arise after an exercise (PIP) or at the end of the session (PTP). An opportunity to let things happen without having to do anything, and to capture the experience of the exercise without judging or interpreting. This is an important time to allow the impact of the exercise to be integrated by the body and consciousness. Observations during these moments are recalled after the exercise in the pheno-description.

10- Techniques used in Sophrology

GENTLE MOVEMENT

Sophrology uses gentle movements as 'dynamic' relaxation, a way to release tension. Releasing physical tension helps to release mental tension and stress. The release of tension is not only relaxing but can be re-energising.

These movements also help us to feel, or experience the body more fully. Becoming more aware of the body through our sensations develops capacities such as interoception which is linked to an increasing number of health and wellbeing outcomes including emotion regulation and depression recovery. See the Student Toolbox for several research studies in this field.

To enhance their beneficial effect, movements are often synchronised with breathing, and sometimes with positive mental images.

The use of movement to stimulate parts of the body assists with developing concentration and then contemplation as we experience ourselves from different perspectives and open new spaces of consciousness.

There is no precise way of doing the movements in sophrology as one might find in yoga. More important than 'getting it right' is the experience itself whatever that is, and listening to one's own body. We always adapt physical movements to the person.

BREATHING

Breathwork in sophrology is first and foremost a way of knowing ourselves better. We discover our breathing as part of reconnecting with the body. That's why we will always start with breath awareness before moving on to any controlled breathing techniques.

In sophrology, breathing is often paired with movements to:

- anchor attention in the present moment
- increase tension release.

Breathing is also often paired with visualisation to increase positive action.

Synchronising the breath with either movement or imagery can help a person to start reconnecting with their breathing, without focusing on the breathing itself.

The connection between breathing and the nervous system means we can use the breath consciously to rebalance the nervous system (see Appendix 1 on physiology). The

relationship between breathing and the nervous system goes both ways – when a person experiences anxiety, they'll naturally start to hyperventilate (breathing hard and fast instead of breathing slowly and regularly). Similarly, if a person starts to hyperventilate (from a controlled breathing exercise), it can generate anxiety/panic attack.

Controlled and regular breathing has been shown to have clinical benefits for nervous, cardiovascular and respiratory systems. For instance reducing stress and anxiety, increasing heart rate variability which is a predictor of cardiac fitness, or lowering blood pressure. See the Student Toolbox for several research studies showing the benefits of various breathing patterns and techniques.

Because of the link between breathing and the nervous system, we can use breathing for different purposes and in many different areas. There are some areas where learning to use and control the breath will be particularly important. For instance, anyone in work involving a lot of communication (use of the voice as well as managing performance and emotions), singers, actors, performers, athletes, public speaking, teachers...

VISUALISATION AND MENTAL IMAGERY

When we visualise in sophrology we use all our senses (touch, hearing, sight, smell and taste). This really helps to imagine ourselves in a situation and make it real. Although many people will be able to visualise; those who can't will welcome the use of the other senses. In sophrology we encourage people to use their own images, giving them time to create something that works for them, to *allow* images to come. Even if they encounter difficulties to start with, 'bits' of images will help, and can be built on from there. In sophrology, we call these techniques Sophro Imagery Stimulations.

There are several ways to work with an image:

- Seeing it from the outside, like a postcard or screen
- Seeing yourself in an image, like a character in a movie
- Being fully in the image with all the sensations.

We also connect to our feelings. The brain does not differentiate between what is real and what is imagined as long as what is imagined *feels* real enough. It isn't how precisely we see ourselves in the situation but how deeply we can immerse ourselves in it and feel it.

Belleruth Naparstek: Staying well with guided imagery

“Our bodies don’t discriminate between sensory images in the mind and what we call reality.[...] Images in the mind are real events in the body.”

“If we combine these three operating principles by (1) introducing images to the mind that the body believes are actual events, and (2) doing this in an altered state, and (3) doing it when, how, and where we want to, we have at our command the unique, powerful, and versatile technique of guided imagery.”

11- Common Patterns of Exercises in Sophrology

In sophrology, there are several common patterns to the way exercises are often performed.

IRTER

IRTER is an overarching pattern that encompasses many exercises in sophrology. It consist of:

Inhaling

Retaining the breath

Tensing the body or part of the body

Exhaling

Releasing

For instance, a Sophro Negative Displacement is often done in IRTER. In this case the intention is to ‘release’. There are other times when the intention is more to ‘stimulate’ or reinforce a presence. You’ll see many exercises in Dynamic Relaxation Protocols that are done in IRTER.

SOPHRO SYNCHRONISED BREATHING

A pattern that consists of synchronising the breath with either an intention, in the form of a word, image, feeling, or with a movement. It is a training to reinforce the intended effects.

12- Terminology used in Sophrology

This table highlights a summary of the key terms making up the vocabulary which is unique to sophrology. These are the terms we use among practitioners but we do not use jargon when speaking with our clients.

Term	Definition
Alliance	The relationship between a sophrologist and their client
Anamnesis	Initial consultation with a client
Vivance	Living experience of what's happening inside
Desophronisation	A return to everyday awareness
Sophronisation	Technique used to get into a sophro-liminal level. Usually a Basic Sophronisation or Basic Vivantial Sophronisation but can be other techniques such as focusing on your breath and/or fixing on an image, by grounding yourself etc...
Intra-sophronic activation	The exercise itself (for instance a landscape visualisation or a shoulder pumping exercise or a square counted breathing)
Pheno-description or Post Sophronic Dialogue (PSD)	Describing and putting into words the experience after the session orally and/or in writing. Note: pheno-description can be oral or written. PSD is oral only.
Phronic	Deep, inner
Phronic Integration Pause (PIP)	A silent pause used to listen and integrate sensations after each exercise in a session
Phronic Totalisation Pause (PTP)	A silent pause used to listen and integrate sensations at the end of the whole session. It typically lasts longer than a PIP.
Sophro-Liminal Level	An altered level of consciousness between being awake and asleep in which we practice sophrology exercises. A space to be both creative and receptive
Terpnos logos	The voice, language, pace of the sophrologist as well as the content of the exercise.

MODULE II – History, Sources & Science

Learning outcomes:

- Describe the sources, influences and development of the sophrology method
- Familiarity with selected sophrology exercises taken directly from the sources
- Deepened understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of sophrology
- Explain the uniqueness of sophrology relative to other methods
- Maintain the integrity of the sophrology method in adapting
- Reference relevant scientific findings relating to the techniques used in sophrology and how to continue to build scientific understanding

1-Summary of Sources

Western sources	Eastern sources
Relaxation & Hypnosis	Yoga, in particular: Yoga Nidra and Raja Yoga
Relaxation techniques, in particular: Jacobson's Progressive Muscle Relaxation Schultz's Autogenic Training	Buddhist meditation
Phenomenology	Japanese Zen

'GEOGRAPHY' OF WHAT PEOPLE USED FOR WELL-BEING AND HEALING

- India (4000 BC): yoga
- Africa & Asia: magic & shamanism, Buddhism & Zen
- Europe: Greek incantation (Plato) and religious prayer (Christian meditation/mysticism)

2-Relaxation

HISTORY OF RELAXATION

Timeline of developments

- Time of magic (shamanism, dance, music)
 - Time of magnetism (Mesmer...)
 - Time of hypnosis
 - Development of hypnotherapy and modern relaxation
-
- **Franz Anton Mesmer (1734 –1815) German physician:** theorised that there was a natural energetic transference that occurred between all animated and inanimate objects that he called animal magnetism and other spiritual forces often grouped together as mesmerism.
 - **James Braid (1795 – 1860) Scottish surgeon:** Following Mesmer's ideas, it led him to develop hypnosis in 1842: looking fixedly at an object for a long time, would provoke a near-sleep state.
 - **Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893) neurologist:** set up the first neuro-psychiatrist clinic in the world at the Salpêtrière Hospital, cured "hysterics" with hypnosis. Freud looked into it. These were the first steps of hypnosis in the medical world.
 - **Emile Coué (1857 – 1926) counsellor and pharmacist** who discovered the placebo effect and positive affirmations. His famous "method" is based on hypnosis and auto-suggestion.
 - **Milton Erickson (1901-1980) American psychiatrist:** Ericksonian hypnotherapy (1960's): indirect suggestion, "metaphor" (analogies), confusion techniques, and double binds in place of formal hypnotic inductions.
 - Caycedo initially introduced elements of hypnosis in sophrology. However he found it too directive and moved away from it as he carried on developing the method.

RELAXATION AND BRAINWAVES

Caycedo was interested in relaxation as a way of varying levels of consciousness to support health and wellbeing (see Fan of Consciousness model). These levels of consciousness are correlated with different types of brainwaves. You can find a description of the types of brainwaves in the Appendix 1.

It is interesting to notice where you are in a sophrology practice, how these different levels feel. You can practice going deeper and coming back up, becoming aware of the difference and noting this in your pheno-description. This will help you return to your desired level more easily.

JACOBSON'S PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION (PMR)

Edmund Jacobson (1888- 1983) American physician

One of the oldest methods (1908). Anxiety is reduced by relaxing muscular tension. Very physiological method, it does not incorporate any suggestion, hypnosis or psychotherapy, "no catharsis, no transfer, no new and different person..." (Jacobson). PMR educates people to feel the difference between tensed and completely relaxed muscles. The idea is muscular relaxation for mental peace. It is usually a long and detailed exercise.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation:

1. Arm
 - Lying on the back, eyes closed, without moving for about 30 to 50 minutes.
 - The person is requested to raise their left arm and to close the fist while pushing the hand towards the back at the wrist.
 - Same thing with the right hand.
2. Legs
 - Tensing the feet and flexing the toes without using the knees then relax suddenly and rest.
 - Feet and toes are relaxed more progressively.
 - Resting feet and arms.
3. Breathing
 - Lying down for 10 minutes, 2 or 3 deep breaths. Feel the rib cage as it expands and comes back.
4. Relaxing the forehead
 - In front of a mirror: frown the brows and rise eyelids, then relax progressively + close eyes slowly and relax.

- Lying down with eyes closed: frowning and letting the muscles relax progressively + closing eyes shut and letting them relax progressively.
- Become aware of the impact of relaxation of forehead and eyes on relaxation of arms, legs and rib cage.

5. Relaxing the eyes

- Looking right for 30 seconds then feel eye tension. Come back to centre. Same with left, up and down.
- Become aware of general relaxation.

6. Relaxing the voice muscles

- Counting up to 10 become aware of work of tongue, lips, jaw, neck and chest.
- Whispering up to 10 + silent relaxation
- Counting silently.

Differential relaxation: the minimum muscle tension necessary to do something. Relaxation starts in the same way as with progressive relaxation (calm room, lying down, eyes closed for 15 to 30 minutes). Then sitting in a chair with eyes closed. Same exercises as before but sitting down. One additional exercise specific to back and neck. Progressing to implementing in everyday life whilst performing various activities. Muscles that are not being used should remain as relaxed as possible. Eventually a 'released' state can be cued to let go of anxiety.

Treatment according to Jacobson can take months or even years, first once a week then once a month.

Other methods: Jarreau & Klotz: Static-Dynamic Relaxation. Ost: Applied Relaxation. Bio-feedback and Alexander technique are directly inspired by Jacobson's progressive relaxation.

SCHULTZ'S AUTOGENIC TRAINING

Johannes Heinrich Schultz (1884 – 1970) German psychiatrist

Inspired by Oskar Vogt's hypnosis treatments, researched between 1908 and 1912 what was to become the Autogenic Training. Late 19th/early 20th century, hypnosis started to be used in medical and psychological treatments. Based on "mental" method: imagine relaxation to get it, you have to think it, not do it.

Method: 2 cycles

1. Inferior cycle: 6 exercises for a specific body part: muscles, blood vessels, heart, breathing, abdominal organs, head.
2. Superior cycle: only to be performed by neuro-psychiatrists trained in psychoanalysis, similar to waking dream technique.

Used for: stomach pains, muscular tensions, heart problems, adrenal problems, sweating, shaking, insomnia, depression, fatigue, stage fright, anxiety, temporary paralysis...

Inferior Cycle (lying down or sitting down comfortably):

1. Heaviness – muscular relaxation
The person concentrates on “my right arm is heavy.” Then comes back with moving the arms, heavy breathing before opening the eyes. First for a short time but 3 times a day. The person is meant to feel that more and more of the body is becoming heavier.
2. Warmth – vascular relaxation: “my right arm is completely warm.”
3. Heart exercise: Feel the heart, its beating, its place: “my heart beats calmly.”
4. Breathing exercise: Breathe freely, respect natural rhythm. Feel the air coming inside, the rib cage moving. “I am breathing calmly” or “I am only breathing”.
5. Abdominal warmth – relaxation of the abdominal organs
Warmth in the plexus. “My solar plexus is completely warm.”
6. Head exercise: “My forehead is cool and fresh.”

Modified Autogenic Training

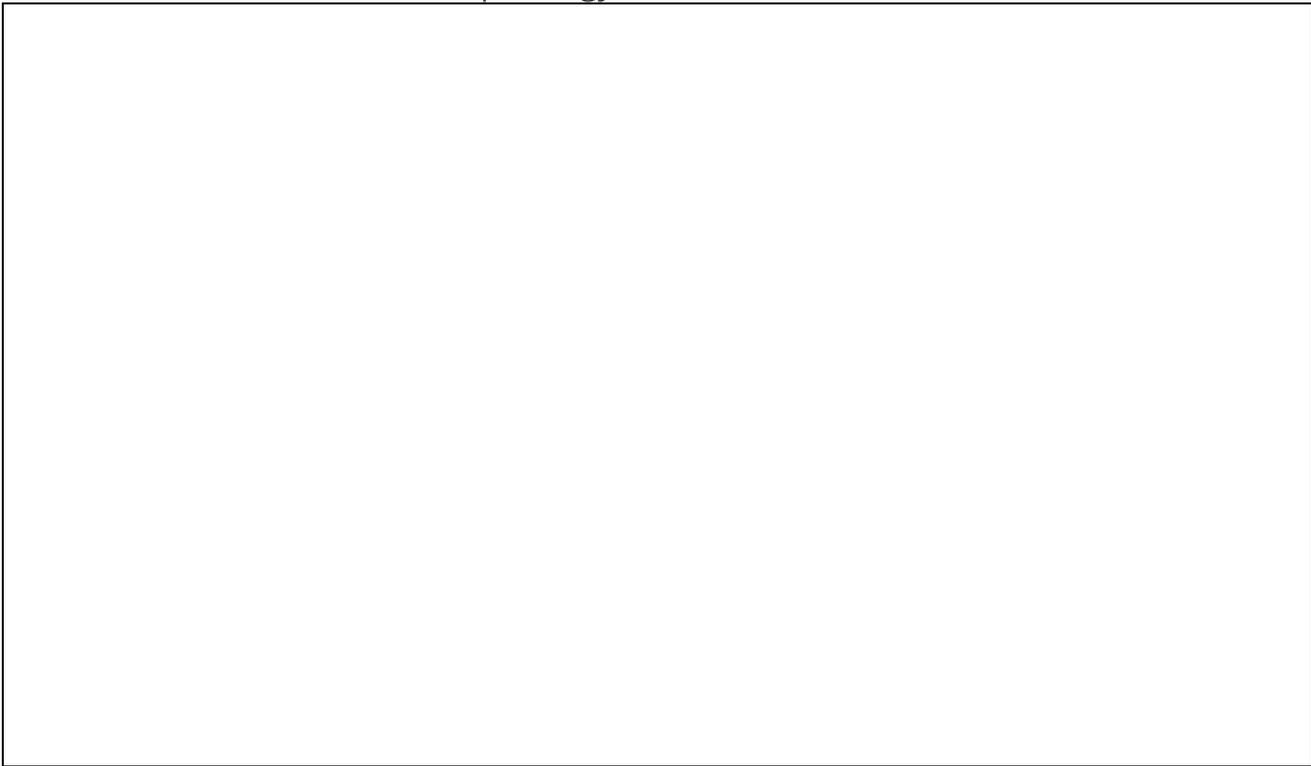
Developed by Dr Raymond Abrezol and Dr Dumont, it is more ‘sophrological’. The exercise starts standing, then sitting, and finally lying down.

Notes on Modified Autogenic Training: you’re unlikely to use the protocol as such with clients but you might use aspects of it. For instance you could use the balancing and bow movements as dynamic relaxation exercises. If a client tells you during pheno-descriptions that they tend to feel warm or heavy after the sessions you may include these aspects into your terpnos logos.

RELAXATION IN SOPHROLOGY

Sophrology practice is very different from casual body relaxation. It’s the experience of the presence of the body and mind.

The influence of relaxation in sophrology



3- Phenomenology

THE NON-JUDGEMENTAL ATTITUDE AND BEGINNER'S MIND

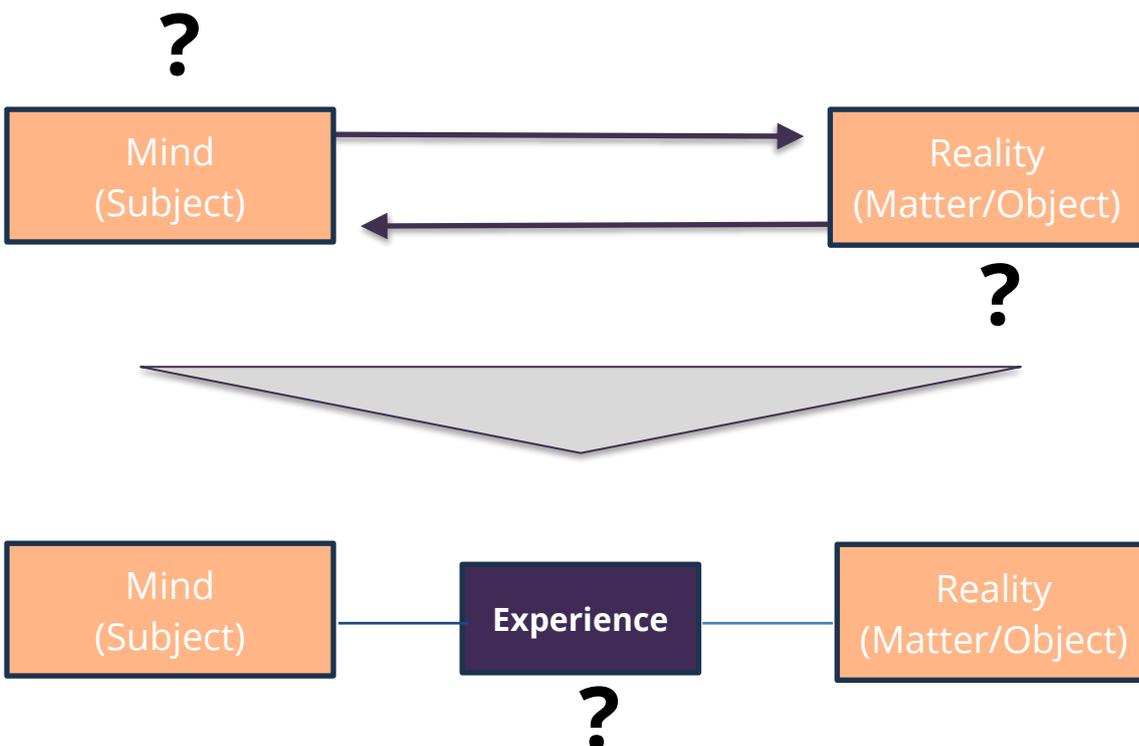
A. Caycedo looked into phenomenology after working in 1963-64 with the Swiss psychiatrist Binswanger (1881-1966) who had studied with Husserl and Heidegger.

From Greek: phainomenon: that which appears + logos: study

Phenomenology is a philosophical movement emphasising the study of the nature of consciousness through subjective lived experience.

Founder: Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). He created phenomenology as a “study of the phenomenon”, ie of what is appearing to consciousness here and now. For him, the first rule is to **describe** directly our experience but not to explain or analyse. “All I know of the world comes from me before knowledge.”

All consciousness is intentional. **Intentionality** is a key concept in phenomenology with a specific meaning being that consciousness is always **directed at something**. Consciousness and what we are conscious of are given together and not separate. Husserl’s contribution was to shift the focus of study away from the debate about whether all matter arises from consciousness (idealists) or consciousness can be reduced to matter (realists/materialists), and to focus on the relationship space between subject and object. This is the space of our experience.



The idea is to **look at the world** with a child's mind and to take it the way it is, **the way it appears to me**, a reality that can be **different depending on the angle**. We are interested in what it is like to be alive, in the **subjective lived experience** vs a reality 'out there'. We look into **observation, perception**, and how we know reality, as active participants, not passive receivers.

The approach is **descriptive** rather than explanatory, in order to open up, reveal more possibilities.

We make a shift from the **Natural attitude** in which we passively take things as given, to a **Phenomenological attitude** in which we are aware of the way in which our consciousness is constituting our perceptions of the world.

To make this shift, we need a "phenomenological reduction", ie:

1. To forget what I know of things,
2. To forget what I know of myself knowing those things.

Phenomenological Reduction: the practice described by Edmund Husserl whereby one is able to liberate oneself from the captivation in which one is held by all that one accepts as being the case.

In Phenomenology, we:

- go back to the "phenomenon" itself
- **"suspend" judgement (époché):** look at things as if for the first time, not using our previous knowledge or experience
- **Bracketing out** our preconceived ideas and beliefs, forgetting what we think we know, we seek to understand the very essence of things, beyond perception or reflexion.

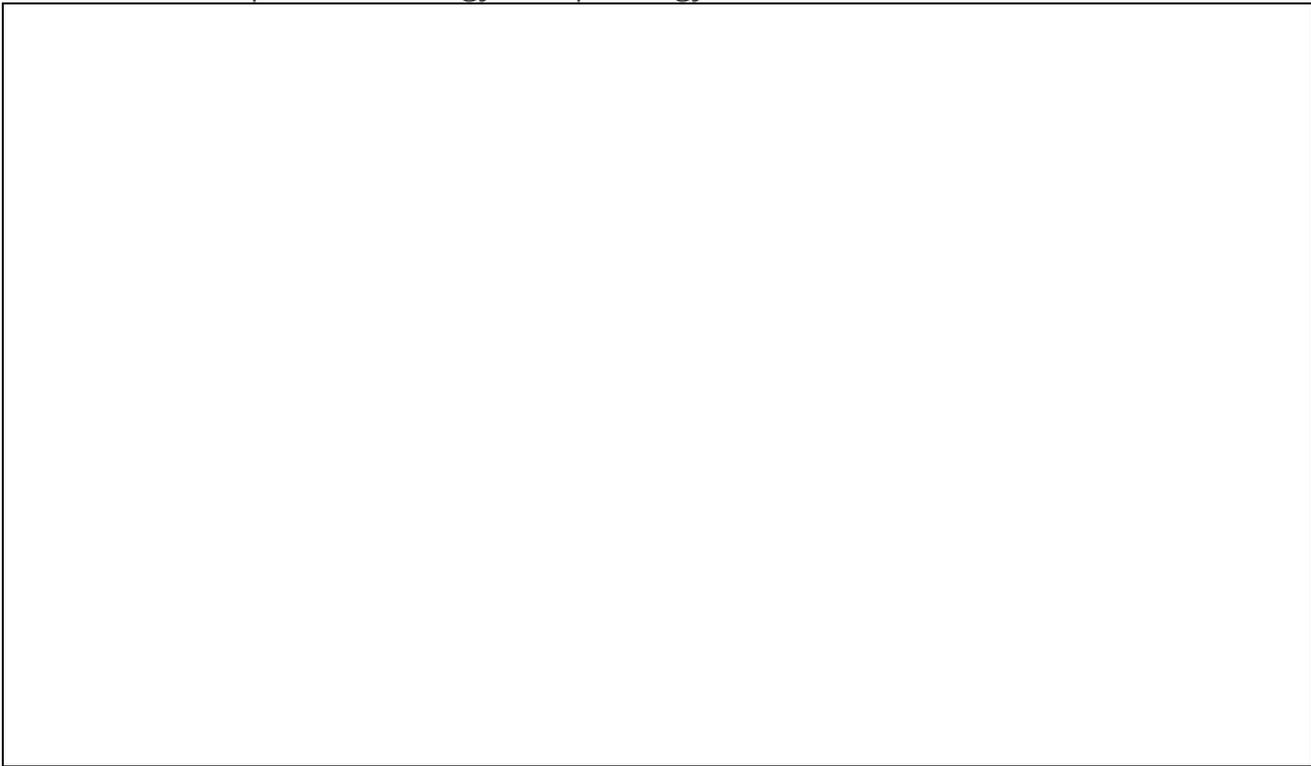
= go back to the bare facts, the pure universal essence of the phenomenon.

To Husserl's work, Heidegger added two further key ideas:

1. Temporality. We always exist in relation to our past in which we were, with our present in which we are, and oriented towards our future in which we will be
2. A focus on finding meaning in everyday life and experiences

Merleau-Ponty further emphasises the central concept of the body-subject, and the embodied nature of perception and experience.

The influence of phenomenology in sophrology



4-Eastern Practices: Yoga, Buddhist Meditation, Japanese Zen

YOGA

Yoga means union, or oneness, uniting mind-body-spirit. It is a philosophy and a way of life. Its goal is to induce a state of self-awareness, a return to original state of grace, realisation of oneness with the universe as a whole. There are many different types, within what can be considered as five main branches:

- Hatha Yoga: path of physical body, Yoga of force
- Gnana/Gyana/Jnana Yoga: path of knowledge, understanding, wisdom, head-based
- Bhakti Yoga: path of devotion to personal god; heart-based
- Karma Yoga: path of action, engagement, work
- Raja Yoga: path of self-discipline and practice; experimentation or trial and error with mind and body through practices and empirical honesty about the inner life and the world

Raja Yoga is found in the yoga sutras of Patanjali. Patanjali divided the path of Raja Yoga into 8 stages – from basic rules of attitude and behaviour that are conducive to mental peace to samadhi, or self-realisation in which the contents and activity of the mind are completely transcended:

1. Yamas - social code
2. Niyamas - personal code
3. Asanas - postures states of being
4. Pranayama - control of pranayama, life force, cosmic energy
5. Pratyahara - withdrawal of the senses
6. Dharana – concentration
7. Dhyana – meditation
8. Samadhi - transcendental consciousness

Yoga Nidra belongs to the higher stages of Raja Yoga as it is essentially a withdrawal of the senses (Pratyahara). In advanced stages when relaxation is complete Yoga Nidra involves Dhyana and Samadhi. Nidra means sleep.

Yoga Nidra can also refer to a state of consciousness: threshold state between sleep and wakefulness where contact with subconscious and unconscious dimensions occur spontaneously (both directions). It is often experienced as the final stage of typical yoga class.

In yoga: 7 chakras, in sophrology: 5 systems

Systems	Chakras	Place in the body
1. Head & face	Crown chakra	above head
1	3rd eye	Middle brow
2. Neck, shoulders, upper arms	Throat	Throat
3. Chest, back, inner arms	Heart chakra	Sternum/heart
4. Abdomen, lower back	Solar plexus	Solar plexus
5. Lower abdomen, legs	Sacral chakra	Abdomen
5	Base	Perineum
6. Whole body		

Techniques taken directly from Yoga

Several DR1 exercises were directly derived from yoga: Bellows breathing, Nauli, Tratak. Also Square breathing (Samavritti) and Rotating Consciousness.

The influence of yoga in sophrology



BUDDHIST MEDITATION

Four different styles of meditation:

- Focused attention or one-pointed concentration (Shamatha): focus on a single object of attention, such as the breath or a picture, or a statue of the Buddha, strengthening the attentional focus until achieving a tranquil state. You bring back attention if it drifts away. The intention is to stabilise the mind.
- Open-presence (in Vipassana): becoming fully aware of whatever is the dominant object in the mind at a given moment (whether a body sensation, emotion, thought, external stimulus...) but without letting it take over your consciousness. A kind of self-observation without attachment, to develop insight into impermanence.
- Compassion (Loving-kindness): focus on people that are close to you, wishing they be free from suffering and then move out in an ever-expanding radius until that wish encompasses all of humankind.
- Devotion: visualise one of most important spiritual teacher and focus on the powerful feelings of respect, gratitude and devotion felt for him/her.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama describes Tibetan Buddhism as the *“science of the mind”* and has often said that *“my religion is kindness.”* Understanding the true nature of the mind and mind training is the focus of the path towards enlightenment

Tibetan meditation:

- Aimed at cultivating qualities of relaxation, stability, and clarity. Clarity refers more to the vividness of subjective awareness than to the object.
- With a peaceful mind, the attention remains where we direct it
- Concentration or contemplation of inner or external object (Shamatha): image of Buddha, breathing, mantra...

“When you contemplate the big, full sunrise, the more mindful & concentrated you are, the more the beauty of the sunrise is revealed to you.” Thich Nhat Hanh

Thich Nhat Hanh: Plum Village

“Washing the dishes you must be completely aware of the fact that you wash the dishes, not in order to clean them, in order simply to wash them. Wash relaxingly, as though each plate is an object of contemplation, consider each item as sacred. Breathe gently and mindfully. Do not try to hurry to get the job over with. As if the most important thing in life was washing the dishes, like a meditation. If you cannot wash in mindfulness, neither can you meditate while sitting in silence. If we hurry to get them out of the way we are not alive during the time we wash them. We will probably not be able to do what we have to do afterward either (if that is what we are thinking about while washing for example). We are sucked away into the future and incapable of actually living one minute

of life. If while eating you are thinking about something else, you are not eating your food but your thoughts. Eat it and be one with it. Tomorrow it will be no more.

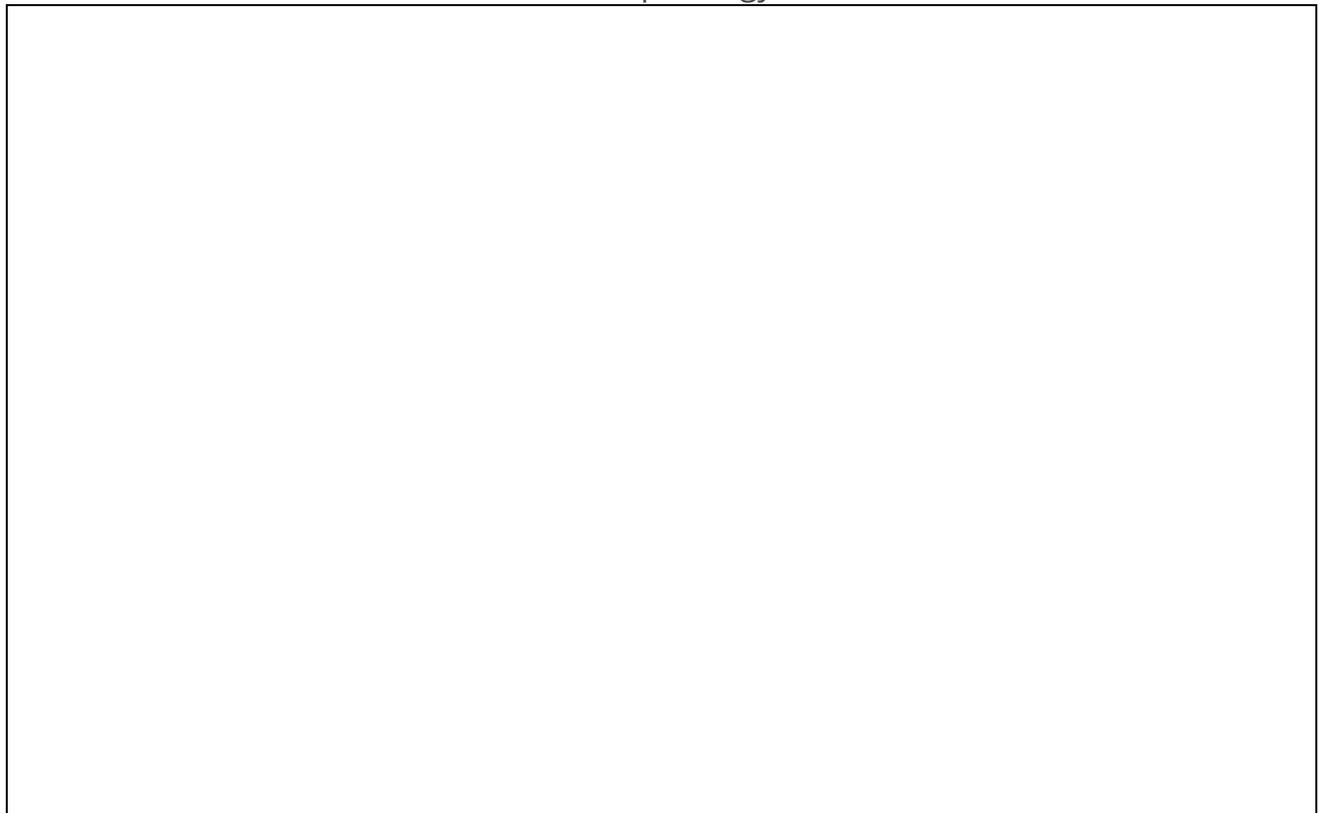
No matter what position your body is in, you must be aware of that position and conscious of each breath, each movement, each thought and feeling. In mindfulness, you are alert and awake, it is not evasion but a serene (non-violent) encounter with reality. There is only one important time and this is now. Active, concerned people don't have time to spend leisurely, walking along paths of green grass and sitting beneath trees. While working, keep your attention focused on the work, be alert and ready to handle any situation with a calm heart and self-control. Work is life only when done in mindfulness."

Thich Nhat Hanh – *The Miracle of Mindfulness*

Vietnamese Buddhist monk who founded the Unified Buddhist Church in France in 1969 during the Vietnam war and Plum Village Meditation Centre in south-west France in 1982.

It can be helpful to distinguish between 'formal' mindfulness practice or mindfulness meditation, and 'informal' mindfulness which is the application of mindfulness to everyday activities.

The influence of Buddhist meditation in sophrology



MODERN-DAY MINDFULNESS

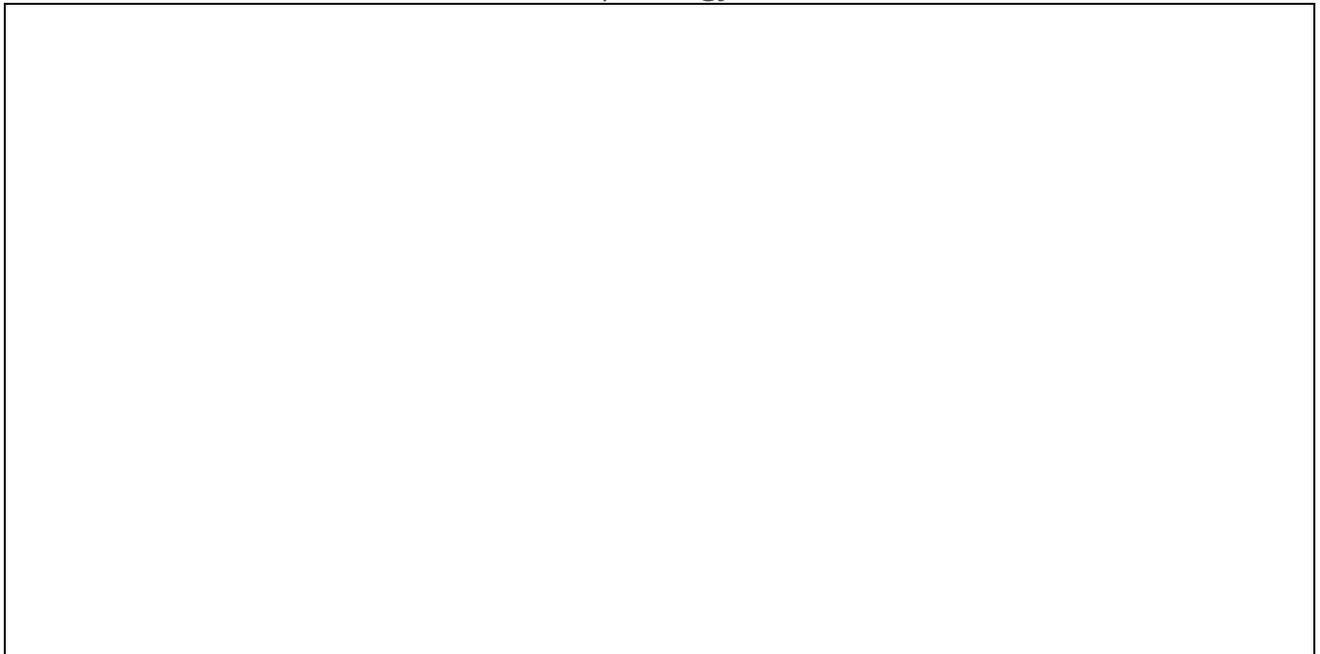
Mindfulness is not a source of sophrology, but also developed from Buddhist Meditation.

In 1979 whilst at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, Jon Kabat-Zinn developed what was to become the structured Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Programme. A dedicated practitioner of yoga and Buddhist meditation, he has brought mindfulness into the mainstream of medicine and society.

Kabat-Zinn defines mindfulness as:

'Paying attention on purpose in the present moment non-judgementally'

Difference between Mindfulness and Sophrology



JAPANESE ZEN

Zen is the quest to break down our tendency to conceptualise and to deal with reality directly. We are not content just to experience something, we must immediately conceptualise it, love it or hate it, ask how it relates to us, give it value in our scheme of things – reality is lost in our clutter of thoughts and feelings.

There is no perfection to reach, awakening is not a goal in itself, it may just happen. You don't have to be perfect yourself but just to be. You live in a simple and natural way. To become aware of what you are here and now: freedom, presence, body and mind meet.

Use body sensations, no visualisation. Open-minded spirit, no prejudgment: just take into account peacefully what is around you. Zen perfection is to be perfectly and simply human. Letting go: as there is no particular aim, there is no hurry and we can simply let things happen.

Po-chang (720-814): « When you are hungry, eat, when you are tired, sleep ».

Meditation: sitting meditation or walking or even in every moment of everyday life.

Two main Japanese Zen schools:

Rinzai: discipline is essential, meditation stimulated by koans, cryptic questions.

Sōtō: more « gentle » method, gradual process of zazen. Zazen (sitting meditation) is the core practice. 'Just sitting' is the essence of Soto Zen. Zen is just being, pure awareness of sitting with no goal beyond the practice itself.

Two postures in Zen:

Translated from Zen & Sophrology, Kozen Thibult at the FEPS Conference 2013

“The first posture is the lotus position with crossed legs. It is very important to adopt this posture because, with dynamic relaxation, we have the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system, we have exterior muscles and deep muscles, shallow and deep breathing, superficial consciousness with the cortical brain and deep consciousness with the reptilian brain.

So the more relaxed you are, the more dynamic, the straighter and stronger you are. This is not the kind of relaxation you may experience in a chair or in bed. It's totally different. In fact it is a way of allowing the body to surrender to itself, to surrender to itself whilst staying totally awake. So this is the first posture, Buddha's seated posture. Also our hands are very important, because we always use them to do things, to work, to approach someone, to protect ourselves. Our hands are very expressive and they are closely linked to our brain. The simple fact of doing this mudra with our hands alters our consciousness, which means that our concentration is with our hands, our body and in our nervous system and in our brain. Another important point about consciousness and

thoughts, if for instance you are in the Rodin's position of the Thinker, your consciousness is different from when your posture is perfectly straight, your neck and head straight, stretching towards the sky, with your nose and belly button aligned, and when you breathe with your whole being. At that point, the mind is no longer dissociated from your body. There is no separation between our consciousness and each cell of our body. In Zen, we call that the bodymind in one word. That was the most basic Zazen posture.

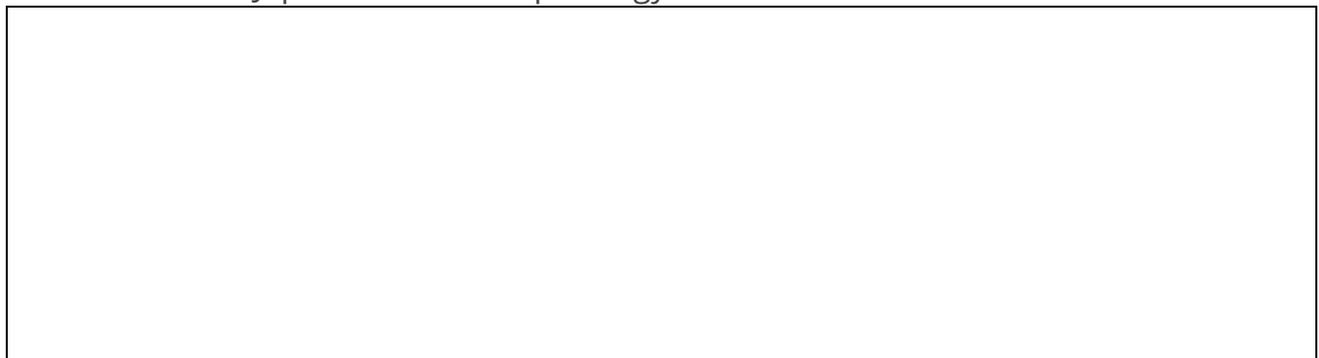
The second posture is the walking posture. As I was saying in Zen we surrender and relinquish all things, but with the walking posture, we have to move, we move forward not to get something but we synchronise our breathing with our steps. Famous French choreographer Maurice Béjard, who was one of my master's disciple, made all his dancers practise this walk every day.

This second posture is known as the Kinhin walk. Again I want to draw your attention to the hands, and what we do with them. For instance, the boxer will do something [with his fists] when photographed, and in that position the brain will automatically express something to do with strong aggression.

So the second posture is the walking meditation, which is fundamental. People doing the zazen, including martial arts practitioners, say that the hand position is great and powerful, especially if you hold it for an hour but what they would like after doing zazen is to be able to regain the same kind of energy, and maintain the same kind of bliss, calm and focus in their daily lives. How can they do it? It isn't easy as the zazen posture is indeed quite specific. Once you have integrated the technique (after focusing on the detail of the hands and foot positions), you can use it at any time in your life (although I myself always forget!) and you can come back to your spiritual centre, to that part of your being that doesn't mess up!

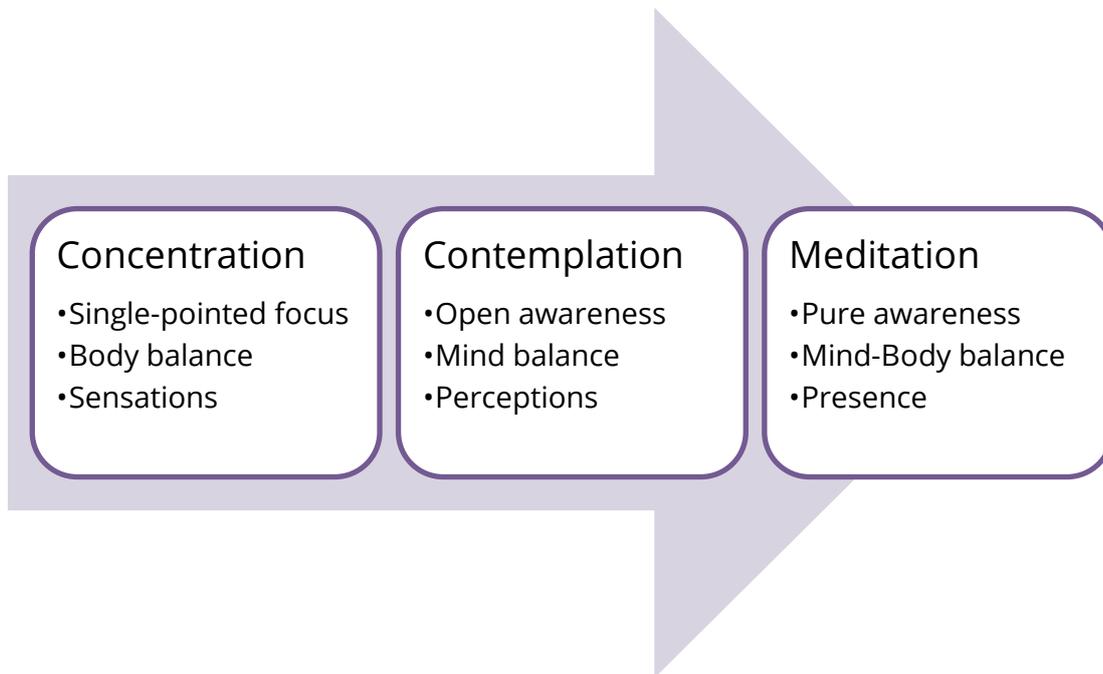
So I've told you about the importance of the hand position, and as soon as you join your hands together, this builds a bridge between the two hemispheres in your brain...., so now you can appreciate the importance of the hands."

The influence of Japanese Zen in sophrology



SUMMARY

The foundation is always to bring attention and focus back on the body and build the capacity for internal regulation. Once this step has been achieved, it is easier to progress towards a contemplative state, building the capacity to observe things as they are. With mind and body more in balance, one develops the capacity to be present, in a state of physical, mental and emotional harmony.



Uniqueness of sophrology

What makes an exercise 'sophrological'?

5- Mindbody Practices and Science

‘Scientific’: a disciplined way of studying the nature of reality via testable hypotheses and theories.

Scientific realism is the view that science describes one world, one reality. Subjectivity is stripped out of that description. Reality is seen as independent of the observer. But many believe there are additional ways of discovering the nature of reality that are valid and required for completeness:

1. 1st person subjective lived experience
2. 2nd person description of experiences; co-operative inquiry in communities
3. 3rd person scientific findings through objective measurement

Note: Just because we can’t measure something yet doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist. Many great theories started out with imagination and were eventually proven through measurement.

PHENOMENOLOGY AND NEUROSCIENCE

Phenomenology considers the subjective experience of reality, as it appears to consciousness. It looks from the first-person perspective and is primarily descriptive.

Neuroscience is the (multi-disciplinary) scientific study of the nervous system. It deals with the third-person aspects of consciousness, and aims to explain.

Take the example of a rainbow. It is a physically real phenomenon of refracted and reflected light consisting of photons and water droplets. Yet it has a clear subjective aspect to it: no two people can ever see the same rainbow. Each will see a different sheaf of coloured light rays and a slightly different location. Can we say it exists? Yes, but it can only be found by specifying a point of view from which it is observed. Otherwise it is just a cloud of water and light rays careening in all directions.

Neuroscience and phenomenology describe the same reality but using different languages. There are many subjective worlds and this multiplicity fits into nature like an infinity of rainbows does.

A science of consciousness must first reflect on what it is that a science of consciousness must explain. It therefore starts with phenomenology!

Neuroscience can’t yet explain our subjective lived experience. This is often referred to as the ‘hard problem of consciousness’: how the workings of our brains result in a subjective felt experience of, for example, the colour red. As Dr Dan Siegel explains, it is a scientific finding that brain activity is really energy (and information as energy pattern) flow. But no one has yet proven how the physical action of energy flow and mental subjective experience of lived life are related to each other (Mind, p45).

Neuroscience is heavily **reductionist**. The approach is to break down into constituent elements to understand the whole.

Sophrology is **holistic**. In this view nothing can be fully understood unless one sees the whole system of which it is part – and the whole is always more than the sum of its parts. Here we re-establishing connectedness and relationship where they have failed or been forgotten.

KEY CONCEPTS IN SOPHROLOGY AND CONTEMPORARY THEORIES ON MIND-BODY INTERACTION

Key concepts review

- Consciousness states and levels and the Sophro-liminal level (1st and 2nd key theories)
- The six systems (3rd key theory)
- Principle of Body Consciousness
- Principle of Positive Action
- Principle of Objective Reality
- Law of Vivance (1st Law)
- Law of Vivantial Repetition (2nd Law)

There is an increasing body of research into the mechanisms at play in the mind-body techniques used in sophrology. See the Research section of the Student Toolbox for various scientific papers with evidence of benefits of:

Top-down mechanisms

Attention and Awareness, Mindfulness and Meditation
Mental imagery and affirmations

Bottom-up mechanisms

Breathing
Relaxation
Body consciousness, posture and movement

EVIDENCE AND EVALUATION

Evidence-based or evidence-informed practice (EIP) is the use of a combination of best available research evidence, plus the expertise of the clinician/practitioner, and the values and circumstances of the client. Evidence-informed practice competencies are included in training of many integrated health practitioners. Research literacy is a prerequisite for EIP and impacts communication and collaboration amongst health and wellbeing professionals.

Sophrology Studies

The Sophrology Academy website lists most of the studies looking into Sophrology and is regularly updated. Areas of investigation include:

- Sleep
- Anxiety and depression
- Tinnitus
- Oncology; Respiratory disease; Chronic Pain
- Perinatal
- Addiction
- Wellbeing and Change in Business

When looking at research studies it is important to pay attention to:

- type of research study conducted
- size
- results
- significance
- other factors as described in: Know the Science: 9 Questions To Help You Make Sense of Health Research – see National Institutes of Health website <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/know-science/make-sense-health-research/page-1>

Sources of Evidence

A few ideas for accessing and keeping up to date with the latest research:

- Use Google scholar alert
- Journals: Frontiers In (free)
- Research Library: National Health Institute PubMed <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/> . Can search for full text papers
- NICE Guidance: National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. Can search NICE for evidence - <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/>
- Networks and memberships: The Complimentary Medical Association (CMA); The Scientific and Medical Network and many others

MODULE III – Dynamic Relaxation Level 1

Learning outcomes:

- Explain the key concepts in Dynamic Relaxation Level 1
- Guide others into the sophro-liminal level
- Practice and integrate the DR1 protocol making use of appropriate variations and adaptations
- Practice and integrate a range of Specific Techniques from Level 1
- Understand when and how to use DR1 and Specific Techniques for yourself or with others

1-Body Consciousness

In sophrology the reconnection with the body is key. Consciousness is not just “mind” stuff. Consciousness is a dynamic process, a force that allows us to integrate all our experiences.

Experiencing the body is the first step in sophrology and the focus of level 1. This is why this level has so many movement exercises involving tensing and releasing, so one can really become aware of the body through its inner sensations – interoception and proprioception.

Body consciousness is discovered, explored and strengthened with a phenomenological approach. What we sense and perceive about our body is more important than the anatomical truth of it or how we think about it.

It's not about visualising the body, or imagining the body as we think we know it is, but truly sensing it as if for the first time.

Repeating the training leads to feeling the body more and more through all its dimensions: physical, mental and emotional, and always remaining a very tangible reality that is lived and experienced.

2-Concentration

The starting point with training our awareness is concentration. Concentration is an effortful focus at a single point. We learn to control our attention, to hold our focus in one place. In Level 1 we often use the body as our focus of concentration, but it can also be an object in our imagination. Training the attention is like building a muscle: with

repetition it becomes easier and easier. Each time the mind wanders, we bring it back to the object of our concentration. This backwards and forwards movement is the training.

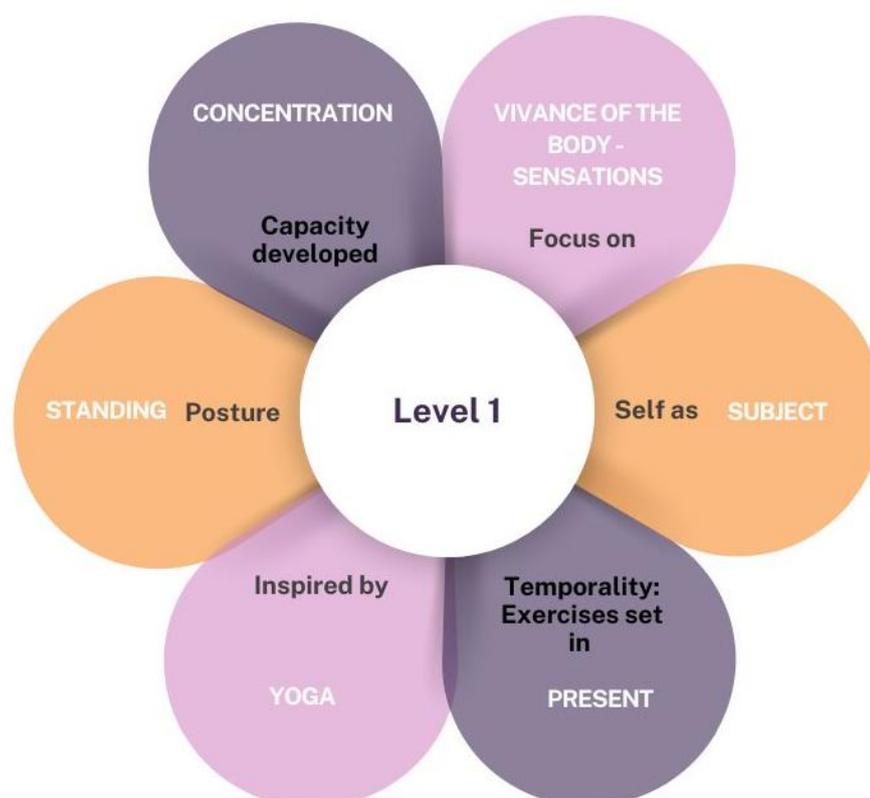
During the integration pauses we concentrate on the appearance of phenomena, as they emerge in their true essence. The moment we become conscious of them. Once something has emerged what follows is often interpretation. We learn to concentrate on letting the phenomena emerge while letting go of judgment.

3-Summary of Level 1

The main aims of Level 1 in sophrology are to

- Become more aware of the body we are living in
- Release inner tensions
- Increase inner harmony
- "I" as a subject, "Who am I?" in my body
- Bring awareness to the present moment
- Very much focused on the inside to improve relationship with oneself and develop body consciousness.

Inspired by	Yoga
Focus	Vivance of the Body, sensations
Develops	Capacity of concentration
Temporality	Exercises set in the Present
Posture	Standing
Self	Self as Subject
Specificities of Level 1	Get to know myself from the inside, in my body; means I can become aware of and shift my inner state; self-regulation; tension/ relaxation

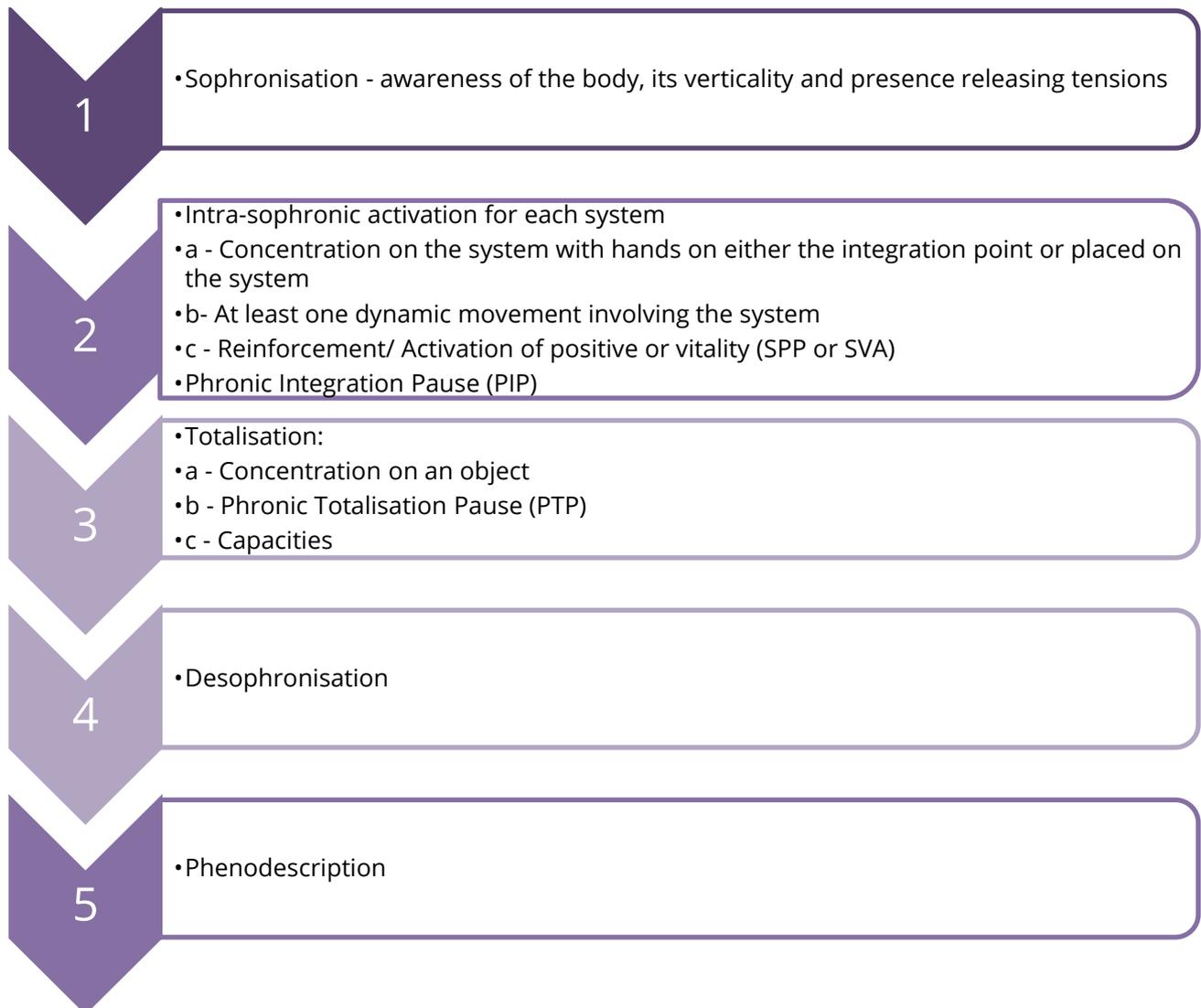


4-Level 1 Dynamic Relaxation Protocol

DR1 – PROTOCOL OVERVIEW

Uses: Better inner harmony and balance through a better awareness of internal sensations. Develops capacity for internal regulation, releasing tensions and bringing a sense of wellbeing.

Protocol steps



DR1 – PROTOCOL

Sophrionisation Standing	BVS + IRTER SND SVA (optional – can be done sitting)	Variations: Close eyes with Tratak SND can be done in different ways IRTER could precede the BVS
System 1 Standing	Concentration on the 1 st system Head and neck exercise Breathing stimulation SPP or SVA (optional)	Variations: Head and neck exercise can be done in free breathing or in IRTER There are several variations of the breathing stimulation exercises
Sitting back	PIP	
System 2 Standing	Concentration on the 2 nd system Neck tension Shoulder pumping SPP or SVA (optional)	Other dynamic exercise/s for system 2 Wrist exercise
Sitting back	PIP	
System 3 Standing	Concentration on the 3 rd system Chest exercise Target SPP or SVA (optional)	Variations: Target can be done in different postures or as a punching movement (Karate)
Sitting back	PIP	Other dynamic exercise/s for system 3 Whirling, Forearms
System 4 Standing	Concentration on the 4 th system Bellows breathing Claws exercise SPP or SVA (optional)	Other dynamic exercise/s for system 4 Nauli
Sitting back	PIP	
System 5 Standing	Concentration on the 5 th system Rotating arms Walk on the spot SPP or SVA (optional)	
Sitting back	PIP	
System 6 Standing	Concentration on the 6 th system Half body /Side-stretch SPP or SVA (optional)	Other dynamic exercise/s for system 6 Puppet Balancing Movement
Sitting back	PIP	Bowing
Totalisation Sitting back	Object concentration PTP Capacities	
Desophrionisation		

Some of the exercises suggested as variations come from older, '**classic**' versions of the protocols or from other protocols such as the Modified Autogenic Training. Caycedo created several iterations of the protocol as he developed the method over the years. The 'classic' protocols, whilst slightly different to the updated versions, stay true to the principles of the level they were designed for and include several techniques used by many sophrologists today.

NOTES ON THE PROTOCOL

Eg don't have to always sit for pause, ways exercises are done, don't have to always use 3 key techniques....

DR1 PROTOCOL – USES OF EXERCISES AND SAFEGUARDS

Please refer to the table below as well as Sophrology In Practice module

Exercise	Possible uses and contra-indications
Tratak	To focus inside Can be used as stand-alone exercise, 3 times with one arm, to improve focus and concentration
Head and neck exercise	To release tensions in the neck. Recommend to people with headaches (but not during acute pain), people who work a lot on computers ⊖ avoid the yes movement and only do the no movement very gently in free breathing with individuals who suffer from vertigo/dizziness, inner ear problems
Breathing stimulation	Activating the brain: trying to breathe out forcefully through the nose while you are bending over Variations: To focus inside - close the door to the outside world with fingers on sensory organs ⚠ if a person is not used to breathing deeply and retaining breath there could be feelings of dizziness
Neck tension	To become aware of the neck area ⚠ adapt the exercise so as not to put too much tension in that area
Shoulder pumping	Release stress, release tensions in shoulders Can be energising ⊖ do not use if a person has acute shoulder pain ⚠ if a person has very tense shoulders adapt to gentle movement (could shrug or rotate rather than pump)
Wrists exercises	For people who type a lot on a computer and do repetitive movements with their fingers and hands Reinforces flexibility of hands and joints and releases tensions
Chest exercise	To become more aware of the chest area, release and open. Connect with emotions. ⚠ use cautiously if someone has anxiety or very strong emotions
Target or Karate	For activating the upper part of the body, chest area Karate can be used for anger management or strong emotional release. Use this version rather than Target for anxiety ⊖ do not use with person with acute pain in shoulders and arms
Forearms	To increase awareness of breath and deepen/slow breathing Can be soothing

Whirling	<p>For activating the upper part of the body, chest area Can be energising</p> <p>⚠ if person has balance issues make sure they are in a stable position before leading the exercise ⊖ do not use with person with acute pain in shoulders and arms</p>
Claws exercise Bellows breathing	<p>To reconnect with breathing and to help prepare for abdominal breathing For lower back pain Can be energising</p> <p>⊖ do not use if someone is in acute stomach or back pain. Avoid with pregnant women. Be cautious using bellows breathing with people who are highly anxious.</p>
Nauli	<p>For digestive problems, lower back pain To release tensions in the stomach area Preventive exercise for people with IBS or women with painful periods cramps Post-natal exercise</p> <p>⊖ do not use during acute pain in stomach or lower back ⊖ do not use with pregnant women or during menses</p>
Rotating arms	<p>To release all body tensions. Often experienced as liberating movement Note: Side stretch and rotating arms are often in combination to rebalance the whole body, reinforce sense of presence in the here and now, feel grounded</p> <p>⚠ adapt exercise if a person has acute pain in knees</p>
Walk on the spot	<p>Good exercise to stimulate lower part of the body and balance.</p> <p>⚠ avoid if people have pain in legs or feet, or balance issues</p>
Side stretch	<p>To release whole body tensions Grounding, balancing and can be used to increase confidence</p> <p>⚠ if a person has balance issues make sure they do the exercise in stable position ⚠ adapt the exercise (intensity or scale of stretch) for people with acute pain in a part of the body, women with breast cancer surgery</p>
Puppet	<p>Good energising exercise.</p> <p>⊖ do not use if people have acute pain ⊖ do not use when pregnant women</p>
Balancing	As for Side Stretch
Bowing	As for Side Stretch
Object concentration	See Sophro-Imagery Stimulation techniques below.

5- Level 1 Specific Techniques/ Present Exercises

BS: Basic Sophronisation

Body scan heavily focused on the feeling of relaxation of all parts of the body.

Uses

⇒ promote a sense of deep relaxation rather than a sense of presence and awareness of the body.

Variations

Rotating Consciousness: a form of body scan inviting to concentrate on different parts of the body in quick succession that can be an alternative for people with busy minds or to help people fall asleep.

Modified Autogenic Training: you can adapt the terpnos logos of the modified autogenic training to do a body scan where you focus in particular on the weight and temperature of the different parts of the body.

BVS: Basic Vivantial Sophronisation (Key Technique)

The Basic Vivantial Sophronisation is a body scan where one welcomes the parts of the body in their entirety. The aim is also to reconnect with the body and to reach the sophro-liminal level.

The BVS can be done with systems delimitation or it can be used without systems just using parts of the body.

Uses

⇒ To reconnect with the body and raise body awareness, release tensions in the body, become more present

Safeguards

⚠ depending on the people you're working with, you may need to adapt the body scan (freedom of posture, freedom to skip parts, adjusting speed, deciding whether to put the accent on relaxation or presence)

SND: Sophro Negative Displacement (Key Technique)

Using IRTER to literally displace the negative out of the body. In sophrology, by negativity we are referring to what is unnecessary, those things that are no longer useful to us and anything stopping us from being fully present in a session or in life. In addition to the terpnos logos in the Toolbox, there are many ways to adapt this exercise.

Uses

⇒ To release tensions, let go of any negativity, physical tensions, unpleasant emotions, distracting thoughts.

Variations

You can perform SND without systems. It is common after an SND exercise to have a positive activation (either ISP as in exercise below, SPP or SVA). The idea being that once you've let go of negative you now have more space to welcome positive instead within your body.

You can also adapt the SND in the following ways:

- Just do it on one part of the body.
- Give option to tense the body as they like (arms up, in front, by the side)
- Make the tensing optional (if tensing may be an issue, for instance people with chronic pain). In that case put emphasis on exhale after holding the breath
- Make holding the breath optional or reduce it, for instance if you work with pregnant women or people with high blood pressure and cardiovascular diseases.
- In-breath to gently and kindly welcome any tensions/ imposing thoughts/ unpleasant feelings/ emotions; outbreath to listen to what may need to be heard or understood (for increasing awareness, listening to the wisdom of the body).
- Other variations include sighs of relief or **clearing breaths**, more visual, washing away /clearing up tensions.

Safeguards

⚠️ Avoid exercises with breath holds with pregnant women, people with high blood pressure or cardiovascular diseases, people with high anxiety or panic attacks. Shorten the hold.

SVA/SVH: Sophro Vital Activation / Sophro Vital Harmonisation (Key Technique)

Exercise with the intention of either activating or harmonising energy and good functioning of tissues and organs from within. Bringing the right blood flow, oxygen and temperature to vital organs, vital functions in a physical way. Usually SVA is used in the morning and SVH in the evening but it can depend on need.

Uses

⇒ To reinforce the perception of our own vitality and wellbeing, and further develop consciousness, acceptance and appreciation of our body.

Variations

SVA/H can be done with imagery or with Sophro Synchronised Breathing.

Safeguards

⚠️ Do not focus on organs until session 3. Make sure the person has integrated the body scan first.

Depending on medical conditions, you may focus on either activation or harmonisation. Some people have had organs removed or some organs that are not working. You may want to skip those. Give freedom to people to work with this exercise in the way that

feels right for them. Remember it's not about the anatomical or physiological truth of the body but their subjective experience and perception of it.

SSB: Sophro Synchronised Breathing

Exercise consisting of synchronising a movement, an intention, a word or visualisation with the breath.

Uses

⇒ Exercise that can be used in a variety of situations to create or reinforce a positive or a desired state such as confidence, calm, clarity and focus etc.

Variations

You could breathe in a positive element and imagine it spreading inside on the out-breath (using colour, sunshine, a feeling, a quality...)

You could breathe in positive and on the out-breath breathe out negative (for instance breathing out dark bubbles and when breathing in, inviting bright bubbles).

Several exercises are or can be done in Sophro Synchronised Breathing such as the SVA/SVH or the exercises below, SLP and SPP.

SLP: Sophro Liminal Protection

SLP is a variation of SSB. Relaxation is induced by welcoming a word or image associated with calm or peace with each out-breath.

Uses

⇒ The technique can be used on its own to reach the sophro-liminal level, like a shortcut to this particular level of relaxed alertness. It also can be used after a body scan or the three key techniques, in which case it reinforces (protects) the sophro-liminal level while also bringing a deep sense of calm.

SPP: Sophro Positive Presence

Activating or reinforcing positive sensations or feelings in the body, somatise the positive, using Sophro Synchronised Breathing

Uses

⇒ Using our breathing to reinforce and/or activate the positive within ourselves. Building inner strength and positivity.

ISP: Immediate Sophro Presence

Activating or reinforcing positive sensations or feelings in the body, somatise the positive, using the breath in IRTER three times.

Uses

⇒ Using our breathing to reinforce and/or activate the positive within ourselves. Building inner strength and positivity.

Safeguards

⚠️ Avoid exercises with breath holds with pregnant women, people with high blood pressure or cardiovascular diseases, people with high anxiety or panic attacks. Shorten the hold.

SND + ISP or SPP

These two techniques are often used together. The space created by the displacement of tensions/negativity is then filled with something positive.

Uses

⇒ Good exercises to increase body awareness, increase capacity of letting go of tensions in particular parts of the body, reinforcing positive resources within and positive sensations.

Variations

Exercises can be used on a particular part of the body or on the whole body.

Safeguards

⚠️ Avoid exercises with breath holds with pregnant women, people with high blood pressure or cardiovascular diseases, people with high anxiety or panic attacks. Shorten the hold.

FURTHER BREATHING EXERCISES

Breathing Awareness

This is the most basic exercise and the first one you could use with a client to check how they respond to breathing exercise and how they breathe. It involves becoming aware of the breath as it is WITHOUT having to breathe in any particular way. Observing and focusing on the breath, becoming aware of it in the body. Focusing on air flow – coming in and going out. Feeling it, shoulders, chest and belly. Doing the exercise in different positions (standing, sitting, lying down).

Uses

⇒ to reconnect with the body, increase body awareness, quiet the mind, release tensions.

Abdominal breathing

This exercise invites a person to let their belly rise when they breathe in and let it fall back into place when they breathe out.

Uses

⇒ to breathe in an optimal way and achieved a state of mind alertness into relaxed body, relax, balance, manage emotions, release tensions.

Safeguards

⚠ Make sure the client is ready before guiding abdominal breathing. Many people have spent years with shallow breathing due to stress. Learning to connect with the breath and become comfortable with the breath is the first step. Perhaps they'll need exercises such as the bellows breathing to gradually transition to abdominal breathing. When they start to relax their chest and belly you can guide this exercise.

Complete breathing

This exercise invites a person to imagine themselves as a glass and take a deep in-breath that fills first the belly, then the chest and goes up to the shoulders before breathing out.

Uses

⇒ to reconnect with the body, increase body awareness. Exercise can be used before events for performance. Increase focus, gain confidence.

Safeguards

⚠ Similarly to abdominal breathing make sure the person is ready before guiding this exercise.

Other breathing exercises include counted breathing which are not truly Caycedian but are used by many sophrologists. We present three counted breathing exercises below.

Calming breath - counted breathing exercise

Breathing in a pattern with an extended exhale and/or including a hold after the exhale to help activate the relaxation response. Even focusing on counting the breath can quieten the mind.

Uses

⇒ Good exercise for people who are anxious or to help people go to sleep.

Safeguards

⚠ People who over-breathe and are highly sensitive to increase in CO₂ in their blood might feel uncomfortable with holding lungs empty of air.

Energising breath – counted breathing exercise

This is the opposite to calming breath. Holding the breath with lungs full of air will stimulate the stress response helping the body to muster energy.

Uses

⇒ To energise, increase performance as well as focus the mind (can be done once before answering a question for instance).

Safeguards

⊖ DO NOT USE this exercise with people suffering from anxiety, panic attacks or insomnia (especially before going to bed or in the evening). Remember the link between nervous system and breathing. This exercise can lead to anxiety because it increases ventilation.

Square breathing – counted breathing exercise

This is a more balancing exercise as it combines the activation of the energising breath and the relaxation of the calming breath. Each of the four steps of a single breath cycle is given full and equal attention.

Uses

⇒ To feel more focused, present, grounded, balanced (physically, emotionally, mentally). It's a good exercise before a stressful event such as interview or presentation and can be used in everyday life while waiting on a queue, in public transport etc.

Safeguards

⚠ Avoid breath holds with pregnant women and people who have high blood pressure or cardiovascular diseases.

SIS: SOPHRO IMAGERY STIMULATION (LEVEL 1)

Sophrology uses mental imagery in many exercises. Whilst these are often called visualisations, it is important to suggest the use of any or all of the five senses so as to make them accessible to people who are less visual and find other ways into using their imagination in a positive way. There are many different exercises that can be used in this way. Key is to keep the wording sophrological (non-directive) and to respect the steps of a sophrology session. Below are some of the most common imagery stimulation exercises used in Level 1.

Safeguards

⚠ With visualisations in Level 1 – when you first work on visualisations provide several suggestions. For people who may have difficulty visualising, also bring other senses to the mental imagery in the exercise.

The following exercises are all Sophro-Imagery Stimulations

Object Concentration

Imagine an object and look at it from all angles, zooming in and out. Holding your attention on the object to discover it as much as possible.

Uses

⇒ For people who need to increase their attention and focus. If a person has difficulty visualising, invite them to hold the object or focus on the scent/sound the object is making to keep focus onto it.

For instance you could use this exercise with students who need to revise and prepare for exams.

It could also be used as a soothing exercise choosing a comforting object.

Landscape

Imaging a place where a person feels good, relaxed, at ease and experiencing pleasant sensations with all their senses.

Uses

⇒ Good exercise to bring sense of calm, start activating senses, work on visualisation

Notes:

- the landscape is often practiced early with a client and can be used in later sessions as a safeguard. When doing other visualisations you can ask the client to go back to their landscape if at any time it's not working for them and unexpected things they'd prefer not to focus on come up.
- When you practice this exercise with a person for the first time, let them have the place to themselves and do not bring loved ones or other people in.
- When the person describes the experience note which senses work best for them and adapt terpnos logos in future visualisations.

Grounding

Focusing on connection with the ground (and/ or sky) to be more in the here and now, present and focused.

Uses

⇒ Good exercise to use for confidence building or event preparation for instance.

Variations

There are several alternative ways of guiding a Grounding exercise:

- **Water flowing** down like a nice, soft, warm shower. Feel it flowing down the whole body (name body parts), taking away all tensions, washing them down. (to get rid of tensions)
- Eyes open, look around you and take into account **the distance** between you and the furniture, the others... Close eyes and try to sense that distance again. Feel your feet on the floor. Open your eyes and check the reality of that distance. Close your eyes, feel your feet on the floor, your whole body, the space it takes. Feel how you fill that

space. Find your balance, gently rocking back and forth and left and right if necessary.
(To find your place in the world)

Protective Bubble

Imagining a protective filter around you that allows you to interact with the world but does not let in the things you don't want.

Uses

⇒ Good exercise to use for people who need to feel more secure, more confident, more emotionally balanced. It can be used for interaction with people or situations where one feels apprehensive.

Anchoring

Visualisation linking an experience or feeling with a small gesture. Repetition leads to a reflex where each time you do the gesture you can go back to the feeling. Think Pavlov's dog or Harry Potter's patronus!

We use anchoring in our everyday life quite naturally: a particular voice will produce specific feelings, a particular food will remind us of a childhood memory...

An anchor can be visual (an image, picture, photo) or auditory (a music, song) but a kinaesthetic one is usually more powerful.

Uses

⇒ Use this technique consciously to help regain a particular frame of mind or state of being immediately in any circumstance.

Notes:

You'll choose a small gesture beforehand with the person.

Although this exercise is presented in level 1 because it can be done with a visualisation like the landscape to anchor the feeling of calm for instance, it's also possible to work with a powerful positive memory or a future event.

Modified Autogenic Training

Using mental formulae and imagery to experience the body as heavy and as warm. Adapted from Schultz's Autogenic Training.

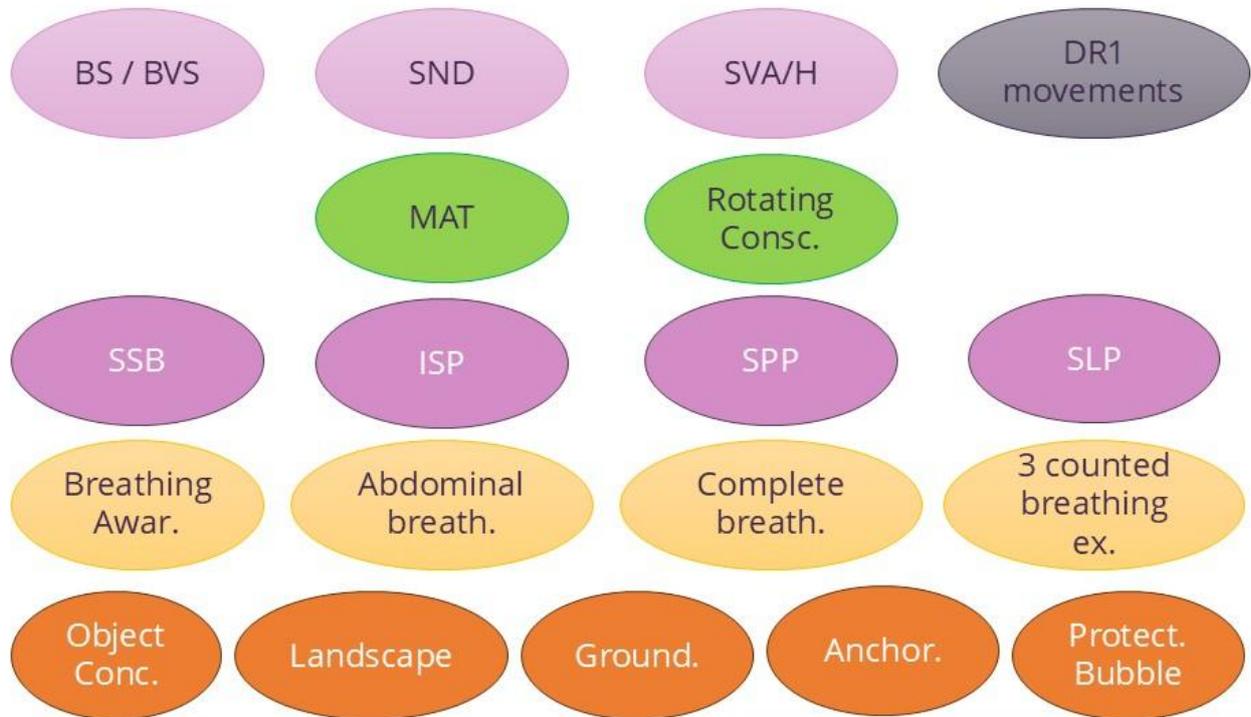
Uses

⇒ Use this technique to experience the mind-body connection.

Notes:

The final step involves a future exercise (SPA). Exclude this step if too early.

Level 1 Exercises



Sophrology academy 

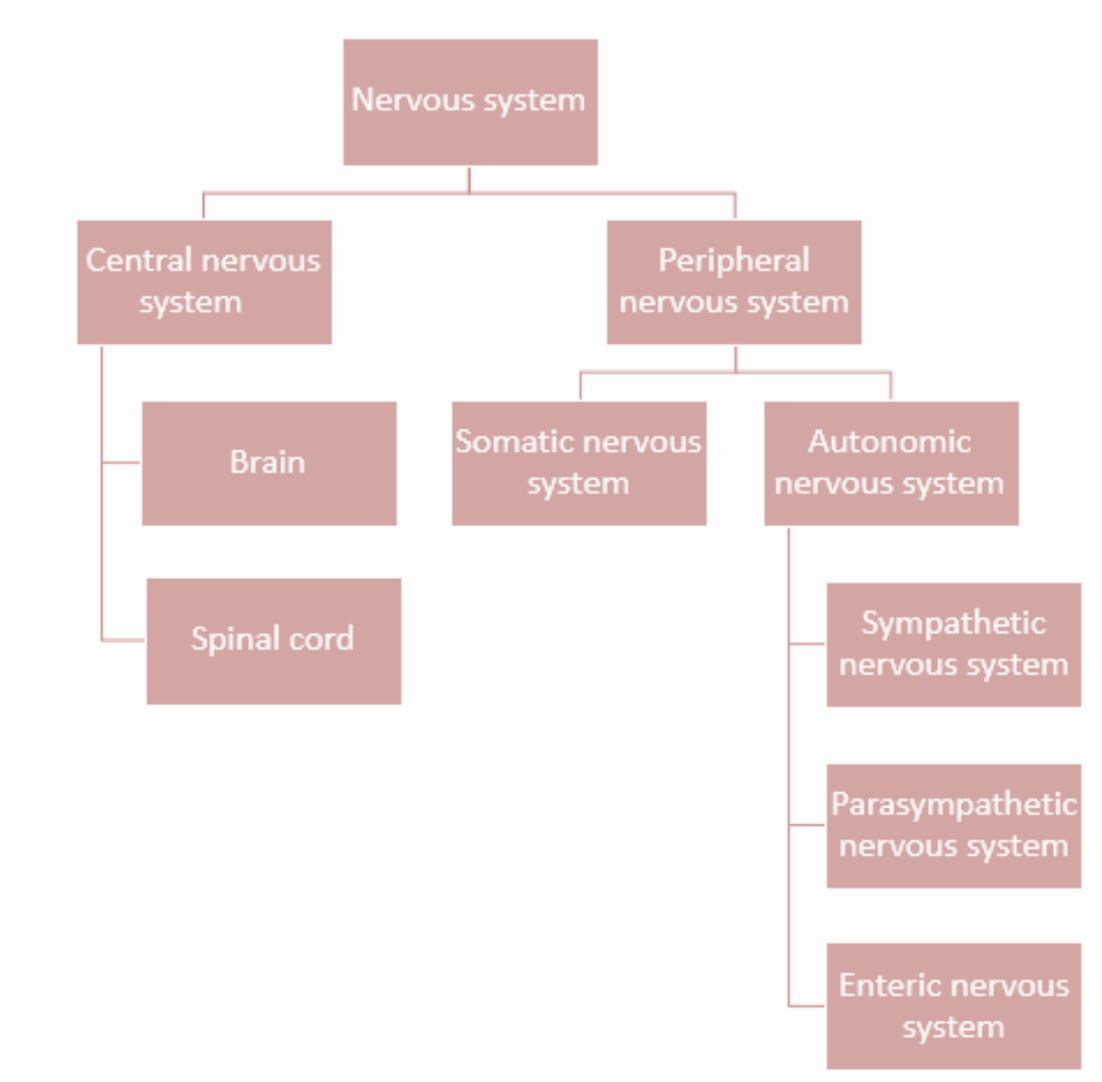
Appendix 1 – Physiology of the different systems

THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

The organs of the first system are the brain and sensory organs which belong to the nervous system.

The nervous system is the control and communication centre of the body. It is composed of nerve cells (neurones) supported by connective tissue (neuroglia) and respond to both internal and external stimuli to maintain a state of equilibrium in your body called homeostasis.

The diagram below shows the division of the nervous system into its different parts.



The Central Nervous System (CNS) is the major constituent of the nervous system. It integrates the information it receives from sensory receptors (5 senses) and coordinates the activity of all parts of the body (brain).

The Peripheral Nervous System is composed of nerves, ganglia and plexuses outside the central nervous system. The somatic nervous system coordinates activities under conscious control (for instance you can open and close your hand as you wish). The automatic nervous system controls involuntary functions such as heart beat or dilatation of pupils. The enteric nervous system controls gastrointestinal functions separately from the CNS.

Brainwaves

Gamma Peak Focus

- Fastest brain waves (>30Hz) associated with focus and high levels of cognitive functioning

Beta Alert

- Produced during daily activities when awake and busy (13-30Hz).

Alpha Relaxed and Detached

- These waves are produced by the brain when awake and relaxed (8-12Hz) . Associated with creativity and daydreaming. Alpha waves connect conscious thinking and subconscious mind (Koudelková et al. 2028 International Journal of Biology and Biomedical Engineering v12 202-207).

Theta Deeply Relaxed

- Produced when drifting off to sleep and in deep meditation (4-8Hz). Associated with low levels of alertness, intuition and inspiration. Subconscious.

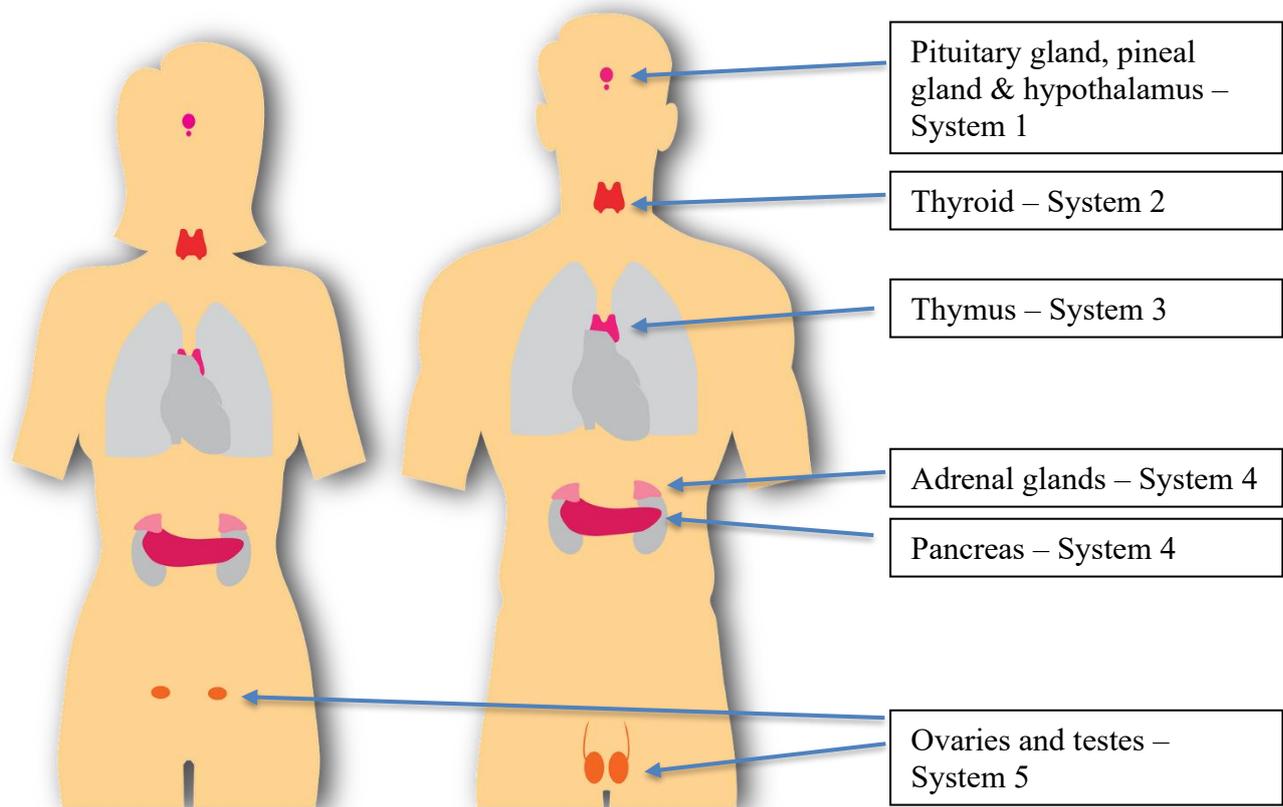
Delta Sleep

- Slowest brain waves (1-4Hz) associated with deep sleep helping functions of restoration and healing in the body. Unconscious.

THE ENDOCRINE SYSTEM

The endocrine system is composed of glands that control many body functions such as metabolism, reproductive processes, growth, sleep and also regulates your behaviour and mood. The glands secrete hormones that are chemical messengers.

Image by [Jefy Matricio](#) from [Pixabay](#)



The hypothalamus links the nervous system and the endocrine system via the pituitary gland. The pituitary gland releases hormones that control growth, the production of melanin in the skin, the thyroid, adrenal and ovaries/testes glands.

The pineal gland releases melatonin and influences the sleep cycle.

The thyroid releases hormones involved in metabolism and maintenance of right levels of calcium and phosphorus (bone health).

The thymus is part of the immune system and plays a part in production and differentiation of certain immune cells. This gland decreases with age.

The adrenal glands release hormones involved in regulation of blood pressure, salts in the body, metabolism, sexual development and the stress response.

The pancreas produces insulin and other hormones that influence blood sugar control.

The ovaries and testes secrete hormones responsible for development of female or male sexual characteristics and involved in reproductive cycle/development.

THE CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM

The cardiovascular system comprises the heart and blood vessels allowing blood to circulate through the body. Blood transports oxygen and nutrients to the body and also removes waste and carbon dioxide.

The heart is a pump and heartbeat is controlled by the autonomic nervous system.

THE RESPIRATORY SYSTEM

Lungs are the main organs of the respiratory system (also comprises, nose, pharynx, trachea, bronchi and bronchioles). The respiratory system allows us to breathe in air which contains oxygen and to breathe out carbon dioxide. Cardiovascular and respiratory system work closely together.

How Breathing Works

Breathing is the only involuntary function of the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) we can consciously act on. Inhalation is an activation of the Sympathetic Nervous System (stress response), exhalation is an activation of the Parasympathetic Nervous System (relaxation response).

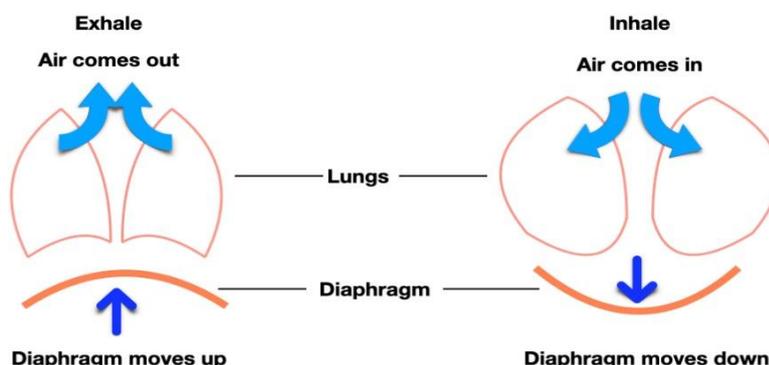
Humans have evolved an optimal way of breathing, although we are less and less breathing as “we should do” in modern society. In theory our natural way of breathing at rest is as follows:

1- In and out through the nose

When we breathe through the nose the air is purified or filtered from germs, dust and particles and it is moistened and heated which facilitates the transfer of gases in the lungs.

2- Using the diaphragm

The diaphragm is the muscle that separates the thorax from the abdomen. When breathing in, the lungs fill up with air and the diaphragm contracts, pushing down the digestive organs. Therefore, the belly rises. When breathing out, the diaphragm relaxes into its initial position and the belly returns to its natural place. That's called diaphragmatic breathing or abdominal breathing.



3- Regular

The normal respiratory rate in a healthy adult is 12 to 16 breaths per minute at rest. Our normal breathing rate should be regular.

4- Almost imperceptible

When at rest and relaxed, the breath should be almost imperceptible. The amount of air we breathe in and out (breathing volume) is not really big.

Breathing allows the vital exchange of gases between lungs and blood.

When you breathe in, the air you inhale is full of oxygen (O₂). That oxygen is transferred from the lungs to the blood and delivered to the cells. As blood delivers oxygen to the cells, it also collects carbon dioxide (CO₂) which is a waste product from your metabolism. You eliminate this carbon dioxide in the air you're exhaling.

When somebody hyperventilates, they release too much CO₂. CO₂ is actually more than a waste product and we need an optimal amount in our blood for optimal external and internal respiration.

The concentration of CO₂ in the blood determines breathing rate and breathing volume. It also affects how efficiently the O₂ gets delivered to the cells (Bohr effect <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK526028/>).

When someone consistently over-breathes, and releases too much carbon dioxide, they become sensitive to the slightest increase of CO₂ in their blood. As soon as that concentration increases it generates a panicky feeling and increases their breathing rate and volume (breathing hard and fast) – This is a vicious cycle making them even more sensitive to CO₂.

However, that threshold can be changed by helping a person to control their breathing and extend their exhale.

THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

The immune system protects against foreign invaders and infectious diseases. It also helps get rid of cells that are no longer functioning properly such as cancerous cells. The immune system is composed of the lymphatic system (which is a network of vessels into which the lymph circulates), special organs and immune system cells.

The lymphatic system drains excess fluids originating during exchange between blood and cells through capillaries. It also removes toxins, fragments of damaged cells and foreign elements such as micro-organisms which are filtered through lymph nodes.

When there is an infection, the nodes can swell indicating that the immune system has been triggered.

Immune system cells, also called white blood cells, include many different cell types who have slightly different functions.

Some white cells such as neutrophils and macrophages are responsible for the most straightforward immune response. They surround a foreign particle, bacteria or dying cell and ingest it.

Some white cells such as basophils or mast cells take part in the inflammation response and will secrete histamine. Histamine is usually responsible for allergic reactions. It dilates small blood vessels and increase their permeability, allowing white blood cells to travel to the site. It also irritates nerve endings. It's in response to histamine that you experience redness, swelling and itching/burning after being stung by a wasp or if you breathe in pollen or ingest food you're allergic to.

Finally, some white cells called lymphocytes are responsible for the immune response, a response that is going to confer you with immunity, i.e. an ability to defend your organism against particular pathogens or diseases.

There are three main categories of lymphocytes:

- Lymphocytes B originating in the bone marrow and leaving the bone marrow differentiated. They produce antibodies in response to presence of an antigen (i.e. a molecule or cell recognised as "non-self". B cells carry receptors on their membrane that can recognise a variety of antigens. When they encounter a new antigen they develop antibodies that are specific against that antigen and keep it in memory. In future if the same antigen appears again the immune response is a lot stronger.
- Lymphocytes T originating in the bone marrow and mature (differentiate) in the thymus. They can either work alongside lymphocyte B in the immune response (helper) or destroy virus infected cells.
- Lymphocytes NK (Natural Killers) who induce auto-destruction of cells that have gone rogue like cancerous cells.

THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

The digestive system breaks down ingested food through a chain of chemical reactions into molecules that can be used and absorbed by the body. The nutrients are used by cells for energy, growth and repair. What is not digested is eliminated as waste.

Ingested food starts to be digested in the mouth by saliva. The food travels to the stomach via the oesophagus where it is further broken down. Further digestion takes place in the small intestine as well as absorption. The large intestine deals with waste. The other organs which play a major role in the digestive system are the liver and pancreas.

The liver is the largest organ and largest gland in the body. It ensures digestion by production and transport of the bile (stored in the gall bladder when produced in excess) but it also plays a major role in eliminating toxins and certain metabolic waste, storing vitamins, glucose (as glycogen) and fats and also produces various proteins and vitamins.

The pancreas plays a role in digestion by producing pancreatic juices containing enzymes that will break down food in the small intestine. It's also part of the endocrine system, secreting the hormones insulin and glucagon. Insulin regulates blood sugar levels by causing liver and muscles to store glucose as glycogen. Glucagon converts glycogen back into glucose which is released in the bloodstream.

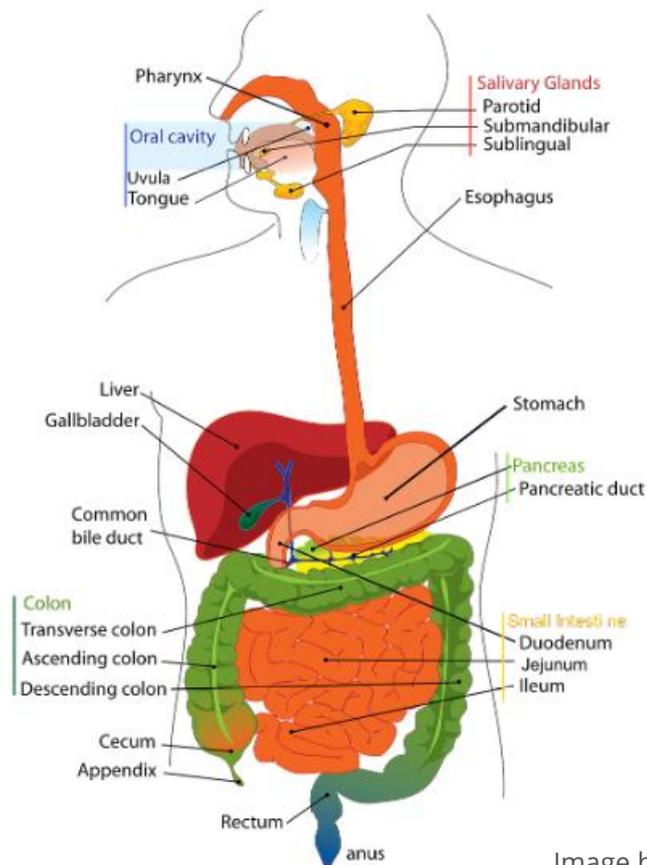


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THE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

The female reproductive system is composed of ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus, cervix, vagina and vulva. The female reproductive system allows for gestation and giving birth. The male reproductive system is composed of prostate, testes, testicular vessels and penis.

The function of the reproductive system is to ensure the continuation of the species by producing offspring. The reproductive system ensures the production of gametes (sex cells) which are the ovum in females and sperm in males.

Ovaries are glands producing progesterone and oestrogen. Progesterone prepares the uterus (or womb) for implantation of embryo while oestrogen stimulates the release of the ovum and is responsible for development of female sex characteristics.

Testes are glands producing testosterone which stimulates the production of sperm and is responsible for development of male sex characteristics.

THE URINARY SYSTEM

The urinary system filters blood and produces urine. It is composed of the kidneys, ureters, bladder and urethra.

Appendix 2 – Table of all exercises

LEVEL 1/ Present Exercises		Date
Dynamic Relaxation	BS Basic Sophronisation	
Level 1 Protocol	BVS Basic Vivantial Sophronisation (Key Tech)	
	SND Sophro Negative Displacement (Key Tech)	
	SVA Sophro Vital Activation (Key Tech)	
	SSB Sophro Synchronised Breathing	
	SPP Sophro Positive Presence	
	SLP Sophro Liminal Protection	
	ISP Immediate Sophro Presence	
	Breathing Awareness	
	Abdominal Breathing	
	Complete Breathing	
	Counted Breathing Exercises	
	SIS Object Concentration	
	SIS Safe Landscape	
	SIS Grounding	
	SIS Protective Bubble	
	SIS Anchoring	
	Modified Autogenic Training	
	Rotating Consciousness	
LEVEL 2/ Future Exercises		Date
Dynamic Relaxation	SOF Sophro Open Future	
Level 2 Protocol	SPA Sophro Progressive Acceptance	
	SFP Sophro Future Programming	
	SPS Sophro Projective Stimulation	
	SIS Finding Your Capacities / Future Self	
	SIS Object Contemplation	
	SIS Treasure Chest	
	SIS Trip to the Sky	
LEVEL 3/Past Exercises		Date
Dynamic Relaxation	SOM Sophro Open Memory	
Level 3 Protocol	SSPM Sophro Senso Perceptive Memory	
	SIM Sophro Integrative Memory	
	Walks	
LEVEL 4/Tri-dimensionality		Date
Dynamic Relaxation	Tridimensionality in time or in space	
Level 4 Protocol	SPV Sophro Presence of Value/s	
	Values Visualisation	