

Undergoing an operation with caycedian sophrology

Caroline is 39. She has to be operated on for breast cancer. Patrick-André Chéné, her obstetrician gynaecologist, is also Director of the Paris Caycedian Academy of Sophrology. He offers to help her through her ordeal with this method.

“The most important idea of caycedian Sophrology is to activate the consciousness in the body”, explains Patrick-André Chéné, gynaecologist and sophrologist, author of books for professionals on this method as well as one for the general public, *Initiation à la Sophrologie*. “I had known Caroline for a long time as I had delivered her two children, aged 14 and 17 when she was diagnosed with cancer. As an operation was necessary to remove the tumour, I prepared a protocol of pre and post-operation sessions. We started the first session with the awareness of the body.” Standing up and following the therapist’s indications, Caroline focuses on her body, bit by bit, contracts a muscle, releases it, does a few movements, tries to become aware of tensions, where they are... This is “active relaxation”, invented and systemised by Alfonso Caycedo. “This technique enables the person to feel her body, its shape, its structure. She feels her body alive. This is what Alfonso Caycedo calls “aliveness”. This first step is essential as, taking into account the information from different parts of the body, you can describe what is happening with precision, with no interpretation or judgement. It is a phenomenological approach, another element that is essential to caycedian Sophrology.” The second part of this session is about letting go of the negative. “This sequence of about 10 minutes is based on breathing. It is about becoming aware of tensions and letting go of them. Then, we go onto the third part, in which we bring in positive and vital energy.” Breathing in, Caroline has to imagine she is breathing in the energy around her to send it to each cell in the body part she is focusing on. The therapist also asks her, still breathing calmly and deeply, to imagine a nice sensation or emotion, a happy memory or an exciting project. The session is over. Caroline went back home with an audio recording of the session. Daily practice is important, it helps make it your own and gain tools to practice Sophrology under any circumstances.

During the second session, we visualised healing, goes on Patrick-André Chéné. Still following the same technique, the person has to imagine body sensations, perceptions and positive emotions in relation to her healing. The therapist guides but this method helps build a real self-confidence because it helps you find in yourself the healing strategies.”

With Caroline, the Sophrologist guided four 20-minute sessions before the operation, one session on the getting prepared for the operation and one session post operation. “We work on the scar healing and, as her breast had been removed, on her new body awareness, adds Patrick-André Chéné. Then we had a few sessions on what we call “existential redeployment”: everyday life with cancer and reinforcing the values that give reasons to live and exist.”

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Migraines

“Turning to alternative therapies is a possibility” says Dr H el ene Massiou. Each patient has to find what fits them better. Several approaches are possible. Some are mentioned in the French National Authority for Health’s recommendations (in *Headache*, June 2010): relaxation, biofeedback and cognitive therapies dealing with stress management. Those, according to HAS, have proved their efficiency and can be used in certain instances, depending on the patient’s psychological profile.

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