

Anthroposophic Therapeutic Speech (ATS) for Rheumatism

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Information for Doctors

ATS for Rheumatism

Diagnostic Criteria

In ATS the diagnosis is based on six main criteria of the patient: stance/movement, breathing, voice, articulation, thinking and speech perception (SBVATS). Within those criteria the main characteristics become evident and they can then be clarified further within the context of the four-fold human being. For the ATS practitioner this diagnostic picture can become the basis for therapeutic aims, means and methods specific for ATS. This diagnostic path of ATS shall be shown exemplary for rheumatic diseases. For an understanding of the disease the book "Rheumatische Erkrankungen Verstehen und Behandeln mit Anthroposophischer Medizin" by Ludger Simon serves as a basis.

Symptoms of rheumatic diseases: seen from an ATS perspective

Stance/movement

Stiff movements as a consequence of poor warmth regulation; quick, restless movements without breath; pain affecting the flow of movement; poor relation to space; movement and speech cannot be co-ordinated and instead become dissociated. *"All conscious movement originates from the most spiritual in Man, his Ego. Therefore disturbances of human movement, for instance in the case of rheumatic illnesses, have to be understood as an expression of feeling and as spiritual processes of Ego consciousness."* (p. 11)*

Conditions of warmth

In most cases the inner generation of warmth is disturbed. The patient does not properly feel warm and suffers from cold hands and feet or from locally overheated joints while inwardly freezing.

"...the principle of Anthroposophic rheumatism therapy therefore rests essentially on the stimulation of the Ego-organisation to begin increasing inner warmth." (p.11)*

Breathing

Tends to be shallow and high up, strained; does not reach into feet and hands; the soul is not incorporated in the deeper breathing process of the whole body, in connection with the metabolic-limb organisation.

The soul life continually gives impulses into the physical breathing processes which specifically work into the liquids of both the cartilage and the joints for their maintenance and functioning.

Life processes

The poor breathing weakens the life processes. The rhythmic flow of the liquid is stopped in the metabolic-limb organisation. This leads to material excretory processes and deposits in the connective tissue of the joints.

"The weakening of the life processes shows in a loss of weight, muscular wasting, anaemia, general emaciation and leads to the depositing of specific protein, glucose and crystalline substances in the affected areas. It also leads to the degeneration or even death of certain components of the connective tissue." (p.21)*

Articulation

The articulation appears unformed and unclear with conspicuous formative weakness in the palatal sounds. The palatal sounds, as an expression of the will in speech, are not shaped and formed.

Voice

The voice has a weak sound. It is monotonous without colour or intention. The individual personality, its soul condition, its potential for self-assertion as well as movement problems all become audible in the modulation, dynamic, colouration and central core of the voice. A vocal behaviour is often adopted in childhood.

"...it is difficult for him to contain his will impulses, to adapt to the expectations of others, to say "No". A pattern of adaptation and subjection develops..." (p.14)*

Therapeutic Speech aims

- Permeating the hampered and painful movement organism with feeling consciousness to bring about its flow as an expression of soul life; awakening the “gesture-man”.
- Stimulating the blood circulation and the inner warmth processes in order to develop and strengthen new self assurance.
- Deepening the breathing processes, bringing about harmony and rhythm.
- Stimulating the rhythmic flow of liquids by repeatedly speaking sounds and rhythms in speech exercises and in poetry (hexameter and alliteration) with movements that support the speech process.
- Strengthening the thyroid processes; airing and warming through the frontal and nasal sinuses.

Therapeutic Speech methods

Working with gestures

The person experiences their own will activity through the consciously felt gestures guided by the Ego. The gestures are found in the content and the images of the chosen texts. The drama of human soul life can be also expressed by gesture and speech; for example in the creative expression of sympathy and antipathy, intention and question.

“In the gesture lives the human being. The human being is present in the gesture. The gesture disappears into speech...the human being in creating gestures re-appears in the word. And we find the whole human being in his speech.” (R. Steiner, GA 282)

Warmth through alliteration

The exhalation is connected with the will and can be stimulated by speaking creatively. The dynamic speaking of fluency exercises activates the blood circulation. In the alliterative

declamatory Nordic poetry the will of the Ego dives through the strong speaking of consonants and vowels into the pulsing rhythm of the blood, generating bodily warmth and creating a strong Ego presence in the soul.

“The grim and greedy guardian of the flood, keeping her hungry hundred season watch” (Beowulf)

Breathing

The breathing is widened and deepened by creatively speaking sounds, using breath exercises such as K-L-S-F-M, A-E-U, “In the vast” and “Fulfilling goes” and by speaking hexameter poetry with breath supporting arm movements.

Rhythm - Syllable stepping and Hexameter

In connection with speaking hexameters: rhythmic syllable stepping, syllable movement with sensitive engagement of the whole body, or as a passive experience received from outside.

In the hexameter rhythm the rhythm of the breath and the rhythm of the pulse are connected 1:4. An example:

“This is the forest primeval, / the murmuring pines and the hemlocks, / Bearded with moss and in garments / green indistinct in the twilight” (Longfellow)

The heart as an organ of perception is stimulated:

“If the process which happens between pulse and breathing is well ordered, lower and upper man are properly connected.”

(Rudolf Steiner, GA 221)

Affects of the speech sounds

The palatal sounds, “H”, “G”, “K” and “Y”, are the sounds of will. They are warming and shape the flow of speech and they affect the whole human organism. Exercises containing the sounds “L” and “R” have a corresponding activity in arms and legs, working from there upon the feeling perception of gait and gesture. At the same time “L” stimulates the liquid processes and gives suppleness to the movement organism. In the vocal element the astral body weaves into the etheric body and its flow. The consonantal element lives between Ego and astral body relating to the warmth organism and to the soul forces of thinking, feeling and willing (GA 282, lecture 5th Sep 1924)

“Speaking vowels means to pour one’s innermost being into the flow of speech. There they become liquid. Speaking consonants means: shaping and forming the liquid.”(Rudolf Steiner, GA 280)

In the case of related diseases, such as disorders of the thyroids or sinus infections:

Exercise for the thyroids

An exercise given by Rudolf Steiner and consisting of seven sentences with a specific sequence of sound structures harmonises and strengthens the functional organism of the thyroids (see D. v. Bonin: Materialien zur Therapeutische Sprachgestaltung)

Exercises for the sinuses

The sounds “N” and “M” are airing, warming and enlivening for the sinus cavities of the head. If spoken with vowels they create resonances and vibrations, supporting and breathing life into these spaces.

*Ludger Simons, “Rheumatische Erkrankungen verstehen und Behandeln mit Anthroposophischer Medizin” edited by Gesundheit aktiv, Anthroposophische Heilkunst e.V. Postfach 1110, 75374 Bad Liebenzell, www.gesundheitaktiv-heilkunst.de
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