THE ART OF MOVEMENT IN SUPERVISION

HELENA EHRENBUSCH
EHRENBUSCH CONSULTING LTD

The aim of this article is to introduce the concept of body work in professional context, and to make it this way more accessible to people who are not professionally trained in specific movement disciplines. In this article the theoretical underpinnings of body work are derived from three larger areas. Science, more precisely neuroscience, is researching the theme of body-mind connections, mirror neurons, origin of emotions. The main practical impact is visible in psychiatry, where new revolution in diagnostics has been done through the invention of bodily movement observation tools. The art of dance and movement has gained scientific value through Laban Movement Analyses, which offers tools for not only choreographers and dance teachers in teaching movement awareness, but also for body psychotherapists.

Keywords: supervision, body work, art of movement, psychotherapy

INTRODUCTION

“What I am looking for, is not out there. It is in me.”
Helen Keller

I believe human body is the physical manifestation of our self. All our life experience is written in our body and movement, it is visible in our outlook, choices, and habits. We tend to think that we know and understand the world, react and develop in life because of and through our brain. Very often we fail to recognise the importance of our bodies in this process. We may have forgotten past traumas and successful experiences, but our body remembers and gives us signs through various health conditions, recognisable movement patterns, eating habits, etc.
My experience shows the best way to understand yourself, your clients, their decisions and reasons more thoroughly is to be able to read and understand messages of body and movement. Sigmund Freud’s more unknown quote says: “The ego is first and foremost a bodily ego; it is not merely a surface entity but is itself the projection of a surface” (Freud, 1923). We do see body posture and visible traits of another person, choices of self-presentation, but there is more information available from the visibly hidden areas, i.e. thoughts, understandings, and beliefs. The question can be how to see this information?

And then there is still a great deal of ambivalence in the topic of body. We are defined as human beings through our bodies, but bodies still seem to be the biggest taboos of all times: unknown, surrounded by fears and fantasies, exploited by economical opinion leaders, norms and statements. Body and movement is not yet a subject or a valuable tool in most of the educational programs, with the exception of dancers, actors, and body psychotherapists. The Cartesian body-mind dualism is strongly present until today, although there is a tendency to talk more about the comprehensive approach to human being, which brings out the importance of body-mind-spirit triangle. Many of us agree that we must take good care of our bodies among other things, and we try to make healthy choices in life, but when it comes to our professional work, we still mostly use words and thinking as our tools.

Professional supervisors, but also other professionals, who work with people, individuals and groups, including, coaches, therapists, psychologists, managers, and leaders, should have more tools than words, written tasks, powerful questions, and mental analyses. We are trained to tune in to our client, to notice the changes in her gestures, breathing, tone, position in the room, etc. With this article I encourage professionals to incorporate the knowledge and skills of body and movement to everyday work more consistently.

This article is based on the material of the presentation *The Art of Movement in Supervision* by the author at the conference *Test és lélek a szupervízióban* (*Body and Soul in Supervision*), in Budapest, Hungary, May 12th, 2018. Hereby, I will give a brief overview of the theoretical
underpinnings of body-work with a special attention to supervisors and supervision. The reader will also find some practical exercises and steps to apply this in everyday work.

WHAT IS BODY-WORK?

“It was valuable to remember how important and useful our bodies in life and work are.”

I often get the request to show body-work in various group settings. My question usually is: what exactly do you want? My fantasy is people expect a shorter (max. 2 hours) entertaining experience during which a little life-changing miracle will also happen. As supervision itself can be defined as being a process, where the most valuable time is actually between the meetings, and where actual experiencing and learning takes place. The same principle applies to body-work. We seemingly start very boring: looking into ourselves and noticing. Significant knowledge and changes in movement and life happen only over the time.

Body-work means attention, awareness, understanding needs, wishes, abilities, and resources. Bodywork demands that the person using this tool should be: a) well trained with a huge toolbox of different movement styles; or b) very comfortable with the body and movement, including high awareness in bodily terms.

The next step after self-awareness is to acquire a deeper understanding of embodiment, that can be understood as being empathic or attuned. “The embodied way of being-in-the-world is also an embedded way of being in a world of others” (Block & Kissell, 2001). The challenge for professionals is to create links between the embodiment form theoretical research and knowledge what we gain through our embodied practice, in order to develop our own learning and support the learning of our clients.

1 Quotes without reference to the authors in this article originate from the feedback of my personal supervision clients.
SCIENCE AND NEUROSCIENCE

“Movement is a good opportunity to switch off thinking and concentrate on the body.”

Most of the professionals, who work with people, turn to scientific research to provide evidence-based results about their professional activities and understandings.

**Neuro-Evolution.** Body, movement, dance, and body psychotherapy researchers have been working closely with neuroscientists over the past decade. Neuroscience is researching a lot the theme of body-mind connections.

The neuro-evolutionary approach to the mental apparatus states, that our minds contain the rudiments of many fundamental psychological processes that emerged long before humans walked on earth. Among the most important factors to understand human behaviour are the basic emotional tendencies of the brain: fear, anger, sexual urges, maternal devotion separation distress and social bonding, playfulness and a general desire seeking system, which are actually common to all life-sustaining objects of the world (Corrigall, Payne & Wilkinson, 2006).

**Rhythm and Bodily Feedback.** Movement is central to the human condition; it is dynamic and pervasive as the air. Movement therapies use this human capacity to restore health, access resources, and diminish suffering. The central topic of movement research is bodily feedback to other people, tasks, and situations. Bodily feedback means transferring the information from position and movement of the body to the central nervous system. It is proved, that bodily reactions of others cause empathic bodily reactions in us. When we talk about rhythms, we think of music rather than movement. But just like there are external rhythms that can make us move rhythmically, there are internal ones, that are related to our personal needs and affect. These rhythms are expressed by alternations in muscle tension and relaxation. The findings of the research about rhythm and dynamic body feedback show that movement qualities modify the meaning of movement adding to it a semantic dimension. (Koch, 2014)
Tools of Movement Research. Though theoretical research themes about body and movement can be placed on a very wide scale, the practical applications are mainly designed for psychiatric research, as specific movement traits are found to be connected to specific psychiatric diagnoses. Hereby, I introduce two movement research tools from Germany and America.

Nonverbal behaviour is taking its place as an important form of communication alongside the written and spoken word. Objective and reliable methods of analysis are therefore required in various scientific disciplines, including psychology, medicine, linguistics, anthropology, sociology, and computer science. The Neuroges–Elan system is an effective and user-friendly research tool for the analysis of hand movement behaviour, including gesture, self-touch, shifts, and actions, i.e. an elaborated behavioural coding system and an annotation tool for video and audio data (Lausberg & Sloetjes, 2015).

Similar work is done by American scientists, Dr. Dianne Dulicai (1937-2017) and Dr. Martha Davis, who researched, designed and applied the Movement Psychodiagnostic Inventory (MPI), a tool for diagnostics in psychiatry, which involves larger scope of bodily movement (Davis, 2018).

LABAN MOVEMENT ANALYSES

“Humans have a choice of movement!”
Rudolf Laban

Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) was an Austrian Hungarian dance artist, choreographer, and movement theoretic, whose works opened the door for the scientific research in dance and movement. Laban Movement Analysis is mainly used by choreographers and dance teachers to teach movement awareness, and body psychotherapists to support healing and development of their clients.

Laban looked upon movement as a two-way language process through which the human body could communicate by giving and receiving messages. He believed that the understanding of this neglected
language would lead to a better means of understanding people. In Laban’s system, all movement stems from an inter-dependence of body, mind and spirit. The movement of the person can be conscious and unconscious. You can observe it and analyse, recognise the need of a mover. Recognition means being aware of the inner attitude, which precedes the action. Attitude (mood or character trait) reveals itself through rhythm and shape (pattern) of the spatial pathway (Newlove, 2012).

Technically the Laban Movement Analysis is a non-verbal observation that looks at the quality of a movement. This system does not look for stereotypical meaning of gestures (e.g. hands crossed), but the action of movement and how it is performed. Important factors to analyses are called movement qualities: the effort or feeling tone of the action, movement in space, phrasing of movement (beginning, development, and end of movement), usage of body parts, and how the person puts all these details together to their personal „movement signature“ (Duke, 2018).

**Body Psychotherapy.** “Understanding how much you communicate nonverbally and how many of your non-verbal cues are movement-based, influences your way of thinking, parenting, and experiencing life” (Suzi Tortora). Body psychotherapy, also known as Dance Movement Therapy, is the psychotherapeutic use of movement and dance through which a person can engage creatively, to further his/her emotional, cognitive, physical and social integration. Body psychotherapy is founded on the premise that the body and mind are an interrelated continuum; that the state of the body may affect mental and emotional wellbeing in manifold ways; and movement reflects an individual’s patterns of thinking and feeling. In contrast to artistic dance, which is usually concerned with the aesthetic appearance of movement, dance therapy explores the nature of all movement. Through acknowledging and supporting clients’ movements, a therapist encourages the development and integration of new adaptive movement patterns together with the emotional experiences that accompany such changes. This therapy works with all populations as any conscious person can move on some level. Body psychotherapy is practised as both, individual, and group therapy in health, education and social service settings, and in private practice (Brooke, 2006).
Body psychotherapists believe the sense of the self is rooted in the body and catalysed by relationships and the environment. Our bodies do not provide many answers in themselves, and neither do the minds. Only when we fully include the mind and the body, we can start to understand the multidimensional hologram of our existence (Corrigall, Payne & Wilkinson, 2006).

Supervision in body psychotherapy is a creative process, where the verbal aspects of insights are comprehended with movement reflections as an integrated whole. Bodywork and dance movement practices may be useful in developing the capacity of both, therapists and their supervisors, to open the unpredictable nature of embodied insights. They also have proved to be useful tools in therapists and supervisors professional self-care (Payne, 2008).

**The First Steps of Becoming Who We Are.** Suzi Tortora is a dance movement therapistspecialised in children and their development. In her interview with Ellie Duke she brings out the connections of body therapy to child development.

In body psychotherapy sessions parents are encouraged to look at the movements of their babies, to help them understand their child’s and their own non-verbal communication. Parents communicate much more through body language than through words, without recognising this themselves. Very often parents’ words say one thing, but their body says something totally different. This happens actually in many other situations of our life too, but for a child that can be quite confusing. Parents need to know, that children and infants are mainly attuned to the sensations around them, and they pick up mainly nonverbal cues instead of words. By simple awareness of our reactions and movements we could avoid many serious communication problems for us and our children in the future (Duke, 2018).

**Observation exercise.** Take a picture of yourself, where you are really happy. It can also be any other, strong emotion. Look at the picture for 10 seconds, then close your eyes, and try to notice what you feel in your body.
Psychologists talk a lot about embodiment, but most of it is just that: talking. Body psychotherapists help people to understand embodiment through felt experience. True embodiment is owning the experience of being in your body. Breathwork, mindfulness, and yoga are useful tools to get people to start listening to their bodies (Duke, 2018).

“Shhhh technique”. Make shhh to Yourself, like silencing a loud or crying child, and then wait, watch, listen. What do you see, notice, understand about yourself?

We become who we are through the reactions of our primary caretaker; usually it is the mother, who is introducing the baby to her body. With the help of mirror neurons, the child reacts to and repeats what she sees. This is body-parenting, our very first attunement experience, which actually starts in mother’s body. The quality of the child’s reaction depends on mother’s own awareness of her body. The child’s mind, including how she feels about herself and what are her thinking skills, is built through nonverbal movement experiences, e.g. the way we use space and rhythm, build. “Body to body” felt experiences are more powerful tools than we can imagine. (Tortora, 2014)

THE ART OF SUPERVISION

“I discovered that movement gives much more information than talking.”

Creative Supervision. Lahad expands the definition of supervision by emphasizing the importance of using the arts, images and creative process in the supervisory relationship, offering the possibility to work with symbols, metaphors, and emotions in deeper levels (Lahad, 2000). Nowadays most supervisors use creative techniques and exercises to reach the goals of supervision. While writing this article, I looked through around dozen creative supervision models and I shall bring out here those ideas which contribute to body-work.
Amundson designed a procedure, where counsellors, as part of their supervision, develop metaphors, and then make them visible for the analysis by constructing drawings or collages. The drawings or collages are used as the basis for case supervision. It was discussed that this novel method in its time could prove to be a useful addition to case analysis and group discussion. The purpose was mainly to help the counsellors to conceptualise the case and get an additional insight (Amundson, 1988). In body-work the use of metaphors is quite common with the goal to translate information from bodily subconscious to conscious awareness.

Bernard’s Discrimination Model (Bernard & Goodyear, 1992) is interesting through the topic about the different roles of a supervisor. Bernard’s model is situation-centred, where the supervisor can be in the role of a teacher, counsellor or consultant (Koltz, 2008). Every role is dependent on the needs of the supervisee. For example, the teacher’s role is more needed in case of developing specific skills; in case of the supervisee’s personal needs the role of a consultant could be more appropriate, and the counsellor role is needed for introspection.

The model of mindful supervision comprises the five elements from the Buddhist and Hindu traditions (space, earth, water, fire, and air), which symbolise the 5 senses of human beings. The combinations of these five elements create a holistic picture of a human being, her wishes and needs. At the same time these five elements are powerful metaphors in themselves that help the supervisee to become more aware of his/her experience (Sturm, Presbury & Echterling, 2012). In a way this model resonates with Laban Movement Analyses.

Constructive approach in supervision focuses on the supervisee as a creator of his/her own knowledge, which develops through professional know-how and practical experience. The process of supervision in this case may change professional behaviour of the supervisee (Deaver & Shiflett, 2011).

**Bodily Supervision.** Bodily supervision is not an official term. This is a word-pair I invented for my supervision studies final dissertation to describe the experience-based process, where the main tool of
supervision is built on body-work. I shall bring out here the theoretical background of my work.

Supervision is characterised by a triangle relationship among the supervisor, supervisee, and the material which is brought up. In the supervision process, bodies and ideas meet in the same space. Historically supervision has been looked upon also as a “speech therapy”, but we must agree, that the bodily exchange of messages is merely more than the subconscious acknowledgement of the body language. Psychoanalysts have defined body as the visible part of the ego or as a bridge to the inner world. Though verbalisation is important in supervision, it is clear, that the bodily experiences rising up during the process are an inseparable part of any client work, supporting the delivery and understanding of messages (Frizell, 2012).

The goal of bodily supervision can be teaching or development, where a supervisee could learn to develop the ability to tune in the “here and now”, give verbal form to the bodily experiences, which both support the understanding of self. The use of imagination techniques and metaphors can provide meaningful insights to the learning process. The success of using metaphors is determined by the supervisee’s ability to think abstractly and creatively at the same time, but also of the supervisor’s competencies, comfort level, skills, and knowledge (Deaver & Shiflett, 2011).

**Authentic movement.** “I wish movement was a bigger part of our learning process and following the dynamics of the group.” Authentic movement is a very powerful tool in training professionals, preparing them for client-work, in meta- or control supervision. It was born from the combination of Jung’s active imagination concept and improvisational movement of modern dance. There are many names, who own the honour to be named the developers of this method, such as Mary Starks Whitehouse (1911 – 1979), Joan Chodorow, Janet Adler.

Authentic movement allows the subconscious material to be transformed into a physical form (Taylor, 2007). The main principles of authentic movement, safe and non-evaluative environment, is achieved by clear rules, how to develop and share the experience and give neutral, meaningful feedback. Teachers and leaders of authentic movement
sessions, such as supervisors in their work, must be aware of their selves “here and now”, notice the needs of themselves and the client, and be able to give reflections.

Being aware of the present moment is resonating with the existential-humanistic and person-centered counselling styles. The main question is: how to guide your client to the awareness? Paradoxically the key to “here and now” is to lose your mind, to come to your senses, as reducing the thinking enables the person to become to bodily awareness (Sturm, Presbury, Echterling, 2012). That explains also why symbols, metaphors and other creative methods are more effective than verbal techniques.

Authentic Movement has a clear and simple framework. It can be done individually or in a group. There is always a mover and a witness. The witness’s main task is to form a containing circle for the mover. There is no music, the mover has to listen to herself/himself, her/his bodily needs and react to her/his inner impulses. With eyes closed, it is easier to focus inwardly, moving blind can symbolize the journey to the unknown. The time for the movement is pre-agreed. As next step, the movers and witnesses transfer their thoughts, images and experiences to a physical form, keywords, poem, or similar. The mover may then share her/his experience, and the witness can respond, only if the mover wants. The witness’s role is similar to the therapist’s and the supervisor’s: we do not give an interpretation, but rather a reflection in a neutral form (“I-statements”). In the advanced version the witness comments only on the material that the mover brings out. The witness is active in her/his participation but contained in her/his response. The discipline of witnessing supports the mover’s drop into the depths of self.

The Art of Movement in Supervision. “All movements were easy and tension free even for me, a person who has difficulties in moving.” To conclude the article, I repeat again, that body-work in supervision or any other similar field is first and foremost an awareness of yourself, your own body and movement patterns. Awareness could be raised by various creative and bodily techniques, like breathing, mindfulness, yoga, authentic movement, journaling, or with help of a personal therapist, psychologist, supervisor, coach, etc.
In supervision we can define the following four larger areas, where body-work is appropriate and helpful:

1. Basic relatedness, attunement, and empathy;
2. Counter transference: the use of your own embodied awareness of your own process (sensations, images);
3. Interventions to highlight the client’s awareness of defences, sensory elements, impulse, breathing, and feeling (e.g. muscular tension);
4. Developing specific skills, methods, aims, like bodily systems, the functioning of the nervous system, etc.

In this list the first topic, basic relatedness, attunement and empathy, is available to most professionals who work with people, while the other three need a more specific training.

In the sessions where we decide to use body-work, we can mainly observe, follow, and facilitate bodily phenomena. First are the things we can observe visually: colour changes of the skin, breathing, relaxation-tension, gestures, and postures. Secondly, we can observe the quality of contact: eye contact, voice variations, and shifts in mood and attitude. Thirdly, we can analyse the counter transference issues: awareness of your own body images, states, impulses, etc.

The most common body-work themes and exercises are as follows:

- Self-preparation, i.e. tuning in;
- Starting and closing the sessions, i.e. specific, repeating ritual;
- Body-based themes, brought to the session by the client: emotions, disturbances, feelings, reactions, etc;
- Specific tools, which can be modified to more body-work centered, e.g. 4 personality types (artist, researcher, soldier, judge);
- Self-development through bodily awareness;
- Group exercises: ice-breakers, energisers, thematic, etc;
- Meta-supervision reflection for supervisors and similar professionals, e.g. modification of 7-eye or Balint model (Payne, 2008).
CONCLUSIONS

When you dream now of using more body-work in your daily job, then I suggest to start from three basic steps. First, set the intention: what do you want to achieve? Second, talk to your body: learn a way to receive and understand the messages. Journaling, supervision on this topic, authentic movement group, etc., could be helpful. Third, be thankful to your body! Your Body is amazing, getting you to the point to finish reading this article here, and willing to take you further in your path, protecting and guiding you.

REFERENCES

HELENA EHRENBUSCH

JUDESIO MENAS SUPERVIZIJOJE

SANTRAUKA

Žmogaus kūnas yra nuostabus šaltinis, kuriame atsispindi visa mūsų praeities ir dabarties patirtis, pasirinkimai ir mintys, netgi genetinis paveldas, atsiskleidžiantis per mūsų kūno formas, judesius ir manieras. Vienintelis klausimas – kaip pastebėti ir perprasti šią informaciją? Todėl darbas su kūnu – daugiau nei gestai ir manieros tiesiogine prasme. Šio straipsnio tikslas – pristatyti darbo su kūnu idėją profesiniam kontekste ir padaryti ji labiau prieinamą žmonėms, kurie nėra studijavę specifinių judesio dalykų. Šiame straipsnyje teoriniai darbo su kūnu pagrindai yra paimti iš trijų svarbių sričių. Mokslas, tiksliau – neurologija, nagrinėja kūno ir proto jungtį, veidrodinius neuronus, emocijų kilmę. Didžiausia praktinė tyrimų nauda

11. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uIzZvyqPz3s
juntama psichiatrijoje, nes čia diagnostikos srityje kilo revoliucija, kai buvo išrasti kūno judesio stebėjimo instrumentai. Šokio ir judesio menas įgijo mokslinę vertę Labano judesio analizės dėka. Ši analizė choreografams ir šokio mokytojams, taip pat kūno psichoterapeutams siūlo instrumentus, kaip mokti sąmoningai judėti. Kūno psichoterapija paremta prielaida, kad kūnas ir protas yra susiję tarpusavyje, judesiai atspindi individo mąstymą bei jausmus. Šokio meno ir kūno psichoterapijos autentiškas judesys siūlo pagrįstą teoriją ir praktines darbo su kūnu gaires. Judesio menas supervizijoje arba darbas su kūnu konsultacijų metu iš esmės yra jį naudojančio asmens kūrinys ir patirtis. Visų pirma tai yra ir turėtų būti sąmoningas savęs, savo kūno ir judesio modelių supratinas. Šis straipsnis – tai praktinio vadovėlio pradžiamokslis žmonėms, norintiems visapusiškai pažvelgti į savo klientus.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: supervizija, darbas kūnu, judesio menas, psichoterapija.