

Development project:
stress-reducing therapies
for women in women's shelters

And who am I by the way?

- Eleonora Bru
- Head of **One Planet** – NGO for improvement of environment and health, based in Stockholm, Sweden.
Project focus, on national and international level.
- CEO and founder of business **Scandinavian Wellness**
 - Environmental consultant from quantification of CO2e to building up of Environment leading systems for small-, medium and- big organizations.
 - Medical qigong instructor and deep relaxation guide
 - Deep muscular massage therapist (sports massage) and pathology advisor
- Teacher at **Södertörn university** (in Stockholm) in
 - Environment management system with expertise in implementation of Environmental law.
- - Continuous **student!**
- **Previous experience** of relaxation treatments:
 - Groups of women in shelter house, Stockholm.
- - Stressed out academics from all sorts of scientific fields.
- - Groups of people with long time psychological issues (anxiety-, PTSD-, Borderline-, Manic depression-, neurosis- and more) on a medical level.
- **Background** (I know, I'm a "Jack of all trades!" ;)
 - Working with war damaged children in Mozambique
 - Writing in cultural magazines, poet, translator
 - Student (BA Theoretical philosophy)
- - **Love Planet Tellus!** ☺

Today's workshop

1. Short introduction to stress reducing practice medical (zhineng) qigong
2. Presentation of the project idea
3. Discussion!

”I want to live like if I had a normal life ...”

Background inspiration: the women at the shelterhouse in Stockholm (Sweden).

- Making stress reducing body and mind therapy in the shelter house.
- Bodily practice, kindness toward my body.
- Meetings with memories coming to the present, processing past and present state.
- Feeling of normality and calm.

Recent research

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Studies have shown that women who have suffered from intimate partner violence, have shown symptoms of ...

Loss of the sense of self giving psychiatric symptoms, for example:

depression

anxiety

sleep disruption

reliving the traumatic event

hyperarousal

avoiding reminders of the trauma

difficulty in trusting others

shame and guilt issues

suicide attempts

Above can be experienced by survivors of trauma for a brief period of time

while other survivors develop a common disorder amongst trauma survivors, a chronic PTSD.

(A Systematic Review of Trauma-Focused Interventions for Domestic Violence Survivors, Carole Warshaw, Cris M. Sullivan, Echo A. Rivera, National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health and Michigan State University, 2013)

Therapies during stressful times (ongoing trauma)

CBT usually treated with great results for persons surviving trauma but not with great result for women still closely linked to a violent relationship, an ongoing trauma.

(D.M. Johnson, et al., 2011)

Body oriented therapies

Body-oriented therapies to promote healing is not usually followed up scientifically but exist in a variety, for example:

acupuncture

yogic breathing

mindfulness based stress reduction

One study where women give testimony about experienced abuse using yogic breathing techniques to alleviate depression in combined testimony/breathing program demonstrated significant pre-post reductions in their depression scores.

(Franzblau et al, 2008)

Brain-Body friendship

Why bodily stress release therapies?

Helping the brain out a little bit in ongoing trauma

- Calmness as a help in decreasing PTSD symptoms

Kindness and therefore appreciation of my body

- Understanding by doing, **physical** feeling of softness instead of beating.
- **Self**-awareness and self-appreciation, feeling of **self-worth**.

Calmness as key to memory-processing

- Meeting with past and present memories and situations in a calm and safe environment.
- Meeting in a **safe** environment of people sharing similar experiences.

Lack of resources – richness in treatments

Project aim: linking the gap between lack of resources and possibility to activate treatments, by a project which:

- Makes people with different expertise and experiences – shelter house staff, therapists and women living in shelter houses – meet and share knowledge.
- Exchanging of already existing body therapy knowledge and creation of new therapies.
- Mapping of the today's needs asked for by women in shelter houses.

Possibility for increased calm during turbulent times

Goal of the project, to support the up-start of:

- Possibilities to have at least one sort of stress-reduce body therapy as activity for women in each shelter house involved in the project.
- Mapping the frequency of anxiety-, PTSD- sleep disorders and depressions amongst women in shelter houses.
- Getting better understanding of the exact interests of activities asked for by women living in shelter houses.
- Creation of cooperative network of shelter houses in Europe.

DISCUSSION

- Interests in this type of project?
- Body therapies right now present in shelter houses?

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