Autogenic Training
Mind/Body Medicine

Ann Bowden
Autogenic Training at the RLHIM

27 years of audit, outcome and research
Autogenic Training

Autogenic, meaning self-generated, refers to the homeostatic nature of the method

• a shift to the Autogenic state creates a functional situation that facilitates, activates and systematically supports the natural forces of self-regulation generated from within
  • a state of altered consciousness
  • a state of altered physiology
  • a switch from autonomic sympathetic dominance (catabolic) to parasympathetic activity (anabolic)

rest renewal repair reflection
The Method

Training is based on three main principles:

• use of specific postures to reduce sensory input to the body and avoid distractions
• mental activity known as passive concentration
• mental repetition of a sequence of verbal formulae whilst simultaneously maintaining mental contact with various parts of the body

limbs  heart area  breathing  abdomen  forehead
Passive concentration

- the silent observer - the witness within
- detached and indifferent to results
- allowing to happen that which needs to happen
- diminution of the effects of stressors
- strengthens the experience of the observing self
- facilitates balancing of left and right brain action
- increase in creative potential
- allows into consciousness intuitions repressed materials
- allows for acceptance of the unacceptable
- EEG changes
- slowing and synchronicity of brain waves
- a predominance of alpha and theta waves
Alpha Rhythms

• Brain wave frequencies are categorised as:
  
  Gamma  30-60 Hz  (Hz: cycles per second)
  Beta    17-30 Hz
  Alpha   8-13 Hz
  Theta   4-8 Hz
  Delta   1-4 Hz

• Alpha activity occurs when an individual ceases to pay attention to any number of stimuli which would normally block this activity

• Stimuli may be cognitive, somatic or emotional.

• Alpha waves can produce feelings of calm, serenity, happiness and bliss

• Experienced Zen and Yoga practitioners show high continuous levels of alpha activity
Mind/Body Medicine

• Meditation- MBSR; MBCT; Vipassana;
• Relaxation- various types
• Visualisation
• Hypnnosis
• Tai Chi
• Chi Gong
• Yoga
• Bio-feedback
Symptom Stress Spiral

My symptoms make me anxious, afraid, angry, depressed.

My Anxiety
Fear
Anger
Depression
Makes my symptoms worse
History and development of Autogenic Training

- Korbinian Brodman (1868-1918) German
  - neuroanatomy - neuropathology
  - localisation of functions of the cerebral cortex
- Osgar Vogt (1870-1959) German
  - Psychiatrist
  - research in neuropathology and psychosomatic medicine
- Prof Johannes Schultz (1884-1970)
  - psychiatrist – research into hypnosis and sleep
  - developed the Autogenic method as a distinct therapy
- Prof Hans Selye (1922-1982) Hungarian
  - physician - developed the concept of Stress
  - research into the contribution of stress to disease
- Prof Wolfgang Luthe (1922-1985) German
  - physician – studied autogenic AT with Schultz
  - developed the Autogenic methods further
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<th>IMPROVEMENT</th>
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AB AT Audit 1993

What did you find most beneficial?

- Control of Symptoms 32
- Relaxation 100
- Confidence in dealing with problems 49
- Group Support 41
QUESTION 6
Did you notice any other changes in yourself after completing the course?

16 Replied none
117 Gave interesting and varied replies.

- Coping better
- Able to relax
- More positive
- More in control of self
- More assertive
- Emotionally stronger
- More confident
- Calmer
- Don't worry so much
- Recognising my needs
- Looking at life differently
- Able to communicate better
- Able to express my feelings
- Able to speak my mind
- Living in the present, not dreading the future
- Stopped thinking everything is my fault
- Better concentration
- Recognising when to "switch off"
- Helps me to sleep
- Come to terms with my problem
- More energy
- Accepting myself as I am
- Recognising symptoms of stress early
- Less irritable
- AT helped me through a serious operation
QUESTION 7

Have you made any changes in your life or habits?

Many trainees were experiencing major and minor changes in their lives - not the least of which was doing the course. AT undoubtedly strengthens the capacity for change by tapping into inner resources which, because they are not always needed, people are afraid they do not possess.

• Doing AT regularly (a very important change)
• Getting out more
• Not striving so much
• Changed job (quite a lot of trainees)
• Started a new course
• Early retirement
• Taking time for self (very important)
• Taking less pain killers (cost effective)
• Going to the doctor less
• Increased interests and activities
• Changes in relationships
• Doing AT led on to interest in other therapies:
  - Alexander
  - Group therapy
  - Massage
  - Aromatherapy

"Stress does not flow over me so much now - just a drop, not a deluge"
"I have stopped getting ill at periods of great stress".
AUTOGENIC TRAINING

A non-drug approach to anxiety, panic attacks and insomnia

A report on the introduction of Autogenic Training into a Primary Care Group Harrow East and Kingsbury PCG (now Harrow PCT)

by
Dr A. Bowden. M.B., Ch.B, D.C.H, MFHom.
Lead Clinician Autogenic Training
• **RESULTS**
  1 Referrals
  – 20 out of 55 GPs referred patients
    • Total no. of referrals May 2001-May 2002 85
    • No. of courses 8 i.e. 64 places
    • No. of patients starting a training course 56

Reasons for referral
  Anxiety, panic attacks and insomnia 15
  Anxiety and panic attacks 16
  Anxiety and insomnia 10
  Anxiety 20
  Panic attacks and insomnia 1
  Panic attacks 1
  Insomnia 1

• **ANXIETY SCORES**
  Anxiety scores were recorded at the beginning and end and at follow-up 3 months later using the Hospital Anxiety and Depression scale which gives a numerical score for the intensity of anxiety.
  – Scores 7 or below are normal
  – 8-10 borderline
  – 11-21 abnormal
  – Average anxiety scores for the first 6 courses

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<th>Course</th>
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<th>4</th>
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<th>6</th>
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<td>8.4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>15.2</td>
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<td>End</td>
<td>9.99</td>
<td>9.99</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
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<td>Follow-up</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
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</table>

The full report of the project is available from the RLHH
AB 2002 Audit-Quotes

• AT has dramatically reduced my anxiety..I have stopped having panic attacks and my confidence has started to return
• Much better sleep, able to get to sleep a lot quicker and easier and I’m not waking up
• I am less stressed and sleep better
AT Grounded Theory

- Dr Levent K Yurdakul. BSc Hons MSc
- PHD Project 2004
- AT and Anxiety- how does it work?
- Model of experience of AT and its perceived effects for anxiety
Stress and anxiety

Intrusive thoughts
External interference

Immediate Rejuvenation

The Core AT Experience

Focusing inwards
Physical sensations
Relaxation
Switching off
Balanced thinking
Detachment

Levent K Yurdakul
AT Grounded Theory

Coping
self stress management
emotional processing and expression
rationalising
self reassurance
(autosuggestions and affirmations)
prioritising
relinquishing control
AT Grounded Theory

Positive cognitions
Confidence
new insights
renewed optimism

Well being
symptom related improvements
sense of well being
AT SLEEP STUDY 2007

• Autogenic Training as a Non-Drug Approach to Improving Sleeping Patterns and General Health.
• 200 patients attending AT courses at RLHH over 12 months
• HADS, MYMOP, General Well Being Questionnaire, Sleep Questionnaire
AT SLEEP STUDY 2007

- Questionnaires administered at initial consultation, at the start and the end of eight week course and at three month follow up.
RESULTS:
The AT course completed by 153 participants,
73% were identified as having a sleep-related problem.
Improvements in sleep patterns included:
sleep onset latency ($P = 0.049$),
falling asleep quicker after night waking ($P < 0.001$),
feeling more refreshed ($P < 0.001$) and more energised on waking ($P = 0.019$).
MYMOP symptom, well-being, anxiety and depression scores significantly improved (all $P < 0.001$).
CONCLUSION:

This study suggests that AT may improve sleep patterns for patients with various health conditions.

- reduce anxiety and depression, both of which may result from and cause insomnia.

- Improvements in sleep patterns occurred despite, or possibly due to, not focusing on sleep during training.
AT SLEEP STUDY 2007

- Autogenic Training as a behavioural approach to insomnia: a prospective cohort study
- Bowden A, Lorenc A, Robinson N.
AT Outcomes 2011-12

- 102 patients
- MYMOP before and after 8 week course
- Stephen Ashby
How long had patients suffered from symptoms

- 3% 4 Weeks
- 17% 3m-1 Year
- 34% 1-5 Years
- 51% Over 5 Years
Patients were asked
How important is cutting down your medication

- 6% Not Imp
- 12% Bit Imp
- 44% Very Imp
- Not Appli
Mean scores of symptoms identified by patients attending Autogenic Training Courses Using MYMOP

MYMOP: Measure Your Medical Outcome Profile

Scale:
0 is as good as it can be,
6 is as bad as it can be
Mean scores of 2 symptoms identified by 102 patients attending Autogenic Training Courses Using MYMOP

MYMOP: Measure Your Medical Outcome Profile

Scale:
0 is as good as it can be,
6 is as bad as it can be
Mean scores of an Activity and Wellbeing
From 102 patients attending
Autogenic Training Courses
Using MYMOP

MYMOP: Measure Your Medical Outcome Profile

Scale:
0 is as good as it can be,
6 is as bad as it can be
Practice after an AT

- Do trainees continue to practice?
QUESTION 8

Do you continue to practice AT?

I divided the questionnaire into length of time since doing the course to see if there was an obvious cut-off point when people stopped practising.

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<tr>
<th>Time since training</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<td>0 - 6 months</td>
<td>a. Several times a day</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. Once a day</td>
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<tr>
<td>6m - 1 year</td>
<td>c. One or twice a week</td>
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<td>1 - 2 years</td>
<td>d. Now and then</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 - 3 years</td>
<td>e. Only when stressed</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 + years</td>
<td>f. Not at all</td>
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<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>c</th>
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<tr>
<td>2 - 3 years</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 m - 1 year</td>
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<td>3 years +</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 - 2 years</td>
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**TOTALS**

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The results show that a significant (28%) proportion of trainees continue to practice AT every day.

18% practice one or twice a week
53% will use AT now and then and particularly when stressed;

13% of trainees have not kept it as a part of their repertoire of self nourishment.

From the results there does not seem to be an obvious cut-off point when AT practice stops. It appears that the technique either engages the trainee in the beginning or not at all.
Future Audit Plans

• MYMOP to be used by every practitioner
• Yearly Report
• Cumulative totals
• Build on AB’s work on longer term effects of AT practice including MYMOP
• AT and FMS study by clinical psychologist PHD student
A gardener observed a butterfly trying to break free from its pupa. He watched the delicate creature struggling violently to get out. The pupa shook and trembled with the butterfly’s efforts to emerge, the struggle seemed to go on for an eternity. The gardener decided to help the process with a pair of scissors. He cut a large hole in the pupa allowing the butterfly to tumble to the ground. What the well-meaning man did not realise is that this struggle is part of the transformation process. A young butterfly’s wings are engorged with fluid and in the struggle to leave the pupa this fluid is forced from the wings to the body to be reabsorbed and processed. Deprived of its transformative process the butterfly’s wings remained filled with fluid and it couldn’t fly. The gardener watched in dismay as the butterfly lay on the ground slowly dying – he should not have interfered.

In Autogenic Training it is essential to trust the process and allow it to happen without interference.
AT

• “AT is a simple but effective way of tapping into our natural self-healing processes. I know from first-hand experience that learning AT is almost like being immunised against the stresses of daily life. I highly recommend it.”

  Dr Roger Neighbour, OBE DSc FRCGP FRCP, Patron British Autogenic Society
• ONLY HE WHO LETS HIMSELF BE CAN BE HIMSELF

• Schultz