



The hidden challenge in coping with stress

Exploring "giving up" in muscles as a defensive coping strategy

A 2-day workshop in London - October 6-7 2012

What do you usually think of when you feel stressed? Yes ... tense muscles.

We well know the discomfort of tension that builds in the muscles of our shoulders, necks and backs as we defend ourselves against outer and inner stressors in an attempt to hold back both impulses and emotions.

But there is another strategy we use. In this workshop Merete will focus on a lesser known reaction to stress or personal dilemmas. Muscles (and other tissue) can give up, become distant, and lose energy in order to "protect" us from sensing emotions or impulses that we don't know how to handle.

A typical example is that we often don't notice body signals telling us when to stop. Psychomotor impulses in arms, legs and core fail to reach consciousness if the muscles involved are in a state of giving up. Consequently, we may not sense when enough is enough – and a vicious circle can start where you lose energy and your sense of being in charge from within.

How can we impact these patterns and access more of our free life energy when coping with stress?

In this workshop Merete will present:

- methods to work with the body's response to stress, giving special attention on how to approach giving up/hypo-response and the typical polarization that happens between tension and giving up
- psychomotor skill training focusing on skills that help us cope with outer and inner stress, such as centering, grounding and containment
- the importance of learning to dose the skill training, so both tense and given up parts of the body are included
- an understanding of the inner polarization that occurs between tensing up and giving up in both the muscle system and the nervous system (hyper and hypo-arousal)
- exploration of the hidden impulses and emotions emerging from the areas of the body that have given up
- differentiating both theoretically and practically between 3 types of "low energy": Natural tiredness, hyporesponse as a defensive coping strategy and hypoarousal which is a survival reaction

This workshop is relevant for anybody who is interested in understanding the body's reactions to stress and how we, through body oriented skill training, can approach these reactions.

The skill training will help you cope in new ways with your own stress reactions and those you meet in others. Also you will gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of *burn out*.

We will do practical exercises, theory will be presented, and we will share and exchange in the group. Please dress to allow movement and comfort.

Go to the CABP website to get information about how to sign up: <http://body-psychotherapy.org.uk/>