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BRMT

Blomberg Rhythmic Movement Training

How could practicing simple, rhythmic movements similar to those done by babies not only improve motor abilities, but also emotions, vision, speech, and cognitive functions such as attention and focus? What is the common denominator?

Observation of “the most incredible improvements” among children and adults treated by Kerstin Linde, a Swedish body therapist, as well as his own experience has convinced Swedish psychiatrist Harald Blomberg, M.D. that these rhythmic movements “have a profound effect on the development of the brain during infancy and childhood”.



Swedish psychiatrist Harald Blomberg, M.D., who established Rhythmic Movement Training

Dr. Blomberg has adopted the triune brain theory of Paul MacLean as a metaphor to explain the mechanism whereby simple rhythmic movements have such a profound effect. MacLean, an American scientist, studied the evolutionary development of the brain among various classes of animals. In his book, *The Triune Brain in Evolution: Role in Paleocerebral Functions* (1990), MacLean says that the nerve chassis (brainstem and spinal cord) is controlled by three operators that compose the forebrain, namely the basal ganglia, the limbic system, and the neocortex.

The neocortex, which is most highly evolved in humans, not only processes and interprets sensory and motor information, but also enables us to think, reason, plan, make decisions, form judgments, and communicate via sophisticated language. However, the effective functioning of the neocortex is dependent upon interaction with the “lower” parts of

the brain. For example, the brainstem contains a network of nerves called the reticular activation system (RAS) which arouses the neocortex and helps to filter out irrelevant stimuli.

The limbic system or mammalian brain includes structures that are involved with memory, learning, and emotion. The development of the limbic system brings with it maternal behaviors and play.

In humans, in cooperation with the motor cortex, the basal ganglia, which MacLean calls the “reptilian brain” or R-complex, plays an important role in movement, regulating activity level, automating learned movements, controlling postural reflexes, and inhibiting and integrating our primitive (first) reflexes.

These reflexes are important in our early development, but can interfere with our learning and overall ability to function effectively if they remain active. For example, Dr. Blomberg has found that the Moro Reflex is often active among children who become upset easily and have difficulty in sorting out irrelevant stimuli. Fidgety, hyperactive children who experience

difficulty sitting still generally have retained (active) Spinal Galant and Spinal Perezé Reflexes. An active Symmetrical Tonic Neck Reflex (STNR) contributes to dyslexia as well as the attention and concentration difficulties associated with ADHD.

A key premise of the Blomberg RMT model is that the spontaneous movements of infants and babies not only help to mature the brain, but also inhibit the primitive reflexes and integrate them into the overall movement patterns of the body. Unfortunately, given our present-day lifestyles, many babies are not given sufficient opportunities to move around the floor (“belly time”), inhibiting and integrating these reflexes and are instead constrained in their movement by car seats, walkers, etc. Primitive reflexes may also remain active or may re-emerge due to other factors including trauma or serious injury or certain diseases such as Parkinson’s.

The good news is that these issues can be addressed in children as well as adults through Rhythmic Movement Training (RMT), now known as Blomberg Rhythmic Movement Training. BRMT is based on the natural sequence of movements performed by infants and babies during their developmental journey toward mastery of standing and subsequent upright abilities such as walking, running, hopping, skipping, and jumping. In addition to the movement exercises, RMT, which was founded by Dr. Blomberg, incorporates isometric integration (slight pressure) when appropriate, to integrate active reflexes.

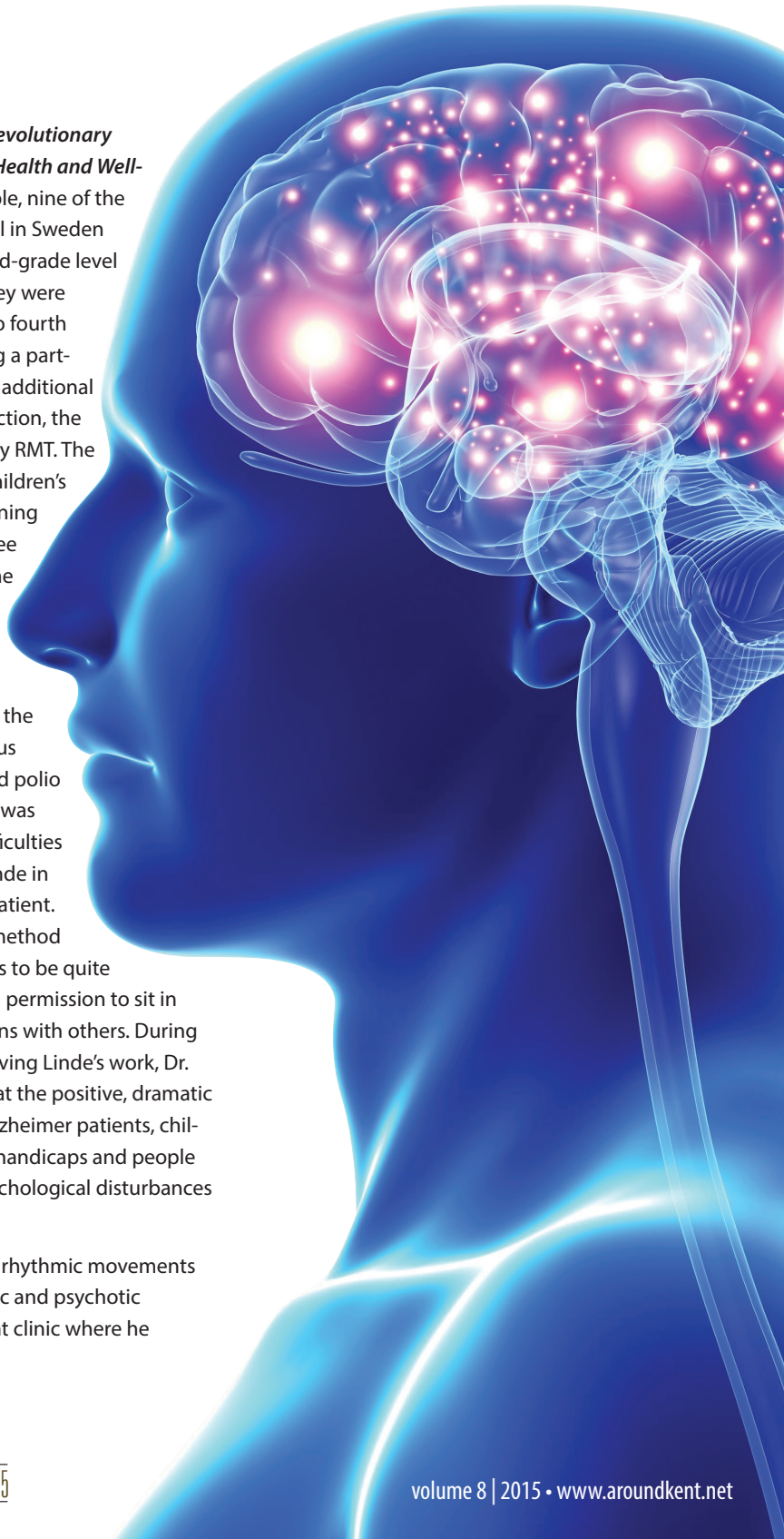
Stories of the success of Rhythmic Movement Training can be found in Dr. Blomberg’s Rhythmic Movement Training manuals as well as his most recent book, *The Rhythmic*

Movement Method: A Revolutionary Approach to Improved Health and Well-Being (2015). For example, nine of the third-graders at a school in Sweden were reading at a second-grade level a few months before they were supposed to move on to fourth grade; rather than hiring a part-time teacher to provide additional remedial reading instruction, the decision was made to try RMT. The teacher as well as the children’s parents used motor training with them and after three months, eight of the nine children were reading at a third-grade level.

Dr. Blomberg’s personal story is as interesting as the case studies in his various publications. Having had polio as a child, Dr. Blomberg was experiencing motor difficulties when he met Kerstin Linde in 1985 and became her patient. Finding her treatment method using rhythmic exercises to be quite beneficial, he requested permission to sit in on her treatment sessions with others. During the three years of observing Linde’s work, Dr. Blomberg was amazed at the positive, dramatic results achieved with Alzheimer patients, children with neurological handicaps and people with emotional and psychological disturbances including psychosis.

After he applied Linde’s rhythmic movements to his work with neurotic and psychotic patients at an outpatient clinic where he

Continued on page 56



Continued from page 55

was a psychiatric consultant, a number of the schizophrenic patients experienced excellent results. However, his supervisor told Dr. Blomberg to discontinue his 'alternative' treatments, and when he did not comply, the supervisor reported him to Sweden's National Board of Health and Welfare. After an investigation, Dr. Blomberg was exonerated by that body, which issued a report supporting his efforts. Subsequently, he began a private practice as well as serving as a consultant at a psychiatric hospital and a school for mentally handicapped youth. In 1998 his first book was published.

Besides working directly with thousands of individuals using Rhythmic Movement Training, since 1990 Dr. Blomberg has been teaching RMT to practitioners in various countries around the world. He continued to study primitive reflexes and attended courses by Svetlana Masgutova, who taught other exercises that could be used for reflex integration. In 2003 and 2004, while attending camps in Poland organized by Masgutova, Dr. Blomberg presented lectures on Rhythmic Movement Training and was invited by Carolyn Nyland from Hilliard, Ohio to teach in the United States, which he began doing in 2005. Dr. Blomberg continues to operate a clinic in Stockholm as well as share his work with educators, parents, speech pathologists, mental health professionals, members of the allied health fields, and others.

In July, Dr. Blomberg spent several days in Kent, Ohio conducting a Rhythmic Movement Training Symposium at Kent State University. Coordinated by the local non-profit, LoveLight, Inc., the symposium was sponsored by the School

of Foundations, Leadership and Administration in the College of Health, Education and Human Services and supported by the Gerald H. Read Center for International and Intercultural Education and the Department of Pan-African Studies. Following an introductory talk and reception at the Wick Poetry Center, participants from Northeast Ohio as well as other parts of the country had an opportunity to attend one or more of the three two-day sessions presented by Dr. Blomberg: RMT and the Limbic System, Emotions and Inner Healing; RMT, Dreams and Inner Healing; and RMT: Dyslexia, Vision and Reflexes. During the sessions Dr. Blomberg also discussed the importance of diet, especially for people with food sensitivities, particularly to gluten and casein, a protein found in dairy products.

Earlier in the year, RMT Instructor Kate Wagner came to Kent from the Chicago area to co-teach RMT Level One: RMT and Primitive Reflexes with me as part of my process of becoming a Blomberg Rhythmic Movement Training instructor. In 2008, having a strong interest in physiological aspects of learning, I attended a series of classes on Rhythmic Movement Training in Hilliard, Ohio where I first met Harald Blomberg. Since that time, I have been privileged to study RMT with Dr. Blomberg as well as other practitioners and have become a BRMT consultant. This method offers so much promise and this work has many potential applications in

a variety of fields. For example, in the RMT Level One class, participants are invited to compare the behavior of children diagnosed with ADHD with that of young children — difficulty with attention, inability to be still, impulsivity. These similarities raise the possibility that ADHD might be related to developmental maturity, at least for some individuals, and offers the potential of a natural alternative for treating ADHD.

I have also had the opportunity to hear the stories of successful outcomes with RMT from others and personally witness the positive and profound effects of RMT. After working with one young man, for example, I was told by his mother that his (improved) handwriting now looked like it was done by a different child compared with his previous handwriting. It should be noted that BRMT is not a "quick fix" — changes can occur quickly but need to be reinforced over time — however, the time required daily is minimal (15 minutes at the most in order to avoid overstimulation).

Under the auspices of the non-profit organization, LoveLight, which is based in Kent, I have provided, on a limited basis, individualized sessions incorporating RMT. Hopefully, in the future LoveLight will be able to use BRMT to offer more opportunities for people such as Z., a boy with autism. In the words of his mother, "Z. is doing amazing. He has transitioned to middle school with minimal stress.

Overall I have noticed an improvement in his ability to manage new situations and his ability to stay positive. I have also seen improvement in his organizational skills and his use of language. I can not say for sure that it is a product of RMT but I do think RMT has been beneficial and is one of the reasons he is managing so well. We have been faithful with his daily implementation and Z. reminds me when I forget. Overall this is the best Z. has been and we are so thankful for all you have taught us." ■



Dr. Blomberg and participants in the Rhythmic Movement Training Symposium at Kent State University