



# **Eurythmy Therapy**

Focus on Movement for Better Health

*A LOOK INTO THE ANTHROPOSOPHIC MEDICAL SYSTEM*



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## Eurythmy Therapy – what it is



Eurythmy therapy (EuTh) is a holistic, **self-activating mind-body** intervention within Anthroposophic Medicine that uses movement exercises with the arms, legs and the whole body. The exercises convert the **sounds of speech and music into movement**. The purpose of EuTh is to promote self-regulation and activate the **self-healing forces** in the human organism. Its integrative medical approach is based on conventional medicine, and in addition to the physical constitution of the patients, it also focuses on their **soul, spirit and life processes**. Eurythmy therapy exercises are recommended for specific symptoms, pathologies and constitutional peculiarities.

## Qualifications and settings

Following a 4-year basic Eurythmy training, Eurythmy therapists undergo a full- or part-time therapy training<sup>1</sup>, which includes general medical knowledge; training on the anthroposophic understanding of man and nature, health and illness; specific competences for the therapeutic discipline, with mentored practice and project work and medical-therapeutic research. Eurythmy therapists receive a diploma or a Masters' degree after presenting a case report and completing a 6-month internship after the training. Continued professional development is required to maintain a professional level.

Eurythmy therapy is widely implemented in anthroposophic outpatient and clinical settings, both in group or individual therapy. It is also practiced in pre-schools and schools. Eurythmy therapy is generally prescribed by a health care professional, but can also be recommended by a teacher or sought out by the patients themselves. The therapy plan is based on the medical diagnosis, and the movement diagnosis by the therapist. Over the course of 6-12 sessions, the patient learns how to perform the exercises, which she/he has to apply at home: regular independent practice reinforces the therapeutic effect [1], as the patient learns to care for him/herself [2].



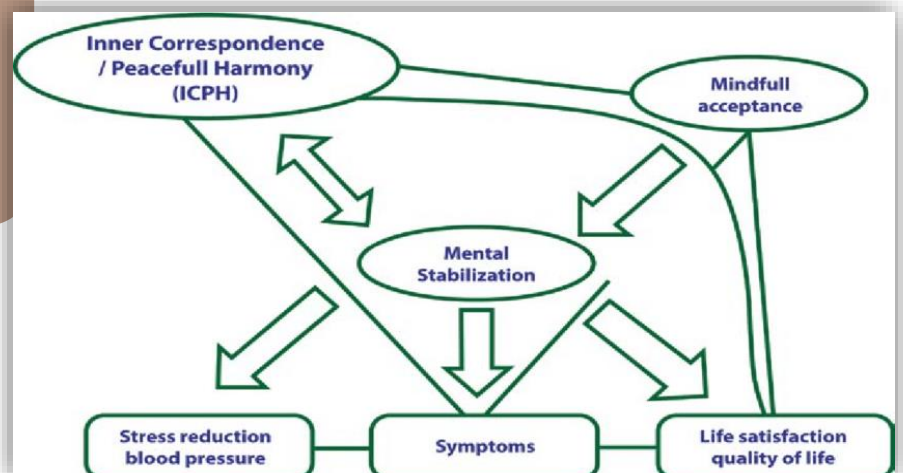
<sup>1</sup> 7.200 h basic Eurythmy and 1.800 h Eurythmy therapy training



### Positive impact of mindfulness aspects in Eurythmy therapy

Eurythmy therapy combines mindfulness components with imaginative movement components. Through movement, the external image becomes an internally experienced, healthy pre-image [7, pp. 128–129]. This can lead to a slowing down of movement [3] and to a heart rate variability improvement (HRV)[4]. Slowing down is usually associated with greater mindfulness, which in turn has a positive influence on psychological factors, such as in patients with inflammatory bowel disease [5] [6].[8] [9] [10].

As displayed in a questionnaire by Arndt Büssing, a correlation between the reduction in symptoms and mental stabilization is observed while practicing EuTh [11].



## Reported effects of Eurythmy therapy

An overview of the effectiveness of Eurythmy therapy in clinical settings from 1985 onwards has been provided by Arndt Büssing et al. [12]. In these studies, EuTh as part of the treatment of **heart attack, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anorexia nervosa, depression, anxiety, chronic diseases, such as asthma, migraine, low back pain**, and others was reported to show significant improvement in symptoms in clinically relevant trial sizes. Lötze et al. presented a second systematic literature review, which confirmed the above results and noted positive treatment effects also for other conditions: **essential hypertension, posterior fossa tumor, status before and after surgery, moderate stress, fatigue and anxiety** [13].

### GLOBALLY



**523.2 million**

people are living with  
cardiovascular disease

**5 %**

of children and  
adolescence have ADHD

**280 million**

people suffer from  
depression

*\*Statistic sources are listed at the end of the 'References' page (page 6)*



Since then, more research has been done. An important treatment field is oncology, where **cancer related fatigue (CRF)** is well researched [14][15][16] [17]. Further impact, such as **mitigating side effects of chemotherapy and dealing with anxiety and companionship in the palliative situation** are highlighted by Barbara Trapp [18]. A new comparative RCT (EuTh vs. slow movement fitness) is currently running on CRF [19]. **Heart Rate Variability (HRV) improvement** through Eurythmy therapy can be observed from several of the studies mentioned above [8] [9] [10]. The effect of Eurythmy therapy on **fatigue** [20], **stress** [21] [22], **depression** [23] [24] and **anxiety** [25] [26] is described not only in terms of symptom reduction, but also on increasing health-related quality of life (HRQL) indexes. That effect was also described in a comparative RCT on **chronic back pain** in the YES study [27]: reduction of pain was reported from EuTh, as well as from yoga and physiotherapy; HRQL was clearly stronger in the EuTh-participants in a 16-week follow up. Regarding the effect on children, a routine outcome monitoring

done in the Netherlands shows statistically significant improvements from eurythmy therapy-specific observation items in children aged 3-18 [28]. Annette Weißkircher presented excellent results in the prevention and treatment of hay fever [29].

### **The individual case in research – the Case Vignette Eurythmy Therapy (CAVI-EYT)**

Because of the holistic and patient-centred approach, CAVI-EYT can give a comprehensive view of the treatment process with all the facets that are typically lost in RCTs, and can provide indications of the effectiveness of the therapy for treatment practice. In order to publish more cases, a CAVI-EYT guideline was developed in 2020 [30][31][32]. It is a structured presentation of individual case treatments with eurythmy therapy in an abridged version. The summary is based on the CARE Guideline [33] and is intended to enable therapists without detailed medical knowledge to present their cases appropriately and in a way that is relevant to the scientific discourse. CAVI-EYT was presented to international committees and has since been used to publish EuTh case vignettes [34] [23] [24] [35] [2].



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All photos used in the paper are taken by Till Kleinelützum for Katharina Gerlach.

#### Statistics source (pg.3):

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