

SOMATIC MOVEMENT EDUCATION (SME) PROGRAM (2020/2021)

A somatic curriculum for teaching body-mind awareness, kinesthetic intelligence, and social and emotional skills

About SME

The body, our bodies, can be thought of, described and experienced in many ways: as vehicles for consciousness, tools with which we achieve performance. Somatic Movement Education invites to see the body as the physical expression of us, human beings, within this world. That means that the body and mind are connected and through movement we can increase our body's intelligence and our mind's embodiment. In this program we are focusing on the internal experience of the movement rather than the external appearance or result of the movement. Any activity from observing the breath or paying attention to the motility of the cells in our body can be somatic movement. It includes processes by which the absent or invisible body becomes more present or visible. Somatic movement is an on-going process and this program can be the first step of life-time commitment to explore our living bodies. Also, it can be a place where non-judgmental acceptance of the self can be born.

The need for the curriculum

Lots of adults tell children what they should do, but not many ask them what it is like to be them. During this program children are asked questions which invite them to express their truth. This way children have a chance to create more positive relationship with their bodies, develop an understanding of their own body as it relates to the world, rather than a view of a gendered and socially constructed body. This program can protect children and adolescents from the self-objectification and negative self-perception. It helps to build loving attitude towards the body and towards the self.

There has been done several researches that show many benefits which Somatic Movement Education can bring to children and adults. It is found that both children and adults increase their senses of body acceptance after a short course in yoga and body awareness exercises (Daubenmier, 2005). Also, it is shown that moving the body through different positions, and using it differently, can affect our emotional attitudes (Cacioppo et al, 1993). Even used educationally, SME may have therapeutic benefits (Fogel, 2009).

As there is still a lot of violence and force used in the field of education globally, this program strictly refuses to use any kind of coercion in the learning process. Thus, contributing to the balancing of this sensitive issue in the world.

Course design

This course is designed for primary school children but can be easily adapted for teenagers and young adults. The course contains 36 lessons which are supported by and designed to explore different qualities of 8 main body systems (Skin, Skeletal and Connective Tissue Systems, Organs which include Cardiovascular, Respiratory, Digestive, Urogenital systems, Muscular System, Fluid Systems, Nervous System, Endocrine System, Immune System & Psychoneuroimmunology). Course material is learned through games, creative tasks, movement exercises which are supported by variety of songs, images and videos. Course also integrates development movement patterns and reflexes. Due to experiential way of learning, the gained knowledge settles deeply in the body. As Bourdieu states "what is learned by the body is not something that one has, like knowledge that can be brandished, but something that one is" (Bourdieu, 1990).

The duration of one lesson can be 45 minutes or 1.5 hours. During the first 45 minutes we learn and experience certain qualities of the specific body system. The next 45 minutes can be devoted to a year-long project - creating the human size body of the character chosen by a child.

Requirements for the fulfilment of the program

Group size - approx. 10 children. Each student should wear comfortable clothes, have eye mask which blindfolds the vision, blanket, materials for drawing, journaling. The room should be spacious, without unnecessary things, can contain chairs for students.

No.	Underlying body system	Topic	Objectives	Creative task: building human body
1	All body systems	Introduction	Meeting each other in the group; Building trust and sense of safety; Introducing basic rules;	-
2		My living body	Explore the living body: sensations, inner body perception;	Body map
3	The Skin, Touch and Tissue Layers	Sensory perception	Have a look at general anatomy and physiology of the skin; Explore different qualities of the skin; Experience the sense of containing and protection; Understand the significance of touch for physiological and psychological development; Explore sensory receptors of skin; Find a unique way of responding to the environment through reflex, instinct or choice;	Cell, membrane
4		Boundary	Explore function of skin as place of boundary and definition; Identify itself as a unique and relatively separate individual; See the unique form of each person in the group; Present ourselves to, and be seen by, the world;	Skin
5		Communication and transformation	Explore skin as primary boundary and place of communication between inner and outer worlds and a place of transformation; Helping kids deal with teasing and bullying;	Skin (receptors)
6	The Skeletal and Connective Tissue Systems	Finding Shapes	Have a look at skeletal system; Exploring the shapes that our bodies can make (geometric shapes, twists, bends, balances and animal shapes); Find a sense of special form that skeletal system (bones and joints) provides; Practicing finding still and quiet time; Experience emotional function of bone; Exploring how our posture affects us;	Bones
7		Balance	Experience the inner core support that skeletal system provides; Find feelings of security, clarity; Explore balance and grounding. Talk about injury prevention, explore how to fall safely;	Joining bones
8	Organs	Emotions	Explore emotional function and find the internal support (rolling, compression) of the organs; Explore power and various emotions through movement and vocal expression; Listen to 'gut feelings' and embody emotional attitudes and responses;	Map of the organs
9	Cardiovascular & Respiratory	My heart	Have a look at and explore cardiovascular system (heartbeat, blood, etc.); Strengthen heart, hands and eyes relationship through artistic creativity; Embody actions which have qualities of fire and magnetism;	Heart
10		Relationship with other	Explore warmth, open heartedness, relationship, being open/closed to others, love/hate, generosity;	Blood vessels

			Strengthen heart, hands and eyes relationship through playing with others;	
11	Digestive & Urogenital	Breathing	Have a look at organs related to breathing; Explore breathing, body movements, notice regulation of respiration happening in the body; Embody heart and lungs relationship; Try several ways of calming down through breathing; Embody actions which have qualities of air, lightness, buoyancy;	Lungs
12		Grief and joy	Explore suffering loss of life, grief, death (exhale) and celebrating abundance of life, joy, inspiration, hope, new ideas (inhale); Explore taking in and giving out of life;	Other parts: diaphragm, etc.
13		Nourishment	Have a look at and explore gastrointestinal tract (mouth, stomach, intestines, liver, gall bladder, pancreas); Taking in or rejecting that which nourishes or toxifies oneself (food, feelings, behavior, thoughts, etc.); Explore various forms of reflection;	Upper part of digestive tract, stomach, intestine;
14		Dealing with heavy emotions	Finding and exploring what deep rootedness means and how does it feel in our bodies; Recognizing and naming heavy emotions that require complex processing and exploring several techniques how to deal with them;	Liver, pancreas, gall bladder, spleen
15		Life force	Have a look at kidneys and bladder; Talk about commitments we make and courage we need to follow them; Explore stability, intentionality and find how to nurture it; Find the spine support for the area of kidneys; Explore urination, fear and being scared;	Kidneys, ureters, bladder
16		Pleasures	Have a look at reproductive organs; Find various ways of experiencing pleasure; Explore physical expression of friendship; Explore physical expression of love; Find out what is charisma and what personal power of it means to each of us;	Reproductive organs
17	Muscular System	Will and surrender	Have a look at structure, function and action of muscle tissue; Try several actions of specific muscle groups and find its specific function; Find out which muscles we can move voluntarily, and which are moved involuntarily; Explore reflex responses; Explore activity, vitality and power of movement;	Upper muscles
18		Dance your day	Explore our daily habits; Find specific neuromuscular patterns in our bodies; Explore how they are influenced by our emotional, physical and mental experiences; Explore muscle tone and posture; Find out which patterns create tension, pain and restriction, and which bring strength, flexibility and grace;	Lower muscles

19	The Fluid Systems	Pathways and rhythms	Have a look at anatomy and physiology of the Circulatory Fluids (cellular, interstitial, lymphatic, blood, cerebrospinal; connective tissue, fat, synovial fluid); Explore how their flows and rhythms support movement and emotional expression;	The Fluid Systems
20		The ocean within	Explore how fluids mediate communication, nourish, heal, protect and transform us; Find creative expression of fluid systems as a matrix for life within the body (all life processes are dependent upon them);	The Fluid Systems
21	The Nervous System	Sensitivity	Have a look at general anatomy and physiology of nervous system; Explore sensitivity and lightness through movement (remember quality of fluidity) and sensing (explore sensory receptors and sense organs); Find careful attention and careful waiting; Explore sensitivity and our unique special needs (recognizing them, speaking them, dealing with them);	Brain
22		Rest and activity	Balancing physical activity with rest (sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system); Find body axis, periphery and explore connection between limbs and body center; Explore movements supported by navel radiation; Find Moro reflex in the body;	Spinal cord
23		Attention and concentration	Explore how information travels through the body; Explore “sitting in the synapse”; Explore focus in a busy environment; Strengthen ability to filter out relevant essential information;	Nerves
24		Polarities	Explore polarity as an extreme of our perceptions, actions, emotional states, ways of thinking, etc.; Explore fixed mindset and growth mindset;	Nerves
25		The Three Brains	Have a look at Vagus nerve; Explore head, heart and gut brains; Find the unique way how these brains communicate to each other;	Vagus nerve
26	The Endocrine System	Our roots (I am and feel)	Have a look at general anatomy and physiology and explore different qualities of the endocrine system with focus on lower endocrine glands and bodies (perineal body, coccygeal body, gonads); Explore Developmental Movement Patterns which supports and are supported by the lower endocrine system; Connect to our roots within the earth, find groundedness that is based on selflove and the will toward personal survival; Exploring group rituals; Find sense of home within our bodies and on the earth through creative expression;	Perineal body, coccygeal body, gonads

27		Body center (I do)	Explore different qualities of the endocrine system in belly area (Small intestine, Adrenals, Pancreas); Find center of weight and gravity in our bodies through movement and creative expression; Strengthen sense of self through making choices; Being aware of how these choices/decisions are influencing the group; Explore fear as a protective function;	Small intestine, adrenals, pancreas
28		Courage to love (I love)	Explore different qualities of the endocrine system in the chest area (Thoraco body, Heart bodies, Thymus) through movement (fullness of breathing, reaching out through the hands and eyes, etc.) and expression of feelings of the heart; Find a unique way how to support transformation of fearful feelings into courageous action; Express courage based on love, beyond instinct or duty; Talk about forgiveness; Explore question “How do I know that I’m loved”;	Thoraco body, heart bodies, thymus
29		Voice (I speak)	Explore the endocrine system in the throat area (Thyroid, Parathyroid, Carotid bodies) as a center of artistic and creative expression; Have a look at Indian and Balinese classical dance; Explore singing voice; Try vocal expression with finely articulated movements of the hands; Explore speaking voice; Explore silence surrounding the sound; Focus on courage to express one’s truth;	Thyroid, parathyroid, carotid bodies
30		Compassion (I see and understand)	Explore different qualities of the endocrine system in head area (Pituitary, Mamillary bodies, Pineal) through movement (turning, rolling and spiraling in space, finding balance) and various reflexes; Explore process of receiving (vision, inner images, smell, sounds, etc.); Have a look at the anatomy of eyes, inner ear, nose; Speak how these senses are affected by daily, monthly and yearly cycles; Strengthen compassion through echoing;	Pituitary, mamillary bodies, pineal
31		Immune System & Psychoneuro-immunology	Household	Have a look at general anatomy and physiology of the immune system; Learn about who I am and what I can become (me vs. not me); Explore immune system as a sensory organ and its ability to learn; Concentrate on repairing damaged things (tissues) and destroying that which is harmful or has lost its value (spleen); Death and transformation;
32	Crystallization		Have a look at the process of crystallization; Explore movements which support the flow of lymph in our bodies;	Lymph
33	Self-defense		Explore immune response; Find several ways how to safely protect oneself;	Other immune organs

			Explore ability to stop something; Reclaiming the power;	
34	Integration	Moving colours	Explore different qualities of colours through movement: pay attention to and be aware of feelings and sensations and re-categorize an experience (colour) into movement;	Adding colours and additional elements to the body
35		Body speaking	Explore our bodies as communicative tools; Finding or creating stories of our bodies;	-
36		Final presentation	Present final projects and celebrate our final lesson;	-

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