





# Mindful movements as classroom-based physical activity for mental health development

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# 'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (WHO, 1948: 100).

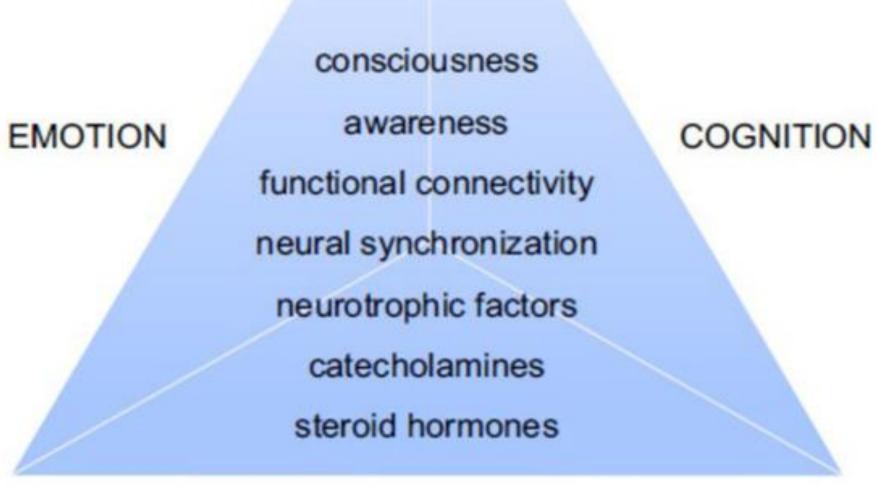
#### Health crisis:

#### Wellness

as a result of being disconnected from the body and environment

Harmonious physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual functioning requires equilibrium between the body, emotion and cognition

(Paoletti, 2008; Pesce and Ben-Soussan, 2016 Stodden et al., 2023).



#### **BODILY MOTION**

There is a growing disconnection from the body and environment Leading to poor physical and mental health and well-being,



psychological stress, anxiety and depression, unhealthy behaviors, inflammatory diseases, accelerated epigenetic ageing

Inflammation and stress can lead to Neurodevelopmental challenges and Neurodegeneration (e.g. Alzheimer's Disease)







#### Health crisis:

## challenges of connectivity in development and well-being

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Our World in Data

Development - Learning disabilities and developmental disorders

Estimates suggest that around 5-10% of school-aged children have a learning disability.

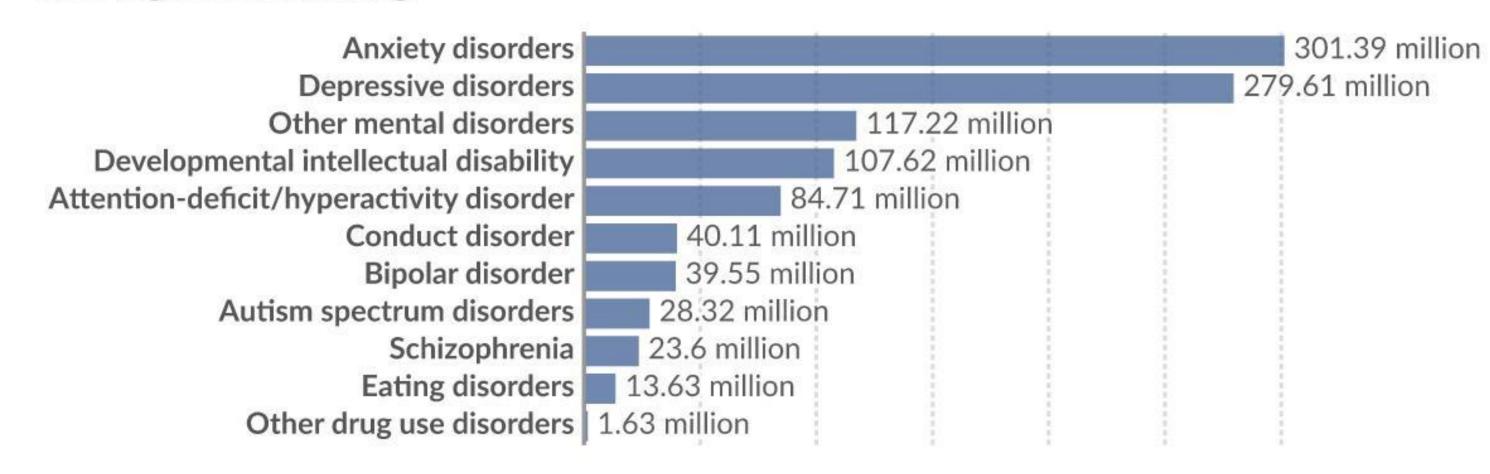
Boys are more likely to be diagnosed with learning disabilities than girls, with a ratio of 3:1.

With regards to Autism spectrum disorders, the latest research in 2023 from the CDC (Center for Disease Control and prevention) shows that **one in 36 children is now diagnosed with autism**.

Depression, anxiety and lack of motivation increased following the COVID pandemic and as the technological and social media use and abuse increase

# Number with a mental or neurodevelopmental disorder by type, World, 2019

Substance use disorders are not included. Figures attempt to provide a true estimate (going beyond reported diagnosis) of prevalence based on medical, epidemiological data, surveys and meta-regression modelling.



Data source: IHME, Global Burden of Disease (2019)

OurWorldInData.org/mental-health | CC BY

#### Health crisis:

## challenges of connectivity in development and well-being





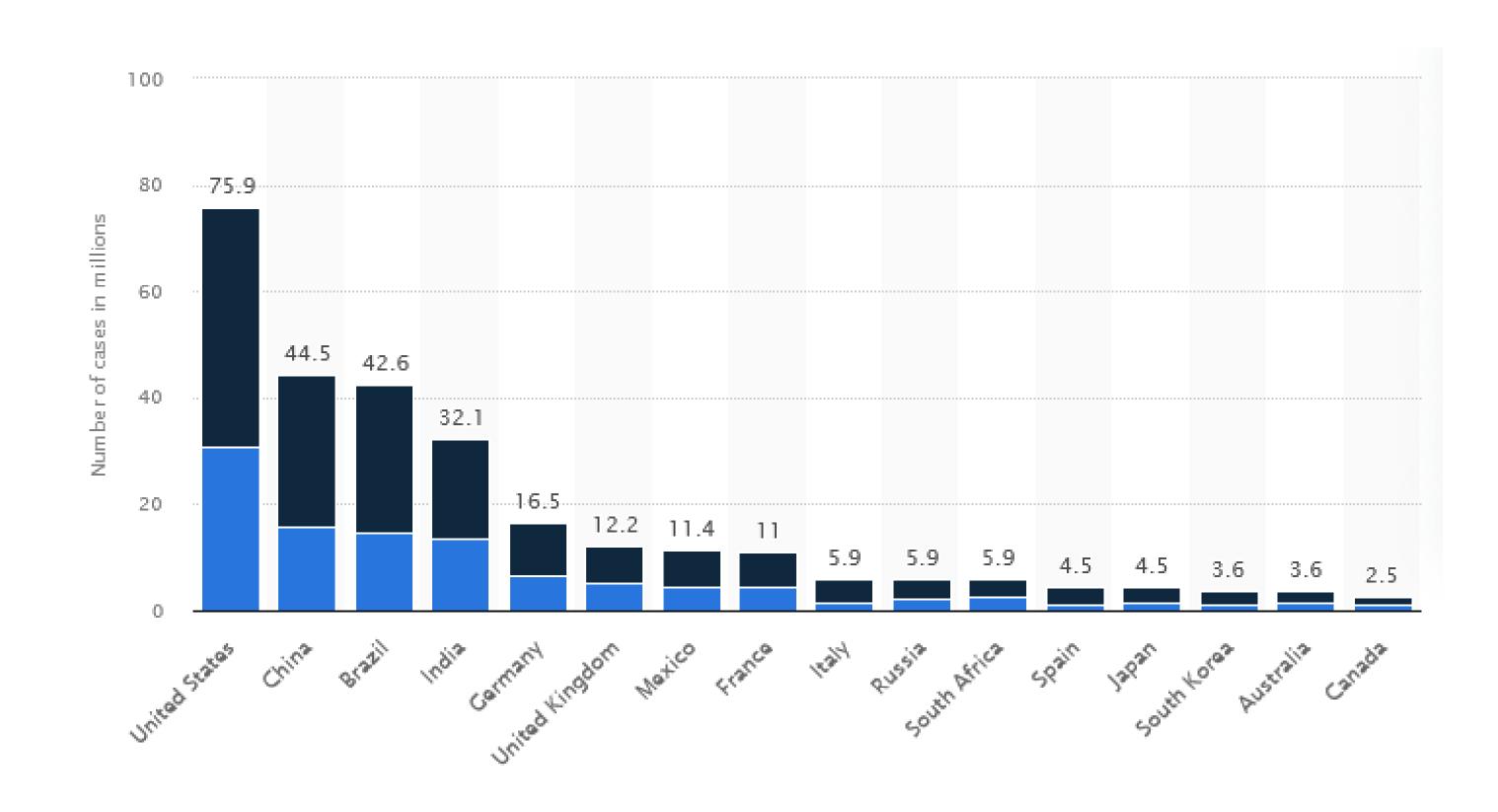


#### Emotional well-being

Globally, it is estimated that 5% of the population suffers from **depression** and that it has a major influence on health and social costs. In 2019, about 301 million people worldwide lived with **anxiety disorders** and 280 million suffered from depression (Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation. Global Health Data Exchange).

During COVID these numbers increased. Recent findings suggest that the COVID pandemic further increased the prevalence of anxiety and depression symptoms in the general population. In addition, evidence of emotional loneliness increased.

Importance of coping mechanisms with stress



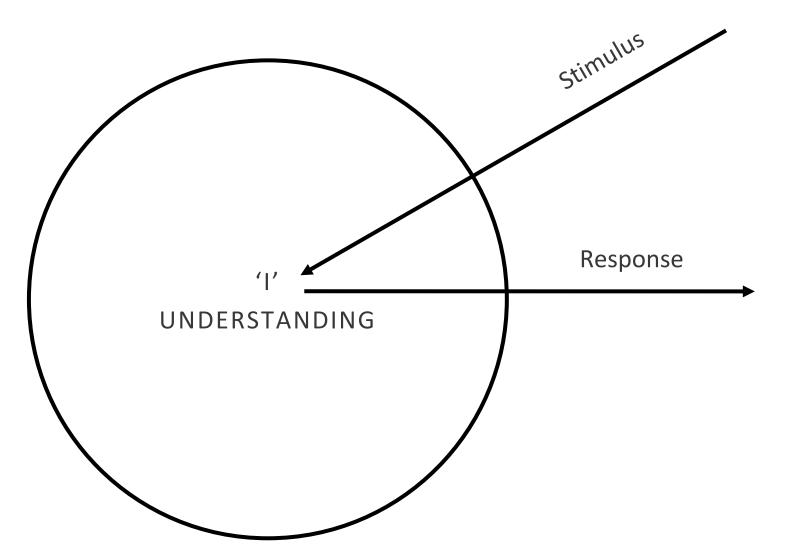
Number of cases in millions of anxiety disorders in different countries by gender (dark blue = females; light blue = males)

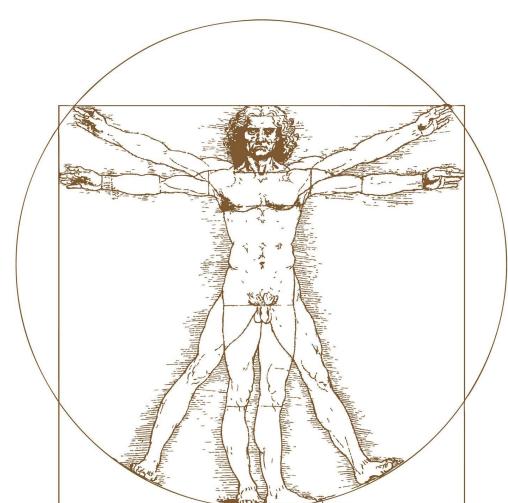
# Movment: Placing humans at the center













MOVING

from Stimulus-Response automatic mode, to Stimulus-Understanding-Correct response mediated by training-induced unification and enhanced synchronization (Paoletti, 2008) TRAINING

Training-induced increased slow

wave synchronization

(e.g. through QMT)

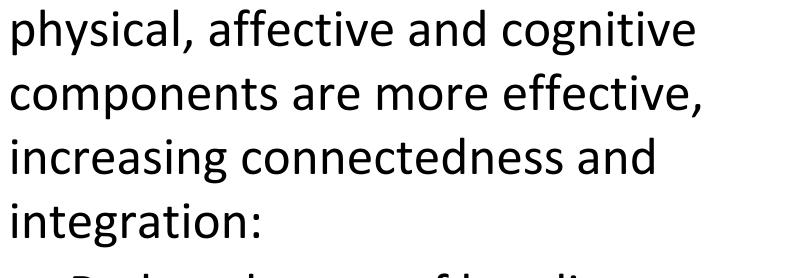
(e.g. through QMT)
for better inner and outer
communication and well-being

CONNECTEDNESS
The brain's and earth's
ionosphere Schumann Resonance
occupy a similar range of
frequencies (Sentman, 2017)

## The importance of Being Embodied

Attending to inner sensations can have beneficial physiological and psychological consequences:

- Greater vitality
- Increased mindfulness, interoception and empathy.
- Balance and coordination
- Subjective well-being
- Increased self-regulation and self-compassion
- Enhanced mood
- Reduced stress



meditations are the same. Practices with



Meditation can help, but not all

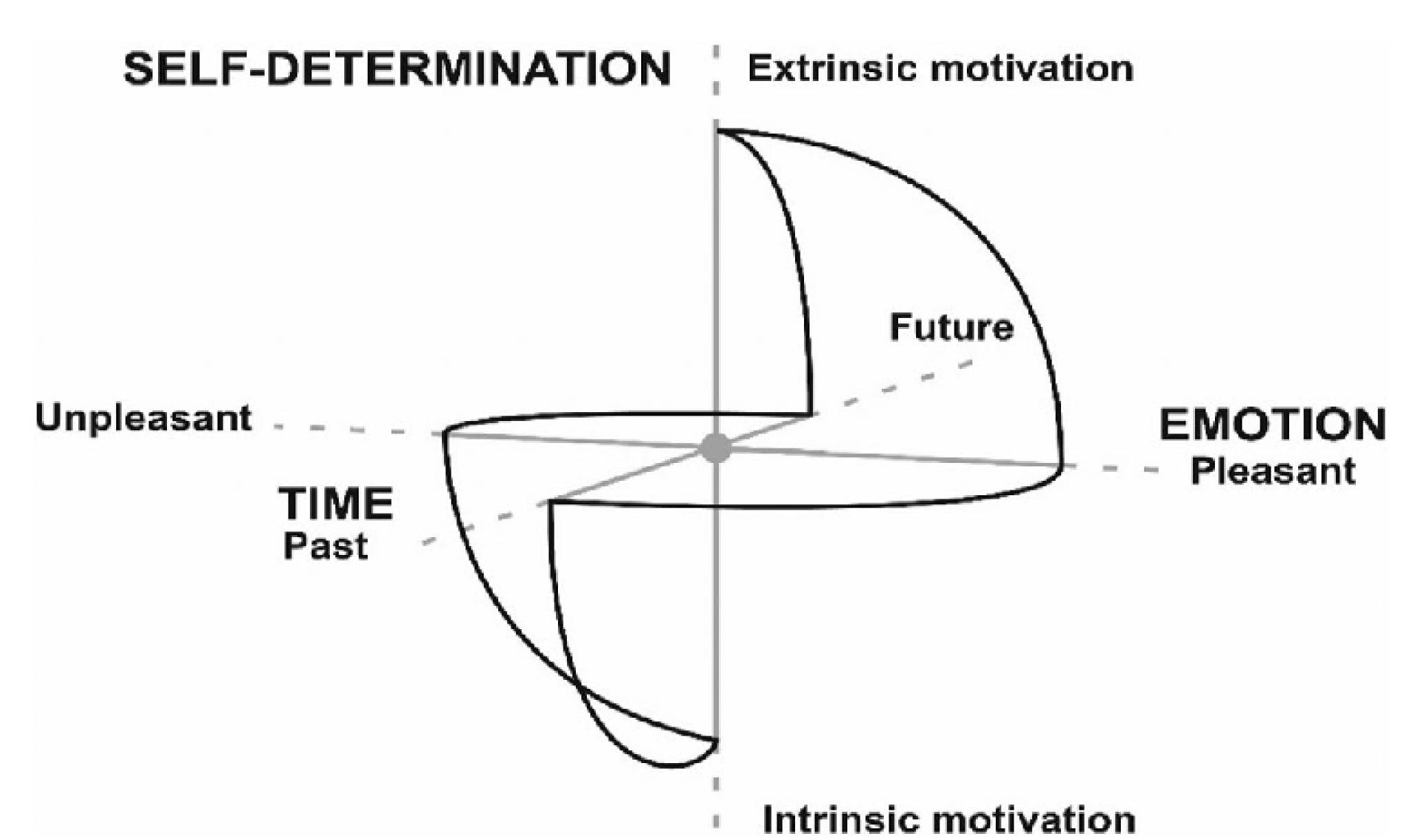
- Improved immune system responses and decreased inflammation
- Increased well-being
- Decreased stress and anxiety, depression, social anxiety disorders, over-identification and pain

Mind-body practices increase embodiment and slow wave neuronal synchronization





# The Sphere Model of Cosciousness Being embodied as a voluntary act









# Resolving the Health crisis

# The selves in the Sphere Model of Consciousness

Narrative Self - Gamma, Beta Focused Attention (FA) The Narrative Self involves awareness of Minimal Self - Alpha, Theta Open Monitoring (OM) personal identity and its continuity through time, as well as conceptual contents Overcoming of the Self - Delta Non-Dual (ND) Theta The Minimal Self has a short temporal **Pre-existence Place** extension, and is endowed with a sense of Delta action, property, and first person nonconceptual content In the Overcoming of the Self all sense of self disappears yet subjective experiences are still able to be experienced and reported

Paoletti, P., Leshem, R., Pellegrino, M., & Ben-Soussan, T. D. (2022). Tackling the electro-topography of the selves through the sphere model of consciousness. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 836290.

# Resolving the Health crisis Placing humans at the center

Not all practices are the same If we want to connect better with ourselves, with nature and the world, slower frequencies are important.

Movement meditations are rarely examined, especially electrophysiologically.

#### Creativity

Divergent thinking Originality

(Fink et al., 2011; Jauk et al., 2012; Ben-Soussan et al., 2013)

#### Physical activity

PA increase individual alpha

(Gutmann et al., 2018)

# Quadrato Motor Training We uniquely examine the effects of a specifically stuctured movement meditation, named Quadrato

Motor Training (QMT) which combines movement and mindfulness and increases alpha activity. There are many positive implications of increased alpha activity.

#### Spatial cognition

Mental rotation Spatial navigation

(Ehinger et al., 2014; Riečanský et al., 2010)

#### Flow states

Lower load on working memory Reduced cognitive control

(Katahira et al., 2018; Léger et al., 2014)

# Alpha activity

www.www.

#### **Attention**

Reduced arousal
Inhibition of external input
More efficiend information processing

(Uusberg et al., 2014; Payne et al., 2014; Cooper et al., 2003)



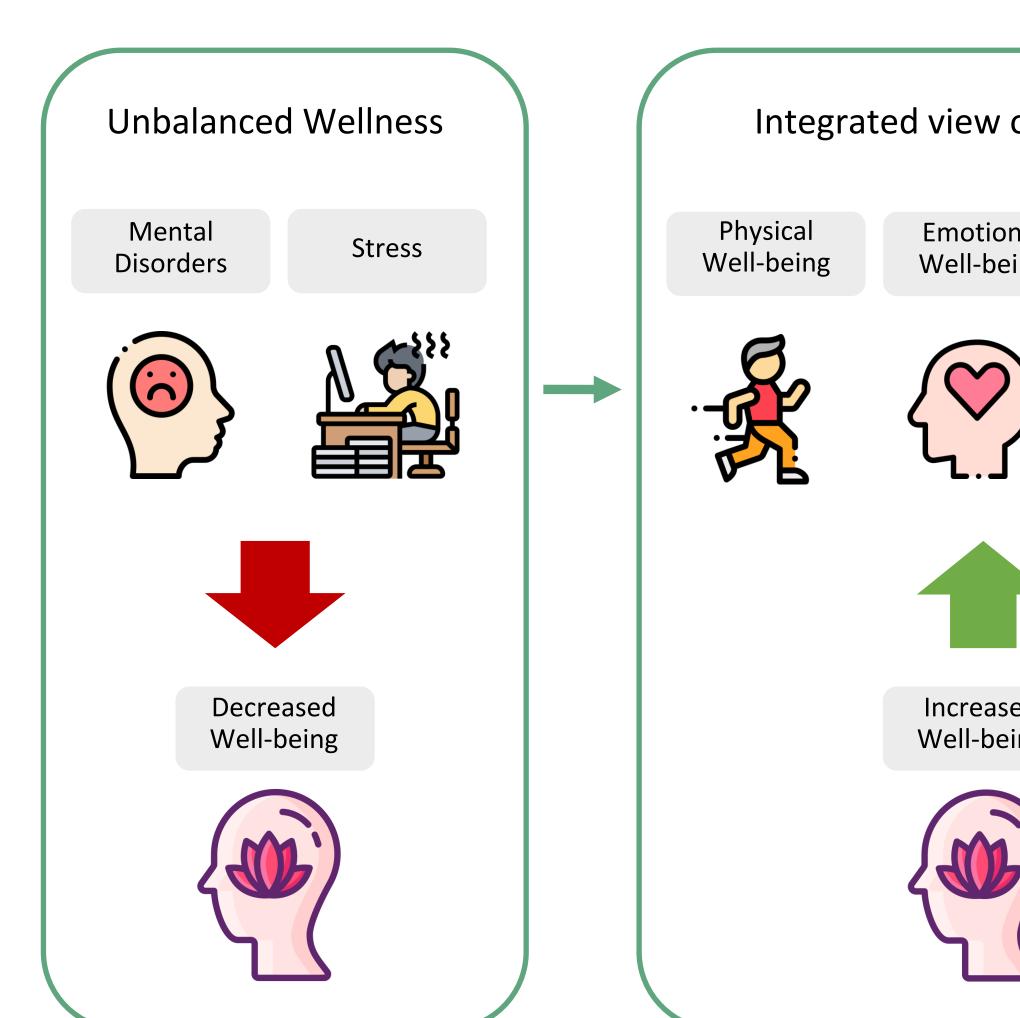


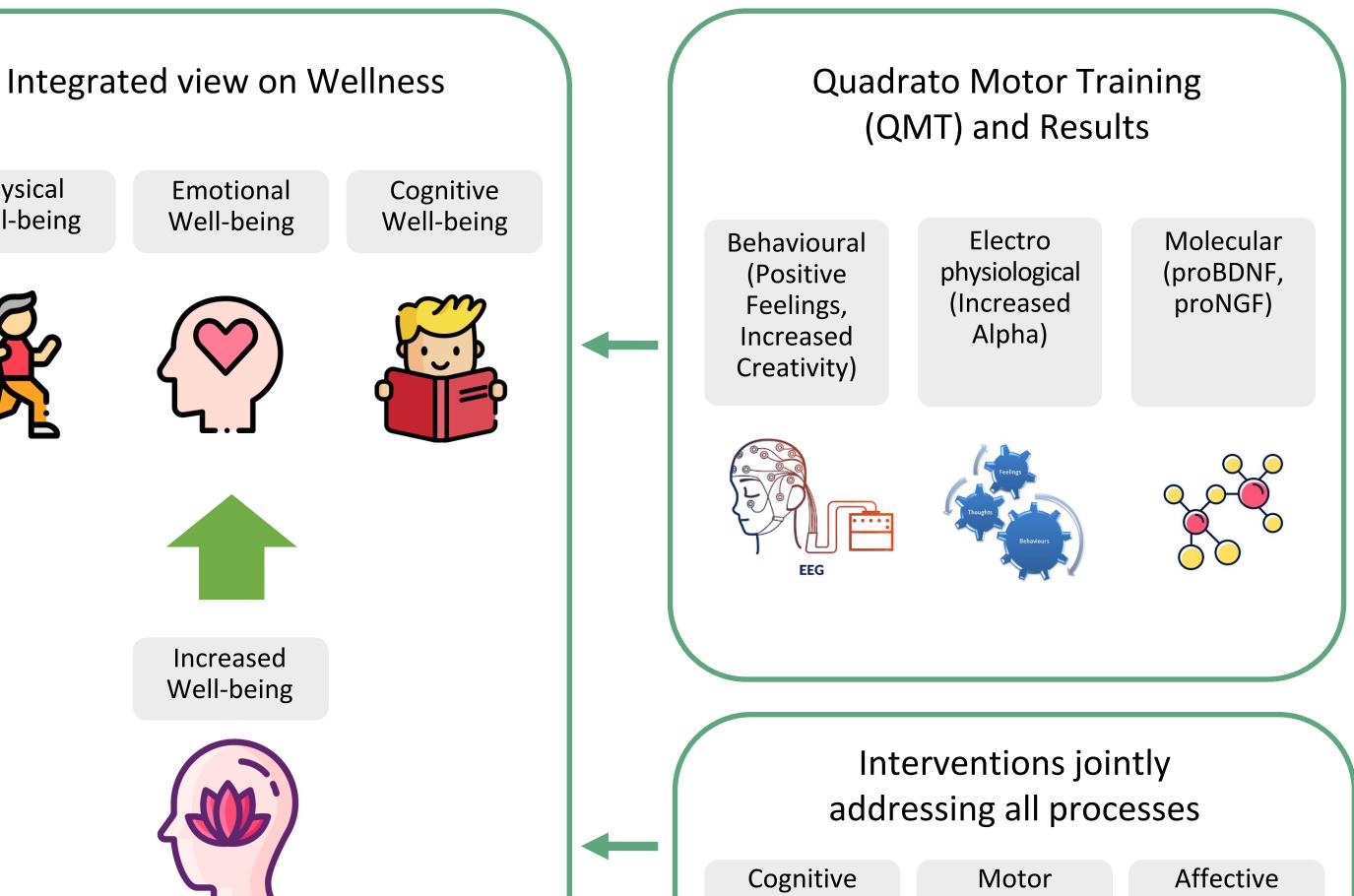


## QMT

# Moving from Unbalanced to Integrated Wellness







**Processes** 

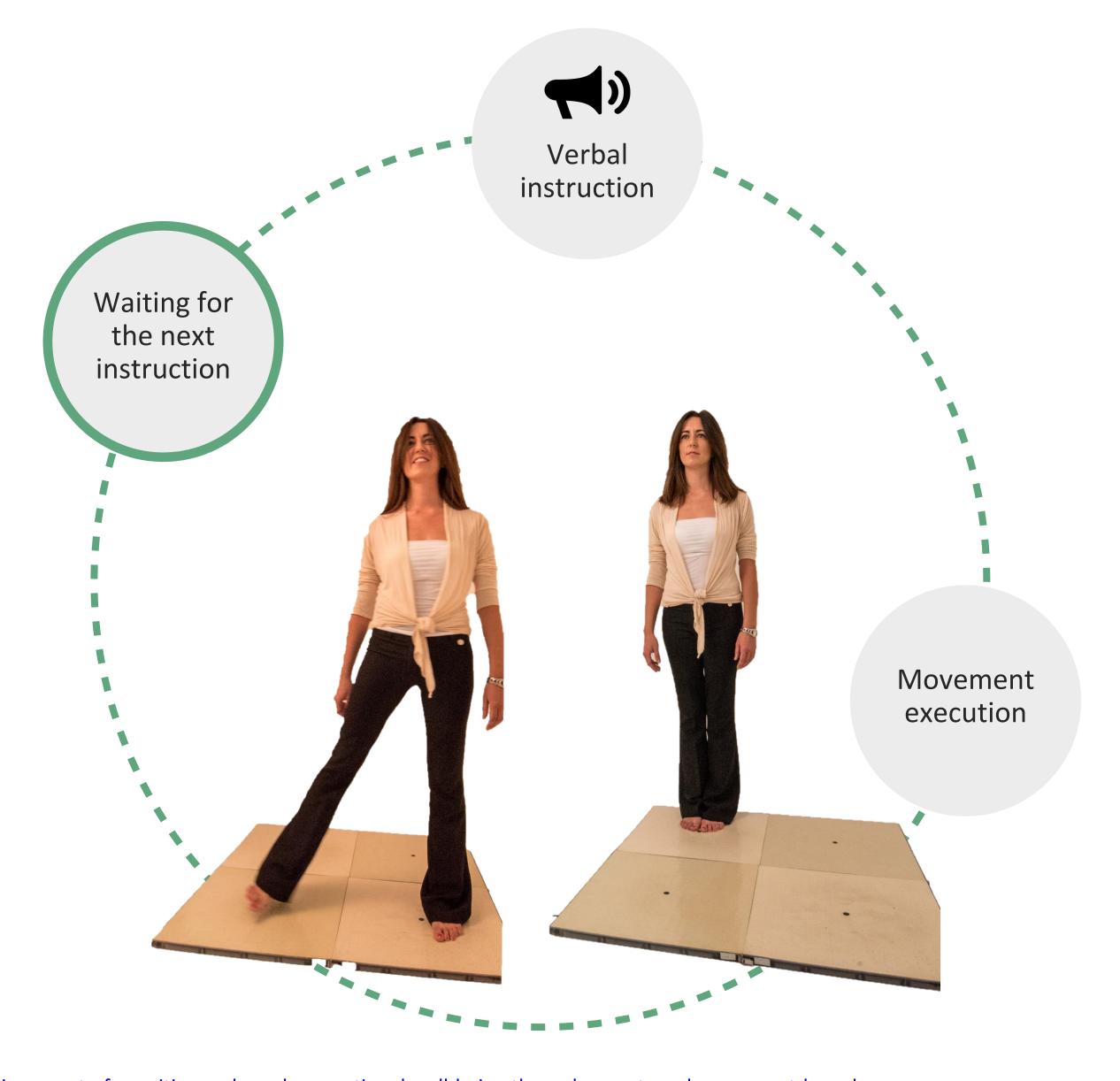
Processes

Processes

## How does QMT work?

QMT is a structured movement meditation aimed at improving coordination, balance, attention, and emotional well-being through behavioral, electrophysiological (especially within the alpha range), neuroanatomical, and molecular changes.

QMT is a specifically structured movement meditation in which the participant moves within a 50x50 cm square according to verbal instructions



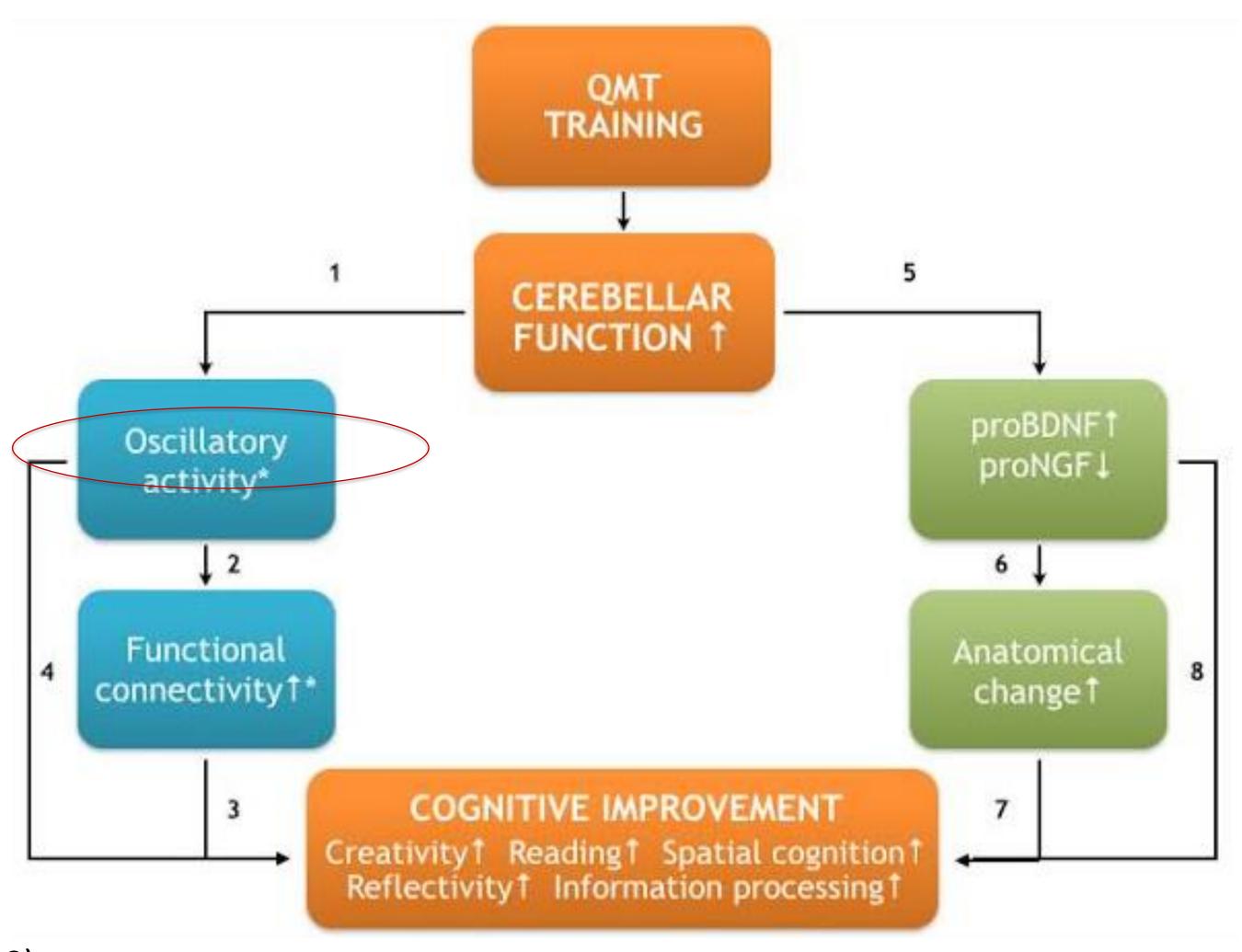


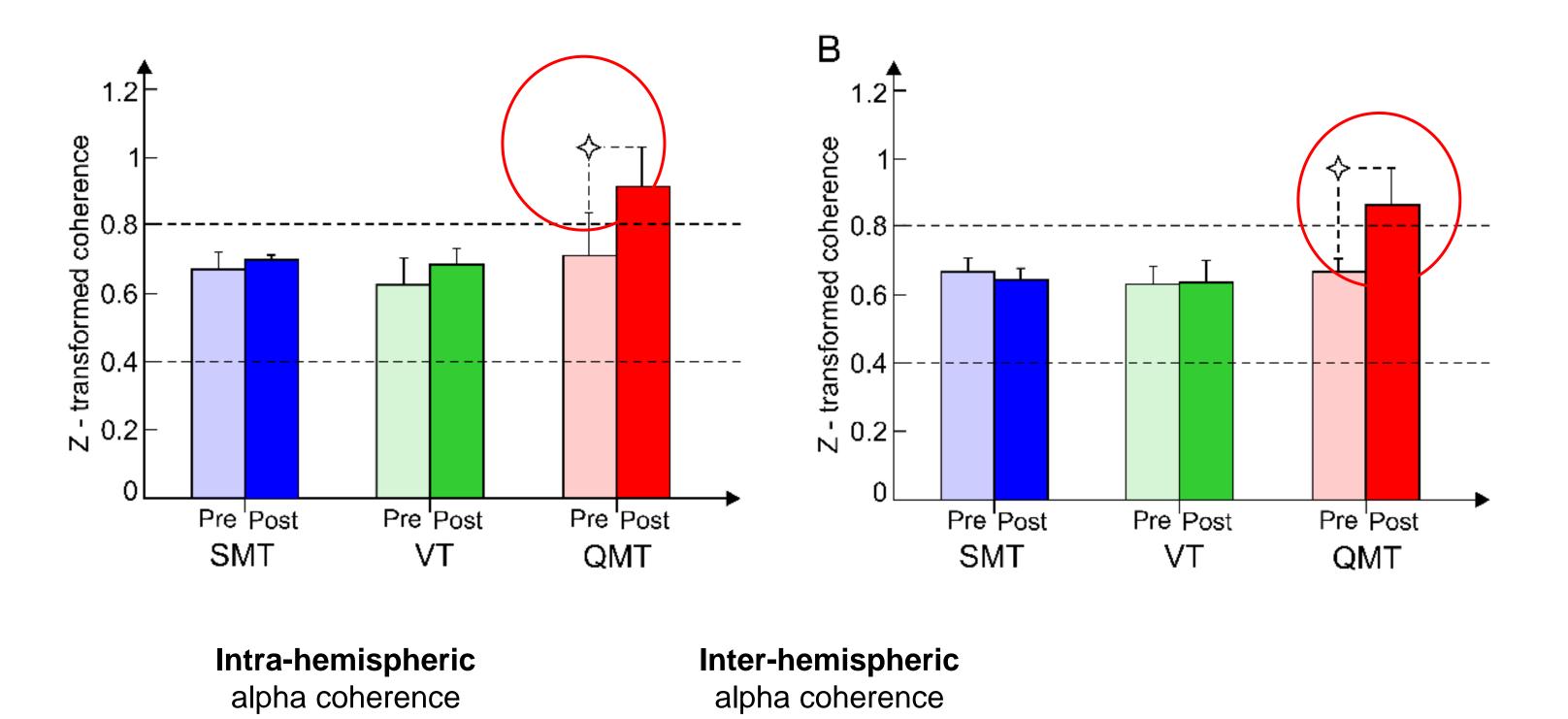


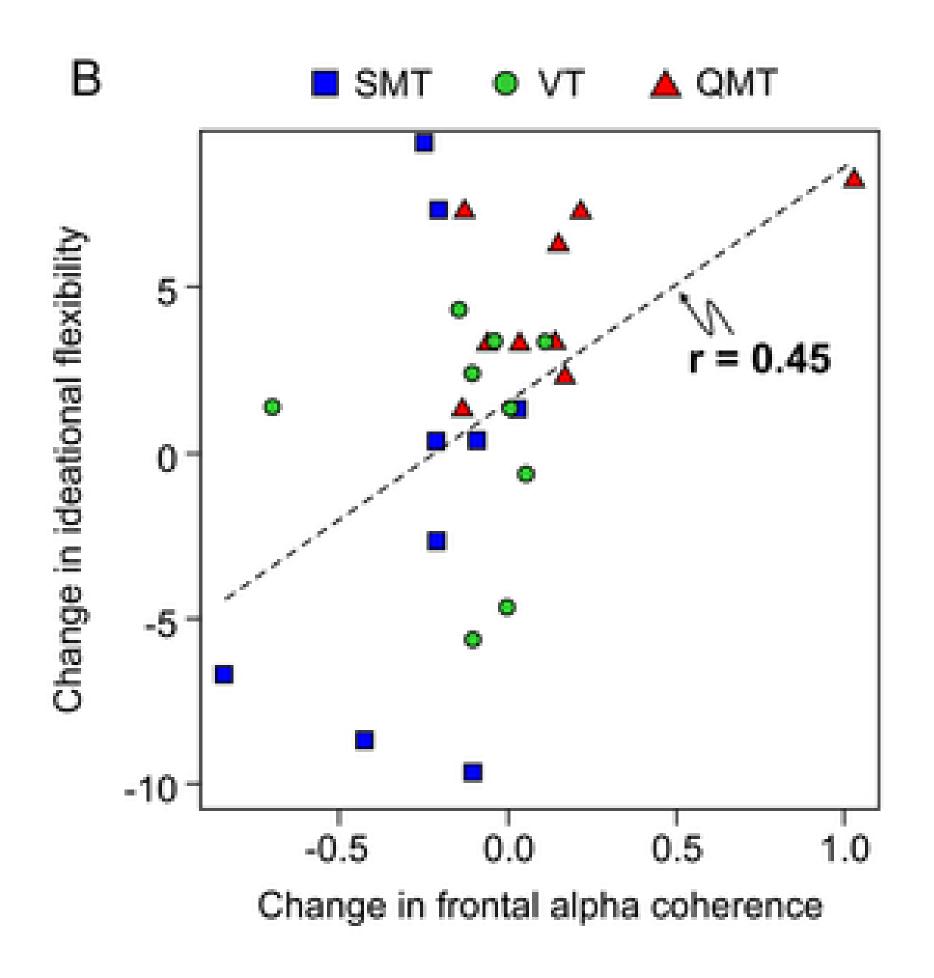




# How does development through movement throughout the lifespan optimize our mental health?







Correlation between change in creativity and frontal alpha coherence

Dotan Ben-Soussan T, Glicksohn J, Goldstein A, Berkovich-Ohana A, Donchin O (2013) Into the Square and out of the Box: The effects of Quadrato Motor Training on Creativity and Alpha Coherence. PLOS ONE 8(1): e55023. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0055023 <a href="http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0055023">http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0055023</a>

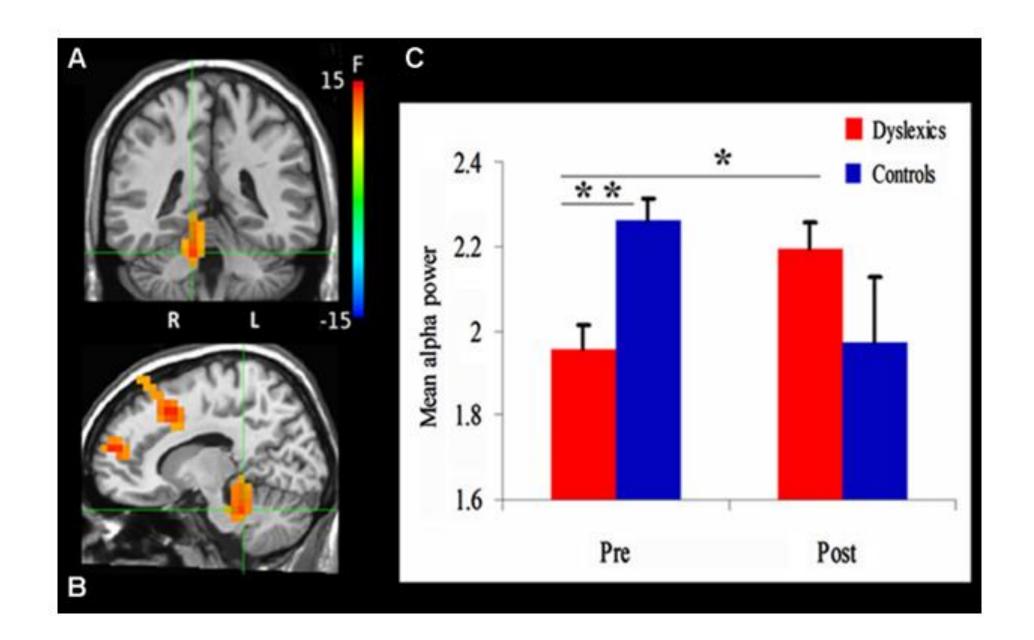
# QMT-induced effects Changes in alpha





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Alpha frequency power before and after QMT between healthy participants and people affected by dyslexia



These studies showed that QMT leads to an increase in alpha coherence and cerebellar alpha power

# QMT-induced effects Changes in alpha connectivity

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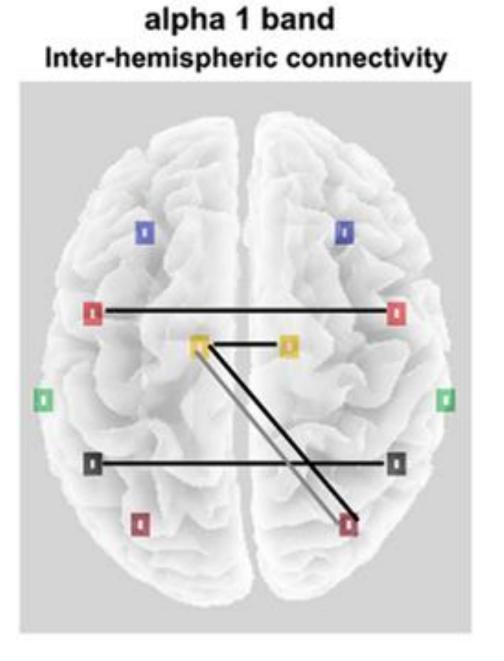
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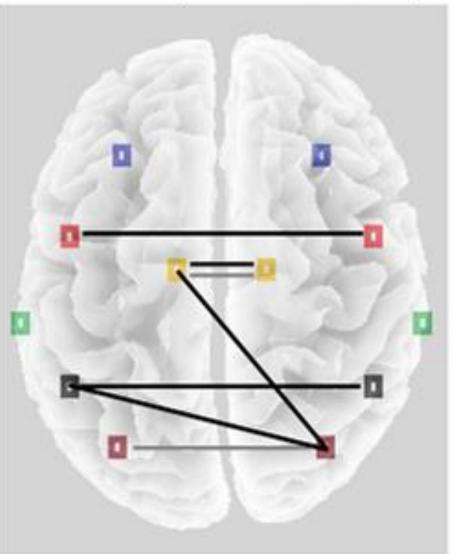


T1 > T0 connectivity ————
T2 > T0 connectivity ———

Changes in alpha connectivity before and after QMT



alpha 2 band Inter-hemispheric connectivity



# QMT-induced effects

# From electrophysiological to emotional and mental well-being









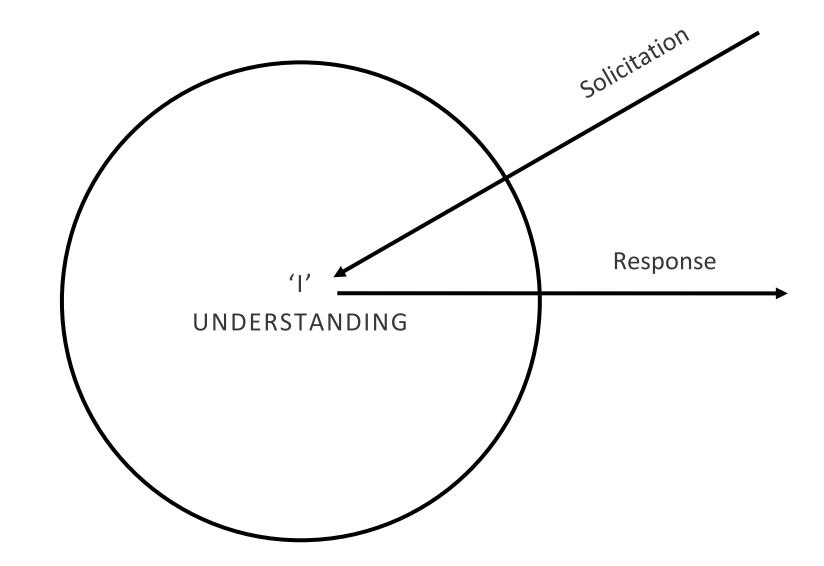
#### QMT-induced effects

QMT improves neuroplasticity and neuronal synchronization especially within the alpha range in:

- Healthy Dyslexic Neurodegenerative states
- Different age groups

#### QMT enhances:

- Creativity, spatial and temporal cognition
- Emotional well-being
- Reading abilities and information processing
- Immune system by decreasing proinflamatory processes
- DNA methylation and genomic stability
- Search for meaning



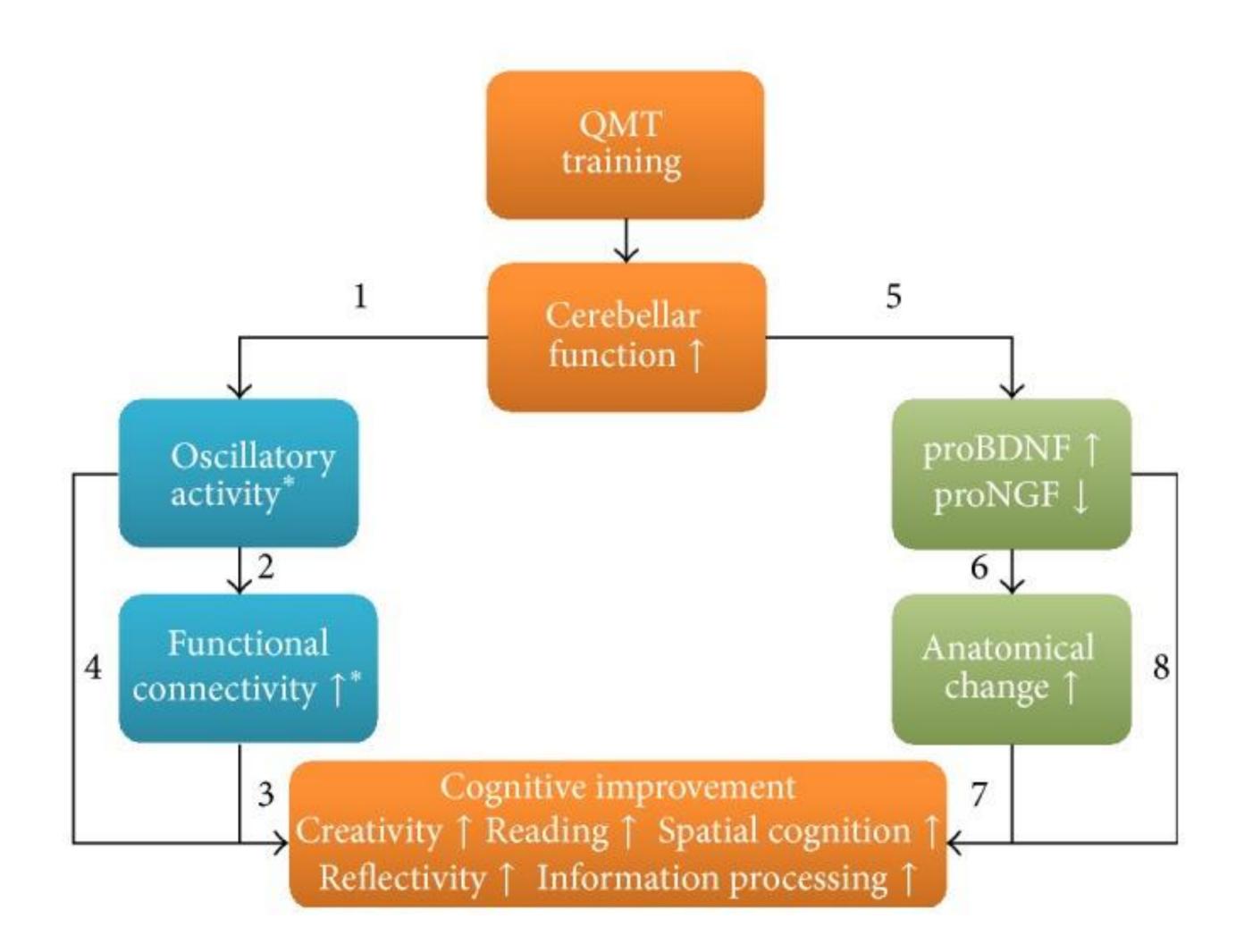
Moving from
Stimulus-Response automatic mode,
to Stimulus-Understanding-Correct response
mediated by training-induced unification and
enhanced synchronization
(Paoletti, 2008)







# The importance of mindful movement Timing waiting: reflectivity and spatial cognition







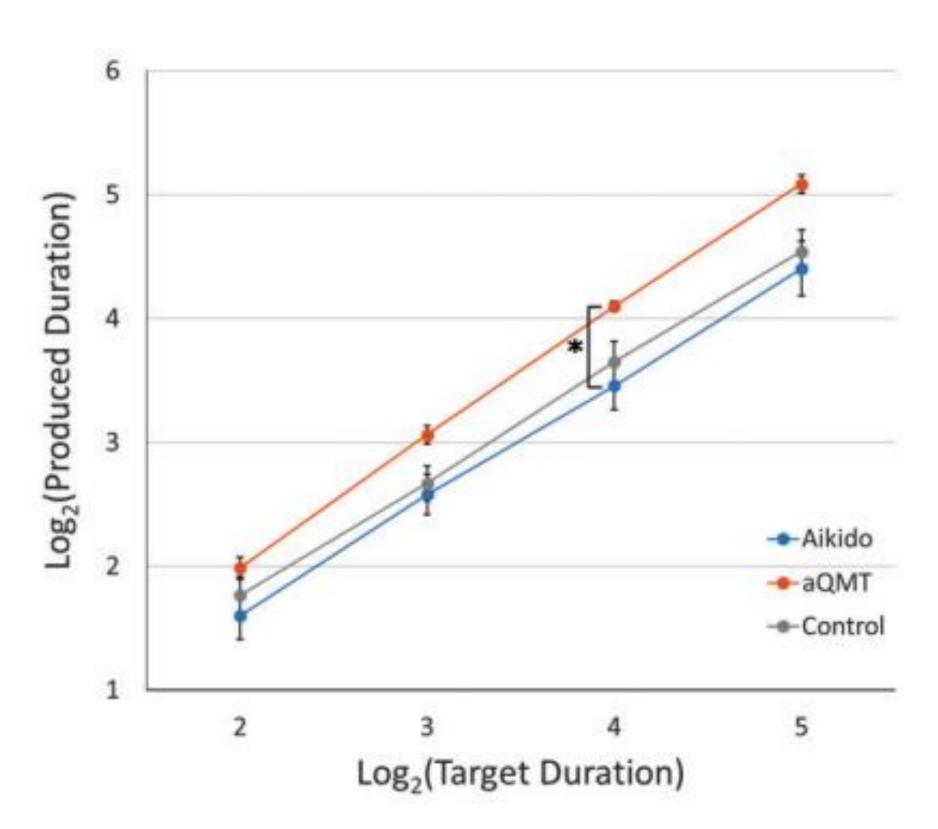






# Temporal production

Produced duration were log-transformed and analysed



#### Results:

Significant main effects of *Group* (Control, Aikido, QMT) and *TP* (4, 8, 16, 32 sec) were observed

Post-hoc analysis of main effects showed a significant difference between QMT and Aikido

#### QMT participants produced longer interval compared to Aikido and Control

Ben-Soussan, T. D., Glicksohn, J., De Fano, A., Mauro, F., Marson, F., Modica, M., & Pesce, C. (2019). Embodied time: Time production in advanced Quadrato and Aikido practitioners. *PsyCh journal*, 8(1), 8-16.

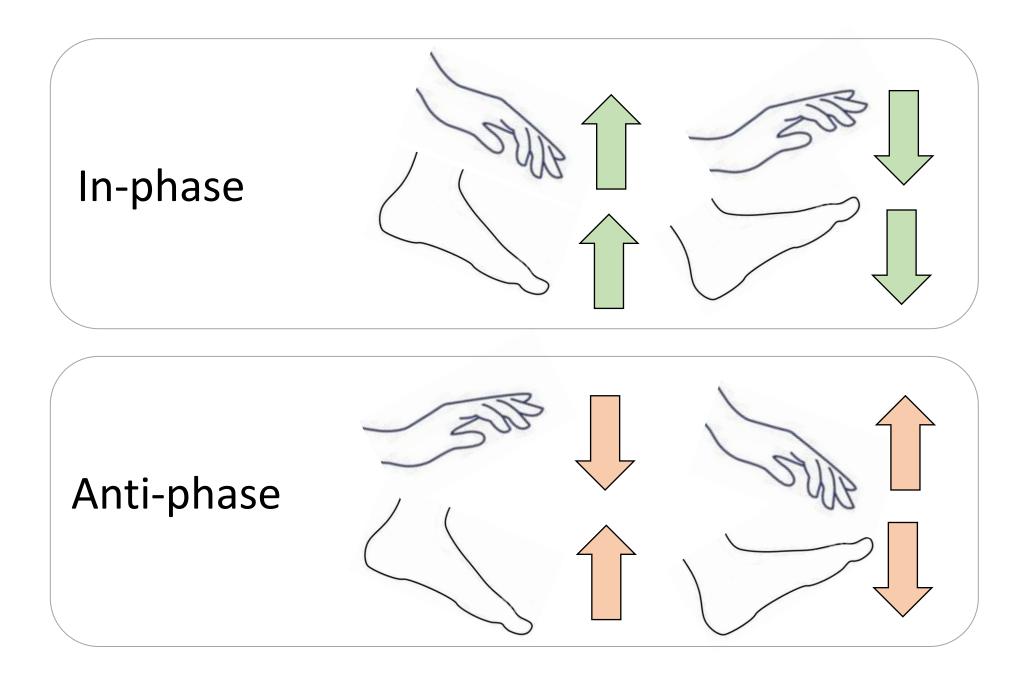




# Coordination

#### Homolateral interlimb coordination task

**Hand** and **foot** indipendent sagittal movements were performed for one side of the body at a time for 60 seconds each trial Two conditions:



Different paces (80, 120, 180 beats/minute)

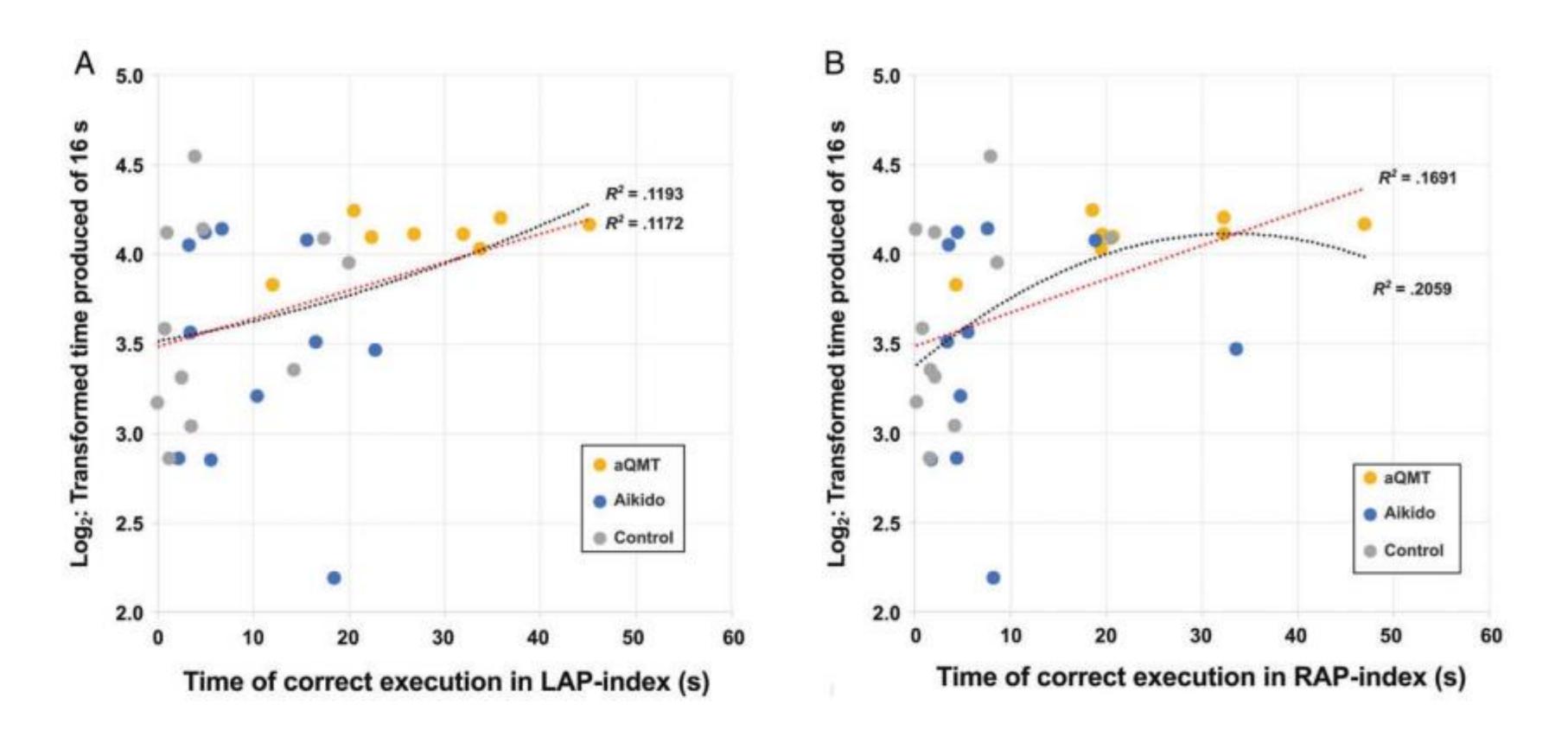
QMT practicioners showed greater coordination (time of correct execution) in:

- Left In-phase movements (vs Aikido and Control)
- Left Anti-phase movements (vs Aikido and Control)
- Right Anti-phase movements (vs Control)





# Coordination correlates with TP



**Left** and **Right Anti-phase** movements correlated with TP performance (with target = 16 seconds)

The correlation disappear when we discard the QMT practitioners





# Information Processing

Training of Inhibition

+

Improving in timing and coordination

+

The activation of the sensorimotor self

=

QMT could change the way we process information

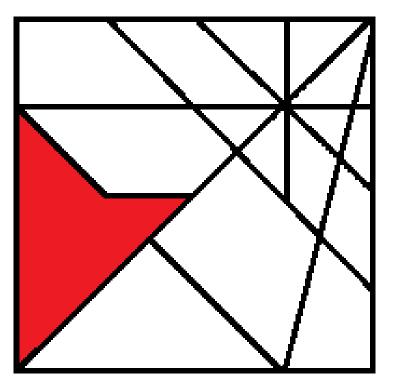


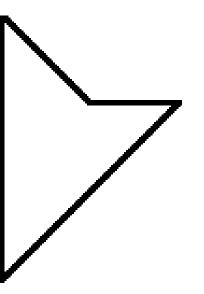


# Hidden Figure Test

Simple geometrical figures has been presented embedded in complex figures

Subject had to find where the simple figure is inside the complex figure as fast as possible









# Spatial cognition

#### Total of 24 females

#### Three experimental groups:

#### QMT

- Whole-body movements
- According to vocal instructions

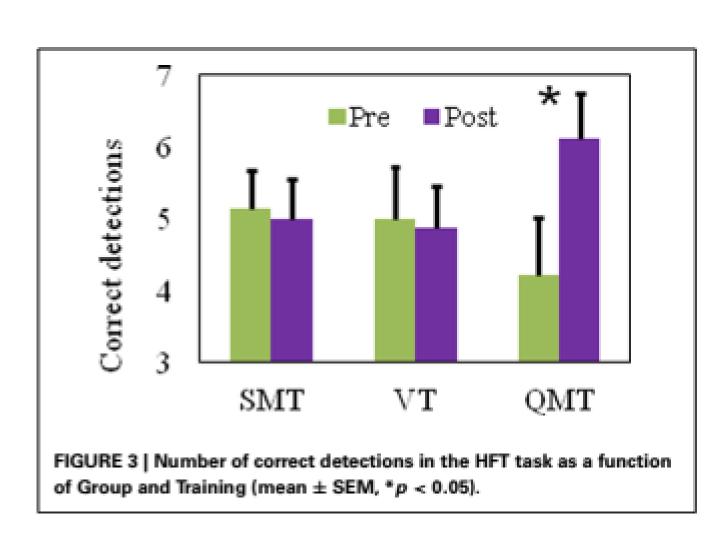
#### Simple Motor Training (SMT)

- Fixed movements similar to QMT
- Always in the same pattern regardless instructions
- Reduced cognitive load

#### Verbal Training Group (VT)

- Same pace and duration of QMT
- Only verbal responses declaring directions
- Same cognitive load, no movement

# QMT practitioners improved in detection of hidden figures





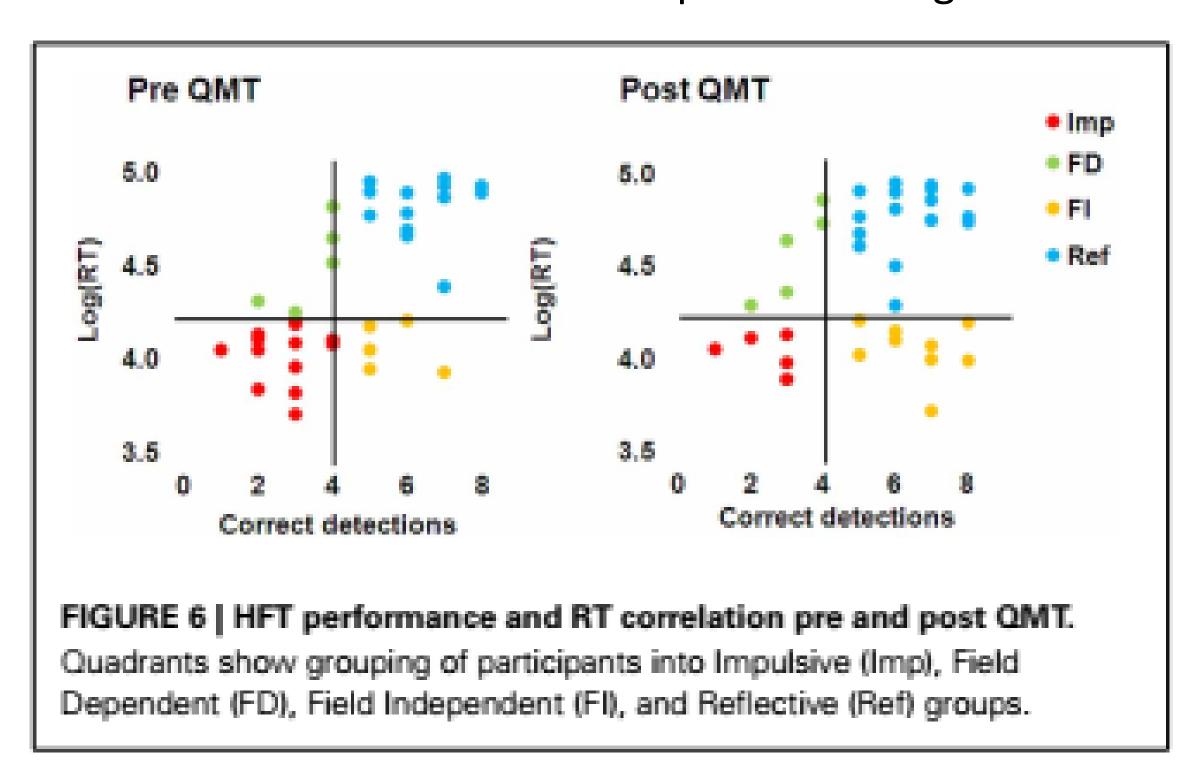


# Spatial cognition and RT: reflectiviy

Categorization of participants depending on performances:

	<b>Low</b> Hits	<b>High</b> Hits
Slow RTs	Field Dependent	Reflective
Fast RTs	Impulsive	Field Independent

12 participants (out of 37) shifted towards Reflective or Field Independent categorization







# Information Processing

Training of Inhibition

Improving in timing and coordination

The activation of the sensorimotor self

QMT could change the way we process information



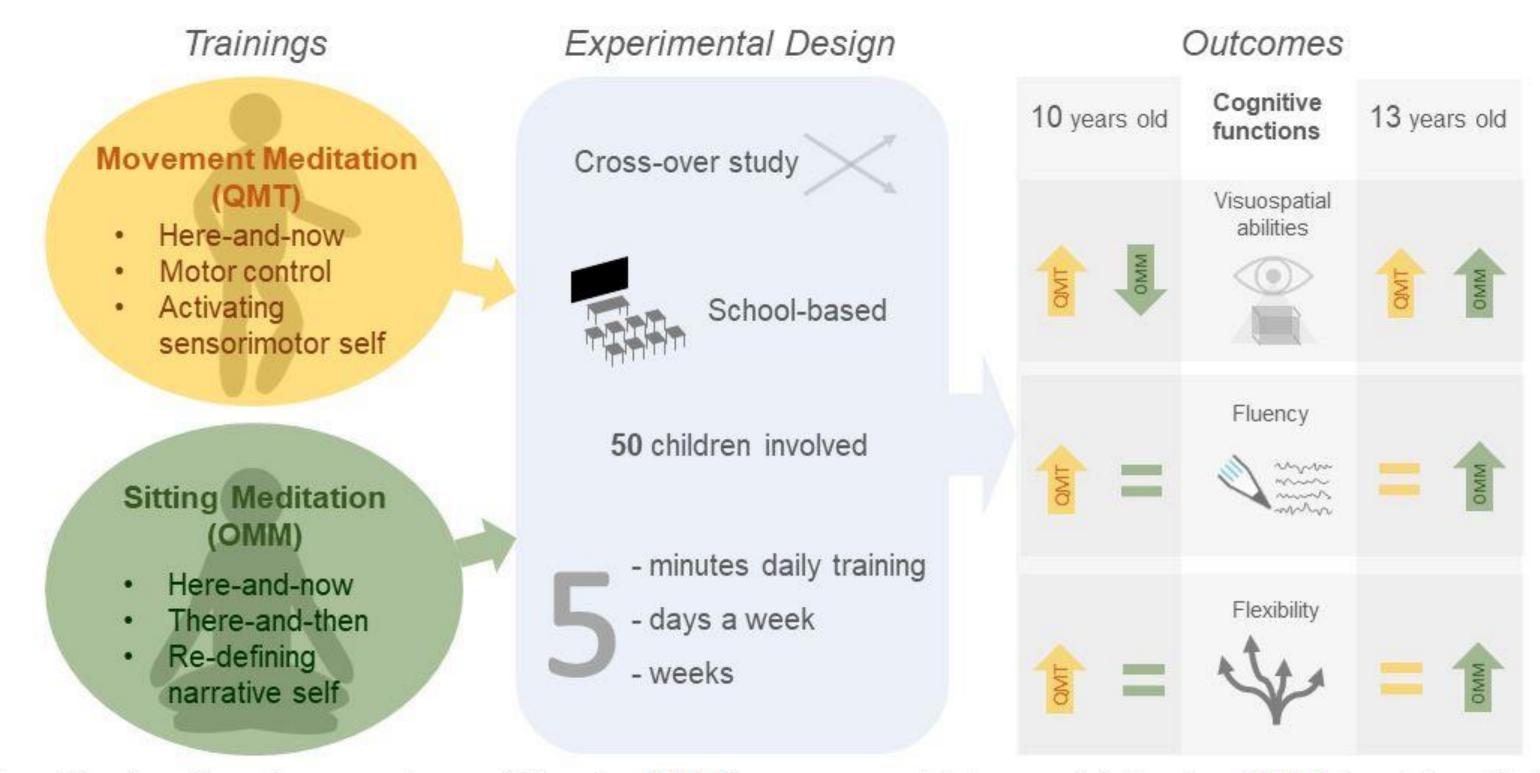
# QMT and Children: group setting in schools

QMT has also been utilized in younger populations and, in particular, in school settings, thanks to the facility with which it can be carried out, requiring limited space and effort.

We observed that **5 weeks of daily training** (during school days) in QMT improved children's cognition.

Specifically, younger children showed greater creativity and better spatial cognition following the QMT.





Cognitive functions improved more following QMT for younger children and following OMM for older children
Implementation of these trainings in school resulted feasible





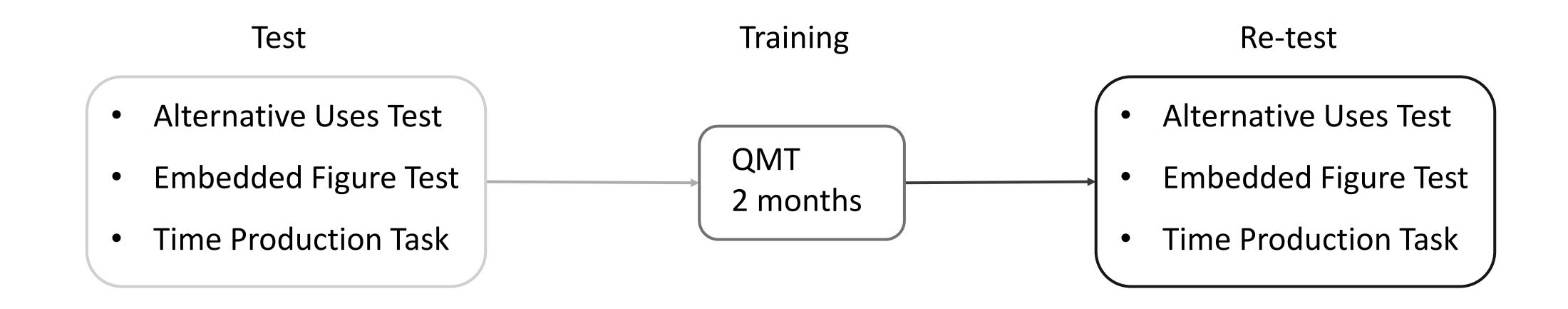






Pilot single case study:

9 years old child Asperger







#### Embedded figure test

#### First session

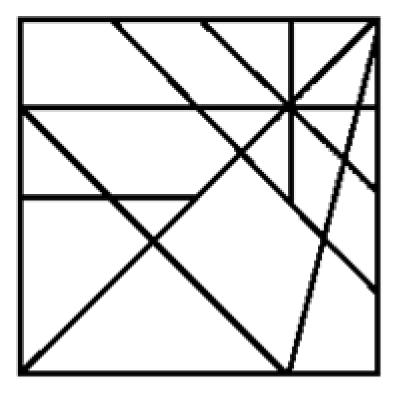
He didn't find any of the figures

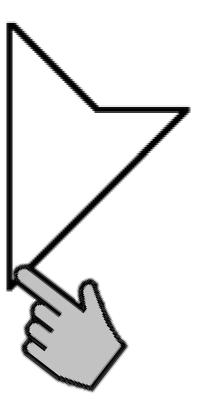
His strategy was to randomly follow lines on the screen

#### Second session

He found 2 of the figures

First he moved his finger on the target figure and then tried to replicate the pattern on the complex figure.





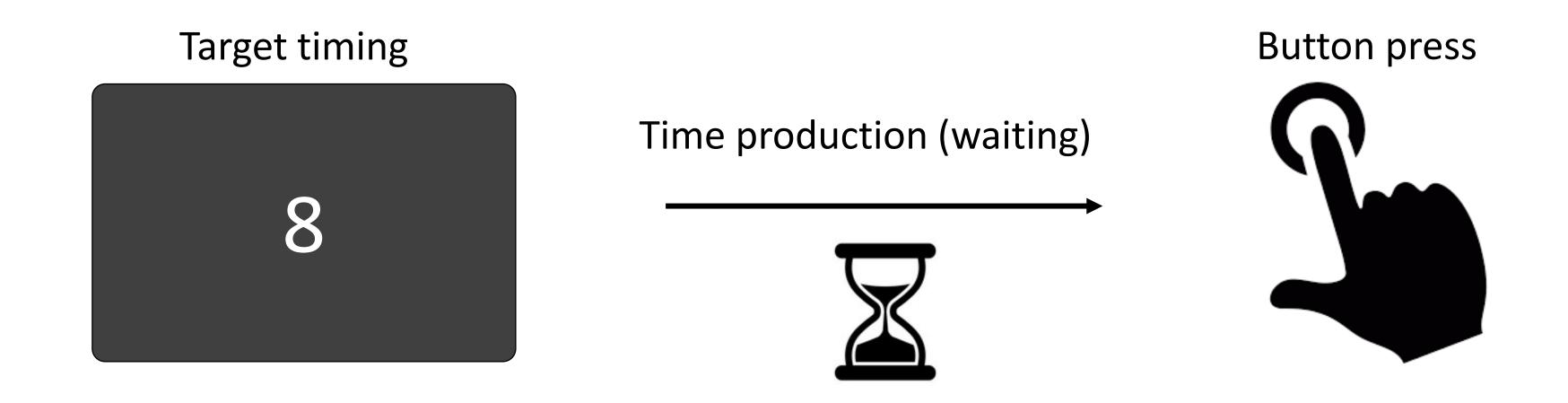




• Time Production Task (Glicksohn, 1996)

Target duration appeared on the screen (4, 8, 16 or 32 seconds)

Subject had to press a button after a delay congruent with the target timing







# Results

#### Time Production Task

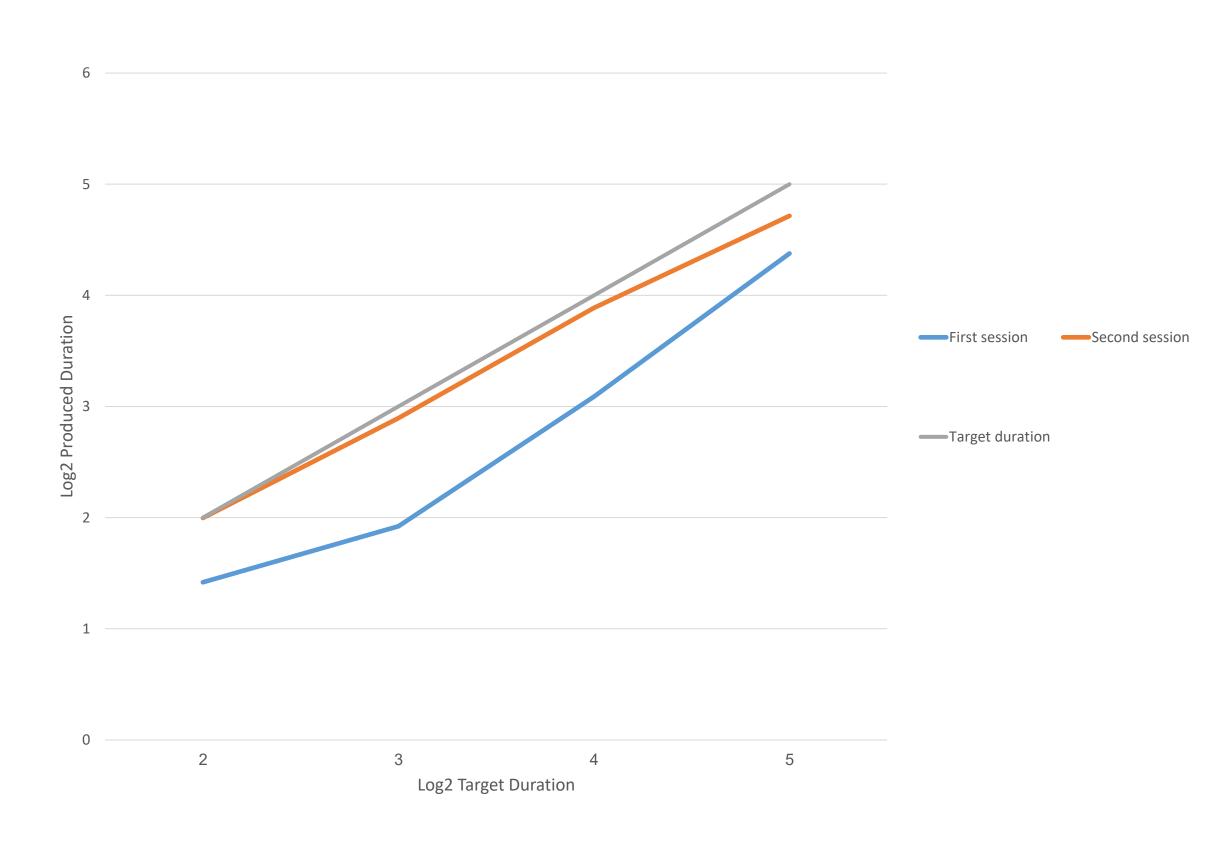
#### Linearized results (Log2 transformed)

Target	First Session	Second Session
2	1,417920008	1,997653714
3	1,922007507	2,895108698
4	3,087717412	3,887379044
5	4,376290383	4,715206994

Average distance from Target duration:

First Session: **0.79** 

Second Session: **0.12** 



## Mindful movement, QMT and EFs





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"Perhaps the biggest surprise is that a relatively understudied approach—mindfulness practices involving movement (Chinese mind-body practices, taekwondo, t'ai chi, and Quadrato Motor Training)—yielded the strongest results for improving EFs.

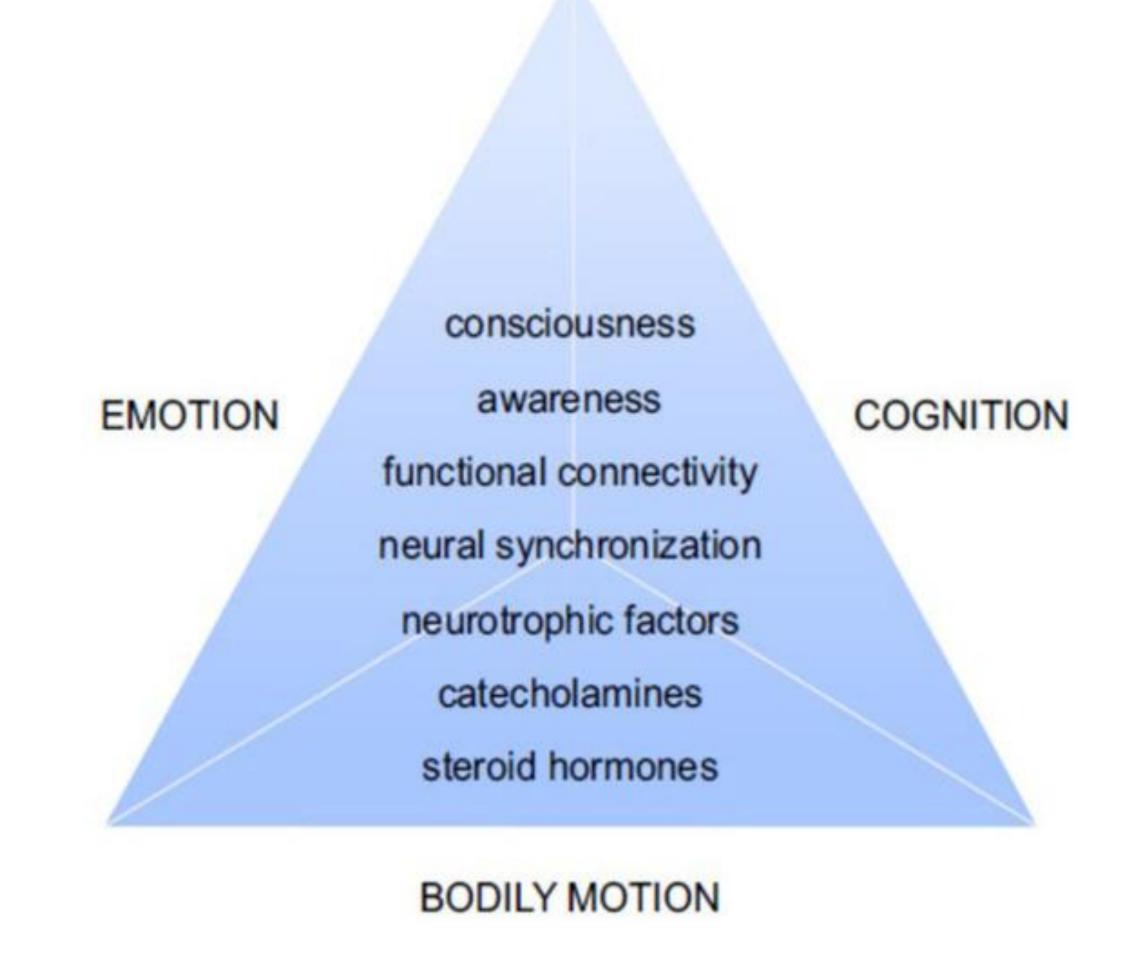
Mindfulness practices involving movement produced the best results for improving EFs across all four different metrics we used for judging strength of EF benefits."

## Healthy and Harmonic Development: a neuro-educational perspective





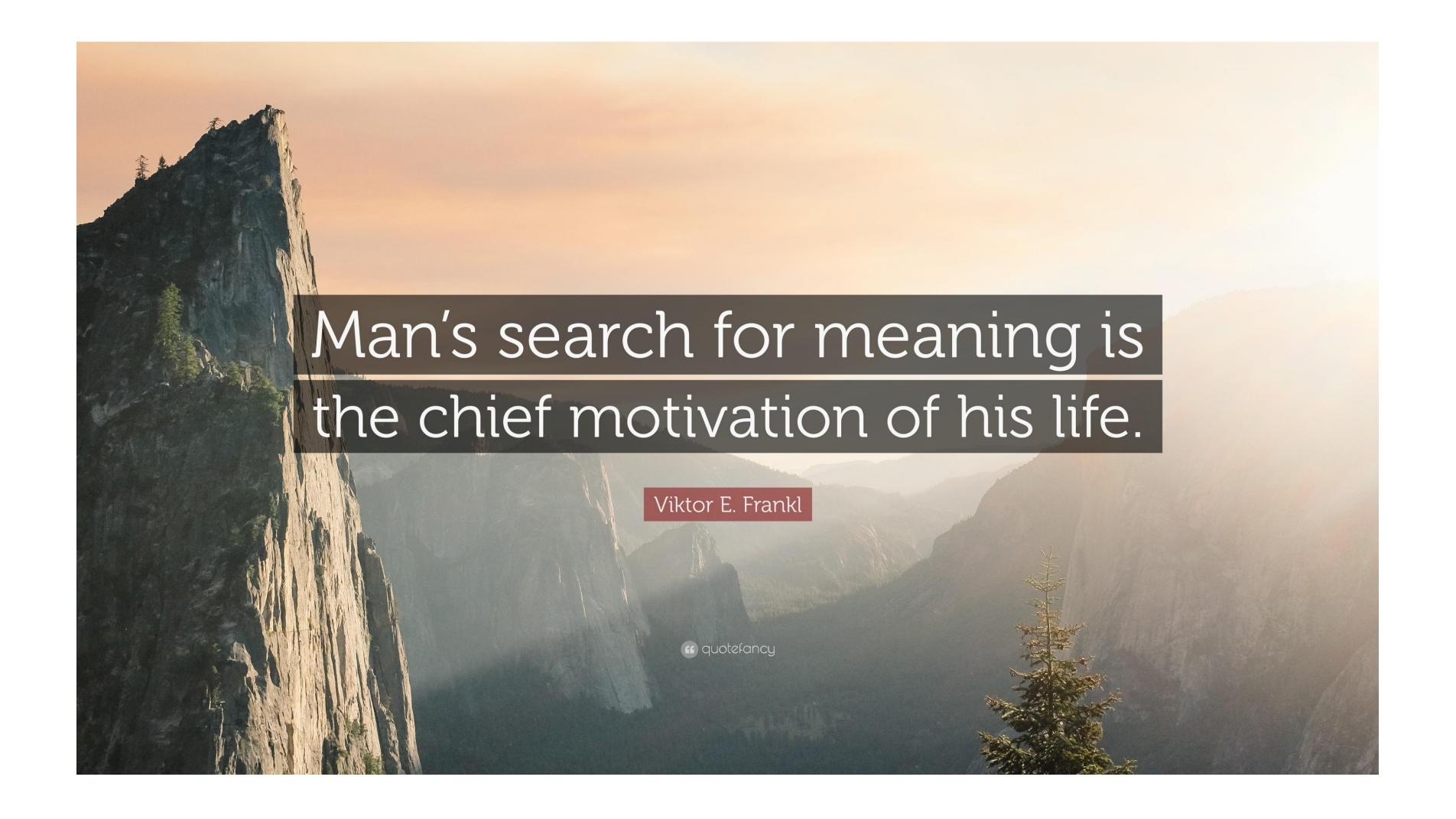




Paoletti, 2008; Pesce and Ben-Soussan, 2016

Paoletti et al., 2023

# The Meaning of Life

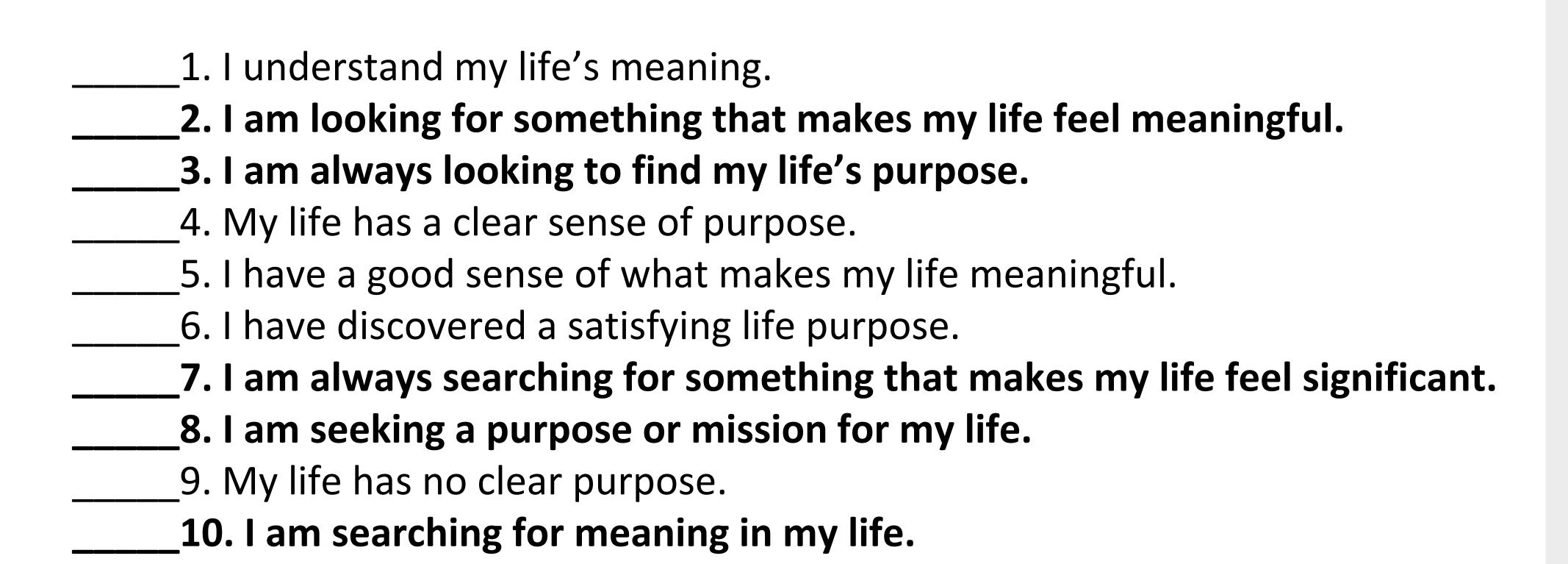








#### The Meaning of Life: presence and search for meaning









Steger MF, Frazier P, Oishi S, Kaler M. The meaning in life questionnaire: Assessing the presence of and search for meaning in life. J Couns Psychol [Internet]. 2006 Jan;53(1):80–93.

# The search for meaning QMT for physical and mental health

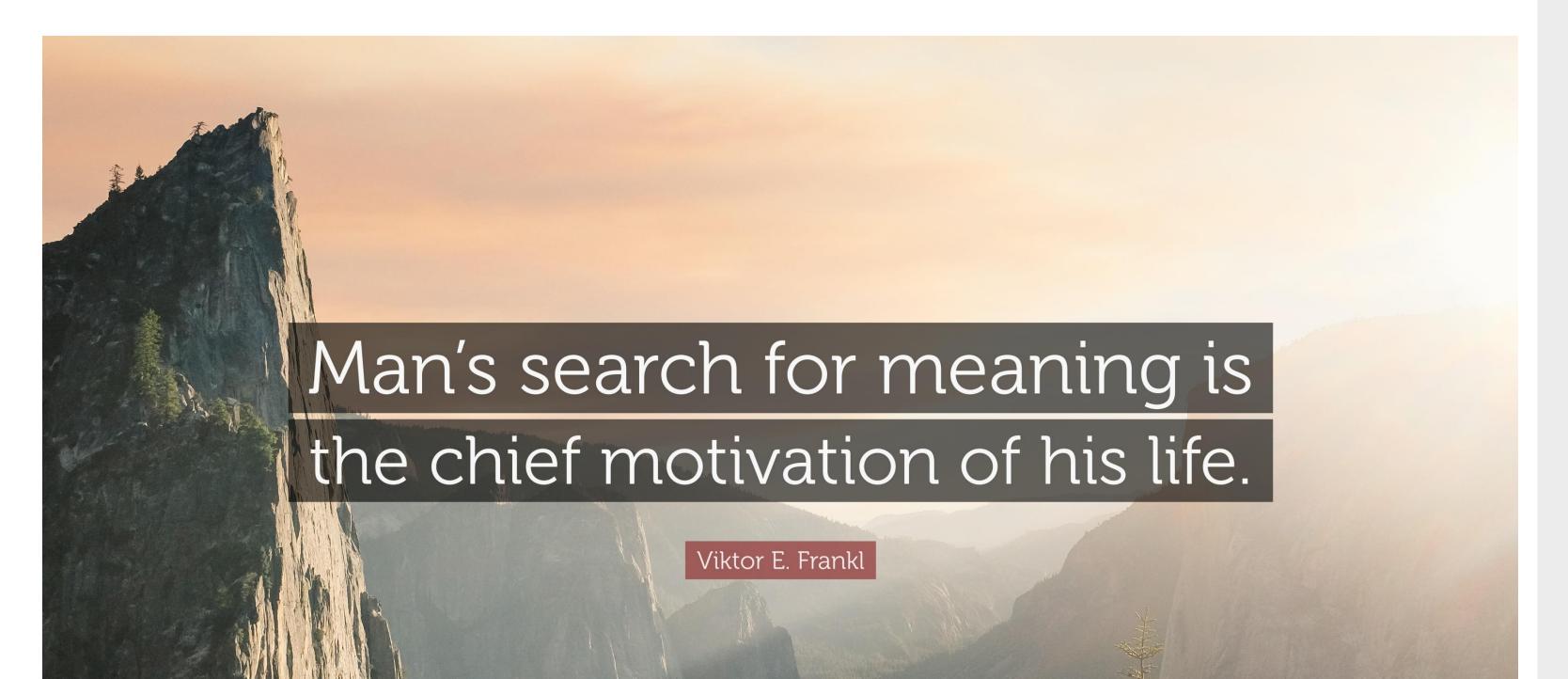
QMT induces methylation alterations in ribosomal DNA and Long Interspersed Nuclear Elements (LINEs) repeats, consistent with increased genome stability. These changes correlated with increases in indices related to Meaning in Life and Positive Relations, thus emphasizing the importance of examining epigenetic and psychological changes related to longevity and vitality.

The MLQ-S subscale represents the attitude toward the active search for meaning and reflects motivation to find or increase one's own understanding of life meaning.

Marson, F., et al. (2023).

Quadrato Motor Training
(QMT) is associated with
DNA methylation changes
at DNA repeats: A pilot
study.

Plos one, 18(10), e0293199.



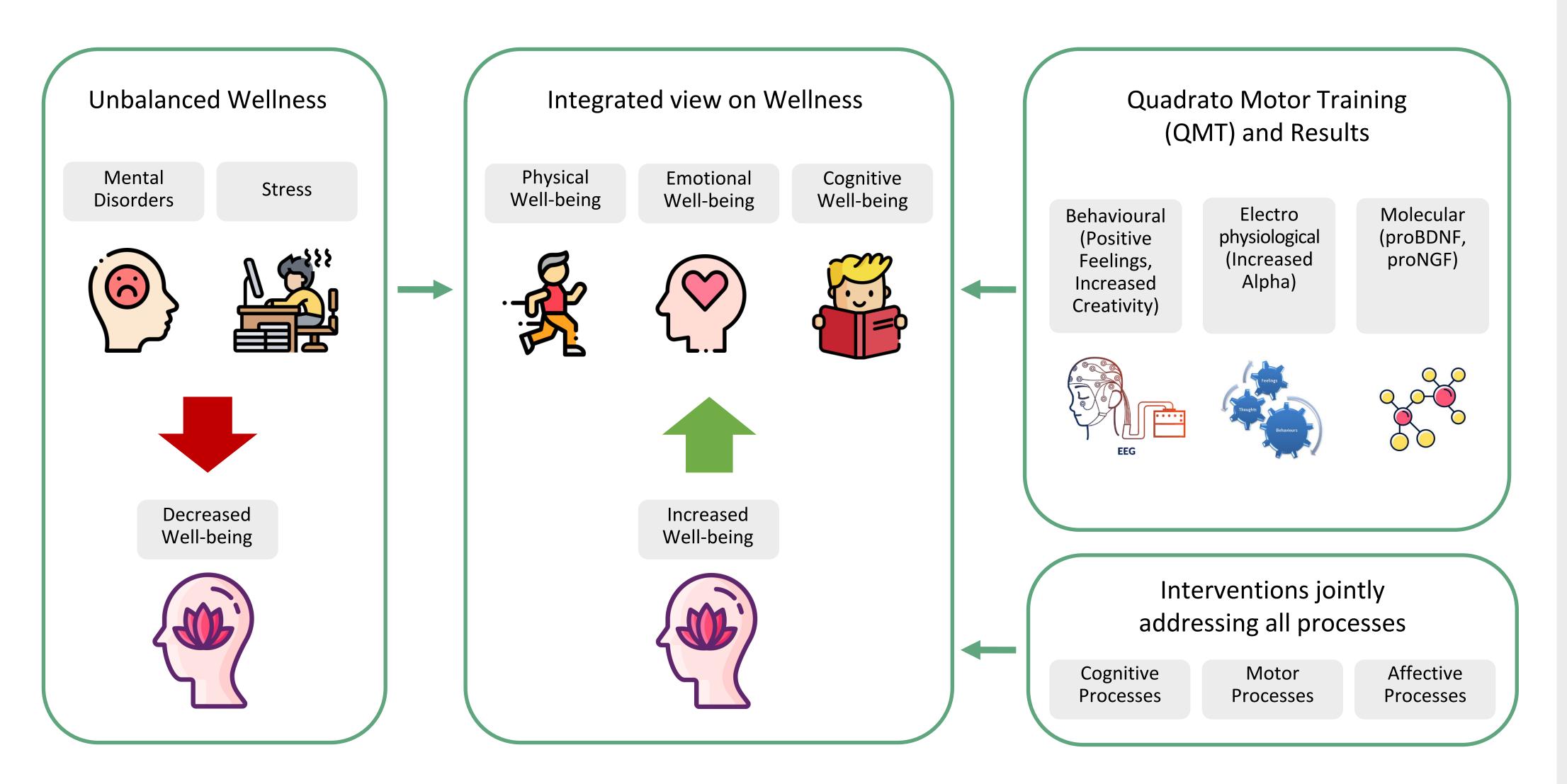






#### QMT

#### Moving from Unbalanced to Integrated Wellness



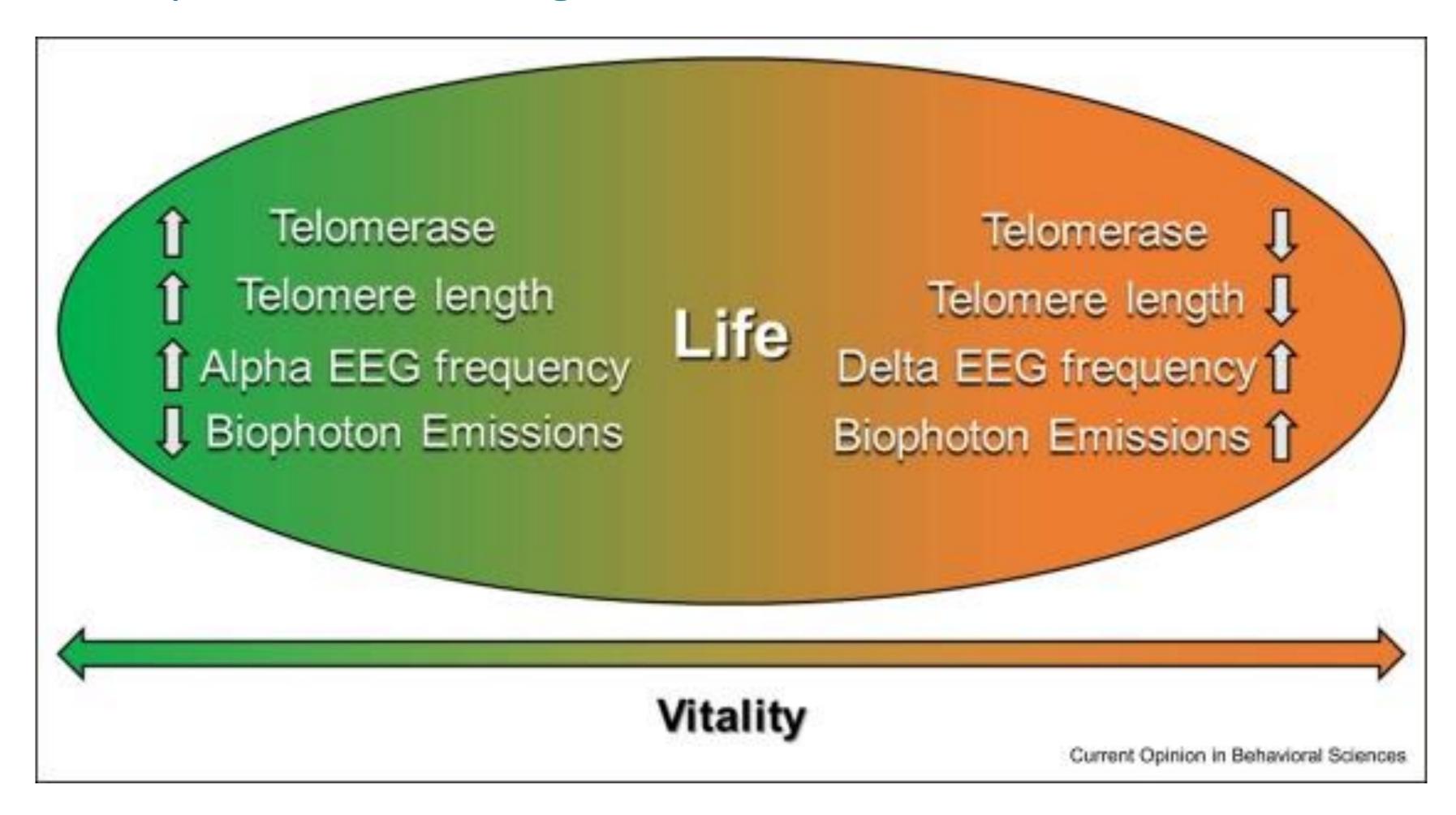


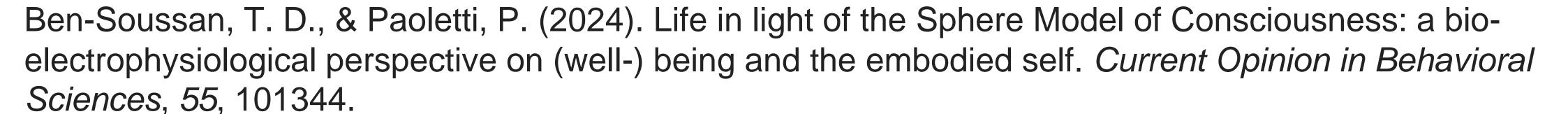




Paoletti, P., Pellegrino, M., & Ben-Soussan, T. D. (2023). A Three-Fold Integrated Perspective on Healthy Development: An Opinion Paper. *Brain Sciences*, 13(6), 857.

### Resolving the Health crisis within: The importance of Being Embodied









#### QMT-induced effects

# QMT was found to increase slow wave oscillations as a means of fine tuning inside and out

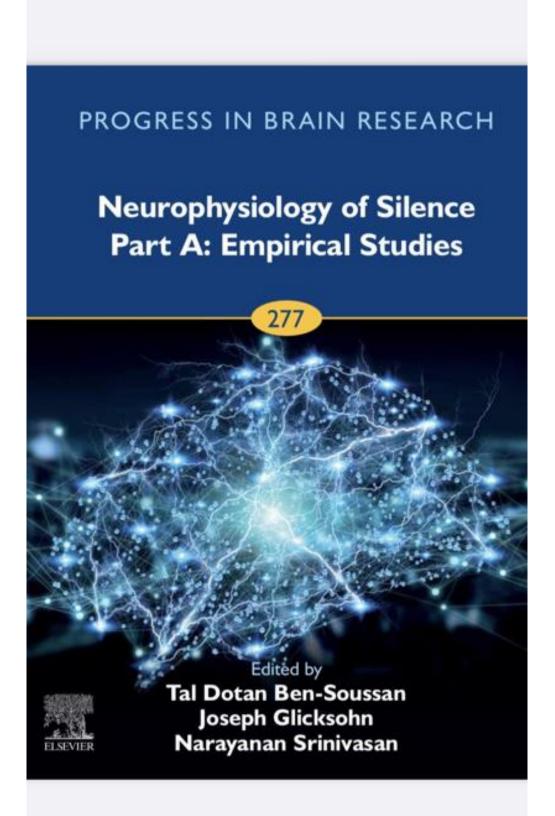
Study	Self Involved	Technique	General Results	Neural Correlates
Berkovich-Ohana et al., 2017	NS	Mindfulness Meditation	Enhanced creativity by long-term mindfulness training	Negatively correlation of creativity results with gamma inte hemispheric functional connectivity
Lasaponara et al., 2016	NS/MS	QMT	EEG changes related to activation in higher order processing and mental effort  Sharpened specialization during eyes closed and eyes open brain states, refining their specific electrophysiological characteristics	Enhancement of the shift from posterior to frontal Beta/Gam from eyes closed to eyes open resting state after QMT Peculiar EEG bands characterizing eyes closed (alpha synchronization) and eyes open (Beta activity) resting state w positively modulated and increased after QMT.
Ben-Soussan et al., 2011	MS	QMT	Changes in time production correlated with frontal theta power and coherence changes	Bilateral temporal theta coherence during the time production increased following QMT
Ben Soussan et al., 2013	MS	QMT	Change in ideational flexibility was correlated with change in alpha coherence	Increased inter- and intra-hemispheric alpha coherence
Ben-Soussan et al., 2014a	MS	QMT	Improved performance on a speeded reading task (both Control and Dyslexic)	Increased cerebellar oscillatory alpha power (Dyslexic) Increased inter-hemispheric alpha coherence (Dyslexic more to Controls)
Ben-Soussan et al., 2014b	MS	QMT	Decreased mind-wandering and narrative focused thought  Increased reflectivity in both genders	Decreased gamma coherence in males compared to female Increased alpha and theta coherence in females while the opposition was found for males
Lasaponara et al., 2017	MS	QMT	Significant changes in functional connectivity in the alpha band following QMT	Limbic and fronto-temporal alpha connectivity increased dur resting state following QMT
De Fano et al., 2019	MS	QMT	Increased frontal theta in last two blocks of QMT compared to the first one	Increased prefrontal and frontocentral theta
Glicksohn et al., 2019	MS/OTS	OVO-WBDP	Subjective experience and gender related differences in alpha profiles of participants	R>L asymmetry for males and L>R asymmetry for females Positive (frontal L <r (frontal="" alpha)="" l="" negative="" or="">R alpha) aff More verbal (L&gt;R alpha) or a more imagistic (R&gt;L alpha) think More trancelike (frontal&gt;parietal alpha) or more reflective</r>
Ben-Soussan et al. 2019	OTS	OVO-WBDP	Achievement of a state of absorption	(frontal <parietal alpha)="" and="" beta1="" consciousness="" cortex="" delta="" frontal="" in="" increased="" inferior="" insula<="" left="" of="" state="" td=""></parietal>

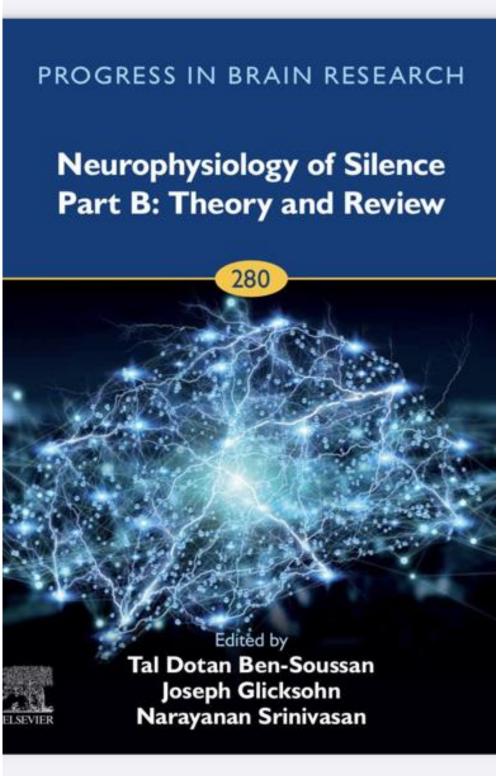


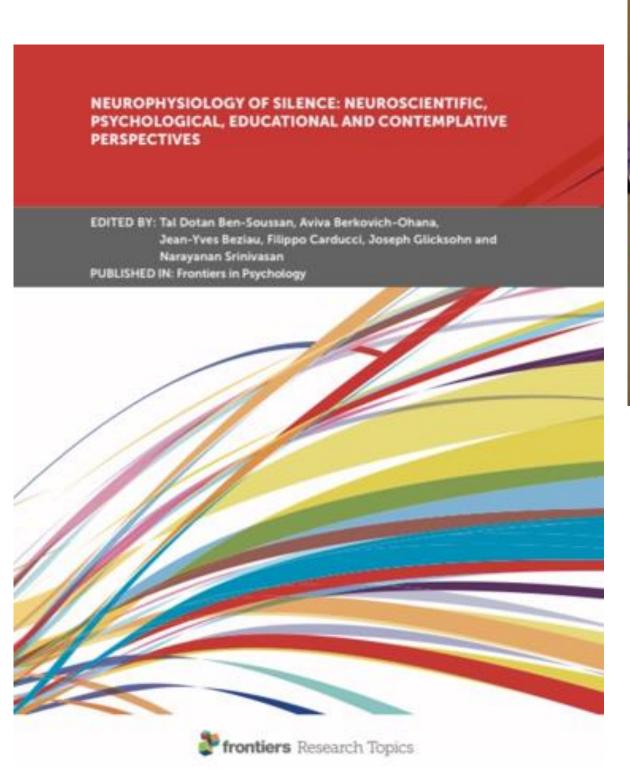




# Psycho-Neuro-Education of Silence: positive solitude versus loneliness









#### Silence, positive solitude and suggestions

- The importance of mindful movement, solitude and silence for reducing stress
- Beneficial programs work because they not only train and challenge EF skills, but also:
- self-control, selective attention, and WM into most school activities
- bring joy, pride, and self-confidence
- a deep commitment, and provide a sense of social belonging (e.g., team membership)

Diamond, A., & Ling, D. S. (2020). Review of the evidence on, and fundamental questions about, efforts to improve executive functions, including working memory. Cognitive and working memory training: Perspectives from psychology, neuroscience, and human development, 143-431.

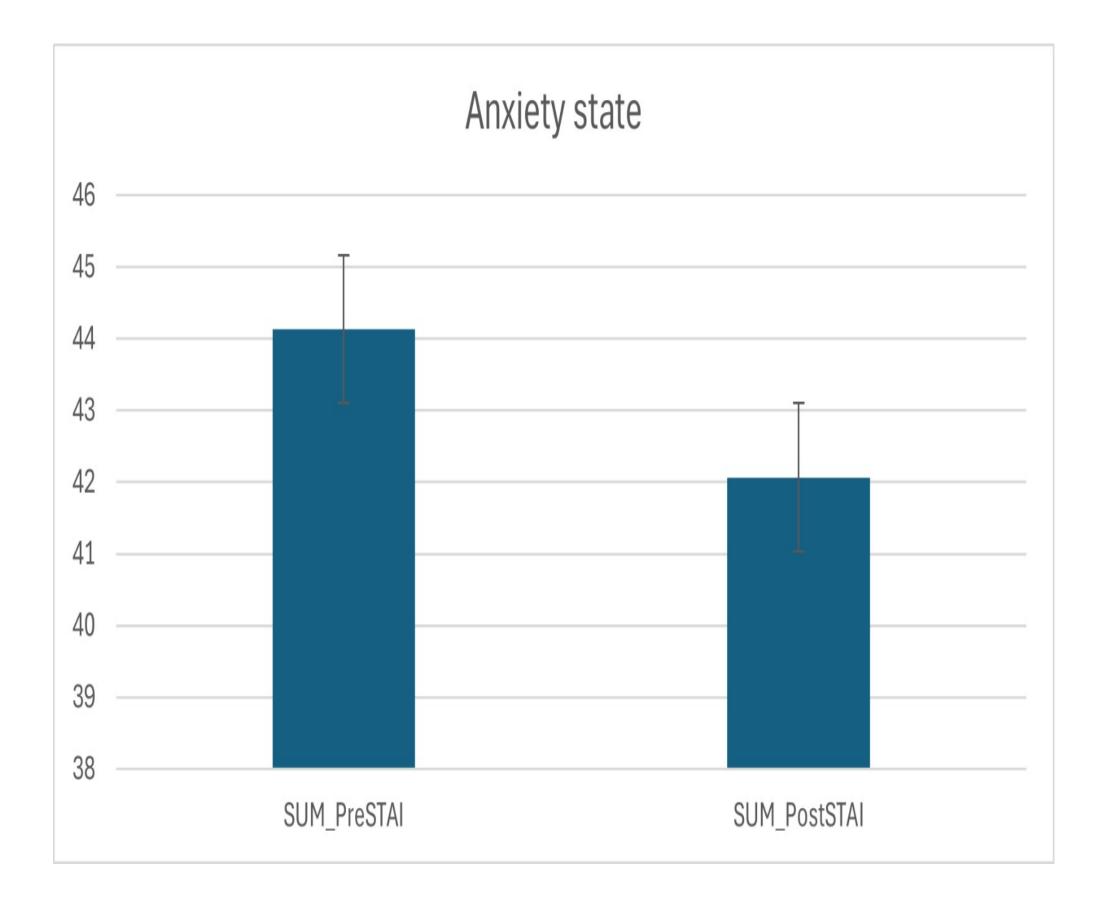
Pesce, C. (2012). Shifting the focus from quantitative to qualitative exercise characteristics in exercise and cognition research. Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 34(6), 766–786.

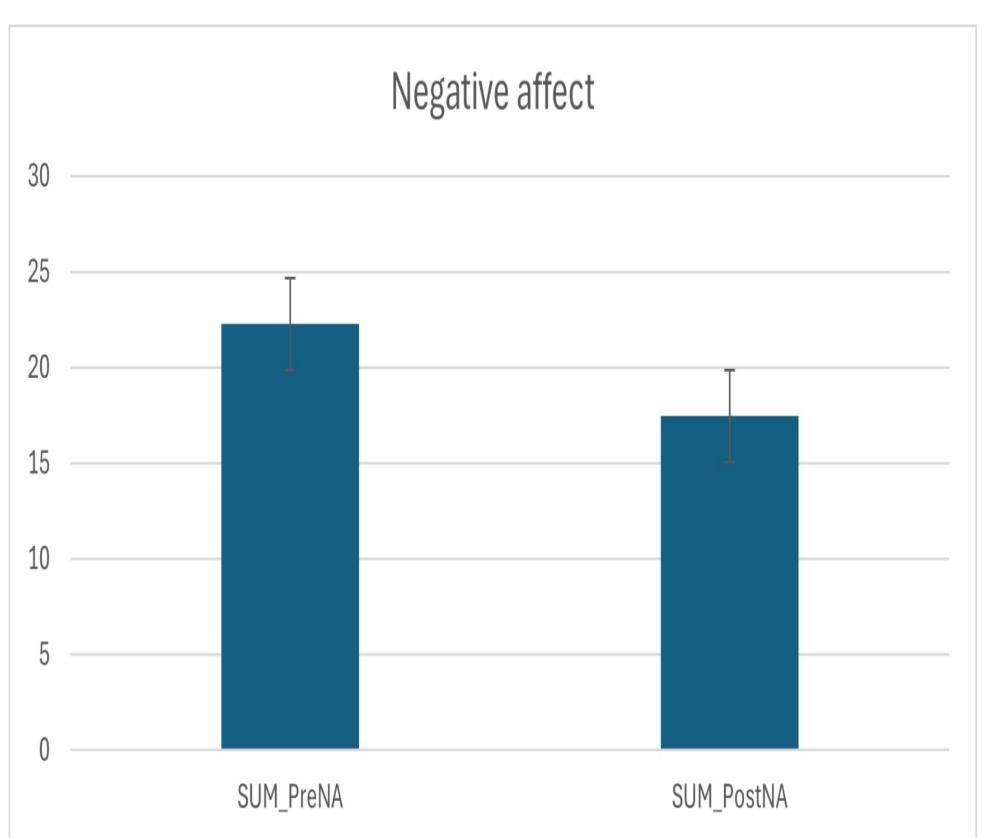






### Future and current directions: QMT following trauma: decreased state anxiety and negative affect





STAI PANAS

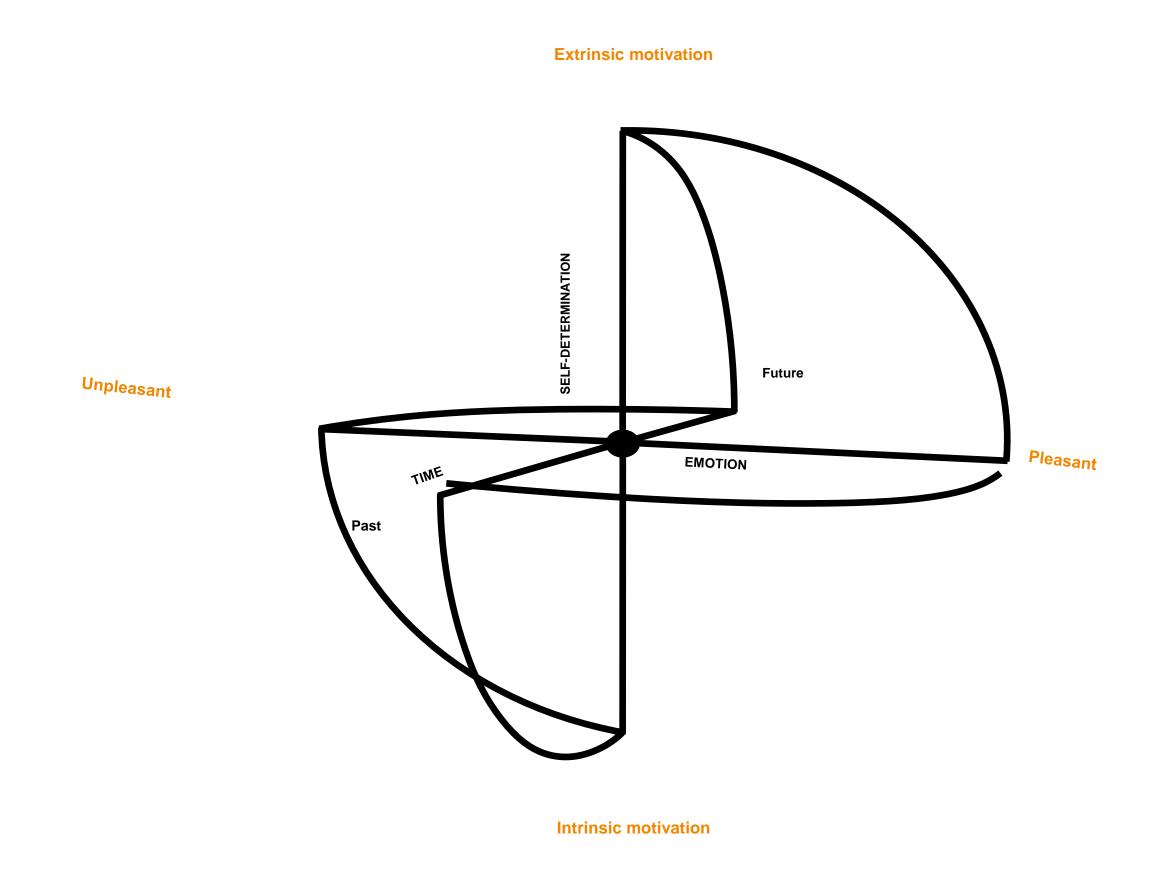
The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) is a commonly used measure of trait and state anxiety (Spielberger, Gorsuch, Lushene, Vagg, & Jacobs, 1983).







#### Mental Health: SMC and being embodied



The Sphere Model of Consciousness (SMC)

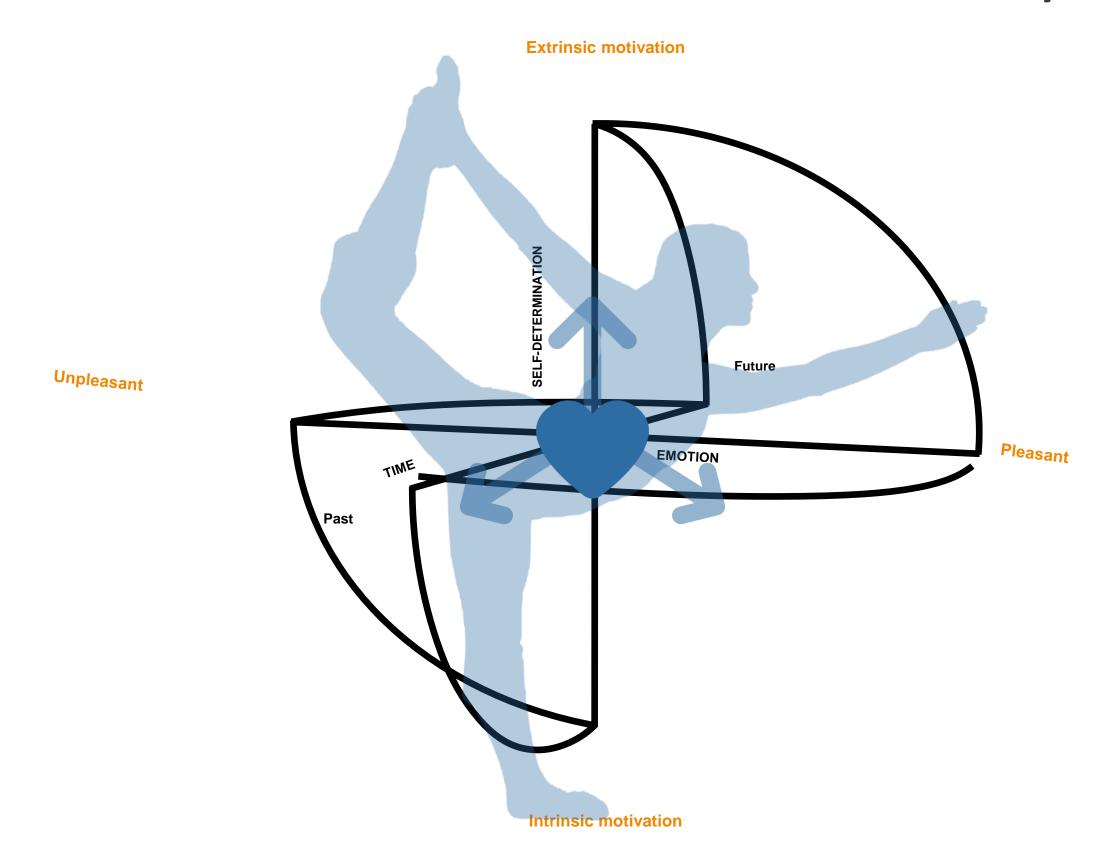
Paoletti, 2002a,b, 2008; Paoletti and Selvaggio, 2011; Paoletti and Ben Soussan, 2019, 2020







# Future directions: Sphere Model of Consciousness, dance and directionality



The Sphere Model of Consciousness (SMC)

Paoletti, 2002a,b, 2008; Paoletti and Selvaggio, 2011; Paoletti and Ben Soussan, 2019, 2020







#### Related Publications, 2023

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  Ente Accreditato MIUR formazione insegnanti
  - Mi U C



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# 'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (WHO, 1948: 100).

# ITe-changing research

## Life-changing research

Patrizio Paoletti Foundation's activities and planning have always been based on neuro-psycho-pedagogical research. A science without boundaries that starts from the premise that: health does not mean the absence of disease.

Thanks to the pioneering vision and multidisciplinary approach of the founder Patrizio Paoletti, today we can guarantee an education of excellence for cognitive and emotional wellbeing and spiritual growth in children and adults.







#### THE AREAS OF THE FOUNDATION







EDUCATIONAL FRONTIERS



MENTAL WELL-BEING



SUSTAINABILITY
AND PEACE

# Life-changing research

#### Fields of Action

## Neuro-Psycho-Pedagogical Didactics

The multidisciplinary scientific approach is the best tool for investigating how we function and for discovering how we can improve and use our limitless potential

# Permanent Education and Training

The reinforcement pf adult competencies in personal, familiar, professional and social environments with training programmes designed for parents, teachers, caregivers, counsellors and psychologists all over the world





## Innovation ir Schools

Scholastic programmes designed to promote the development of life skills from early childhood, going beyond the traditional acquisition of knowledge

#### Educational Emergency

We operate in the most difficult contexts in the world to guarantee the right to education to thousands of children, promoting social responsibility: personal wellbeing, the quality of life and of relationships is always to the advantage of society

#### Research Institute for Neuroscience Education and Didactics (RINED) FPP





# RESEARCH INSTITUTE

#### Why?

Impact and assist healthy and harmonious development and wellbeing at all ages.

By understanding the underlying mechanisms, we can help psycho-physiological processes of well-being, coping with the polycrisis and especially the health crisis, by increasing personal and social resilience. We can always improve inside and out.

#### What?

### Rigorous Scientific study (PH.A.S.E)

Through a process starting from the Philosophical vision of what humans can achieve, to Art and the innovative tools to achieve it, to Science for examining these tools and the Economy of Self to guarantee sustainability

#### Academic collaborations:

- peer reviewed articles
- scientific conferences
- books and courses

### Sharing knowledge for the general public

- International and European projects
- Educational Kits
- books and courses

#### Who?

#### Target populations:

- Adults
   Neuroplasticity, creativity, spirituality, resilience and wellbeing.
- Children

reading, coordination, academic, emotional, physical, cognitive, social and spiritual well-being

Neurodegenerative patients
 Alzheimer's and Parkinson's
 disease

How?

#### **Innovative Techniques**

- Quadrato Motor Training (QMT)
- OVO-WBPD whole body perceptual deprivation tank
- Place of Pre-Existence Technique
- One Minute Meditation (OMM)
- Physical activity and active breaks in schools

#### Methods

- Electrophysiological (EEG, MEG)
- Behavioral
  - coordination, balance
  - Emotional regulation and affect
  - Creativity, spatial and temporal cognition
- Molecular (NGF, DNAm, Cytokines)
- Structural and Neuroanatomical (MRI)

#### Our main collaborations



































#### Science is a team sport

#### **RINED**







Patrizio Paoletti

Founder Patrizio

Paoletti Foundation



Tal Dotan Ben-Soussan Director RINED



Fabio Marson Researcher



Michele Pellegrino Researcher



Tania Di Giuseppe Researcher



Stefania Galiè Trainer

#### Theoretical & Electrophysiological







Joseph Glicksohn



**Rotem Leshem** 

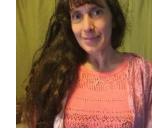


**Revital Naor** 

#### Motor & Behavioral







Caterina Pesce



Antonio De Fano

#### Molecular







Sabrina Venditti



Micaela Caserta



Michele Zampieri



Loredana Verdone

#### Neuroimaging









Filippo Carducci



Claudio Babiloni Carlo Quattrocchi



Claudia Piervincenzi



Stefano Lasaponara







# ife-changing research

## The impact of the research



350.000

Research hours in support of personal and social well-being



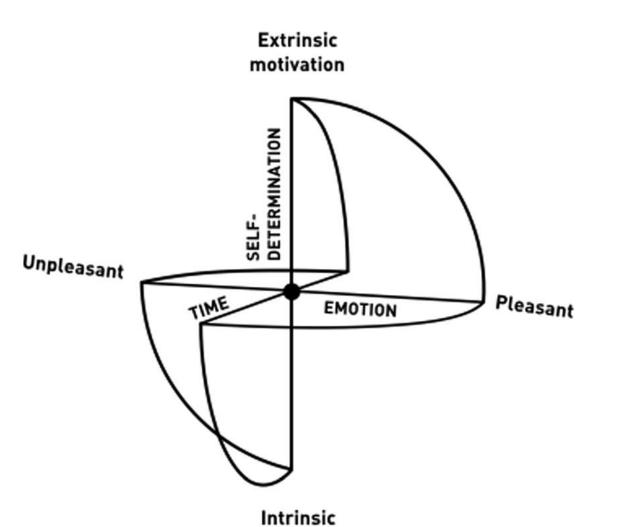
120.000

Specialists, neuroscientists, psychologists and researchers trained



285.000

Children, families and teachers reached by our educational projects



motivation

#### 5 innovative techniques

examined in over 14 labs, schools and hospitals throughout the world



FONDAZIONE PATRIZIO PAOLETTI

## Consciousness (SMC)

Sphere Model of

considered one of the most advanced and elegant models of consciousness

# Thank you!

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