

## Activity-based Stress Release – ABSR research project 2023

Information for physicians, psychotherapists, and institutions with potential study participants.

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### Short description of the research project

The research project aims to investigate how the therapeutic application of Rudolf Steiner's lecture "Overcoming Nervousness" through Activity-based Stress Reduction (ABSR) changes stress levels, affects participant satisfaction, and how the approach of the course instructors influences the outcome.

For this purpose, from September 30th to December 2nd, 2023, twelve ABSR online courses will be conducted in various languages with a target of 500 to 1000+ participants. The pages for the research project have recently been launched: [www.absr.international/project-2023](http://www.absr.international/project-2023)

This large cohort study aims to refine and harden the results of multiple pilot studies already completed (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4).

The Institute for Complementary and Integrative Medicine (IKIM) at the University of Bern will carry out the Data collection and analysis.

## Project Participants and their roles in the project

Technical implementation:	Eurythmy4you. Creation of ABSR online programs. Training and coordination of course instructors. Recruitment of participants. Technical and organizational implementation. Interface to IKIM, University of Bern. <a href="http://www.eurythmy4you.com">www.eurythmy4you.com</a>
Scientific research:	University of Bern, Institute for Complementary and Integrative Medicine, IKIM, Prof. Dr. med. Ursula Wolf. Scientific basis, data collection, data analysis, and dissemination. Implementation as part of a dissertation. <a href="http://www.ikim.unibe.ch">www.ikim.unibe.ch</a>
ABSR concept:	Perseus Research Society. Development of recommendations regarding the results predicted by Rudolf Steiner for ABSR: self-recognition, plausibility of the four-fold human being, and more stable health. <a href="http://www.perseus-forschung.org">www.perseus-forschung.org</a>

## What is the goal of the research project?

In 12 parallel conducted online ABSR courses, in several languages (German, English, Russian, Ukrainian, Spanish, and Chinese), with a total of 500 to 1000+ participants, the Institute for Complementary and Integrative Medicine, IKIM, will investigate whether significant positive effects on the general and psychological health and quality of life of the participants can be demonstrated in a pre-post survey.

The results will be evaluated by the Perseus Research Society to determine which aspects of human development underlie the changes observed and which aspects may be used for the further development of the 8-step ABSR concept.

## What hypotheses are being worked with?

ABSR promotes mindfulness of one's own thinking, feeling, and actions. This serves to improve attention and prevent memory problems, doubts and indecisiveness, burnout and depressive moods, post-traumatic stress disorders and anxieties, high sensitivity, psychosomatic complaints.

- Dr. Harald Haas already developed and published the basic ideas for a mindfulness-oriented anthroposophical group course based on Rudolf Steiner's lecture "Overcoming Nervousness" in 2006 (3.7) and 2007 (3.8), and in co-operation with Theodor Hundhammer (3.3). The correlations of the human constitution in its three-, four-, and seven- or eight-foldness play a decisive role in the ABSR concept (3.10).
- According to ICD-10, symptoms of neurotic and adaptation disorders as well as post-traumatic stress and somatoform disorders are based on an inner structure that was previously summarized under the term nervousness or nervous disorder. This term was also used by R. Steiner in his lecture on "Overcoming Nervousness"
- Through an understanding of the inner connection of these illnesses, systematic group programs for strengthening perception, thinking, feeling, willing, and acting can be developed based on the "active" everyday exercises proposed by Rudolf Steiner and the related eurythmic exercises.
- As now developed in the form of ABSR (3.11 and appendix), a new inner orientation can be developed and made available for everyday life. This is done with the help of the combination of mental, behavioural, and eurythmic exercises for dealing with the various forms of stress disorder, anxiety and nervousness

ABSR is a practical exercise and training path that, through simple exercises in daily life, leads to greater mental strength and effectiveness of the Self.

## Practical and theoretical context of the research project

The ABSR therapy concept based on Steiner's lecture "Overcoming Nervousness" (3.1) is referred to as either *Anthroposophy-based* or *Activity-based Stress Release (ABSR)*, in line with the well-known MBSR programs (2). The core aspect of the program is activity in daily life, accompanied by eurythmy.

- Unlike the well-known mindfulness-based MBSR programs, with the body scan at the center, which are based on Buddhist meditation practices and values, the ABSR courses do not focus on meditation. Instead, they build on grasping, penetrating and playfully changing activities in daily life in eight stages as a means of long-term stress reduction for seven forms of nervousness.
- Steiner's nervousness exercises are, unbeknown to many, a practical application of the Eightfold path of the Buddha, which he valued very highly. As such, the two programmes, MBSR and ABSR, have the same spiritual source and can be seen as siblings, as is made visible through the naming.

The "Perseus Research Society", established in 2021, is concerned with mutually defining and delimiting the two approaches in their individual characteristics and generating awareness of the differences.

## Practical and scientific significance

The research project aims to investigate the effectiveness of ABSR courses for the sustainable management of stress and how they can be improved to help people cope better with difficult situations.

The research project aims to develop a concept of the human I that can also be experienced by the average person. In so doing to help perceive patterns of stress-related behaviour and bring resolution in a gentle way.

If we can prove that simple exercises in everyday life in combination with little but targeted eurythmy have significantly positive effects on general and mental health and quality of life, as announced by Rudolf Steiner (3.1), we hope that it will stimulate the research community to ask further questions and promote the interdisciplinary discourse.

In the broadest sense, the project aims to raise awareness of the importance of stress management in society and to stimulate further research in this area.

## Research plan

Eurythmy4you is preparing a series of approximately 12 parallel ABSR courses in the autumn of 2023 with a target of 500 to 1000+ participants. They will be run by a multi-lingual, international team of course leaders trained by Eurythmy4you in 2022 and 2023. The target languages are English, German, Russian, Ukrainian, Spanish and Chinese.

Research Outline 23/24	April 23	May 23	June 23	July 23	Aug. 23	Sept. 23	Otc 23	Nov. 23	Dec. 23	Jan. 24	Feb. 24	March 24	April 24	May 24	June 24	July 24
Research activity	Study design	Questionnaires	Implementation	Data collection			Data evaluation			Writing the reports						
Recruitment	Planung	Rekrutierungskampagnen	Info Events													
Team, course leaders	Training of new course leaders		Preparation of courses		Conducting the courses											
Technical support	Website	Campaign support	Support Events	Support teams and participants												
Online courses	Developing	Translating	Implementing	Automations												

For the recruitment of participants, we particularly wish to address the following groups of people:

- People who are in general need of stress relief and personal empowerment.
- People who are exposed to a high level of stress at their workplace
- Health care workers
- Clients of psychologists
- Teachers and social therapists
- Parents

Participants answer scientifically validated questionnaires, checked by accredited interpreters where necessary. This will be done at the beginning, middle, end of the course and 8 weeks thereafter to record changes in stress levels and the intensity of their participation in the course. The trainers provide information on: the delivery of the course; adherence to or deviation from the standards; specifics of the group process and issues addressed.

The recruitment of the participants in the research project and the handling of the courses takes place on [www.absr.international](http://www.absr.international). For English, the project is already installed in the pilot stage: <https://www.absr.international/project-2023>. As soon as the project development is completed, the other languages will follow.

### **Costs and participation**

ABSR courses are conducted as online courses to meet the changing habits of users as well as the new technical possibilities.

Online courses are modern, look simple and have an invisible but elaborate background organisation. Besides, for the targeted number of 500 to 1000 test persons, there are special expenses for recruiting such high numbers of participants. Additionally, at least twelve course leader teams, with two persons each, have to be paid for two and a half months.

We expect to spend 157,000 Euros on this project.

To cover at least part of the costs, we depend on charging participation fees. We distinguish between the following price categories:

- Normal prices, graded according to country and economic circumstances (West/East, urban/rural).
- Prices for clients of cooperating psychotherapists, psychologists and doctors
- Group prices for employees of institutions and companies
- Individual case solutions including free access

Persons suffering from severe psychiatric disorders are asked to refrain from participating in the study.

### **Appeal to psychotherapists, psychologists and doctors**

We hope that this study will provide insights into how the ABSR concept can be used in psychotherapy. Either by the psychotherapists themselves guiding clients through the eight steps of the everyday exercises, or by recommending the online courses as an accompanying programme to therapeutic intervention or for intervention breaks. In order to arrive at reliable findings, two to four courses with participants from this environment would be needed.

If you are a psychotherapist, psychologist, doctor or psychiatrist and can imagine cooperating with us, please contact us. Then we could discuss how, and with which clients, participation is recommended and we can give you the code with which you and your clients receive the special price.

No data collection from your side is planned. Reimbursement for your efforts is possible if desired.

## Appeal to institutions and companies

For institutions and companies, we offer group prices for the participation of employees in the ABSR research project. Employees can either attend the course as a closed group or together with other participants in mixed groups.

In this course your employees can develop a new awareness of, and new possibilities for dealing with stress. As such it can play a significant role in their health care and general well-being. The measurable benefits will be established by the research results.

We adapt the times to your needs and run the 8-week course either during working hours or afterhours. Both 60-minute and 90-minute meetings are possible. It is best to call us to discuss your setting and needs in person.

## Appeal to sponsors

Can you help us to cover at least the basic costs so that we can successfully set up and run what we believe is an important and promising research project? That would be great! Please get in touch with us. We will be happy to present you with a detailed budget and explain it to you.

## Summary

We would be pleased if you would like to support the project. This may be done either by supporting it financially or by sending participants from your medical or therapeutic practice, institution or company to the courses. The courses will take place online from around 30 September to 2 December 2023. The times can be adapted to the needs of your clients or staff.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information.

Yours sincerely



**Theodor Hundhammer**  
Eurythmy4you



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## ANNEX

### Cooperating partners

#### Theodor Hundhammer



#### Eurythmy4you

Theodor Hundhammer is a graduate engineer and eurythmy therapist. He studied mechanical engineering at the Technical University of Braunschweig, with research activities in glider construction, the sugar industry and factory management. He then worked as a factory engineer at Wala Heilmittel GmbH. After studying eurythmy and eurythmy therapy, he moved to Switzerland, where he has been working as an eurythmy therapist in his own practice in Bern and Biel since 2006. From 2011 to 2019, Theodor Hundhammer was first a board member and later president of the Swiss Eurythmy Therapy Professional Association, HEBV-CH.

As a eurythmy therapist, he is looking for new ways to communicate eurythmy and eurythmy therapy and to experience the etheric forces in the human being. In his book "Eurythmy Therapy Quo Vadis" (4.3) he examines the widespread ideas about eurythmy therapy for their relevance and applicability. With Eurythmy on skis and corresponding videos, he has successfully been exploring ways of teaching eurythmy without direct personal contact, which until then had been considered impossible. The online platform Eurythmy4you was created in 2017, initially specifically to create and offer the ABSR courses. Numerous applications have since been added and Eurythmy4you is increasingly becoming a global company.

#### Dr. med. Harald Haas



#### Perseus Forschungsgesellschaft.

Dr. med. Harald Haas is a specialist in psychiatry and psychotherapy (FMH) in Bern and has been working in his own practice for 20 years. His dissertation, for his medical doctorate at the Institute for Social Medicine at the University of Heidelberg (Prof. Blomke), was an empirical research work on pre-existing cancer conditions. He then worked in anthroposophical clinics in the fields of internal medicine, general medicine and psychiatry in Germany and Switzerland. His specialisation took place in psychiatry and psychotherapy in Berne, most recently as senior physician and head physician in the Department of Gerontological Psychiatry of the University Psychiatric Services in Berne. He has a Certificate of competence in anthroposophically extended medicine from the Association of Anthroposophically Oriented Doctors in Switzerland (VAOAS) and in anthroposophical psychotherapy from the German Society for Anthroposophical Psychotherapy (DtGAP). He is an author and further lectures in medical, psychotherapy and art therapy trainings and adult education.

#### Prof. Dr. med. Ursula Wolf



#### Institute for Complementary and Integrative Medicine, IKIM, University of Bern

Prof. Dr. med. Ursula Wolf is the director of the Institute for Complementary and Integrative Medicine at the University of Bern, where she works in teaching, research and patient care. The focus of her research is on investigating the efficacy and safety of medicinal and non-medicinal integrative medical therapies, especially anthroposophic medicine. For her clinical training and as part of her research, she spent some time abroad, amongst others in Canada and as a postdoc and visiting scientist in the USA. She is past president of the International Society for Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine Research ISCMR and past president of the International Society on Oxygen Transport to Tissue (ISOTT).



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