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EMBODIED WELL-BEING:
A PROSILIENCE PROGRAMME FOR CALL CENTRE AGENTS

by

Walt Janse van Rensburg
14155355

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Supervisor: Prof. Marié-Heleen Coetzee
Co-Supervisor: Prof. Marth Munro

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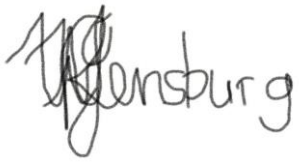
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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy (Drama) at the University of Pretoria, is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to this or any other institution of higher education. Where secondary sources have been used (either from a printed source, internet or any other source), this has been justly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with departmental requirements. I understand what plagiarism is and am aware of the University of Pretoria's policy in this regard.



Walt Janse van Rensburg

December 2024

ETHICS STATEMENT

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this Doctoral thesis, has obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval on the 28th of April 2022. The author declares that he has observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's Code of Ethics for researchers and the Policy guidelines for responsible research.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my mother, Moira. You have always been my best friend, my greatest supporter, and my constant source of strength. Thank you for your unwavering honesty, love, and prayers, even in my lowest moments. Thank you for attending every dance concert, competition, and production since I was seven years old, and for never complaining when I asked you to turn off the television to watch one of my impromptu home performances. By fully accepting me, with all my passions, quirks, faults, and flaws, you have made it possible for me to dream big and never give up, no matter the challenges, losses or failures that present themselves.

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I love you.

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I begin my acknowledgements with a quote from Stu Morris (2024:98−100) that served as a grounding reminder throughout this process:

> In pursuing prosilience, we often have the mistaken belief that success requires control over the external world. An understanding that life is precious, fragile, finite, and fleeting steers us to cherish every moment and focus on what we can influence — our thoughts and actions. […] To decide and see it through — understanding that the outcome will either be success or a learning experience — reinforces the notion that the only failure is quitting. This prosilient mentality roots itself in a gratitude that refuses to wilt under challenge. […] Through the lens of gratitude, challenges transform into powerful catalysts for growth and rejuvenation […] and learning to say "thank you" becomes much more than a courteous expression. It's the cornerstone of a life lived prosiliently, richly, and with strength.

Writing these acknowledgements feels surreal as I reflect on the incredible journey this PhD has been. While filled with challenges, it was made worthwhile by the unwavering support of many remarkable, prosilient individuals who carried me through. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the following people:

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In memory of my father, **Vis Janse van Rensburg**, I conclude my acknowledgements with his guiding words which aptly introduces the study:

Onthou altyd seun, mense is belangriker as dinge[1]*.*

[1] In English, this quote translates to: *Always remember son, people are more important than things.*

ABSTRACT

This study explores how full-time students, employed part-time as call centre agents in South Africa, can develop prosilience-related behaviours to manage stress and enhance their subjective well-being (SWB). The central aim of this study is to develop and facilitate an embodied prosilience programme (EPP) grounded in somatic practices to support call centre agents in mitigating stress.

This study is situated in the field of somatic practice. Somatic practice incorporates practices, such as embodied movement, that focus on creating awareness by having the individual reflect on their movement patterns and develop self-directed and personal movement capacity (Meehan & Carter 2021:2). Movement within somatic practice denotes a range of physical activities that prepare the individual for states of heightened physicality and vocality, aiming to enhance expressivity and optimise use of self (Potter, Adrian & Fleischer 2017:5).

Somatic practices have increasingly adopted a monist perspective of the bodymind, marking a departure from the dualist view that understands the body ‘and’ mind as separate entities. This shift may contribute to an awareness of embodied patterns, which could encourage more effective stress-management strategies (Payne 2021:2), and thereby enhance SWB.

Such strategies become pertinent in high-pressure work environments such as call centres. Well-being in the workplace is crucial, as it not only affects individual performance but also influences organisational culture and employee retention (Ladagga 2022:[sp]). Subjective well-being, which encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being, is particularly vulnerable to the pressures of chronic stress, especially in high-pressure environments. Call centre agents frequently experience stress due to their demanding workloads, repetitive tasks, and challenging customer interactions.

This study investigates how full-time students employed part-time as call centre agents in South Africa can develop prosilience-related behaviours to manage stress and improve their SWB within these demanding work environments. Programmes like the EPP may offer strategies that draw from somatic practices to mitigate stress and promote prosilience in the workforce.

The VUCA world involves volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, and the BANI world comprises brittleness, anxiety, non-linearity, and incomprehensibility. The VUCA/BANI world exacerbates stress in call centres and can have a detrimental effect on mental health, leading to burnout, absenteeism, and reduced job satisfaction (Banks & Roodt 2011:5).

In exploring ways to enhance SWB in the VUCA/BANI world, it is useful to consider Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which emphasises the importance of addressing basic (or deficiency) needs before individuals can focus on growth and self-actualisation. By using bodyminded practices such as somatic movement to build stress-prosilient behaviours, this study seeks to help call centre agents to address both deficiency needs and growth needs outlined in Maslow's hierarchy.

In terms of research praxis, I was guided by a constructivist worldview and research paradigm. I employed a qualitative approach to my research, and a phenomenographic research design. I used phenomenography as my research methodology as it enables a focus on exploring and understanding the different ways in which people experience and conceptualise phenomena (Khan 2014:34).

This methodological choice allowed me to observe and capture data on the subjective experiences of participants so as to understand how their participation in the EPP may have influenced their well-being. My phenomenographic data collection and analysis methods included semi-structured interviews before and after the EPP intervention, participant journaling, body mapping, participant observation, and video recordings to create a thick description of the participants' experiences of the EPP. I also employed a quasi-quantitative data collection method by using the workplace SBW assessment and comparison instrument, the workplace PERMA profiler, to ascertain the SWB profile of participants before and after their participation in the EPP.

My use of mainly qualitative methods with this latter quasi-quantitative instrument aided me in triangulating the various data collection methods to ensure a thorough analysis of the data I collected. I analysed the data by means of theme extraction, using data analysis tools such as ATLAS.ti. After theme extraction, I analysed and interpreted the data in relation to the main themes of the programme, interpersonal experience and intrapersonal experience.

This analysis of the participants' responses to the EPP demonstrated that, for the duration of the intervention, they gained prosilience-related behaviours and habits, primarily through the creation of their own pattern phrases. My interpretation of the data from the workplace PERMA profilers reveals that, overall, participation in the EPP enhanced participants' SWB, enabling them to cross thresholds into healthier ranges of functioning. This last reflects reductions in distress and enhanced experience of positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment at work, despite some inter-individual variability in relation to certain factors.

Key terms:

Embodied prosilience programme (EPP); somatic practices; subjective well-being (SWB); call centre agents; volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA); brittleness, anxiety, non-linearity, and incomprehensibility (BANI); prosilience skills; stress management; embodiment; bodymind; movement; monist perspective; Maslow's hierarchy of needs

GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION
AIDT	Association of International Dance Teachers; a non-profit examining body that promotes high standard syllabi in Modern/Jazz, Tap and Hip-Hop dancing, offering graded examinations and teacher certification worldwide (AIDT 2024:[sp])
ATLAS.ti	ATLAS is qualitative data analytical software that can aid one in searching for and generating codes once the researcher provides the raw data (Maguire & Delahunt 2017:3356).
BANI world	Brittle, anxious, non-linear and an incomprehensible context that extends the VUCA lens to emphasise fragility, anxiety and system unpredictability (Godoy & Filho 2021:1).
EPP	Embodied prosilience programme; a twelve-session somatic programme integrating LK, LBMS, SRT, Horton technique and tap dancing explorations to cultivate workplace prosilience.
EXCO	Executive committee; the senior management team mandated by the board to drive strategy implementation, risk oversight and ethical culture throughout the organisation (Wire 2023:[sp]).
HR	Human resources; the organisational function that manages recruitment, learning, performance, relations and reward to align people and strategy (Armstrong & Taylor 2020:5).
LBMS	Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies; a conceptual and practical framework for observing, recording, analysing, and creating movement (Fernandes 2015:84); consists of an integration of Laban Movement Analysis and the Bartenieff Fundamentals™.
LK	Lessac Kinesensics; a well-established, holistically developed approach that is ever emergent and continuously evolving as a bodyminded method for optimising body and voice usage in behaviour, communication, performance, and well-being (Munro 2017:93).
NRG	Energy and/ or neuro-regenerative growth; Lessac's term for the intrinsic vibratory energy states (body and vocal) that support expressive, self-regulated movement and vocal exploration (Lessac Training Institute 2024:[sp]).
OD	Organisation development; a system-wide application and transfer of behavioural-science knowledge to the planned development, improvement and reinforcement of the strategies, structures and processes that lead to organisational effectiveness (Cummings & Worley 2019:2).

PERMA	Five-pillar flourishing model that encompasses positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment (Butler & Kern 2016:13).
Prosilience	The dynamic process that leads to the effective and proactive adaption of the bodyminded self to taking action in possibly adverse and stressful circumstances.
SPAR	SPAR refers to the process of sensation, perception, awareness and response (Lessac 1990:23). Humans engage with their environments through the processes of sensation, perception, and response; by cultivating awareness, this interaction evolves into SPAR (Munro & Kinghorn 2022:8).
SRT	Skinner Releasing Technique; a holistic approach to movement facilitation that encourages a deep kinaesthetic awareness of movement (Neuhaus 2010:1).
SWB	Subjective well-being; a self-reported measure that provides direct insight into how individuals evaluate their lives, including cognitive and affective components (OECD 2013:29; Sahai & Mahapatra 2020:808).
VUCA world	Volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environments that characterise rapid, unpredictable change in twenty-first-century workplaces (Çiçeklioğlu 2020:231).

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study explores how an embodied prosilience programme (EPP), grounded in somatic movement practices that draw from the performing arts, may enhance the subjective well-being (SWB) of call centre agents. Call centres are high-stress environments where the demands of the job are compounded by the broader context of a working world increasingly characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA), as well as brittleness, anxiety, non-linearity, and incomprehensibility (BANI). In this chapter, I demonstrate that the VUCA/BANI world elevates the stress that call centre agents experience. The central aim of this study is to develop and facilitate an EPP grounded in somatic practices to support call centre agents in mitigating stress, exacerbated by the VUCA/BANI world, more effectively. The research demonstrates how mitigating stress effectively with improved prosilience-related capacities can enhance call centre agents' well-being.

Resilience is generally understood as the ability to recover from difficulties and is directly linked to higher levels of well-being (Raju 2019:742). However, thriving in a volatile and uncertain world requires a proactive approach to resilience, also known as prosilience (Hoopes 2017:1). Prosilience is the ability of a person to be intentionally prepared to face stressors (Enriquez 2024:462; I explain prosilience in more detail on pp. 139−141).

Call centres are high-pressure environments where agents frequently experience stress due to demanding workloads, repetitive tasks, and customer interactions. Stress in such contexts can lead to burnout, absenteeism, and reduced job satisfaction which detrimentally affects agents' mental health and well-being (Banks & Roodt 2011:5). Well-being in the workplace is crucial, as it influences not only individual performance but also organisational culture and employee retention (Ladagga 2022:[sp]). An important aspect to consider is SWB, as SWB is influenced by the mental health challenges that arise from workplace stress, made increasingly difficult to navigate by the VUCA/BANI world. Subjective well-being encompasses various dimensions, including emotional, psychological, and social well-being, which can be

negatively impacted by chronic stress. Programmes like the EPP may offer strategies to mitigate these effects and promote a healthier, more prosilient workforce.

Prior research on the performing arts demonstrates how artistic and creative practices enhance SWB in challenging environments. The performing arts (such as theatre, movement, dance and music) have long been recognised for their potential to improve SWB. Prior research demonstrates that these modes of performing arts, and associated creative processes, have the potential to provide a creative and expressive outlet that supports emotional regulation, personal development, rejuvenation and stress reduction (see, for example, Anand & Kumar 2013, Barth 2023, Fong Yan, Nicholson, Ward, Hiller, Dovey, Parker, Low, Moyle & Chan 2024, Wall, Fries, Rowe, Malone & Österlind 2020, as well as Wong & Clammer 2017).

Anand and Kumar (2013:242) interviewed performing artists including dancers, actors and musicians to highlight how creative practices foster positive emotional experiences and life. Wheatley and Bickerton (2017:27) found that arts engagement, such as attending theatre, positively influences leisure experiences and contributes to SWB. Devlin's (2009:27–65) case studies demonstrate that arts participation promotes both physical and emotional well-being, with frequent references to people, health, and arts. Melchionne (2017:201) argues that it is not necessarily the mastery of artistic skills that contributes to improved SWB, but rather participation in the process of artistic creation and enquiry.

Gül and Çağlayan (2017:567) note that students in arts-based (drama) classes experience enhanced relationships, life purpose, and self-acceptance. Students of similar programmes that utilise work-based role-play and other creative practices also experienced an increase in self-awareness, understanding of new perspectives, and enhanced preparation “to encounter the challenges of working life” (Kettula 2012:58).

These studies allowed participants to explore realistic work situations since drama allows the participants to practise real-life situations in a safer environment, “avoiding learning restricted to a particular work setting”, while “learning through reflection, and avoiding potential conflicts between real-life stakeholders” (Kettula 2012:61). Although aligning with the workplace, as also occurs in this study, the studies I mention above do not necessarily focus on facilitating resilience or prosilience.

However, there are various studies on facilitating resilience in the workplace – see, for example, Hayes, Chumney and Buckingham (2020), Ratanjee (2020), as well as Marone (2020). Moreover, there are several studies that specifically use arts to facilitate resilience in the workplace. For example, Koglmeier (2022) uses dance and play to build resilience in working individuals, and Matto and Sullivan (2024) explore how first responders can become more resilient after creative wellness activities such as music, painting, and mindfulness training.

There are many African and South African Organisation development (OD) and somatic practitioners whose work contribute substantively to embodied understandings of wellness at work. These practitioners focus mostly on trauma, psychosocial resilience, and social justice through organisational transformation. Mlilo (2024), founder of the Phola organisation, draws on Ubuntu-informed narrative therapy to support community-based trauma healing, observing that healing becomes possible when stories are told, named, and heard in culturally safe spaces. Her work exemplifies the integration of embodied storytelling and culturally attuned care.

Njomane (2024), a social innovator affiliated with the Bertha Centre for Social Innovation, has developed participatory, decolonial OD approaches that centre power, voice, and organisational transformation in post-apartheid South Africa. Pather (2024), a leading somatic facilitator, has long employed body mapping, systemic constellations, and Biodanza to navigate organisational trauma and facilitate embodied reflection in teams.

These applied frameworks are supported by scholarly contributions such as Nosworthy (2020), who integrates ecopsychological and somatic rituals into South African drama therapy, arguing that the body itself holds the narrative of trauma and can release it through sensory ritual. In a similar vein, Lowry (2020) explores the somatic dimensions of caregiving stress, noting that distress manifests somatically in the caregiver's body and is mediated through culturally situated coping mechanisms.

Makube (2024) interrogates the lived experiences of black professional women in South African corporate spaces, foregrounding embodiment as a site of resistance and adaptation, where marginality is negotiated through silence, code-switching, and internalised regulation. Phaswana (2024) explores trauma linked to sedentary

workplace environments, emphasising the intersection of embodiment, burnout, and African-centred wellness practices.

In the field of applied arts, Draper-Clarke (2024) has developed the Healing Arts Pedagogy and Practices (HAPPy) framework, a trauma-informed, arts-based training curriculum grounded in embodied awareness. She argues that nervous system regulation is foundational for pro-social connection and communal healing (Draper-Clarke 2024). Magubane (2019) interrogates the embodied dimensions of blackness in the South African professional workplace, drawing attention to the emotional and somatic toll of structural marginality and exclusion. Finally, Dibobo, Ngonyama-Ndou and Mncwabe (2022) advance an OD framework for managing racial and gender diversity in South African workplaces, asserting that resistance to transformation is deeply psychosocial and must be addressed through reflective, not merely procedural, facilitation. Trauma, social justice and organisational transformation fall outside the scope of this study, but the work of these OD practitioners exemplify how the arts can be used to enhance well-being.

Similarly, Baxter and Low's (2017) anthology documents ways in which applied theatre has been used in addressing health and well-being across a range of contexts and communities. Chapter 9 in the anthology focuses on the intersection of theatre and movement in the context of health and self-care, demonstrating that artistic expression through movement, can facilitate shifts in well-being (Baxter & Low 2017:205−228).

Research on dance and movement, specifically, substantiates the role of dance and movement practices in promoting well-being. Notable studies by Mansfield, Kay, Meads, Grisby-Duffy, Lane, John, Daykin, Dolan, Testoni, Julier, Payne, Tomlinson and Victor (2018), Malkina-Pykh (2014) and Hrusova (2015), as well as by Aujla and Needham-Beck (2020) explore movement's potential for enhancing well-being. Hanna (2017), Thomson and Jaque (2016), and Nutu and Munteanu (2017) specifically examine the effects of dance and movement in relation to stress. Their research findings show that movement and dance help with navigating stress and building resilience. This research is of particular interest in the context of my research as it directly outlines the relationship between movement, dance, and stress.

At the time of conducting and documenting my research, I had not found research in English or Afrikaans that directly explores how the performing arts enhance SWB in call centres. The closest research I found involved the use of participatory workshops that focus on job redesign in call centres to enhance well-being (Holman & Axtell 2018), a study that likens the call centre to a space for metaphoric navigation and movement to aid the customer interaction process (Ellway 2014), and a study that analyses a call centre and likens communicating with customers to a choreographed event, in an attempt to aid agents in articulating themselves more clearly over the phone (Whalen, Whalen & Henderson 2002). Despite their relevance, none of these studies address individual stress navigation in order to enhance well-being.

Studies addressing call centre well-being (e.g., Doellgast & O'Brady 2020; Kumar 2019; Miller & Hendrickse 2016; Shepell 2008; Van der Westhuizen & Bezuidenhout 2017) tend to concentrate on management strategies rather than creative practices such as dance or movement. Although management strategies and styles have a significant impact on well-being in the workplace (Doellgast & O'Brady 2020:9), in a call centre, the well-being of call centre agents is of equal importance.

There are several studies that focus on increasing the well-being of call centre agents and encouraging them to practice resilience (see, for example, Akanji 2016, CCMA 2023, and Harry 2015). Nonetheless, these studies do not focus on the application of movement and dance to navigate stress within a call centre environment. This study seeks to fill that gap by integrating somatic movement practices – approaches that emphasise embodied awareness and intentionality in movement – to facilitate stress prosilience and enhance SWB among call centre employees.

The field of somatic practice serves as the foundation for this study. Somatics (which I delineate in Chapter 5.2) encompasses "ways of working with the body that are educational, creative, and physically expressive" (Mullan 2014:253). I specifically focus on somatics within the performing arts as it was used to create the EPP. The performing arts and somatic practice share a focus on embodied engagement and self-expression. This shared focus provides a foundation for understanding how an EPP can contribute to enhanced SWB.

Somatic practice incorporates modalities such as embodied movement (see pp. 155-157) that focus on creating awareness through reflection on an individual's patterns and developing self-directed and personal movement capacity (Meehan & Carter 2021:2). Embodied movement within somatic practice denotes a range of physical activities that prepare the individual for states of heightened physicality and vocality, aiming to enhance expressivity and optimise self-use (Potter *et al.* 2017:5). Over the past two decades, the concept of embodied movement in somatic practice has developed to embrace the monist perspective of the bodymind, viewing the body 'and' mind as interconnected (as I explain on pp. 102-105), leading to a holistic perception and experience of embodiment (Camilleri 2020; Munro & Coetzee 2007; Zarilli 2007). Such holism contributes to and foregrounds the bodymind as multimodal. This multimodal "state of being" in turn manifests in the presence and expression of the bodymind as a monist self (Munro 2018:7).

Due to monist bodymindedness, individuals have the capacity to gain new embodied cognition. Embodied cognition views "knowledge as embodied action" (Colonna 2024:452), underlining the idea that cognition is formed through the experience of the interconnected bodymind in and as part of the broader context in which action occurs. Building upon this understanding of embodied cognition and its roots in monist bodymindedness, the study outlines embodied cognition's potential to develop the human capabilities necessary to face stress in the VUCA/BANI world. Colonna (2024:454) states that embodied cognition "can become an effective way of developing the human competences needed to face today's global challenges". I argue that somatic practices may facilitate embodied cognition that can lead to enhanced SWB.

Somatic practice has been employed in a variety of contexts to facilitate greater self-awareness, emotional release, and connection to others, all of which are essential components of well-being. Within the field of health and well-being, somatic practice has been found to aid individuals in becoming more resilient (see, for example, Nguyen, Le, Tran & Tran 2024; Smith, Shatté, Perlman, Siers & Lynch 2018, and Winblad, Changaris & Stein 2018).

In the domains of theatre, movement and dance, somatic practice offers a means of deeply engaging with the bodymind's inner experiences and responses. Within these

domains, somatic practice is used to enhance an individual's awareness of their physical and emotional states, enabling a fuller range of expression and responsiveness. This is done by fostering an embodied understanding of movement, breath, and presence, through somatic techniques that allow individuals to expand their physical and emotional expressivity, fostering embodiment, and enhancing self-use during movement. In the domain of movement, specifically, somatic practice enables participants to actively engage with their environment, encouraging both learning and growth (Rigg 2017:6). This form of movement becomes an "endless source for supporting the artistic [and] educational […] process" (Dinold 2013:103).

Somatic movement education places particular emphasis on "attention to body sensations and interpreting them with a perspective that aims to enhance a quality of life in which one stays present, mindful, even while moving" (Eddy 2017:7). Through this mindful engagement with the self, individuals can improve their well-being. I argue that this can occur by facilitating embodied cognition in the form of prosilience-related capacities.

The EPP I construct in this study aims to foster prosilience by incorporating somatic movement practices, which may support individuals in managing stress and potentially enhance their SWB. Payne (2021:2) highlights how somatic practice helps individuals feel more in control and better equipped to handle stress. By fostering body awareness, emotional regulation, and adaptive responses, somatic practice equips agents with tools to manage stress proactively, enhancing both resilience and prosilience.

It is important to note that this research is not located in the domain of therapy. I do not use drama therapy, movement/dance therapy, or somatic movement therapy as part of this research. My focus is on exploring a somatic mode of engagement in the context of a call centre for the purpose of fostering an agentic approach to navigating personal stress in the workplace via prosilience for enhanced SWB.

In exploring ways to enhance well-being, it is useful to consider Maslow's hierarchy of needs (I explain this concept on pp. 21−26). Maslow's hierarchy of needs offers a perspective on the relationship between well-being and prosilience. In Maslow's hierarchy, well-being is supported as each level of need – from physiological

necessities to self-actualisation – is fulfilled (Uysal & Genç 2017:215–216). Deficiency needs, which include physiological needs, safety, belonging, and esteem, are essential for foundational well-being (Ghaleb 2024:1030); their absence can lead to stress and hinder an individual's capacity for prosilience. When these needs are unmet, individuals are likely to focus energy on survival rather than on cultivating prosilience.

As deficiency needs are satisfied, individuals progress to growth needs, characterised by self-actualisation. In this growth-oriented phase, individuals experience well-being not only as a sense of security but as an opportunity for personal fulfilment and development (Ghaleb 2024:1030). This state aligns closely with prosilience, which goes beyond basic resilience by encouraging individuals to anticipate and adapt to future stressors with a proactive, growth-oriented mindset (Enriquez 2024:463). Thus, meeting both deficiency and growth needs is important for fostering well-being in challenging environments, such as call centres, where prosilience enables individuals to navigate stress with adaptability and to thrive despite pressures. By using somatic movement practices to facilitate enhanced stress prosilience, this study seeks to address both the deficiency needs and growth needs outlined by Maslow. This approach addresses a gap, as research (which I outline in the following section) indicates that management in many call centres often overlooks the role of stress resilience and prosilience in sustaining employee well-being and performance.

1.2 Broad overview of call centre management

As Morley and Robinson (2006:298) argue, neglecting to engage actively with call centre agents' stress resilience needs not only impacts on individual well-being but also diminishes the organisation's overall capacity to adapt in challenging conditions. This study, therefore, aims to build on prior research by exploring how somatic practice can meet this pressing need, supporting agents with a proactive, body-centred approach to stress management and well-being. By integrating selected somatic practices, organisations might better support their agents' abilities to manage stress and navigate the challenges of their high-pressure environment. I present this argument in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

Soyinka (2019:[sa]) calls South African call centres a “trap for young people” since they might pay well,[2] but the constant stress, with few resources to become resilient (or prosilient) in relation to that stress, makes the environment seem “demotivating, frustrating and strenuous”. From personal experience, I have noticed the same in my workplace,[3] a call centre that employs only young students as call centre agents. As I explained earlier, various studies indicate how call centre agents need help to improve their well-being and succeed in these environments (see, for example, Akanji 2016, CCMA 2023, and Harry 2015).

In a study focused on South African call centres specifically, Harry (2015:10) indicates that organisational practices should cultivate “resiliency-related behavioural capacities”, since these are crucial resources to improve well-being (Harry 2015:10). Focusing on developing personal attributes of employees, such as time management or better planning, through professional development initiatives so that agents perform better does little to address well-being in the workplace. Kaniaru (2020:ii) indicates that employee assistance programmes[4] are utilised in some South African call centres to enhance well-being, but not all agents are aware of or have access to these resources.

There are no such programmes available in the call centre in which I work. Management has an open-door policy and there are toll-free numbers that agents can dial for personal guidance and help. As a result, there is no active use of programmes that support well-being or enhance stress prosilience in this call centre. I argue that the lack of such programmes results in lowered stress prosilience capabilities. This results in lowered well-being for the call centre agents. This study thus recommends a need in this specific call centre for a programme that addresses the well-being of call centre agents. In particular, a programme to enhance call centre agents’ stress prosilience. It is in this regard that I propose using somatic practices to create an EPP.

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[2] At the time of this study, agents receive an average gross salary of between R10 000 and R25 000, depending on their targets and their quality of work.
[3] I have been employed in this call centre from February 2019 until the time of this thesis.
[4] Employee assistance programmes are programmes that workplaces offer to employees for personal and social aid (Mogorosi 2014:343).

In what follows, I provide a background to and contextualisation of the research. To contextualise my research, I discuss the notions of VUCA and BANI as descriptors of the continuously changing world in order to frame how this world affects the bodymindedness of individuals. Through the lens of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, I examine how stress hampers individuals in meeting deficiency and consequently growth needs in order to outline how call centre agents can navigate stress to meet these needs. In outlining the need for the EPP, I discuss specifically how call centre agents experience stress in the South African context (pp. 27−29) as well as investigating existing stress management programmes.

1.3 Background and contextualisation

I studied somatic and other embodied practices during my BA Drama undergraduate and postgraduate (honours and masters) studies at the University of Pretoria (2014 to 2020).[5] I also completed a human resource management course at the University of Stellenbosch Business School in 2020. As a call centre agent and fulltime university student (February 2018 to February 2019), I acquired first-hand experience in making outbound calls for the purpose of marketing. The same company then appointed me as a motivation and development executive in February 2019, and then promoted me to assistant manager in July 2022.

Within the company, call centre agents[6] spend the majority of their workday seated, managing high levels of stress in a physically static environment. This setting not only limits their physical movement but also restricts opportunities for embodied engagement that could alleviate stress. In the VUCA and BANI world in which these

[5] My training in embodied practices includes courses such as introductory workshops in both Laban Movement Analysis (2016) and Lessac Kinesensics (2017). My honours' physical theatre and live performance courses also focused on training and teaching other individuals in embodied practices. My master's practical component further homed in on the training and choreographing of other individuals by using embodied practices. I have also been a guest lecturer at the Tshwane University of Technology and the University of Pretoria, and a dance teacher at Dance de Art for two years, at Rhythm of Hope Dance during 2022 and 2023, and Ignite Dance Studio during 2023 and 2024, where I also used embodied practices to facilitate growth and learning. I have constantly been using principles found in embodied practices as part of my daily routine to facilitate an ongoing experience of these approaches and how they change in relation to my own personally unique growth.

[6] The company's employee profile is multicultural.

agents operate, the constant demands for adaptability, emotional regulation, and rapid response further intensify the pressures they face.

Without supportive programmes, such as those offered by an EPP, agents may miss the chance to develop prosilience and maintain well-being amid these challenges. In the absence of such resources, agents are left to manage the complex stresses of a VUCA/BANI world without adequate tools, which can ultimately impact on both their well-being and on job performance.

During my time as a call centre agent, I was also confronted with the VUCA/BANI world and became aware of how it affected my well-being. In my search to function effectively, I started investigating the ever-changing call centre environment. My background in movement and somatic practice enabled me to identify ways in which to orientate and align my own body more effectively, which initiated the idea of how a focus on embodied strategies may enhance the SWB of call centre agents.

When I was promoted into a position of management, I wanted to create an EPP to investigate whether somatic practice could not only get the agents moving, but also facilitate prosilience-related capacity in the midst of the constantly evolving world. I contextualise this ever-changing environment within a call centre by drawing on current descriptors, namely the VUCA and BANI world.

1.3.1 The VUCA world

The acronym, VUCA, stands for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (Çiçeklioğlu 2020:231). Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus coined the term in the late 1990s to exemplify the conditions that armed forces dealt with as they fought in Operation Desert Storm (Lawrence 2013:2). Authors and business leaders began using the term to describe the challenges that leaders and members of management face in dynamic environmental, cultural, and societal contexts (Anderson 2017:1). The VUCA world includes four similar yet distinct challenges, each represented by a letter of the acronym:

- Volatility (V): The unstable nature and dynamics of the rapidly changing context in which decisions are made (Shaffer & Zalewski 2011:66);

- Uncertainty (U): Unpredictable and unreliable outcomes due to a lack of knowledge or the inability to determine the meaningfulness and outcomes of future proceedings (Bennett & Lemoine 2014:314);
- Complexity (C): The perplexing and multi-faceted nature of issues and the overwhelming confusion associated with this (Raghuramapatruni & Kosuri 2017:16); and
- Ambiguity (A): When the significance of occurrences is vague, and the nature of cause-and-effect relationships is uncertain (Bennett & Lemoine 2014:316).

The acronym, VUCA, is useful for identifying risks in stress-inducing environments but does not give any practical advice on how to respond to these risks and changes. Importantly, the VUCA world is not a universal and stable world or experience. Kraaijenbrink (2019:[sp]) suggests that practitioners might be able to establish and measure volatility and complexity, but that "uncertainty and ambiguity are more of a perceptual nature" and are experienced differently by various individuals in various contexts. Kubiena (2020:[sp]) agrees and adds that seeing VUCA as making a universal claim about the world "ignore[s] and fail[s] to account for what the concept sets out to describe: namely, that […] stability and predictability can and do exist side-by-side with situations characterized by volatility and unbearable uncertainty, paired with a high degree of complexity and further complicated by ambiguity".

McAlonan (2018:[sp]) argues that practitioners often use the VUCA world as an excuse for poor management, in order to not have to provide solutions or truly consider the root of problems in the workplace. I use VUCA both as a manner of identifying problems and as a framework to help identify how agents navigate their unique experiences. For example, I do not assume that the participants simply experience a VUCA world and that therefore they are stressed. I use interviews, questionnaires, and reflections to identify how they react to change caused by stress, and how they react to volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity once they become more stress prosilient. I also understand that the world itself is not only volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous, but also that being prosilient towards this world and the role it may play in creating stress can aid individuals to proactively deal with situations when these elements are present.

Robert Johansen (2007:46) states that "the VUCA world is all about change, including both dangerous ruptures and positive innovation. Inspiring strategies are hidden in the volatilities, uncertainties, complexities, and ambiguities". This indicates that change can be both negative and disruptive, but also positive and uplifting if managed effectively. Johansen developed a complementary framework known as VUCA prime that addresses the dimensions encompassed by VUCA by using vision, understanding, clarity and agility (Lawrence 2013:6):

- Vision (V): Addressing volatility by having a clear idea and vision so that one stays on course when external circumstances are turbulent (Hillson 2017:1);
- Understanding (U): Investing considerable time and energy in listening and communicating all available information to employees to build trust, gain confidence, and reduce uncertainty (Hillson 2017:1);
- Clarity (C): Deliberately trying to make sense of particulars in all situations so complex situations become intelligible and clear (Lawrence 2013:6); and
- Agility (A): Being flexible in our approach so that any ambiguous situations lead to experimenting with quick solutions (Lawrence 2013:6).

During disruptive change, such as the Covid-19 pandemic,[7] when the VUCA world possibly became even more amplified, management needs to focus on advantages and opportunities by considering the four dimensions encompassed by VUCA prime. Çiçeklioğlu (2020:229) states that "none of the classic management techniques make sense anymore". This study aims to move beyond these techniques by means of the EPP.

To utilise the principles exemplified by VUCA prime, management needs to be creative and introduce more effective ideas (Çiçeklioğlu 2020:241) that fulfill the needs of all employees. However, some theorists suggest that VUCA has become inadequate to

[7] The coronavirus is a virus family; a novel coronavirus was identified in 2019: the "severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2)", that causes "a highly contagious disease called coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)" (Lone & Ahmad 2020:1300). Covid-19 is "highly contagious, spread globally in a short period of time, and was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization on 11 March 2020" (Lone & Ahmad 2020:1300).

explaining the world as the coronavirus pandemic changed the situation of the world from “complex to chaos” (Agilität 2020:[sp]).

To address the changing issues of the twenty-first century, theorists moved beyond VUCA to consider the world as BANI, an acronym coined by Jamais Cascio (Menaria 2024:2). The BANI world builds on the ideas of the VUCA world to further frame and explain the current world in which individuals find themselves. This study aims to focus on the current situation in which call centre agents find themselves, and therefore considers both the needs of the VUCA and BANI world.

1.3.2 The BANI world

The acronym, BANI, stands for “brittle, anxiety, non-linearity and incomprehensible” (Godoy & Filho 2021:1). Whereas volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) alludes to a world in which conditions are hard to foresee, BANI alludes to a newer world where conditions are completely unpredictable (Cascio 2020:[sp]).

The four components encompassed by BANI are (Mugabe 2022:[sp]):

- Brittle (B): The easily breakable nature of circumstances (Mugabe 2022:[sp]). Cascio (2020:[sp]) defines brittleness as “illusory strength”; here, systems appear to be continuing with strength but can suddenly shatter at any given time;
- Anxiety (A): The VUCA world has given rise to anxiety which links to “the anguish and stress of our present times” that causes individuals to become tense and, as a result, passive (Sridharan 2022:[sp]);
- Non-linearity (N): Cause and effect are no longer assessable or linear (Agilität 2020:[sp]), which means that beyond being merely complex, results of decisions have become disconnected or disproportional (Sridharan 2022:[sp]); and
- Incomprehensible (I): When events or circumstances are impossible to understand because the events and decisions become illogical or senseless (Cascio 2020:[sp]).

Compared to the VUCA world, the BANI world evolves and changes even more rapidly (Menaria 2024:3). The BANI world indicates that individuals and systems are not

adaptable, but rather rigid, vulnerable, and non-resilient (Botea-Muntean & Constantinescu 2024:42). In the call centre, the agents reflect this with their heightened susceptibility to stress, burnout, and emotional fatigue, as they navigate unpredictable customer demands, constant performance-monitoring and a shifting work environment. These pressures often expose limitations in adaptability and resilience within the call centre environment, amplifying agents' feelings of instability and anxiety.

Similar to the VUCA world, the BANI world provides only a language to describe what is going on, but it does not provide solutions (Grabmeier 2020:[sp]). Cascio (2020:[sp]) and Alvarez (2021:[sp]) indicate that, similarly to VUCA, there are ways to address each of the four challenges:

- Resilience and flexibility can address brittleness;
- Empathy and mindfulness can address anxiety;
- Context and flexibility can address non-linearity; and
- Transparency and intuition can address incomprehensibility.

To effectively address the human needs of the call centre agents in this study through the EPP, I incorporate VUCA prime as well as principles designed to navigate the complexities of the BANI world. Rather than treating VUCA prime and BANI principles in isolation, I demonstrate how appropriate responses to these frameworks can interconnect to mitigate stress and meet the holistic needs of the bodyminded self (see Chapter 4). It is important to recognise that the effectiveness of these strategies may vary across cultural contexts.[8] Cultural contexts and differences play a significant role in how individuals perceive and respond to stress, prosilience, and embodiment, which must be accounted for in the creation and implementation of the programme.

1.3.3 Cultural complexities

Lebrón (2013:126) defines culture as "a set of values and beliefs, or a cluster of learned behaviours that we share with others in a particular society, giving us a sense

[8] A delineation of various cultural contexts falls outside the scope of the study.

of belongingness and identity".[9] Individuals can belong to a certain social group, such as a family or religious group that shares common values. Shavitt, Lee and Johnson (2008:1103) describe culture as including "elements that provide standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, communicating, and acting among those who share a language, a historical period, geographical locations", practices, artefacts, and the like.

Phillips (2018:206) states that "examining the influence of culture [in any domain] makes [individuals] realise that there exist several perspectives when interpreting [the] world". For example, a white dress in an advertisement would traditionally signify purity to people in Western[10] societies, but death to people in some East Asian cultures, such as in China, Japan, and Korea (Kastanakis 2014:6). This is an example of cultural difference. In a multicultural society, these phenomena are therefore experienced differently by everyone, due to their culture(s). In this way, culture can influence the way in which individuals perceive and respond to phenomena (Csordas 1990:37).

Every culture is distinctly formed by a set of "physical environments, historical context, political events, and dominant religions and philosophies" (Wong, Wong & Scott 2006:2). These differences can diminish when the hegemony of a certain culture dominates others. These hegemonic workings in culture involve discrepancies in hierarchy, control, and influence (Cortes-Ramirez 2015:118). Culture is therefore not neutral or static; rather, it is influenced by the workings and decisions of those in power or those who have influence over the majority of a social group.

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[9] I do not unproblematically accept this definition. The concept of culture is more nuanced, but such a discussion falls outside the scope of this study.

[10] "Western" refers to Europe, the UK, North America, and Australia. These encompass historically dominant traditions that, through colonisation, globalisation, and hegemony, became the exemplars that are internationally recognised as the 'main' customs and practices. The power thus lies with Western traditions since they descend from these societies to dominate subordinate traditions in other societies so as to enable the idea of collective purposes or general interests for society as a whole (Beetham, cited in Pozo 2007:55). Although these traditions and countries are vastly different, historical cultural hegemony grounded in Western modernity saw patterns of similarities arise in thinking about the supposed universality of practices, knowledge, modes of thinking, and being-in-the-world.

Cultural contexts, including the dynamics of cultural hegemony, determine and shape the resources available to individuals (Chun, Moss & Cronkite 2006:33). This includes internal resources available for dealing with stressors. Yeh, Arora and Wu (2006:55) explain the difference between individualism (where the self is central within the culture) and collectivism (where the group forms the centre of culture) when discussing how culture influences cognition, emotion, and motivation. Cordas (1993:138) refers to the ways in which individuals change in relation to their environments as modes of attention or "culturally elaborated ways of attending to and with one's body in surroundings that include the presence of others".

In this way, culture has an influence on individual's responses to stress. Culture is the way individuals and groups approach and respond to stressful situations (Chun *et al.* 2006:30). More specifically, appropriate support and stress management systems within a culture can lead to enhanced well-being for the collective (Kuo 2012:3). In this study, the collective consists of South African call centre agents, each with their own socio-cultural history. To remain sensitive to the diverse South African backgrounds of the participants, I recognise the wide array of cultural influences that shape each individual's socio-cultural identity. In what follows, I outline my positionality as a white South African male, and how this might affect my perceptions and interactions. As a white male researcher in South Africa investigating multi-cultural call centre agents, I acknowledge that my racial and cultural background, as well as my gender and white privilege, may shape my perceptions and interactions within the diverse call centre setting.

Being white, South African, and male were ascribed to me and may be regarded as being 'fixed'. Holmes (2020:2) argues that "fixed aspects may predispose someone towards a particular point or point of view, however, that does not mean that these necessarily automatically lead to particular views or perspectives". I consider myself a researcher who lives outside of my 'expected' norms. Living as a homosexual man, one who asked his parents to dance at the age of 7, I have always found comfort in the transformative effects of the performing arts. I discussed my experiences and qualifications in the field in Section 1.3. As an insider in the call centre environment, I have constantly tried to find ways of employing embodied movement to help myself navigate stress. My focus on only helping myself shifted during my master's studies,

which were concurrent with my moving into senior management in the call centre. This gave me a broader view of individuals working there, illustrating that I was not alone in dealing with stress in the call centre.

Guided by a constructivist worldview (see pp. 44−46), I recognise that knowledge is constructed through subjective experience, and I aimed to engage collaboratively with participants while remaining reflexive about how my positionality might influence the research process. I am committed to creating an environment that acknowledges and honours various diversities; an environment where there is a striving for equality so that inclusivity can become a reality for all the participants. This, so that each participant may experience belonging, and share their subjective experience with greater ease.[11]

I incorporated knowledge gained from various South African practitioners who presented workshops and interventions into the EPP, ensuring that this knowledge is passed on tacitly (Bhola 2002:8). Tacit knowledge refers to the "knowledge, skills, and abilities an individual gains through experience that are often difficult to put into words or otherwise communicate" (Oragui 2023:[sp]). Because tacit knowledge is acquired and conveyed through lived experiences, it becomes a form of knowing, deeply connected to the self. Ngara's (2007) work highlights the tacit and creative dimensions of knowledge in South African cultures, where knowing is often non-verbal and embedded in practice. I utilised various somatic approaches to facilitate this tacit creation of knowledge in the EPP.

While the EPP is rooted in what is considered Western somatic practices,[12] emphasis on tacit and somatic knowledge recognises the shared possibility of embodied knowing across cultures. Though cultural understandings and expressions of tacit knowledge differ, tapping into such dimensions of knowledge and knowing within the workplace with employees adds depth to the organisational knowledge landscape

[11] In communication and conversation, I am committed to behave in a way that promotes diversity, equality, inclusivity, and belonging (a discussion of such practices falls outside the scope of the study). As such, I invite the idiosyncratic life worlds and selves into the facilitation process.
[12] This is not to be confused with my behavioural communication patterns (see footnote 11).

(Adesina & Ocholla 2024:2). The EPP acknowledges the importance of embodied knowing in the creation of tacit knowledge, especially focusing on non-verbal experience.

In organisations, certain non-verbal practices are also embedded in the organisational culture. Organisational culture refers to “goals that should be pursued and standards of behaviour that should be maintained by employees as they pursue those goals” (Amah 2013:43). In the call centre, this includes the shared values and learned behaviours of the agents within the larger ambit of the organisation. For example, the company encourages employees to adhere to its mission statement. Within that, however, the call centre agents are multi-cultural since they do not just belong to one culture but constantly navigate between various cultures elicited by their familial, student and work lives (amongst others).

Wade (2006:350) discusses the idea that organisational culture frequently harbours covert discriminatory practices that individuals of certain groups must mediate. Dibobo, Ngonyama-Ndou and Mncwabe (2022) illuminate the persistence of gender and racial segregation in post-apartheid organisations. They emphasise the need for line managers to be equipped with transformative tools to address systemic inequality and psychosocial distress in diverse teams. Similarly, Magubane’s (2019) investigation into the embodied experience of blackness in the South African workplace reveals the enduring effects of marginalisation and emotional strain on identity, productivity, and interpersonal agency. Her work underscores the value of embodied interventions that not only build individual resilience but also confront structural and affective exclusion. While the EPP does not seek to reform systemic inequality or challenge the structural fabric of the organisation, it aims to provide a space in which participants from diverse backgrounds can engage in movement-based explorations that acknowledge their unique identities and physical capacities.

Nevertheless, these structural inequalities may hinder a sense of belonging for certain individuals, thereby compounding their stress. This increased stress may diminish their capacity to pursue cognitive, aesthetic, or self-actualisation goals (see Maslow’s hierarchy, pp. 21–26), as their more basic deficiency needs — such as safety, belonging, and relief from stress-induced physiological arousal — remain unmet.Members of management in corporate organisations therefore require

sensitivity since everyone shares a common workplace culture in which various individuals with various personal cultures and ways of being meet and interact. This means that individuals' experiences of how they live in and as part of their organisational culture change in relation to other individuals and their unique cultures in the larger workplace culture. The call centre agents make meaning through their belonging to various groups, but culture moves beyond only the set of current values of behaviour that groups share. Culture also includes the influence from an individual's cultural background that is central to living in the world.

For this research, I define organisational culture as the shared values and learned behaviours of a social organisation or group or corporate group, in addition to an individual's cultural background that creates the tacit knowledge that is central in their perception of needs, making meaning, and navigating stress, so that individuals adhere to the standards and rules of the culture. In this vain, I acknowledge the organisational culture and individually unique cultures of each call centre agent. To facilitate embodied knowing and understanding of the self within each agent, I must acknowledge their idiosyncratic life worlds and identities.

By acknowledging that each participant has a different life world, I may be able to guide the participants to explore the daily stressors these agents face, which often leave them in a state of constant alertness and mobilisation. Porges (cited in Mulcahy 2020:1) suggests that society at large "has a culture that keeps us mobilised. If we weren't mobilised, we'd be more generous, creative and benevolent". This constant state of mobilisation influences the self, as it prevents individuals from being fully present, which is essential for self-care and addressing deficiency needs. When individuals are not fully present, their ability to meet growth needs is hindered. By considering each agent's unique experience, this study seeks to counteract the effects of such mobilisation and promote a deeper, embodied understanding of well-being.

To better understand what needs humans have in relation to their background and how stress affects human beings, I consider Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This hierarchy presents an outline for understanding human needs along a developmental and chronological trajectory. In this study, I use Maslow's updated hierarchy of needs not to impose a strict progression of needs but to provide a flexible framework for

understanding human needs and the impact of stress on individuals in a multi-cultural VUCA/BANI world.

1.3.4 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Abraham Maslow was a psychology professor at Brandeis University, where he studied human needs and motivation (Aruma & Hanachor 2017:15). Human needs are "innate psychological nutriments that are essential for ongoing psychological growth, integrity, and well-being" (Deci & Ryan 2000:229).

In the early 20th century, behaviourism (which refers to humans and their functioning reduced to basic input–output systems) and psychoanalysis (focused on 'problematic' behaviours and processes) dominated studies on human needs and motivation (Desmet & Fokkinga 2020:3). Maslow, in contrast, was more interested in understanding human behaviour and how these behaviours aid individuals in satisfying needs so that they could find fulfillment (Desmet & Fokkinga 2020:3).

Maslow proposed his hierarchy of needs in 1943[13] with five levels of human needs: physiological needs, safety needs, belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualisation needs (Aruma & Hanachor 2017:15; Uysal & Genç 2017:215–216). He argues that human needs are continuous (when one has been met, others arise), occurring in a hierarchical order that depends on the satisfaction of the needs below; all of the needs must be considered collectively. Below, I explain the five needs, from lowest to the highest in Maslow's hierarchy:

- Physiological needs: Needs that have to be satisfied for effective biological functioning and maintaining homeostasis, such as breathing, eating, drinking water, sleeping, and access to a shelter;
- Safety needs: Needs that ensure physical and interpersonal security such as protection from danger, as well as employment, health, resources, and property;

[13] Maslow's 1943 work, *A theory of human motivation* is a seminal source. My argument draws on newer sources to provide an updated/improved version of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

- Belonging and love needs: Needs that ensure belonging and the acquisition of love and respect from others through membership of groups, time with family, and establishing friendships;
- Esteem needs: Needs that relate to how an individual is appreciated by others in terms of their reputation and achievements, and how confident individuals are in terms of their own successes and talents; and
- Self-actualisation: Needs that relate to individuals fulfilling their full potential through creativity, problem-solving, and focusing on personal abilities.

Practitioners have used the model to consider human motivation in various contexts. Mawere, Mubaya, Van Reisen and Van Stam (2016:15) study indigenous African cultures through this lens and conclude that Maslow's model is not necessarily applicable in this context since other needs are important to various extents in these communities,[14] such as the difference between the personal/individual and collective cultures.

Hanley and Abell (2002) as well as Nwoye (2017) allow that Maslow's hierarchy does not necessarily consider needs from an African perspective, rather framing needs through a Western lens. Rather than rigidly applying Maslow's framework, I adapt it to accommodate the participants' cultural contexts, using embodied explorations that allow each individual to engage with their needs in ways that resonate with their lived experiences.

Furthermore, Maslow's original conception of his hierarchy was not necessarily aimed at the corporate environment (Barling 1977:3). More recently, however, practitioners have used the hierarchy in the corporate environment and although there is "empirical data […] that some of the theory's underlying propositions are incorrect, some of the other propositions have been convincingly replicated and supported" (Desmet & Fokkinga 2020:3).

[14] These communities are specifically rural communities in southern Africa.

The underlying propositions that are problematic include the assumed universality of the model. Another criticism is that the idea that self-actualisation is the goal of human development, with some arguing that this focus on individual achievement may not align with cultures that emphasise interconnectedness and collective growth. I argue that, despite these limitations, the hierarchy can provide valuable insight into the corporate environment.

Michalowicz (2020) employs Maslow's hierarchy in the corporate environment, arguing that employers must ensure that the lower needs of employees are met in order for them to meet their higher needs and become their most optimal selves. He further proposes that the model can provide companies with a framework by means of which to identify where there is an imbalance in needs being met. This provides companies with a possible focus area for interventions.

Researchers such as Sabbagha (2016) and Peerbhai (2006) have used Maslow's model to explain and evaluate employee motivation in South African corporate environments. These practitioners provide examples of the possibilities for using the model with employees in the corporate world of South Africa, since corporate environments are steeped in colonial practices (Bernard 2021:633).

Another criticism regarding Maslow's theory is that needs are not satisfied in a linear and chronological manner (Wahba & Bridwell 1976:220−224), specifically, if the development has already taken place and outside elements impact on the individual. In response to criticisms like those outlined above, Maslow continued to refine his theory over several decades, stating that the hierarchy "is not nearly as rigid" as he had initially implied (Maslow 1987:68).

Maslow further argued that "any behaviour tends to be determined by several or all of the basic needs simultaneously rather than by only one of them" (Maslow 1987:71). This indicates that the various needs overlap and are multidimensional. Maslow (1970) expanded the five-stage model to include cognitive, aesthetic, and transcendence needs. These newer levels encompass needs that focus more on a sense of being, rather than simply on having certain possessions. The eight-level model (Figure 1) therefore includes cognitive, aesthetic and transcendence needs (McLeod 2020:[sp]):

- Cognitive needs: Needs that encompass knowledge, meaning, exploration and understanding;
- Aesthetic needs: Needs that align with the appreciation and search for form and beauty; and
- Transcendence needs: Needs that encompass values that transcend the personal self, including experiences such as serving others, sexual experiences, and religion.

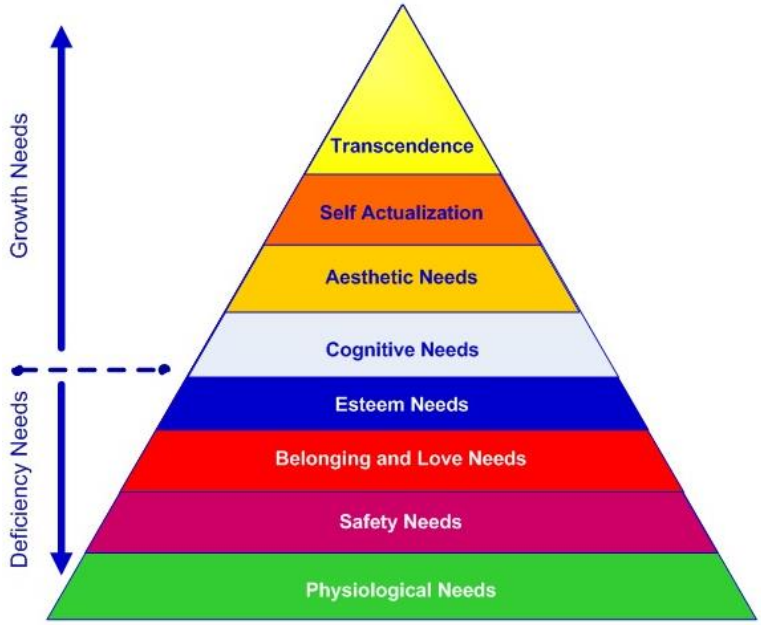


Figure 1: Maslow's adapted eight level hierarchy of needs (Kelly 2014:[sp])

Although individuals may have various needs at the same time, the lowest unmet need in the hierarchy is the most urgent motivation for an individual.[15] An individual's

[15] This links directly to the three evolutionary stages of the triune brain (which I define in Chapter 3.4). The first part is the primitive, unmyelinated vagus nerve that links to immobilisation, which in turn links directly to physiological needs. The second part of the triune brain is the sympathetic nervous system that governs fight-or-flight behavior, that occurs so that individuals can meet safety needs. The third part of the triune brain is the myelinated mammalian vagus that develops and supports homeostasis and social engagement, which, in Maslow's hierarchy, links to belonging, esteem, and love needs. In other words, considering the triune brain in this way allows individuals to meet their deficiency needs so that they can grow as individuals.

deficiency needs must be met as fully as possible so that effective progress can take place by fulfilling growth needs.

In an uncertain VUCA/BANI world, deficiency needs are amplified. Belonging, safety, and even physiological certainty become disrupted because of the ever-changing physical environments in which individuals find themselves. An example would be the unexpected Covid-19 pandemic, which not only affected physiological functioning but also threatened the sense of safety and belonging. Many individuals must still work from home, and those that do not have to can possibly live in constant fear of a lack of security in a workplace where they might initially have felt safe.[16] Students also had to complete most of their studies online and did not have the same opportunities for belonging to a student community that was the accepted norm.

McLeod (2020:[sp]) notes that when deficiency needs, such as physiological and safety needs, are not met, individuals may struggle to manage risk and change effectively, leading to compromised physiological functioning. This lack of fulfilment can create heightened stress levels, as individuals are unable to build resilience against stressors. In corporate contexts in which Maslow's hierarchy can be seen at work, the failure to meet needs in the traditional sequence can impede well-being. Consequently, stress resilience becomes more challenging to develop, as individuals may not have the tools or cultural frameworks to address their deficiency needs adequately. This study, as I discuss in Chapter 4.3, addresses these limitations by focusing on stress prosilience and how an embodied understanding of needs, adapted to diverse cultural contexts, can enhance well-being.

De Visser, Dorfman, Chartrand, Lamon, Freedy, and Weltman (2016:352) explain that while stress is necessary for learning and for increased engagement with the environment, too much stress overwhelms the body 'and' mind, leading to negative physical and psychological effects, making it unhealthy. This means that a certain amount of stress is a physiological need since it aids one in staying healthy, while also

[16] I acknowledge that one cannot promise a safe space seeing as, due to human diversity, every space or situation could be triggering for someone. Excessive stressors can further also make a workplace unsafe.

being a safety need, since it aids individuals in effectively engaging with threats in their immediate environments.

Once individuals experience stress to an extent that is no longer beneficial (the limit is unique for each individual), they might not be as resilient towards the stress, and it consequently negatively affects each individual's SWB. When stress reaches this intensified level and basic physiological and security needs are not met, it affects how individuals meet their needs. The environment can therefore inhibit effective fulfilment of basic physiological and even deficiency needs (as outlined by Maslow) since habits are formed that aim to protect an individual, though these habits end up limiting basic functioning. Munro, Kinghorn, Kur, Aronson, Krebs, and Turner (2017:96) posit that conditioning from the external world (the outer environment) "potentially blocks or limits us from realising our full potential and creates tension, stress, and fatigue, which over time erode the body's natural and organic responses and usage, until we become mired in habits that are neither effectively functional nor clearly expressive".

The stress and uncertainty present in the VUCA/BANI world may contribute to stress and uncertainty in the inner environment[17] of individuals, since they are not necessarily aware of the habits that are hampering them from fulfilling their deficiency needs. Without the necessary tools to remain resilient towards stress, individuals also then struggle with intensified fear, with interacting socially, with finding meaning in life, and being cognitively and emotionally flexible (Staten & Lawson 2018:100).

The VUCA/BANI world may therefore not merely contribute to stress in terms of basic functioning but also spill into social interaction and belonging. This intensifies the need for prosilience towards stress since stress intensifies when basic needs are not met. This may obstruct the growth of individuals. This happens both in people's personal lives and in their professional work lives. Fink (2017:4) states that stress is amplified when demands are increased. In workspaces where more needs to be done daily,

[17] The inner environment refers to the bodymind (the holistic interrelatedness of the body, brain and mind) of each individual that I define and explain fully in Chapter 3.8. This interconnected whole "contains innate wisdom which we can access to teach ourselves better functioning in action" (Munro *et al.* 2017:96).

demands keep changing as well. Some individuals might sacrifice proper eating habits and forget to take time to breathe properly, increasing their stress, so that their physiological functioning is affected even more. Certain ways of managing employees may also impact on the physiological well-being of employees.

With this need not met, they do not necessarily have adequate resources to fulfill needs relating to their safety, belonging in the workplace, or esteem, so their effective growth as an employee is limited. The VUCA/BANI environment, therefore, affects workers' physiological functioning since stress affects the individual, and they can therefore not effectively fulfil all their other needs. When individuals in a VUCA/BANI world struggle to remain resilient towards stress, their deficiency and growth needs are therefore not necessarily met, which hampers their SWB.

In a call centre environment, the VUCA/BANI world and its influence on the inner environment of individuals are amplified since call centres are stress-filled environments. With an awareness of this, and a programme to address this, call centre agents may be able to effectively manage the stress environment to fulfil not only deficiency needs but also growth needs.

1.3.5 Call centres

Call centres are "specialised organisational units providing telephone-based customer services" (Kleemann & Matuschek 2002:1). In call centres, calls are made and/or received for marketing or sales purposes, technical support, or other focused business activity ranging from legal advice to recruitment (White & Roos 2005:41).

South Africa established its first call centre in 1976, and there was a boom in call centre growth in the late 1990s. Benner, Lewis and Omar (2007:10) attribute this growth primarily to reduced telecommunication costs and improved computer technology. The company this study focuses on started in 2002. This company employs call centre agents to market the company by making outbound calls, capturing prospect information, and sending them physical and/or electronic gifts. Managing employees who are constantly on the phone presents various challenges.

Banks and Roodt (2011:5) describe the biggest challenge for call centre management as managing agents effectively because of the intense environment created by this

technology- and labour-intensive industry. This is possibly problematic since it implies that the agents are ignorant and unruly tools, which promotes a certain positioning of power in the work environment. However, not all call centres are managed in the same manner. The company on which I base this study encourages members of management to focus on promoting the agency of the call centre agents, although this is not yet effective.

The agents have various targets they need to reach every day by capturing, in a computer database, data acquired from prospects over the phone. The calls of all the departments within the company are recorded and listened to, and agents are constantly made aware of their shortcomings and how they can fix them. They receive daily feedback from management on their statistics for the week, and weekly feedback on their calls and adherence to their scripts.

Robinson and Morley (2007:250) state that the role of management in a call centre has changed from "that of (an) active investigator, director and overseer of work activities to that of a monitor and evaluator of the worker's performance". This is prevalent in our workplace. Management in call centres varies in terms of titles, but responsibilities remain similar at various levels. The company at which I am employed divides management into four levels, listed here from highest to lowest rank:

- Top management/Executive committee (EXCO): CEOs, senior general managers, general managers, and senior managers;
- Senior management: Managers, senior assistant managers, and assistant managers;
- Mid-management: Motivation and development executives, supervisors, and team leaders; and
- Lower management: Mentors.

From managers to mentors, there is active involvement with the daily running of a specific department, with CEOs, senior general managers, and general managers overseeing various departments at once. This company employs students registered for full-time degrees as call centre agents. As a motivation and development executive, my duties include the holistic development of 15–30 multi-cultural students who work part-time as call centre agents to market the company. Together, these students form

an organisational unit called a profile. When I was promoted to assistant manager, I started managing various executives, each with their own profile of student call centre agents.

Agents can see their current daily totals for their profile and for other agents on electronic screens placed around the office. Top management also looks to senior management for answers regarding agents' performance. This creates a highly monitored, competitive environment which may add stress (see problem statement on p. 33).

More stress is added since these students do not only have to work at a call centre; they must also complete their studies at the same time while balancing their personal lives and relationships. All these responsibilities can hamper the holistic development of these students since they do not necessarily possess the tools to honour and utilise their bodymindedness (pp. 104−107) effectively and thereby meet their deficiency needs.

The members of management in the call centre I study use many competitions[18] and incentives (such as lunches, raffle prizes, and other instant rewards like chocolates) to motivate and encourage employees, and they also have weekly one-on-one meetings with each agent to hear how they are doing and to help them as much as possible. Management often uses the one-on-one sessions to obtain feedback on performance, so there might not be enough of a consistent focus on well-being.

Call centres often adopt a sacrificial HR strategy by surrendering employee well-being to achieve efficiency and productivity (Banks & Roodt 2011:5; Wallace, Eagleson & Waldersee 2000:174). The reason for this is that management is responsible for meeting company requirements, and they are held accountable should their departments not reach their goals and/or targets (Banks & Roodt 2011:5). It becomes

[18] This danger of this is that it can cause even more stress for the call centre agents, internally and in response to the other agents and how they react in competitive situations. I further acknowledge that this sets up a situation in which external rewards drive motivation, but in the context of this call centre, this is the only route that is under the control of management.

challenging to balance the focus on performance outputs with the well-being of each agent.

Call centres might provide many benefits, such as allowing companies to save while generating large amount of revenue for the economy, but there has not been enough focus on the well-being of call centre agents (Miller & Hendricks 2015:51). In my experience within, and engagement with, the call centre in this study, there is a lack of focus on well-being specifically, and thus employees are not necessarily encouraged to become aware of or engage with their SWB. In what follows, I discuss certain programmes that focus on stress management and resilience in the workplace in order to create a foundation for the implementation of an EPP in a call centre.

1.3.6 Existing stress management programmes

In this section, I begin by examining various strategies that employers can use to manage workplace stress effectively. This exploration focuses both on general approaches, such as fostering a supportive work environment and providing mental health resources, and on specific interventions like stress management workshops and counselling services. In understanding these foundational methods, I highlight their limitations, whether in terms of applicability, cultural relevance, or long-term impact – all of which underscore the necessity of introducing the EPP.

This EPP is specifically designed to fill the gaps left by conventional approaches by focusing on embodied practices that build prosilience at a physiological level, preparing individuals for stress management before it arises. This two-step approach, first reviewing broader employer-based stress management methods and then narrowing the focus to the need for the EPP, lays the groundwork for demonstrating how the latter offers a more holistic, tailored solution to stress in workplace settings.

Panigrahi (2017:159) reviews a variety of resources and identifies the top 10 strategies employers can use to manage employee stress:

- Flexible working options;
- Physical interventions, such as yoga and tai chi;
- Education and awareness campaigns;

- Promotion of employee assistance programmes, such as working through structured sessions with psychologists;
- Specialised training for employees;
- Training for managers;
- External resources used to design programmes;
- Anti-stress spaces; and
- Written guidelines on stress.

The work of Holman, Johnson and O'Connor (2018) resonates with these strategies and also includes a focus on job redesign, time management, and therapy. Bloisi, Cook and Hunsaker (2007:313) state that, globally, workplace stress management programmes often focus either on addressing the problem of stress through cognitive training, such as time management, or on managing emotions by guiding individuals in how to engage with negative emotions. Such strategies might help to alleviate stress by focusing on changing the physical environment, exercising the body, cognitive development and training, or creating awareness of stress, but none of these stress management techniques actively focus on fostering the resilience (or prosilience) of individuals.

The work of Hoopes (2017:150−186) draws from various studies and presents a “prosilience workbook” that individuals can use to become more prosilient. This includes activities such as creating a “workout plan” that focuses on building resilience, in relation to stress, confronting spontaneous real-life challenges and analysing one’s responses, as well as finding a “resilience gym” where there is a constant challenge to better oneself (Hoopes 2017:150−186). Albeit valuable for improving individual prosilience on a personal level, the workbook does not specifically focus on embodied explorations, link to the possible enhancement of SWB or include a focus on the organisational cultures in which individuals find themselves.

In some organisations, individuals are employed specifically to facilitate stress resilience. An individual fulfilling this role is often called a “resilience manager, emergency planner, chief risk officer or business continuity manager” (Branicki, Steyer & Sullivan-Taylor 2019:1269). Branicki *et al.* (2019) interviewed 137 resilience managers across 127 private and public sector companies in the UK and France and

concluded that the work is often impossible, pointless, and unpleasant since they themselves experience overwhelming stress and lack resources. This may include resources such as effective resilience programmes.

Vanhove, Herian, Perez, Harms and Lester (2015:10) identified “129 studies that potentially met inclusion criteria as workplace resilience-building programmes”. When evaluating these programmes, they concluded that resilience-building programmes are effective but vary greatly in implementation and that further research is needed on resilience-building in the workplace. Scheuch, Peters, Lohner, Muss, Aprea and Fürstenau (2021:3) studied global resilience programmes and found 48 relevant studies. Of these programmes, only 17 were found to have a positive effect on resilience. The effective programmes focused primarily on mindfulness, “health-related topics, relaxation techniques, social support, reflective thinking, goal setting, and/or problem solving” (Scheuch *et al.* 2021:8).

As I discussed in Chapter 1.1, there are various studies that facilitate workplace resilience (see, for example, Hayes, Chumney & Buckingham 2020, Marone 2020, and Ratanjee 2020) as well as studies that involve the use of the arts in facilitating resilience (Koglmeier 2022; Matto & Sullivan 2024). Most of these studies focus specifically on some sort of mindfulness. Vanhove *et al.* (2015:18) argue that the extensive time required for mindfulness training can be impractical for many employees and organisations looking for quicker resilience-building solutions.

In South African organisations specifically, various studies focus on giving advice regarding what is needed to establish resilience in organisations; yet they do not outline any specific programme (see, for example, Buys 2012, Dlamini 2021, Mujajati, Ferreira & Du Plessis 2024, and Weeks 2009). Williams and Weyers (2006:281) describe a South African programme called “Managing Stress Effectively” which focused on engaging SAPS employees to “understand the nature of stress (knowledge), be willing to adopt new stress-management behaviour (attitude) and be able to utilise newly acquired knowledge and skills to design and implement a personal stress management plan (behaviour)”. This programme was of significant value and resilience for the participants (Williams & Weyers 2006:295). With its focus on creating proactive stress management abilities, the programme may be linked to prosilience.

However, the programme focused primarily on presentations and cognitive development activities. It did not specifically facilitate embodied cognition.

While the approaches I have discussed thus far may be multimodal, they often treat only one aspect of the self at a time. Mindfulness training, meditation, resilience training, and coping skills come closest to an embodied approach. Nevertheless, these methods often focus on either the body or cognition, risking a dualistic perspective even when addressing mental health.

The Sustain 7 Model is the only applicable programme that facilitates resilience. I argue that this model, which focuses on authenticity, purpose, adaptability, self-care, support, energy, and networks (McEwen 2014:4), can move from resilience to prosilience if applied in an optimal manner (see pp. 142−151). This is because the model not only focuses on resilience-related behaviours but also on proactively preparing for future challenges (prosilience).

There is thus a gap in literature on embodied programmes that facilitate prosilience: no programmes I found at the time of writing and conducting the research are focused on facilitating prosilience in the workplace. More specifically, no research has been undertaken on multimodal embodied programmes in the call centre environment. This brings me to the problem statement of the study.

1.4 Problem statement and research questions

1.4.1 Problem statement

Individuals generally aspire to self-actualisation and transcendence through work (Ihensekien & Joel 2023:14). As such, work is one of the most important things in many people's lives and forms part of their identity. Chronic stress at work can affect individuals not reaching their deficiency needs, which then hinders self-actualisation and erodes the knowledge they embodied as part of their identity. Call centre agents, and particularly those who study full-time, experience high levels of stress caused by various stimuli in their external environment, which is compounded by the uncertain VUCA/BANI world. These agents do not necessarily possess the required experience or skills to stay prosilient in response to stress and therefore are likely to not be fulfilling

their basic physiological and safety deficiency needs. Not having the prosilience skills to effectively navigate workplace stress and meet their needs can lower their SWB.

This is the case because not meeting deficiency needs can hamper the fulfilment of the growth needs in Maslow's hierarchy since, in the long run, higher needs cannot be met when deficiency needs are not satisfied. When these latter needs are not met, the call centre agents may experience lower levels of SWB. If the lower needs are not met, the higher needs, those concerning self-actualisation and flourishing, are hampered, which can result in lower productivity and therefore a less meaningful experience of work (Ladagga 2022:[sp]). This in turn implies an impact on motivation and can lead to detachment from, or disinterest in, work and the workplace. Moreover, this in and of itself can cause significant stress, perpetuating an unhealthy cycle that negatively impacts SWB (Veltman 2016:6).

In my experience, the employee assistance programmes in the call centre where I work provide only a helpline and an on-site councilor for those experiencing stress. I identified a need for a more thorough, embodied approach to assist the call centre agents in cultivating prosilience-related behaviours in relation to stress.

1.4.2 Thesis statement

The EPP can serve as an employee assistance programme that enables student call centre agents to cultivate prosilience-related behavioural capacities. These capacities may help them to proactively navigate stress effectively and consequently enhance their SWB. The skills they learn may help them to adapt their responses to external stimuli and stressors so that they can meet their lower and higher needs to flourish, thereby increasing their SWB.

1.4.3 Research questions

The statement above gives rise to the following main research question:

How can an embodied prosilience programme contribute to subjective well-being in a call centre environment?

Sub-questions that arise from this research question are:

- What is stress?

- What is subjective well-being?
- How do stress and subjective well-being occur in the context of call centre environments?
- What is the bodymind?
- What is embodiment?
- What is embodied learning?
- What are resilience and prosilience and how do they relate to subjective well-being?
- What somatic approaches can facilitate prosilience to stress through the bodymind?
- How can somatic approaches be used to create an embodied prosilience programme?
- How can an embodied prosilience programme build knowledge and skills that can aid call centre agents in being more prosilient in response to stress?
- How can I assess the efficacy of an embodied prosilience programme?

In what follows, I contextualise my research practice to position myself in relation to the research and discuss how I activated my philosophy in the course of the research.

1.5 Contextualisation of my research practice

To briefly position myself in the research and outline the lens I use as a researcher, I discuss the constructivist philosophical worldview that informs my ontology and epistemology. I adopted a constructivist research paradigm grounded in my constructivist worldview, ontology, and epistemology (I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 2).

My constructivist research paradigm determined which research approach, design and methodology I utilised. I employed a qualitative, phenomenographic research design and methodology, which focuses on exploring and understanding the different ways in which people experience, understand and conceptualise phenomena (Khan 2014:34) – in this case, stress and prosilience through somatic practices. The design and methodology indicated the steps I took when undertaking the research.

Considering phenomenography, I did not assume that participants experience change in similar ways. I studied and viewed their responses not only as those of a group of participants within a specific work environment who experience, understand, and think about of the EPP in varied ways; I also viewed them as personally unique individuals with various backgrounds and past experiences who made sense of the effect of the EPP on their SWB (by navigating stress and gaining prosilience-related capacities) in unique ways.

For example, in the context of the EPP, some individuals might find that movement provides physical relaxation, enhances mental clarity, or increases focus. Others, however, may feel less affected by certain aspects of the programme, illustrating a spectrum of responses and experiences. I was particularly interested in capturing these viewpoints in order to understand the diverse subjective experiences and interpretations among participants.

Phenomenography determined the methods for data collection and analysis available to me. I incorporated mainly qualitative methods with a quasi-quantitative method to triangulate the various data collection methods to ensure a thorough analysis of the data I collect. I evaluate the efficacy of the programme by means of a thick description, and I used an eclectic pedagogical approach in the creation of the programme, selecting somatic approaches used in the performing arts. Compiling the thick description involved using qualitative phenomenographic data collection methods such as semi-structured interviews before and after the programme, as well as participant journaling, body maps, participant observation and video recordings during the programme. I also employed a data collection method before and after the EPP that is quasi-quantitative: the workplace PERMA profiler (based on the PERMA model; see pp. 62−66). I further utilised theme extraction as a method for data analysis. To triangulate the data and follow the steps of phenomenography, my research took shape through six phases, namely:

1. Review of literature and establishing research practice;
2. Creating the programme;
3. Pre-programme data collection;
4. Facilitating the programme and data collection;
5. Post-programme data analysis and interpretation; and

6. Research synthesis and reflection.

I discuss each phase in Chapter 2.7. Next, I provide an outline of the chapters of this thesis to indicate which chapters respond to which research questions, and to which phases of the research process each chapter aligns.

1.6 Chapter outline

1.6.1 Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter occurs in phase 1 of the research process and sets the stage by providing the background and contextualisation of the study, highlighting how call centre management often overlooks the importance of stress resilience for agents, which negatively impacts their SWB. Chapter 1 articulates the research problem and presents the main research question as to how an EPP can contribute to SWB in call centres. The chapter addresses the following sub-questions:

- What is subjective well-being?
- How do stress and subjective well-being occur in the context of call centre environments?

1.6.2 Chapter 2: Research practice

This chapter continues phase 1 of the research process. It outlines my constructivist philosophical worldview, monist ontology, constructivist epistemology, constructivist research paradigm, qualitative research approach, phenomenographic research design and methodology, and research methods that collectively form the research practice. It details the use of semi-structured interviews, participant observation, video recordings, semi-structured interviews, journaling, body maps, and the PERMA profiler to create a thick description, and it explains the undertaking of data analysis using theme extraction. I delineate the six phases of the research, and I also discuss participant selection and ethical considerations. The chapter addresses the sub-question:

- How can I assess the efficacy of an embodied prosilience programme?

1.6.3 Chapter 3: Bodymind and embodiment

Focusing on theoretical exploration, this chapter continues phase 1 of the research process and delves into the concepts of bodymind and embodiment, moving beyond Cartesian dualism and grounding the research in a monist ontology. It deepens the understanding of how individuals engage with embodied learning through their bodyminded selves. The chapter addresses the following sub-questions:

- What is the bodymind?
- What is embodiment?
- What is embodied learning?

1.6.4 Chapter 4: Subjective well-being and stress

This chapter is a continuation of phase 1 of the research process and explores the concepts of stress and SWB, specifically in relation to call centre agents. It introduces stress prosilience – a proactive and adaptive approach to stress management – and outlines how the EPP can facilitate the attainment of this prosilience. Together, chapters 3 and 4 constitute the theoretical framework of my research. Chapter 4 addresses the sub-questions:

- What is stress?
- What are resilience and prosilience, and how do they relate to subjective well-being?

1.6.5 Chapter 5: Embodied prosilience strategies towards creating the embodied prosilience programme

Transitioning from theory to practice, Chapter 5 aligns with phase 2 of the research process, defining somatics as a field and employing somaesthetics as the pedagogical framework of the study. It outlines the embodied prosilience strategies drawn from somatic practices necessary for developing the EPP. By translating theoretical concepts into actionable strategies, it facilitates prosilience through embodied cognition by means of embodied learning. Chapter 5 documents the shift from programme design to implementation. It details the breakdown of the EPP sessions, ensuring alignment with embodiment principles, stress prosilience at work, and

somatic strategies. The implementation of the programme allowed for my data collection.

The chapter addresses sub-questions:

- What embodied learning approaches can facilitate prosilience to stress through the bodymind?
- How can embodied learning approaches be used to create an embodied prosilience programme?

1.6.6 Chapter 6: Data analysis

This chapter reports on the data that was collected during phases 3 and 4 of the research process. Chapter 6 encompasses the first half of phase 5 (data analysis). A thematic analysis of pre-, during, and post- EPP data identifies key themes that inform how participants' experiences evolved throughout the programme. I provide the final theme extraction report in Appendix G.

1.6.7 Chapter 7: Data interpretation

This chapter starts phase 5 of the research process and analyses the data collected from participant journaling, as well as pre- and post-programme semi-structured interviews and workplace PERMA profilers. Chapter 7 considers the themes identified in Chapter 6 (as well as the final report, Appendix G) and identifies patterns in participants' responses, connecting them with the core concepts and research questions. By interpreting data across pre-, during, and post-programme phases, this chapter explores how the EPP aligns with theoretical frameworks like Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the VUCA/BANI world. The chapter addresses the main research question:

- How can an embodied prosilience programme contribute to subjective well-being in a call centre environment?

1.6.8 Chapter 8: Conclusion

The final chapter concludes phase 5 and encompasses phase 6 of the research process. It summarises the key findings and critically reflects on the research practice.

It discusses the study's limitations, strengths, and weaknesses, and outlines opportunities for further research. The chapter reinforces the study's contributions to existing scholarship on SWB among call centre agents. By addressing how the EPP enhances stress prosilience and SWB in a high-stress environment, it opens pathways for future explorations in similar professional settings.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has contextualised the study and established its rationale by addressing the problem of call centre management's limited focus on stress prosilience, which negatively affects agents' SWB. The central research question concerns how an EPP can improve SWB in a call centre setting. Through this research, I aim to contribute to the field of SWB, particularly in the context of a South African call centre, where stress plays a significant role.

I have demonstrated that the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world, now further complicated by the brittle, anxious, non-linear, and incomprehensible (BANI) world, continually disrupts the lives of call centre agents. These disruptions prevent agents from fulfilling the lower levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which hinders them in addressing higher-level needs and thus diminishes their SWB. My study contributes to existing knowledge by exploring how an EPP, grounded in prosilience and somatic approaches, offers agents a pathway to better navigate these disruptions and enhance their SWB. The key to this chapter is an understanding of the theoretical foundations of the research, namely facilitating prosilience-related behaviours to enhance SWB in a call centre environment. In the following chapter, I explore the research practice that I consider most appropriate to address my main research question.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH PRACTICE

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I contextualised the study and established the rationale for creating an EPP in the call centre environment. Specifically, the rationale is that the EPP may serve as an employee assistance programme that can enable student call centre agents to cultivate prosilience-related behavioural capacities to enhance their SWB.

This chapter presents a motivation for the choices that constitute my research practice and explains the relevance of my choices to my research topic and my research questions. In doing so, I acknowledge the set of beliefs, assumptions, and principles that underpin the ways in which I approach my research. As such, I discuss my philosophical worldview, research paradigm, ontology, epistemology, research approach, design, methodology, and the research methods that cumulatively form my research practice. To indicate how my research practice developed, I considered my positionality as a researcher (see Chapter 1.3.3, pp. 15−20).

In the rest of the introduction of this chapter that follows, I provide a broad overview of each aspect of my research practice in order to provide a bird's eye view of how the discussion unfolds in the chapter. I discuss everything in more detail in sections 2.2 to 2.9. I initiate this discussion by explaining the philosophical worldview that shapes my understanding of knowledge and reality. A philosophical worldview serves as an overarching framework, guiding how researchers interpret the world and approach an enquiry (Peterson & Gencel 2013:1). My worldview is constructivist. Krahenbuhl (2016:4) posits that, through a constructivist worldview, individuals actively construct knowledge and make meaning by integrating new information with personal experiences.

A constructivist worldview encapsulates both my ontological view, that reality is subjective and constructed through individual experience (Schunk 2012:229), and my epistemological stance that knowledge emerges through interactions with the world (Ignacio & Paras 2024:10). A constructivist worldview recognises that knowledge is

created through the experience of the individual within and as part of the world (Sardar 2023:2653).

My constructivist worldview aligns the study with a constructivist research paradigm. A research paradigm encompasses the researcher's ontological, epistemological, and methodological premises (Yong, Husin & Kamarudin 2021:5858), and thus directs the research design and methodological choices. A constructivist research paradigm provides researchers with a framework that shapes the entire research process so as to "understand the complex and multiple perspectives of individuals" (Turin, Raihan & Chowdhury 2024:1). My constructivist research paradigm is mutually constitutive with my constructivist worldview, epistemology and ontology – my philosophy underpins the constructivist paradigm, while the paradigm operationalises the worldview (philosophy) in the research.

My constructivist worldview, monist ontology, and constructivist epistemology collectively informed my choice of research approach. I selected a qualitative research approach to explore my research questions. A qualitative research approach explores how individuals interpret problems, using emerging questions, data collected in natural settings, inductive analysis from "particulars to general themes", and researcher-driven interpretation (Creswell & Creswell 2018:51). This approach informed the theoretical framework and determined the choice of phenomenography as the research design and methodology.

A phenomenographic methodology examines lived "experiences through the descriptions provided by the people involved" (Nieswiadomy 2008:172). The methodology provides the following steps that one can take when undertaking a phenomenographic study: Definition of theme, characterisation of research subject, data collection methods, pilot study to evaluate the data collection methods, data collection, data transcription, identifying of concepts, hierarchy of concepts, analysis of links, and preparation of the research report (Santos & Silva 2022:46).

These steps provided a framework that guided me in selecting the specific methods I used for data collection and analysis. These methods are qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews, journaling, body maps, video recordings, participant observation and a quasi-quantitative method, namely the workplace PERMA profiler.

I expand on each of these methods in Section 2.5.1. Besides delineating my research practice, this chapter further divides the research process in six phases, namely a review of literature and establishing the research practice, creating the programme, pre-programme data collection, facilitating the programme and data collection, post-programme data collection, analysis and interpretation, and research synthesis and reflection. I also discuss how I selected participants for the study and how I adhered to ethical research practices when facilitating the programme with the participants. Figure 2 below offers a visual representation of my research practice.



Figure 2: The framework of the research practice (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

To delineate the research practice, I begin by outlining my worldview, ontology, and epistemology.

2.2 Constructivist worldview

A philosophical worldview comprises the researcher's beliefs about how research should be conducted – the ways in which data should be collected, analysed, interpreted and used. A philosophical worldview thus encompasses a researcher's assumptions and beliefs about the nature of reality and knowledge (Ültanır 2012:196). It also provides a framework that explains how knowledge is formed and how individuals learn. Moon and Blackman (2017:[sp]) explain that demarcating the researcher's philosophical worldview is important because, when explicitly articulated, it unveils the assumptions that inform decisions regarding the research purpose, approach, methodology, and methods, as well as guiding data analysis and interpretation.

A constructivist worldview emphasises that knowledge creation is a process in which individuals shape their own understanding not solely through observing objective reality but through subjective experiences (Allen 2022:2). Constructivism, which focuses on a subjectively experienced reality and on knowledge, meanings, and understandings drawn from lived experiences, opposes "the idea that there is a single methodology to a study to generate knowledge" (Dawadi, Shrestha & Giri 2021: 26). Rather, "knowledge must be approached through multiple perspectives" (Dawadi *et al.* 2021: 26). Cresswell and Cresswell (2018:55) summarise the constructivist worldview by underlining its four main components:

- Constructivists argue that individuals seek to understand the world in which they live and work;
- By constructing subjective meanings of their experiences;
- Guided by researchers who acknowledge participants' socio-cultural histories within and as part of their current context;
- To interpret and make meaning of each experience in order to create theory.

My worldview relates to both my ontological (nature of reality) and epistemological (how I acquire knowledge about reality) positioning. Constructivism includes an ontology that focuses on "multiple, socially constructed realities" and an epistemology

in which knowledge creation is an “interactive link between research and participants” (Mertens 2024:11).

Ontology, the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature of reality, refers to “the study of being – the study of the basic building blocks of existence” (Moses & Knutsen 2007:5). By identifying my ontology, I can elaborate on what exists, how it exists, and the relationships between notions (Guarino, Oberle & Staab 2009:1) – all shaped by my subjective experience.

Ontology categorises and connects different aspects of human existence. While I align with the constructivist ontology of multiple subjective realities, I also adopt a monist ontology in this research. Kockelman (2024:2) argues that many researchers adopt an ontology that aims to collapse Cartesian dualism,[19] which he describes as “the biggest, or at least most problematic […] ontology”. I align with this view and adopt a monist ontology that generally involves interpreting reality as subjectively constructed through embodied cognition, where the bodymind is integral to the experience of the world (see Chapter 3). Rather than viewing the body ‘and’ mind as separate, a monist ontology embraces the multimodal self, which is expressed in and through embodied action (Coetzee 2018:1). By allowing researchers to deepen their understanding of embodied experience and cognition of the multimodal self, a monist ontology leads to a reconsideration of the bodymind’s role in cognition (Gallagher 2017:11). I explore this in detail in Chapter 3.

A monist ontology aligns with constructivism in acknowledging diverse perspectives, experiences, and understandings, while also providing a basis for understanding how these experiences arise from the interconnectedness of the bodyminded self and its environment. With the self expressed in this manner, knowledge creation in constructivism is active since individuals do not simply find knowledge but “construct or make it” based on their participation in lived experiences (Schwandt 2000:18).

[19] I describe Cartesian dualism in more detail in Chapter 3.

My focus on a somaesthetic[20] framework that encapsulates somatic approaches which may encourage an awareness of bodymindedness (see SPAR; p.181), reinforces a monist ontological position. It aligns with the idea that individuals actively create knowledge by continuously reconstructing their embodied self through experience (Ionescu & Vasc 2014:276). To understand how I frame my research to acquire and discover knowledge in relation to my ontological position, below, I discuss my epistemological stance.

Epistemology, the branch of philosophy that deals with the nature and limits of knowledge, addresses questions concerning the justification of knowledge claims (Sol & Heng 2022:80). Moon and Blackman (2017:[sp]) posit that epistemology encompasses all aspects related to acquiring knowledge, such as determining what creates knowledge, how knowledge can be produced and by whom, what it is possible to know, and what knowledge is valued.

The epistemology of the study, similar to my philosophical worldview, aligns with constructivism. With a constructivist epistemology, there is no objective truth that is waiting to be discovered (Moon & Blackman 2017:[sp]). Rather, knowledge and meaning are created within individuals as they experience situations (Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan 2018:283) and engage with the world in varying ways. In research, this occurs through an interactive process between researchers and participants (Mertens 2024:19), where the researcher attempts to interpret the varying meanings that participants make (Cresswell & Cresswell 2018:56).

Adom, Yeboah and Ankrah (2016:3) argue that knowledge creation in constructivism occurs through two processes, namely accommodation and assimilation. Accommodation refers to the framing and understanding of an individual's existing knowledge to make room for new experiences, while assimilation referring to the

[20] Somaesthetics is the framework in which the bodymind is the locus of "sensory-aesthetic appreciation (aesthesis) and creative self-fashioning" to enrich (embodied) knowledge in relation to somatic experiences (Shusterman 2012:27). See Chapter 5.3.

process of incorporating the new experiences as part of the self without altering the environment in which they find themselves (Adom *et al.* 2016:3).

Aligning with this view, I applied these processes in this study by drawing on my prior experience with embodied somatic practices. I engaged call centre agents in a process designed to first identify and understand the patterns they embodied as part of their self (accommodation). Subsequently, I guided the agents to construct their own understanding and implementation of prosilience-related behaviours, enabling them to enhance their SWB (assimilation) without changing the call centre environment itself. The programme was arguably only possible because it embraced a monist ontology, which views knowledge as rooted in the integrated bodymind, and a constructivist epistemology, which acknowledges that knowledge is not passively received but actively constructed through lived embodied experience.

A researcher's worldview or philosophical position is operationalised within research through the application of an appropriate research paradigm that provides guidance for a research approach (Mertens 2012:1). Paradigms represent the overarching set of beliefs and philosophical assumptions guiding enquiry, whereas approaches denote the methodological frameworks stemming from these foundational assumptions (Creswell & Creswell 2018:54).

2.3 Constructivist research paradigm

Yong *et al.* (2021:5858) state that a research paradigm guides researchers by highlighting significant disciplinary challenges, enabling the development of models and theories to address them, defining criteria for appropriate research tools, and offering principles and methods for tackling similar future issues. As mentioned earlier, my worldview aligns with a constructivist research paradigm. A constructivist research paradigm actively focuses on how various research participants can learn from their subjective experience in the research process and construct meaning within and as part of their environment (Mertens 2024:16).

In a programme informed by a constructivist research paradigm, facilitators act as co-explorers, encouraging participants to question, challenge, and form their own ideas and conclusions (Ültanır 2012:196). The constructivist research paradigm is characterised by a dynamic and interactive relationship between the researcher and

the phenomenon or participants being studied. Constructivism acknowledges that the researcher is inherently part of the research process. This interconnectedness stems from the understanding that knowledge is co-constructed through active engagement and shared experiences between the researcher and participants (Adom *et al.* 2016:5). With a constructivist research paradigm, the researcher uses prior knowledge to provide opportunities for the participants to construct new meanings that can help solve problems they encounter within their environment (Ültanır 2012:196).

Knowledge creation for participants does not occur through traditional teaching methods but requires them to discover knowledge through subjective investigation and doing (Adom *et al*. 2016:2). The participant is thus seen as the constructor of knowledge based on how they apply what they have learnt to find their own solutions (Ültanır 2012:205).

Given the complexity and individuality of these embodied experiences, a qualitative approach was most suitable for capturing the depth and richness of the agents' subjective realities. This approach not only honoured the agents' personal perspectives but also ensured that the research process fosters genuine meaning-making, tailored to each individual's lived experience of well-being.

2.3 Qualitative research approach

Qualitative research aims to understand aspects of life and has "people-centred" methodologies and methods that generally focus more on subjective experiences and reflections rather than on numerical data for analysis (Patton 2015:2). According to Ugwu and Eze (2023:20), qualitative research enables researchers to develop a thorough understanding of social phenomena as they occur in their natural settings by examining how people construct meaning in their everyday lives. The core of qualitative research thus involves how "people make sense of their own concrete, real-life experiences" (Cropley 2023:9) rather than focusing on a fixed, stable reality.

Qualitative research, therefore, moves away from a positivist paradigm that sees the world as stable and predictable in order to explore new possibilities (Denzin & Lincoln 2011:8). A qualitative research approach often uses exploration and inductive reasoning, and the product of the research is often descriptive (Merriam 2009:13) or interpretive of subjective experiences. Wasser and Bresler (1996:6) state that

subjective lived experiences generate qualitative research that is thus aligned with the experiencing and studying of phenomena. Qualitative research “seek[s] to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and world views of the people involved" (Merriam 2009:11). These varying perspectives involve the studying of multiple subjective realities.

Bumbuc (2016:419) states that “subjectivity is always present in […] qualitative research”, though this is not necessarily disadvantageous – provided that researchers can use their subjective positions to fulfill the aims of the research. This holds for both researcher and participants. By focusing on the subjective experiences of individuals, researchers can enhance the understanding of the participants in relation to a situation and reveal how personal experience influences data. A qualitative research approach thus views the “subjective descriptions of experiences as legitimate data for analyses” (Levitt 2018:27).

However, when employing a qualitative research approach through the constructivist worldview, collected subjective data should not be treated as simply reflecting “reality” but instead as contributing to shaping meaning in relation to the phenomenon (Braun & Clarke 2024:17). Adom *et al*. (2016:5) concur about this active construction of meaning and add that meaning is also made by the researcher’s immersion in the research process; researchers integrate their own subjective experiences with those of the participants.

Mertens (2014:173) posits that if individuals become aware of their subjective perspective, they can expand their “experience by making new experiences”. Studying the subjective experiences of individuals while the researcher also has their own subjective knowledge may introduce bias (Gough & Madill 2012:374). Polit and Beck (2010:107) describe bias as “an influence that produces an error in an estimate or an inference”. Basically, bias is any influence that distorts the results of a study (Galdes 2017:1). In my research, I needed to ensure I navigated confirmation bias, “an inclination to retain, or a disinclination to abandon, a favoured explanation” (McSweeney 2021:1064).

Specifically, I needed to structure my research practice in a manner that acknowledged my involvement in the research process not merely as the facilitator of

the EPP but also as an assistant manager with previous experience as a call centre agent in the workplace, though I have not directly managed the participants in the study. I further needed to ensure that I do not assume, simply because I experienced stress in the call centre when I was an agent, that participants would experience it in the same manner. This brings me to the first way I navigated confirmation bias, namely reflexivity. To navigate bias, a qualitative researcher must adopt a reflexive stance. Reflexivity refers to “a process of constant, self-conscious scrutiny of the self as researcher and of the research process” (Drozdzewski & Dominey-Howes 2015:18).

Qualitative researchers thus need to position themselves in relation to the investigated phenomena and be reflexive in relation to their subjective perspectives (Braun & Clarke 2024:3). A qualitative research approach thus depends on researcher subjectivity and requires reflexivity to delineate how their subjectivity shapes the research process (Olmos-Vega, Stalmeijer, Varpio & Kahlke 2023:241). Reflexivity should not be regarded as a defence against the absence of objectivity in research. Instead, reflexivity reflects a commitment to valuing subjectivity, reflecting its role in constructivist qualitative meaning-making.

Alvesson, Hardy and Harley (2008:498) state that reflexivity should be understood as a route to “thoughtful and interesting research”. Through reflexivity, researchers acknowledge and account for the intricate interplay of personal, interpersonal, methodological, and contextual factors that shape and inform the research process (Olmos-Vega *et al.* 2023:242). In line with this, I continuously questioned my own assumptions, outlined my positionality (see pp. 17−18), and journaled about my observations (see p. 60) to mitigate confirmation bias.

Besides employing reflexivity, I took a further precaution to mitigate bias, namely data triangulation (Khatun & Haque 2024:106). Van Schie (2023:24) notes that data triangulation involves using multiple methods to collect and analyse data in order to ensure that the findings have a high level of trustworthiness. I discuss the multiple methods I employ to triangulate data in Section 2.6. Since my qualitative research approach considers multiple and varied subjective experiences, and uses multiple methods, I needed to employ a relevant design and methodology to guide me in the research process.

A research design serves as a broad framework for structuring the research process, encompassing the selection and implementation of both methodology and methods (William 2024:3239), whereas methodology encompasses the specific set of principles informing the process of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Schwardt 2007:195). A methodology thus provides researchers with “a way to systematically solve the research problem by logically adopting various steps” (Patel & Patel 2019:48). I utilised the research design and methodology of phenomenography.

2.5 Phenomenographic research design and methodology

Phenomenography is a qualitative research design and methodology that focuses on studying and interpreting “peoples’ qualitatively different experiences of the world in terms of categories of descriptions” (Khan 2014:34). The term phenomenography has Greek etymological roots, which derives from the two words ‘phainomenon’ (appearance) and ‘graphein’ (description; Khan 2014:34). Phenomenography can thus be understood as the study and description of the various ways individuals experience and interpret phenomena.

Rovio-Johansson and Ingerman (2015:259) argue that a study can only be labelled phenomenographic if it assumes “the constancy of the phenomenon”. This indicates that the subjective experiences studied using phenomenography need to concern the same phenomenon. Marton (2000:105) posits that phenomenography assumes “there is only one world […] which is experienced and understood in different ways by human being(s)”. Phenomenography is concerned with understanding the variation in experiences of the same phenomenon and identifying relationships between them (Marton 1981:180).

In phenomenography, experience includes a focus on “reference” and “structure” (Santos & Silva 2022:43). Santos and Silva (2022:43) argue that “these elements signify the ‘what’ (referential aspect) and ‘how’ (structure) of experience”. In what follows, I describe the referential and structural aspect of experience within this research, specifying how the study aligns with phenomenography. By outlining these two aspects of experience, and then describing the specific phenomenographic steps I take in the research, I indicate how I employed the phenomenographic design and

methodology to understand the collective lived experiences of the participants “in all its complexity and variability” (Rolls 2023:129).

2.5.1 The referential aspect (‘what’) of experience

Before a researcher can embark on a phenomenographic study, they must discern what the shared phenomenon is that the individuals will experience and make meaning from (Collier-Reed & Ingerman 2013:4). As outlined in Chapter 1, my personal experience in the call centre and engagement with prior research resulted in a problem statement regarding the elevated stress levels of call centre agents that I argue could possibility be navigated with an EPP.

Learning plays an important role in phenomenography as it often focuses on teaching beliefs, teaching environments, and ways of teaching, as well as creating knowledge in the process of experiencing and learning (Huang 2017:7600). To create the EPP in a manner that could facilitate embodied learning, I utilised an eclectic pedagogical approach.

An eclectic approach provides a flexible framework that can be customised to address the specific needs of participants by drawing on a variety of methods and techniques (Goh & Wong 2012:185). By engaging with prior scholarship, my experiential knowledge of various somatic approaches (see Chapter 5), as well as my knowledge of the call centre environment, I explored what I could draw from each of the somatic approaches to create the EPP. This integration was not simply about applying different techniques but about facilitating an eclectic pedagogical approach that aided the participants in accessing embodied experiences.

The eclectic nature of this approach helped to facilitate embodied learning to guide participants in constructing knowledge through their subjective lived, physical experiences (Cochrane-Smith & Lyle 2009:129). This approach thus aligns with the phenomenographic design and methodology since the EPP served as the referential aspect of experience − the phenomenon from which the participants made subjective meaning. I also sent the participants a video after each session, in which I reminded them of and recapped the explorations of each session. This served as an extension of the referential aspect of experience, since it enabled participants to engage with the explorations in their own time and so to attain a deeper understanding of what changes

they experienced. Kuang, Tian, Wilson and Buzzanell (2023:1137) state that videos can be memorable messages that, when engaged with, can establish anticipatory resilience (which, I argue in Chapter 4, is related to prosilience). The videos were intended as an expanded learning opportunity that supports an in-depth understanding of the EPP and how it enables prosilience in the call centre environment, since it involves learning and engaging through a different modality.

Next, I discuss the structural aspect of experience; this concerns how I created meaning from the participants' subjective experiences of the referential aspect (EPP) by organising, analysing, and identifying connections and variations in experience.

2.5.2 The structural aspect ('how) of experience

Rolls (2023:128) describes how the analysis of experience in phenomenography creates an understanding of a phenomenon by considering the external and internal influences on subjective experiences. The external influences refer to how individuals interpret an experience based on their subjective context and history, informed by social, cultural, or environmental factors that shape their understanding. In contrast, the internal aspect pertains to how individuals comprehend the experience itself, focusing on the intrinsic features of the phenomenon as they encounter it directly. Considering both external and internal influences allows an in-depth understanding of the "how" of experience (Santos & Silva 2022:43).

Sims (2024:1169) posits that the internal and external influences are not separate when individuals make meaning; rather, they combine in experience so that individuals can understand and describe phenomena in the world. This means that "the only world we can communicate is the world as we experience it" (Sims 2024:1169). This aligns with how individuals embody experiences as part of their self (see p. 105) since, in phenomenography, "the person and the world are […] not separated"; this in turn aligns with a non-dualistic ontology (Rovio-Johansson & Ingerman 2016:261). This directly relates with my monist ontology that is focused on the experience of the interconnected bodymind in and as part of the world.

With this research, I thus identified and studied the varied subjective experiences of various call centre agents in relation the same EPP (referential aspect). In phenomenography, the researcher does not directly investigate the process, but rather

the ideas individuals have about the process (Reed 2006:3). I did not investigate the actual EPP at the moment of it occurring, but rather studied the responses of the agents to the EPP in terms of the development of stress prosilience and the maintaining of SWB (structural aspect). This aligns with my constructivist paradigm that considers knowledge creation in research from multiple perspectives, including the researcher's subjective experience among and of the phenomena. Since I was the facilitator of the EPP and was thus placed along with the participants among the phenomena experienced, I needed to employ data triangulation and reflexivity to ensure I acknowledged my position in relation to their subjective experiences.

Now that I have delineated how subjective experience can lead to various perspectives on a phenomenon in the phenomenographic methodology, I outline the steps that I utilised to guide the research. These phenomenographic steps helped me to effectively gather, analyse, and interpret the data generated from the subjective experiences of the participants.

2.5.3 Phenomenographic steps

Figure 3 outlines the steps of the phenomenographic research process.

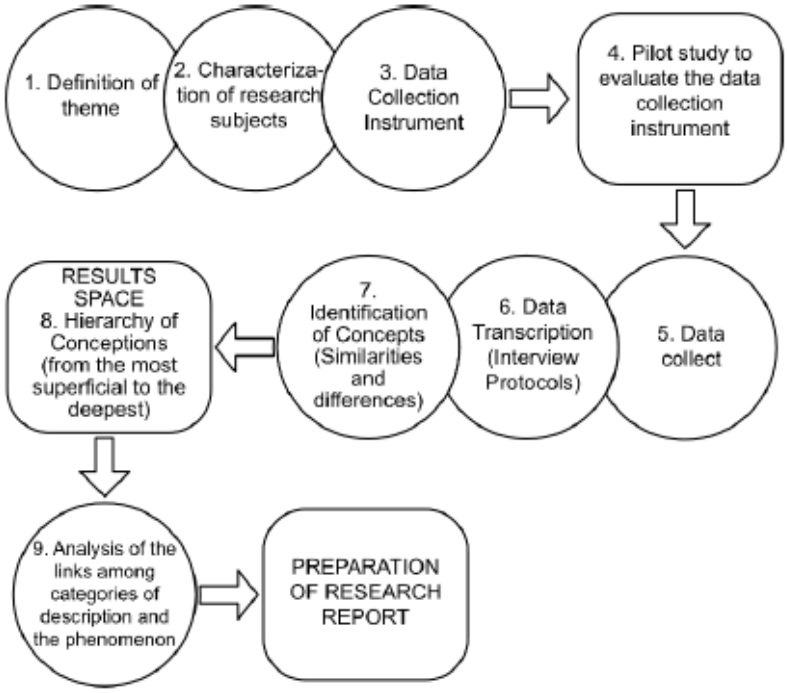


Figure 3: The phenomenographic research process (Santos & Silva 2022:46)

In this research project, I adhered to this process by undertaking the following steps:

1. Definition of theme based on engagement with relevant scholarship and prior experiential knowledge of somatic approaches: The subjective well-being of call centre agents.
2. Characterisation of research subject(s): Various call centre agents with certain salient characteristics (see Section 2.8).
3. Data collection methods[21]: There are various methods that one can use for data collection in phenomenography, such as "semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires, think-aloud methods, and observation" (Han & Ellis 2019:3). I discuss the methods I used for data collection associated with phenomenography in Section 2.6.1.
4. Pilot study to evaluate the data collection methods: I did not specifically evaluate the data collection methods other than researching each method. This will be discussed as a shortcoming of the research (see Chapter 8).
5. Data collection: Collecting the interviews, journals, participant observation, body maps, session video recordings, and workplace PERMA profilers of each participant (see Section 2.6.1).
6. Data transcription: Re-writing all the responses into one document.
7. Identifying concepts: Uploading the document to ATLAS to identify common themes (see Chapter 6). This occurred four times: first with the pre-programme interviews, then with the journals (including body maps), followed by the post-programme interviews, and finally with the workplace PERMA profilers.
8. Hierarchy of concepts: Arranging the common concepts in categories, sub-themes, and themes (see Chapter 6).
9. Analysis of links: Studying the links between the themes and the programme matter (see Chapter 7).
10. Preparation of research report: Producing a final report of all the data (see Chapter 8).

[21] In this study, I use the term method instead of instrument as depicted in Figure 3.

Various studies show that the 10 steps do not have to be followed strictly; they can be adapted, while remaining within the frame of phenomenographic research (see, for example, Dose, Desrumaux & Bernaud 2023, Sims 2024, and Soysal & Saruhan 2023). I followed steps 1 to 3 and steps 5 to 10 of the process. Soysal and Saruhan (2023:275) do not explicitly include a pilot study as a separate step. However, they indicate that pilot studies may be beneficial (Soysal & Saruhan 2023:280).

A pilot study evaluating the data collection methods was not necessary, since the methods I used are well-established in qualitative research and have been validated in previous studies (see, for example, Aung, Razak & Nazry 2021, Giangrasso 2018, Jasper 2005, Kern, Water, Adler & White 2015, Ortlipp 2008, Ruslin, Mashuri, Rasak, Alhabsyi & Syam 2022 and see Section 2.6). Phenomenography allows for a range of possible methods to be used for data collection and analysis. Below, I outline the methods that I used to gather and study data.

2.6 Research methods

In this section, I first describe my data collection methods (2.6.1), followed by my method of data analysis (2.6.2). Data collection occurred in step 5 of my phenomenographic research process. I employed multiple forms of collecting and documenting data throughout the study. These included qualitative, phenomenographic methods such as pre- and post-programme semi-structured interviews, as well as journaling, participant observation, body maps, and video recordings during the EPP.

A qualitative research approach and phenomenographic design and methodology are particularly well-suited for providing rich, detailed insights into the complexities of human experience. The rich and detailed data that I collected allowed me to generate a thick description (Geertz 1973:7) of the participants' experiences in relation to the phenomenon, namely the EPP. A thick description is not a method but rather a result of employing various methods that generate thorough and detailed data. Generating a thick description involves providing a detailed and contextualised account of a phenomenon, behaviour, or experience by delving into the intricate, layered realities of the research context (Younas, Fàbregues, Durante, Escalante, Inayat & Ali 2023:2).

The thick description allowed me, as an active researcher, to find nuance in the data and to critically reflect on the findings in order to mediate my potential biases (see p. 52). A thick description can be interpreted in a way that accounts for and mediates the subjective understandings of the phenomenon being studied (Younas *et al.* 2023:1).

I also utilised a quasi-quantitative method to achieve both breadth and depth of understanding, and to aid in data triangulation, namely the workplace PERMA profiler. 'Quasi' is a prefix that refers to a concept "that significantly or notably resembles another [concept] in some way or to a certain extent" (Justia 2024:[sp]). Quasi-quantitative methods thus refer to methods that resemble quantitative methods to some extent. Quasi-quantitative or "quantitative translation" (Boyatzis 1998:129) refers to a research method in which quantitative numerical data is tied to qualitative meaning to "more fully describe and interpret a target phenomenon" (Sandelowski 2001:231).

A quasi-quantitative method thus combines elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. It involves using qualitative methods while incorporating some quantifiable measures to enhance the structure and depth of the analysis. The data remains primarily qualitative, but quantitative tools or frameworks are used to guide certain aspects of the research process, offering a more structured or measurable dimension to the qualitative insights (Sandelowski 2001:231).

This method is particularly useful for capturing subjective experiences while also allowing for some degree of comparison or assessment, often using rating scales or profiling tools to measure and understand, for example, in this study, SWB. A well-being assessment instrument should measure multiple factors rather than merely measuring one of the three aspects of SWB (hedonic, eudemonic, or evaluative[22]; Kern *et al.* 2015:263). When a practitioner measures only one factor, they obscure potentially valuable information since the concepts relate to each other (Kern *et al.* 2015:263). This means that the feelings and emotions (hedonic well-being) of individuals link with their social experiences (eudemonic well-being) as well as with

[22] I discuss all these aspects of SWB in Chapter 4.

their evaluation of their own lives (evaluative well-being). As a result, one needs to measure these factors in relation to each other. This links to the phenomenographic design and methodology since a measurement tool that can consider all these aspects in relation to one another can provide a richer understanding of the subjective ways in which various participants experience SWB. Next, I discuss in greater detail the methods I used to collect data.

2.6.1 Data collection methods

Sims (2024:1170) states that "the goal of data collection in phenomenography is to jointly explore the experience under investigation as deeply and fully as possible". The main method used to gather data in phenomenography is the individual in-depth interview (Hajar 2020:5). However, researchers who employ this methodology can also use journaling, participant observation, the illustration of body maps (drawing), and video recordings (Sims 2024:1170), as I do in this study. I also used the quasi-quantitative method of the workplace PERMA profiler. In what follows, I discuss semi-structured interviews.

2.6.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

I facilitated in-depth semi-structured interviews both before and after the programme. Marlon (1994:4427) explains that the aim of semi-structured interviews is "to establish the phenomenon as experienced and to explore its different aspects jointly and as fully as possible" by asking the participant semi-structured, open-ended questions (Stolz 2020:1082) so as to gather data that establishes what participants have subjectively learned or experienced.

For example, instead of asking, "Did this programme make you feel better?" I asked questions such as "How do you currently navigate stress at work?" before and after the programme and established connections between their initial and final responses. To formulate my semi-structured questions effectively, I followed what Santos and Silva (2019:12) call "the trilogy of phenomenography in the script". The trilogy encompasses perception, thought, and action to aid in "search of the understanding of experience" by means of the phenomenographic approach (Santos & Silva 2019:12).

Table 1, below, summarises this by showing how questions concerning "what" enable discernment of the experience (linking to perception), questions concerning "how" assign meaning to the experiencing (linking to thought) and questions concerning "why" offer a description of behavioural responses to the experience (linking to action). In Table 1, I also present an example of a question that aligns with perception, thought, and action in the interview script that I created and followed.

Table 1: Trilogy of phenomenography in the script (adapted from Santos & Silva 2019:12)

Trilogy	**Meanings**	**Example in script**
Perception	Discernment (what?)	What specific sensations do you notice in your body when stress is present?
Thought	Meaning (how?)	How do you know, within yourself, when you experience stress at work?
Action	Behavioural responses (why?)	Are the tools you use effective to navigate stress? Why, or why not?

All the questions I asked participants thus aligned with the trilogy so as to elicit responses that could contribute to an enhanced understanding of experience. (See Appendix B for the full interview script I used.) I also asked clarifying questions when necessary to guide the participants to provide a more detailed explanation of the phenomenon (Soysal & Saruhan 2023:281). Soysal and Saruhan (2023:278) state that "creating a relaxed atmosphere that encourages sincere verbal interaction at the beginning of the interview process can provide the basis for the participant to give more dynamic and voluntary answers to the main questions." I attempted to create a relaxed environment by making the participants laugh before asking the interview questions, sitting next to them at a table instead of in front of them (to aid in disabling power dynamics; I explain this in more detail on pp. 81−82), and encouraging them to be open and honest. Since I did not line-manage the participants, the power dynamics were mediated. Their involvement in the research thus had no effect on the

management of their performance at work. Moreover, pseudonyms were used for each participant, as per ethical research guidelines (see p. 80). The interviews are confidential; I did not share or discuss their responses to questions with anyone.

To further protect participants, an outside party (the company's operational administrator) attended each of the interviews. Working in operations, the outside party could not influence their manager or the management of their performance at work. This party's role was to ensure fairness across the interviews, ethical conduct, and that interviews took place in a non-coercive environment. This helped ensure that participants felt comfortable answering interview questions openly. To further record participant experiences, I guided the participants to journal during each session.

2.6.1.2 Journaling

I encouraged the participants to journal during each of the sessions. I used the phenomenographic methods of open-ended questions and think-aloud discussions[23] to facilitate conversation, and then invited the participants to journal about their observations. I facilitated guided open-ended written reflections and self-checks (through journaling and think-aloud discussions) during and following every session. In these moments of journaling and discussions, participants anonymously provided feedback that linked to their current state of embodiment so that it was possible to consistently monitor their experience of stress prosilience and SWB. I also invited the participants to creatively reflect during the sessions by illustrating body maps.

2.6.1.3 Body maps[24]

I used the embodied method of body maps, where participants drew or wrote about their experiences on an outline of the human body (Gastaldo, Rivas-Quarneti & Magalhães 2018:3). This activity allowed participants to visually and physically

[23] Think-aloud discussions are a qualitative research method: participants verbalise their thought processes as they perform a task or engage in an activity (Seng 2007:30). This method allows researchers to gain insight into how individuals reason, make decisions, solve problems, or approach specific tasks in real-time. The participant speaks aloud their thoughts, including their reactions, doubts, strategies, and reflections.

[24] I explain how body maps are formed as mapped patterns in the brain on p. 60.

express their lived experiences of stress in relation to various parts of the body during the sessions. Providing materials such as paper and craft supplies,[25] I invited them to represent their embodied experiences on and in relation to the body maps in each moment. Sims (2024:1170) argues that drawing in this way can serve as a means of communicating experiences relating to the phenomena; in the case of this study, drawing about the experience of explorations in the EPP. I did not impose any boundaries. Instead of only giving them outlines of a human body, I encouraged them to use the outlines as a starting point and to reflect on their experiences in any manner they wanted to. This resulted in body maps that even morphed into completely different images. The body maps I thus extracted themes from in Chapter 6 and present and interpret in Chapter 7, are therefore personally unique ways of reflecting for each participant. I compared these body maps, along with journaling, written reflections, and self-checks, to my subjective participant observation of each session.

2.6.1.4 Participant observation

Bumbuc (2016:419) states that "observation is a method of data collection that consists in the recording of some features, behaviours or events related to the subject, as they are perceived by the researcher". Throughout the semi-structured interviews and the facilitation of the EPP, I used a journal to document all my participant observation. These observations included details about somatic movement preferences displayed by the participants, recurring discussion points during sessions, and the questions they posed throughout the process. By recording these nuances, I aimed to capture the depth of their embodied experiences and their evolving engagement with the programme's explorations.

I also had to ensure that what I was observing was not merely a way for me to force the creation of a particular meaning and reinforce intended outcomes due to confirmation bias (see p. 49). Åkerlind (2012:117) argues that it is important for the phenomenographic researcher to maintain an open mind and constantly be willing to "adjust her/his thinking in the light of reflection, discussion and new perspectives".

[25] This included coloured pens, permanent markers, card, glue, and various stickers.

Marton and Booth (1997:129) concur with this view, stating that, in the course of phenomenographic data-gathering, reflection is a critical tool for researchers. I therefore employed reflexivity (see p. 50) in relation to the participant observation. By employing reflexivity and data triangulation (see p. 50), I could better identify patterns in the participants' behaviours and reflections, linking their somatic preferences to their expressions of prosilience, subjective well-being, and stress responses. This approach not only enriched my thick description, but also fostered a more participant-centred methodology. While the methods described thus far focused on reflections during the sessions, video recordings[26] supported my reflection on action.

2.6.1.5 Video recordings

Schön (1983:68) distinguishes between reflection in action (during the activity) and reflection on action (after the event). By video recording the sessions, I was able to reflect on the participants' embodied expressions and behaviours afterwards, aligning my participant observation with their self-reported experiences during journaling and creating body maps. This comparison allowed me to gain deep insights into both the participants' perspectives and my perception of what occurred in the moment. I further employed the quasi-quantitative method of the workplace PERMA profiler

2.6.1.6 Workplace PERMA profiler

In his book, *Flourish,* Martin Seligman (2011) created the PERMA model to study SWB as a multidimensional construct. The acronym PERMA includes P (positive[27] emotion), E (engagement), R (positive relationships), M (meaning) and A (accomplishment; Seligman, cited in Lovett & Lovett 2016:108). The PERMA model encompasses these five elements to collectively measure SWB. More specifically, Seligman created various PERMA profilers to measure SWB in various contexts. In this study, I used the workplace PERMA profiler. Seligman's theory highlights that humans primarily seek subjective well-being by enhancing their level of flourishing (Janse van Rensburg,

[26] I obtained the necessary ethical clearance for this.
[27] I understand that referring to emotions as positive or negative is highly subjective, as any experience can be beneficial in certain circumstances. It is for this reason that I rather refer to the positive experience of an emotion, and not positive emotions per se.

Rothmann, Diedericks 2017:2). Leontopoulou (2020:75) describes the different factors of PERMA as follows:

- Positive experience of emotions are feelings such as happiness and comfort;
- Engagement is how intrinsically motivated and immersed one is in a task;
- Positive relationships indicate one's satisfaction with one's social network and the support one receives;
- Meaning denotes connection to a greater whole and having a sense of purpose in life, and
- Accomplishment refers to achievement in terms of progress towards goals.

The PERMA profiler is a questionnaire that measures each of the five PERMA elements with 23 questions on a scale from 1 to 10 per question (Butler & Kern 2015:1). Butler and Kern (2015:1) use the same questions of the PERMA profiler and adapt them to work as the workplace PERMA profiler (Figure 4).

#	Question	Response Anchors	Label
Pg. 1	How often do you feel you are making progress towards accomplishing your work-related goals?	0 = never, 10 = always	A1
	At work, how often do you become absorbed in what you are doing?		E1
	At work, how often do you feel joyful?		P1
	At work, how often do you feel anxious		N1
	How often do you achieve the important work goals you have set for yourself?		A2
Pg. 2	In general, how would you say your health is?	0 = terrible, 10 = excellent	H1
Pg 3	To what extent is your work purposeful and meaningful?	0 = not at all, 10 = completely	M1
	To what extent do you receive help and support from coworkers when you need it?		R1
	In general, to what extent do you feel that what you do at work is valuable and worthwhile?		M2
	To what extent do you feel excited and interested in your work?		E2
	How lonely do you feel at work?		Lon
Pg 4	How satisfied are you with your current physical health?	0 = not at all, 10 = completely	H2
Pg 5	At work, how often do you feel positive?	0 = never, 10 = always	P2
	At work, how often do you feel angry?		N2
	How often are you able to handle your work-related responsibilities??		A3
	At work, how often do you feel sad?		N3
	At work, how often do you lose track of time while doing something you enjoy?		E3
Pg. 6	Compared to others of your same age and sex, how is your health?	0 = terrible, 10 = excellent	H3
Pg. 7	To what extent do you feel appreciated by your coworkers?	0 = not at all, 10 = completely	R2
	To what extent do you generally feel that you have a sense of direction in your work?		M3
	How satisfied are you with your professional relationships?		R3
	At work, to what extent do you feel contented?		P3
Pg. 8	Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are with your work?	0 = not at all, 10 = completely	hap

Figure 4: The workplace PERMA profiler (Butler & Kern 2014:[sp])

Participants received each question with a scale from 1 to 10. Each group forms a Participants responded to each question using a scale from 1 to 10. Each group of questions (see Figure 4) forms a separate page of the questionnaire.[28] Each factor includes the answers (in numeric value) to all the questions that link to that factor. For example, all the questions with Ps indicate positive emotion. The factors are calculated as follows:

- Positive emotion: P = mean (P1, P2, P3)
- Engagement: E = mean (E1, E2, E3)
- Relationships: R = mean (R1, R2, R3)
- Meaning: M = mean (M1, M2, M3)
- Accomplishment: A = mean (A1, A2, A3)
- Overall well-being: PERMA =
  mean (P1, P2, P3, E1, E2, E3, R1, R2, R3, M1, M2, M3, A1, A2, A3, happy)
- Negative emotion: N = mean (N1, N2, N3)
- Health: H = mean (H1, H2, H3)
- Loneliness: Lon (single item)

The practitioner tabulates the scores as a bar graph after calculating the mean of the items comprising each factor. The mean is the sum of all the entries divided by the number of entries (Manikandan 2011:1). An example is calculating positive emotion by adding P1, P2 and P3 (the sum of the entries) and dividing the answer by 3 (the number of entries). Loneliness has only one entry (a single item), so no mean is calculated. By comparing the various factors, one can identify which parts of an individual's SWB are higher and which parts are lower. One does not need to be a specialist for this process since the data is processed and tabulated in bar graphs according to fixed formulas and the results of these formulas are already connected to certain pre-determined values. To analyse and interpret these values, a practitioner uses the scores I explain below.

[28] See Appendix A for the full profiler.

Kern (2014:[sp]) describes how the answer to each question (and consequently the mean of each factor) can range from 0 to 10. 10 is the most that an individual can score for a factor and indicates very high functioning, while 0 indicates the lowest possible functioning. Since the factors of negative emotion and loneliness work in the opposite direction (individuals function better with less negative emotion and loneliness), a lower score indicates higher functioning. The mean of each factor can be analysed as follows (Kern 2014:[sp]):

- Very high functioning = 9 and above (0 to 1 for negative emotion and loneliness)
- High functioning = 8 to 8.9 (1.1 to 3 for negative emotion and loneliness)
- Normal functioning = 6.5 to 7.9 (3.1 to 5 for negative emotion and loneliness)
- Sub-effective functioning = 5 to 6.4 (5.1 to 6.5 for negative emotion and loneliness)
- Languishing = below 5 (above 6.5 for negative emotion and loneliness)

Goodman, Disabato, Kashdan, and Kauffman (2017:1) found a correlation of .98 between the PERMA-profiler and SWB and that the elements of the models are highly interrelated. Kun, Balogh and Krasz (2017:62) used the model to measure SWB at work and propose that the model is a SWB measurement tool that has “different aims, in different occupations, and with a larger population”. For this study, I used the workplace PERMA profiler as a questionnaire to measure SWB in a call centre, both before and after the EPP.

In this study, the numbers ascribed to the profiler are quantitative descriptors, but since they are not studied as only as numbers, with numerical value (they link directly to words and meaning as well as to the words received via other methods), the method is quasi-quantitative. Terrel and Edmonds (2012:12) describe how “greater emphasis is placed on the qualitative strand” of the research method, though the quantitative is still present. By integrating the workplace PERMA profiler with the other qualitative methods, I was able to mediate my bias and achieve more precise, detailed results.

When measuring SWB, respondents are often asked to self-report using scales with minimum and maximum values to rate their well-being. Tanaka, Kitada, Tanaka and Sugawara (2016:3) critique these scales for being bounded, as they involve the assumption that individuals can accurately assess and rate their current well-being

relative to a maximum possible level of well-being or happiness. While this raises a conceptual challenge (whether well-being is truly bounded), in practice, these scales have provided valuable insights into how certain aspects of SWB relate, and how they reveal trends over time (Thompson & Marks 2008:18). Nonetheless, self-reported SWB scores can be influenced by numerous factors, such as material deprivation, experiences of violence or abuse, social relationships, demographics, socio-economic status, health, functioning, and personality. These factors can bias responses either positively or negatively, depending on the individual's socio-cultural conditioning and context (Lansford 2018:3; Pavot 2018:2).

In this study, I used the workplace PERMA profiler to identify trends and changes in the experience of SWB over the course of a month. However, as this model utilises bounded scales, I countered its limitations through triangulation that incorporated material from the semi-structured interviews, journaling, body maps, participant observation, and video recordings. These additional methods helped determine which events each participant perceived as stressful and allowed me to compare their observations with self-reported data from the workplace PERMA profiler. The profiler's scales indicate the intensity of each participant's experience of their current situation and needs.

Although a psychological approach to SWB is outside the scope of this study, it is important to acknowledge that habitual patterns and conditioned expectations can influence participants' responses to SWB measurements, including the PERMA profiler. To account for this, I administered the workplace PERMA profiler before and after a month-long programme to evaluate participants' responses over time. This extended period allowed me to assess whether participants' responses had shifted or had remained relatively stable. The participants' completed workplace PERMA profilers were placed in a sealed box that I collected after they left the room and took to my supervisors. While SWB is inherently subjective and potentially flawed in its measurement, self-reports offer valuable insights into participants' perceptions; these were further explored through interviews and journal prompts to identify additional influences on their well-being.

I utilised the tools of workplace PERMA profiler based on SWB, as well as the analysis of the bar graphs of each PERMA factor, to consider how and in which ways the EPP

affects SWB. I considered both the pre-and post-programme responses of the agents to the profiler (the actual numbers) individually, and then compared their pre-programme responses with their post-programme responses to ascertain the ways in which (and how much) the SWB of the agents had changed due to the programme.

The methods of semi-structured in-depth interviews, guided reflections and journaling, body mapping, participant observation, the video recordings of each session, and the use of the PERMA workplace profiler thus produced many forms of data that I collected to inform my thick description. From this data, I extracted themes that inform my understanding of participants' subjective well-being, as assessed before and after the programme. I conducted data analysis through theme extraction, which further contributed to creating a rich, layered understanding of the participants' experiences before, during, and after the programme.

2.6.2 Data analysis method: Theme extraction

Data analysis took place from step 6 to 9 of the phenemonographic process, namely data transcription, identifying of concepts, hierarchy of concepts, and analysis of links. Theme extraction (also called thematic analysis) is a way of identifying, analysing, and reporting on themes within data (Braun & Clarke 2006:16–23). Sims (2024:1171) describes how this process enables phenomenographic researchers to produce authentic and rigorous findings since it accounts for and includes the various subjective experiences of all the participants. In performing analysis through theme extraction, researchers can make meaning not only from each individual participant's responses but also from the collective data set of all the participants (Sims 2024:1171).

I performed theme extraction four times: first on the pre-programme interviews, then on the journals (including the body maps), followed by the post-programme interviews and finally the workplace PERMA profiler. The steps a researcher takes are familiarisation with the data, generating an initial code, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing a report (Braun & Clarke 2006:16–23). For a thicker description, I adapted Braun and Clarke's (2006:16–23) steps and added the steps of arranging the codes into categories, searching for sub-themes, and reviewing sub-themes. I explain each step below.

- Familiarisation with the data

I read through the responses and journaling of the participants in an active manner (numerous times) and asked them to clarify any responses that I did not understand during the pre- and post-programme interviews. I typed up all the interview responses, journaling, body maps, and workplace PERMA profilers. This aligns with step 6 of the phenomenographic process, namely data transcription. While reading through all the data, I searched for meaning and patterns to understand what each participant subjectively experienced before, during, and after the programme.

- Generating an initial code

I highlighted the striking remarks and choices of each participant in order to understand what general observations they had made. A code is a word or phrase which represents a single idea. For this, I used a programme called ATLAS.ti. ATLAS is qualitative data analytical software that can aid one in searching for and generating codes once the researcher provides the raw data (Maguire & Delahunt 2017:3356). This aligns with step 7 of the phenomenographic process, namely the identifying of concepts. The following theme extraction steps align with step 8 of the phenomenographic process, namely the hierarchy of concepts.

- Arranging codes in categories

After I generated the initial code with ATLAS, I used various AI tools (ChatGPT 3.5, POE, and Claude) to all arrange the codes into various categories. A category is a word or phrase to describe a group of similar codes. I compared the categories I identified with those the AI tools identified and included the ones that were the most prevalent and common, in order to mediate confirmation bias.

- Searching for sub-themes

For the purpose of this study, I included this and the next step to add more depth, detail, and complexity to the findings.

- Reviewing sub-themes

I identified sub-themes from the categories.

- Defining and naming themes

I then named the themes in relation to the sub-themes. Themes are a word or phrase to describe broader, overarching ideas.

- Producing the report

To produce a final theme extraction report, I first identified the overall sub-themes and themes of the EPP and then grouped all sentences and remarks from the participants that link to these sub-themes and themes. I present this report in Appendix G.

Figure 5, below, outlines the research trajectory and links each part of the research with the research phases, thesis chapters or appendices, and phenomenological steps with which it aligns. Figure 5 thus illustrates the chronological flow of the research process as a whole, in order to provide context for the discussion that follows. The legend for the figure is as follows:

- The research trajectory is indicated in blue with black arrows indicating the flow of the process.
- Research phases (see Section 2.7) are indicated in orange, with dotted orange lines splitting the research trajectory into the various phases.
- Thesis chapters and appendices (which I outlined in Chapter 1; see pp. 37–40) are indicated in green and placed underneath each phase they correspond to.
- Phenomenographic steps (see pp. 54–55) are indicated in red, with red brackets indicating which part of the research trajectory, as well as which phases or chapters, each step aligns with.

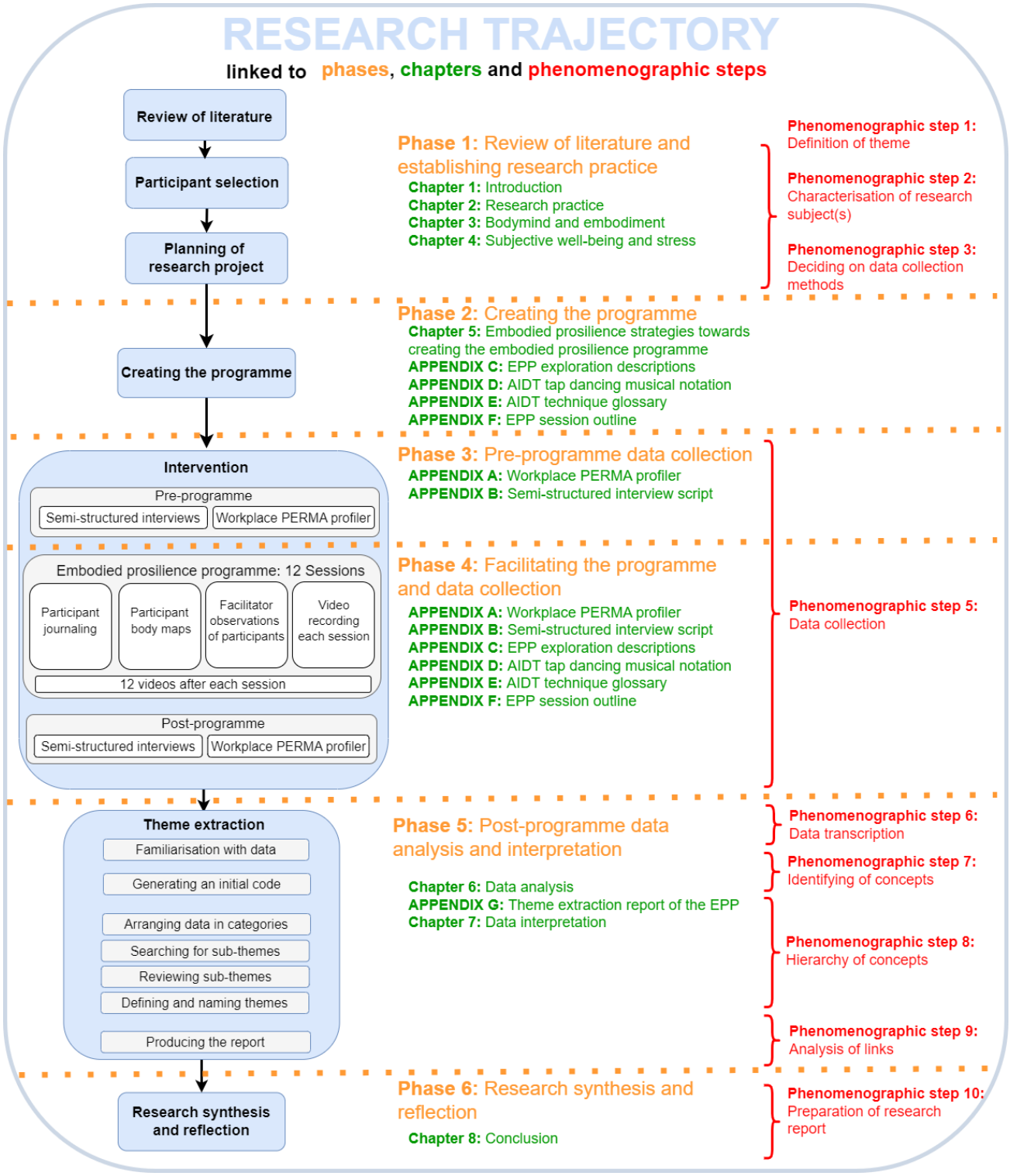


Figure 5: Overview of my research trajectory (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

Next, I discuss the phases of the research, linking them with the chapters of the thesis as well as the phenomenographic steps I took, in order to provide further detail regarding my research trajectory.

2.7 Outline of the research phases

I provide a brief overview of the phases of my research in relation to the chapters of the study to integrate my process with my research practice. I further also outline how each phase relates to the steps in the phenomenographic research process.

2.7.1 Phase 1: Review of literature and establishing research practice

In phase 1 of the research (chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4), I engaged with current and relevant scholarship to build the theoretical foundation and outline the research practice important for addressing the research questions. This aligns with the first step of the phenomenographic research process, namely defining the theme of the research based on engagement with relevant scholarship and prior autoethnographic knowledge of somatic approaches. This phase is crucial because it allowed me to define and critically reflect upon the key concepts underpinning the study: resilience, prosilience, subjective well-being, call centres, embodiment, and embodied learning. By thoroughly analysing these areas, I constructed a theoretical framework and research practice that guided the research, as well as an eclectic pedagogical approach in creating the EPP.

2.7.2 Phase 2: Creating the programme

In phase 2 of my research, starting with Chapter 5 (embodied prosilience strategies towards creating the embodied prosilience programme), I moved from theoretical constructs to practical application by situating somatics as the disciplinary field and employing somaesthetics as the conceptual framework to shape the EPP. This chapter describes embodied prosilience strategies derived from somatic practices, linking embodied learning with actionable explorations that enhance participants' adaptive capacities. Appendices C, D, E and F provide the requisite resources — explorations descriptions, AIDT tap dancing musical notation, technique glossaries, and session outlines — that, together, informed the EPP. By delineating how each somatic approach engages participants' bodyminded selves, I established a foundation for cultivating prosilience and improving SWB.

2.7.3 Phase 3: Pre-programme data collection

In phase 3, I collected pre-programme data, using the workplace PERMA profiler (Appendix A) and semi-structured interviews (Appendix B) to establish baseline measures of SWB. The data collected provided a starting point to interpret whether the EPP influences participants' stress prosilience and SWB. This phase shifted the research from conceptual design to empirical testing, aligning with step 5 of the phenomenographic process, where data collection takes precedence.

2.7.4 Phase 4: Facilitating the programme and data collection

In phase 4, I facilitated the EPP with the call centre agents, drawing on explorations (Appendix C), AIDT tap dancing notation (Appendix D), AIDT technique terminology (Appendix E), and the programme outline (Appendix F). I conducted the sessions thrice weekly over a month, focusing on cultivating participants' prosilience-related capacities through embodied learning. Although I do not devote a standalone chapter to facilitation, I integrated insights from this phase into subsequent chapters. Chapters 6 and 7 explore how I implemented embodied strategies, how I assessed their effectiveness for fostering prosilience, and, by analysing and interpreting pre- and post-programme data, how participants' SWB evolved.

2.7.5 Phase 5: Post-programme data analysis and interpretation

In phase 5, I analysed all the collected data, drawing on the participants' guided reflections documented through journaling before, during, and after each session, as well as semi-structured interviews and workplace PERMA profilers completed pre- and post-programme. I examined pre- and post-programme semi-structured interviews, participant journals, and profiler results to extract themes, as outlined by the theme extraction report in Appendix G. This theme extraction, detailed in Chapter 6, identifies patterns that I later compare with the original aims of the EPP.

This phase aligns with steps 6–9 of the phenomenographic method, moving from transcription to concept identification, hierarchical arrangement, and link analysis. In Chapter 7, I interpret these themes in relation to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, assessing whether and, if so, how the EPP enhanced participants' stress prosilience

and subjective well-being. This critical comparison illuminates the EPP's effectiveness and its potential to inform practices in high-stress environments.

2.7.6 Phase 6: Research synthesis and reflection

Phase 6 aligns with step 10 of the phenomenographic process, focusing on preparing the research report. In Chapter 8, I synthesise and reflect on the research, and propose improvements to the EPP, laying a foundation for future investigations involving different cohorts. Although broader transferability and significance lie beyond this study's scope, the findings suggest avenues for replication. I conclude by summarising key results, critically reflecting on research practice, and noting limitations and strengths. This reflection connects the EPP's influence on stress prosilience and SWB in call centre settings with a constructivist worldview. Having elaborated on my research trajectory, I now discuss how I selected the participants for the study. As described on p. 55, the characterisation of the research subjects (or participants) is step 2 of the phenomenographic approach.

2.8 Research participants

2.8.1 Participant selection

Makwana, Engineer, Dabhi and Chudasama (2023:763) define sampling as "the process of choosing a sample of a population from an individual or a large group for a certain type of research objective". I utilised purposive sampling to select the participants. Purposive sampling refers to the method of selecting participants based on criteria that link with the research question, such as knowledge of the phenomenon at hand (Palinkas, Horwitz & Hoagwood 2016:533). In the case of this study, this involved knowledge of the call centre environment and how it affects stress levels. Purposive sampling is a non-random technique ensuring that the accepted participants have the required experience or characteristics that the research requires.

At the time of this study, there were about 80 students working in the call centre. To ensure enough "similarities and variations in perceptions are gathered" in the phenomenographic study (Rolls 2023:129), I used a sample of at least eight students, since this constitutes 10% of the population. I argued that 10% of the population could

maximise “the diversity of experience” and thus lead to varying subjective interpretations of the same phenomenon (Soysal & Saruhan 2023:278).

Soysal and Saruhan (2023:278) argue that if a researcher uses purposive sampling and tries to force diversity or include participants that they intuitively think will have different experiences of the phenomenon, the entire study could be based on “incomplete or wrong researcher assumptions”. For this reason, I only included the first eight agents that volunteered to ensure that I avoided any personal bias or assumptions in selection, and so that I could effectively observe and guide all the participants in relation to the same phenomenon. By chance, a diverse group of individuals were the first eight to volunteer (I describe their characteristics in Section 2.8.2). By not using subjective purposeful sampling (where I would choose participants) but rather random purpose sampling (the first ones who volunteer are automatically selected), the study findings are more likely to be transferable to the whole of the target population (Statton 2024:122).

Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016:3) outline another challenge in purposive sampling, indicating that participants need “to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner”. I navigated this through in-depth data triangulation that afforded participants the opportunity to reflect by means of various modalities. Some participants might be better at sharing their experience through writing or journaling, by drawing, such as through body maps, verbal communication such as in the semi-structured interviews, or even by completing scales such as the workplace PERMA profiler. I added further depth by asking the operational administrator (external observer) to video record each session. I then compared the recording with all the participants’ subjective experiences, as well as with my own observations. If any data was not clear enough, I asked clarifying questions. There were certain salient characteristics that the participants needed to possess.

2.8.2 Salient characteristics of participants

Salient characteristics refer to the qualities a person must possess to ensure that the intended involvement of that person in the context can be satisfactorily realised (Wisconsin Department of Transportation 2020:4) in support of the research aims. I invited *call centre agents* who were *over the age of 18* and were *registered university*

students (from various universities), *employed at the company*, and had a vision of *staying for at least one year* (until the completion of the programme). The department's policy is to employ full-time students as call centre agents. Although they are students, I did not study them as students but as call centre agents who are also studying. I did not ask any questions about their studies. They did not need any experience in embodied practices but did require a *willingness to participate in the process.*

Other criteria for the participants included *availability* during programme times (which occurred before work times, that is, before 09h00) and an *ability to reflect*. Participants were also to be *based in the Gauteng area* for ease of transportation to a venue close to the workplace where the programme occurred. The agents who volunteered differ in gender and race. Specifically, the participants self-identify[29] as the following:

Participant A:	Coloured[30] man
Participant B:	White woman
Participant C:	White woman
Participant D:	White woman
Participant E:	Black man
Participant F:	Black woman
Participant G:	Coloured woman
Participant H:	White man

In summary, the sample includes three white woman, one black woman, one coloured woman, one white man, one black man, and one coloured man. As I was working with human participants, I had to ensure that my research adhered to research ethics.

[29] Self-identity is an individual's internalised perception of who they are as a distinct human "constructed within ever-changing sociohistorical contexts" (Delvoye & Tasker 2016:7).
[30] The term "coloured" can be seen as problematic, even if people self-identify in this way. The term emerged as a rigid category under South African apartheid, intended to classify individuals of mixed racial heritage, typically involving European ancestry. Many regarded it as pejorative, prompting some to adopt identities such as "Black" or "Brown" to assert solidarity and differentiate themselves from imposed colonial labels. Others, however, have reclaimed "coloured" on their own terms, reflecting an ongoing negotiation of identity, power, and historical legacy (Msimang 2020:160).

2.9 Ethical considerations

Research ethics refer to “the specific principles, rules, guidelines, and norms of research-related behaviour that a research community has decided are proper, fair, and appropriate” (Davis & Lachlan 2017:108). Ethics ensures that the well-being of research participants are the top priority, with the research question always being of second importance (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey 2005:8).

To adhere to research ethics, my research had to be in accordance with the ethical values of the University of Pretoria, which are in turn aligned with international principles and values of ethical research practice. I applied for and received ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria (reference number is HUM015/1021) for my research. The University of Pretoria ([sa]:11) places the responsibility of (amongst other things) benevolence, beneficence, respect, professionalism and the avoidance of maleficence or discrimination in the hands of the researcher. This means that, in order to conduct ethical research, the researcher must ensure the participants are protected from harm and that efforts are made to ensure their well-being (University of Pretoria [sa]:11).

Parveen and Showkat (2017:5) state that the researchers must ensure that research is done in an ethical way, by adhering to the following principles:

- The participants must give informed consent;
- The researcher must reveal all risks to the participants and must not expose the participants to risks “greater than they encounter in their normal lifestyle”;
- The researcher must consider a possible knowledge gap between the participants and the researcher in terms of the research content;
- The researcher must design questionnaires and rating scales in the preferred language of participants;
- The researcher should protect the rights and interests of the participants; and
- The researcher must respect and utilise the principles of integrity, honesty, and openness.

Table 2 below provides a summary of the ethical considerations involved in the study, to delineate each type of participant's involvement. This provides a frame of reference for the discussion that follows.

Table 2: Summary of my ethical considerations in the study (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

Group/ person required for study	**Expected participation/ involvement**	**Sections of research in which the person or group participated, as well as methods involved in data collection**	**Provisions/ information given**	**Possible risks**	**Protection measures**	**Possible benefits**
Eight student call centre agents (participants)	The participants were expected to be committed to the programme and to engage in reflection as honestly as possible. They were also required to have the intention to work at the company for at least a year and needed to be registered students, based in Gauteng. Participants were encouraged to wear comfortable, movement-friendly clothing	Pre-programme: • A meeting of one hour prior to the programme to establish a timetable that did not interfere with academic and/or work responsibilities in any way. • Methods for data collection: one hour long semi-structured interview and completing a workplace PERMA profiler. Programme: • Participating in an embodied prosilience programme, three hours each week for one month, during which they participated in somatic movement explorations and physical activities (adapted to each individual's ability and mobility). The EPP took place in the mornings before work in an office building adjacent to the office in which the call centre agents work. • They received twelve one-minute-long video reminders of the EPP after each session of the programme. They were invited to explore these on their own and journal about them. • Methods for data collection*:* Journaling, body maps, participant observation and video recordings.	Gave the participants in-depth information and provided them with the required UP indemnity form, letter of intent, and letter of informed consent to sign.	Due to the physical nature of the research programme, participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that the researcher and University of Pretoria would not be held liable for any physical injury that occurred during the programme.	Code names were used instead of names, both on profilers and in the thesis. Participation in the programme was voluntary, and participants could withdraw at any stage without facing negative consequences.	Participants may have become more prosilient to stress and have experienced elevated levels of SWB. No monetary benefits.

		Post-programme: • Methods for data collection: An hour-long semi-structured interview, as well as completing a workplace PERMA profiler.				
3 Directors of the company (permission)	The opportunity to study their company and work with their employees outside of working hours.	The directors gave the initial approval and permission for the study to take place based on their company.	Provide information and ask them for a permission letter to work with the company.	No projected risks.	I do not mention the company name in the study.	No direct monetary benefits, but possibly tangential benefits.[31]
1 Operational administrator (external observer)	This party's role was to ensure that there was fairness across interviews, ethical conduct, and a non-coercive environment.	Pre-programme: • Shared information leaflet with possible participants. • Attended all semi-structured interviews. Programme • Attended all EPP sessions. • Method for data collection: Video recording of every EPP session. Post-programme: • Attended all semi-structured interviews.	Provided information and letter of informed consent to sign.	No projected risks.	Since she was an external observer, I did not need to implement any protective measures, but she needed to make sure to keep participant information confidential.	No direct monetary benefits, but possibly tangential benefits.[32]

[31] If call centre agents are more prosilient, they might achieve their targets with greater ease. Measuring the target changes of agents due to the EPP falls outside the scope of this study.
[32] By continuously attending EPP sessions, even an outsider might gain new knowledge. This falls outside the scope of this study.

As discussed in the previous section, my first responsibility was to get ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria. A researcher cannot begin gathering data from human participants without ethical clearance (Fleming & Zegwaard 2018:210). After I received ethical clearance, I provided the directors of the company with detailed information about the study that I wanted to conduct. I outline all the information I provided to them in Table 3, namely their expected participation and involvement, the sections of the research in which this would occur, the possible risks, the protection measures I employed, and possible benefits. I then asked the directors for written and signed permission to conduct my study in the department in which I work.

Thereafter, I approached our department's operational administrator and provided her with a letter of informed consent containing all the information outlined in Table 3. She then approached the possible participants by sending an information letter by means of email to all the students in the department. She advertised the programme as voluntary and indicated that there would be no positive or negative consequences, in terms of workplace dynamics, stemming from involvement in the programme.

Eight participants expressed interest in joining the programme. In accordance with the ethical principles outlined by Parveen and Showkat (2017:5), I had to receive informed consent from the participants. Informed consent is a "fundamental component of conducting ethical research" (Cacciattolo 2015:58). The operational administrator organised a meeting with the eight participants and myself, in the course of which I provided the participants with a letter of intent and a letter of informed consent outlining the study's aims and detailing their involvement.

Fleming and Zegwaard (2018:210) state that informed consent requires, firstly, clear information and, secondly, explicit consent. The letter of informed consent that I provided to the participants clearly articulated both the aspects of information and consent, in alignment with the requirements outlined by Fleming and Zegwaard (2018:210):

- Aspects of information include who the researcher is, what the intent of the research is, what data will be collected from the participants, how the data will be collected from participants, and the potential risks of taking part in the research.

I outlined the purpose and intent of my research and the data collection methods. Dooly, Moore, and Vallejo (2017:5) state that researchers must fully disclose all methods to participants before commencing the study. I started by explaining pre-programme data collection (phase 3 of the research), namely their involvement in one pre-programme semi-structured interview and the completion of one workplace PERMA profiler.

I then explained the embodied prosilience programme[33] and described the data collection methods (phase 4 of the research) during the session as journaling, body maps, participant observation and video recordings by the operational administrator. I continued to also outline the post-programme data collection methods, namely one semi-structured interview and one workplace PERMA profiler. I further explained the twelve one-minute-long video reminders about the programme that they received after each session and were invited to explore on their own and journal about.

I also addressed the possible risks of the intervention. Participants were reminded of the physical nature of the research programme and that participation was at their own risk. Next, I outline the aspects of consent that I described in the letter of informed consent.

- Aspects of consent include information regarding the right to withdraw at any time without reason; assurances that participant identity would be kept confidential; their right to access to their data; the right to ask for more information; and the contact details of the researcher along with the supervisor's details.

I stated that participation in the programme is voluntary and that participants could withdraw at any stage without any negative consequences. In terms of confidentiality, code names were used instead of names in journals, profilers, and in the thesis. I also informed the participants about the limitations of anonymity and confidentiality. I clarified that complete anonymity might not be guaranteed, especially if identifying

[33] The EPP took place over one month (October 2023) with three one-hour long sessions each week before the participants started dialing in the morning (before 09h00).

information, such as personal details or specific contexts, could inadvertently reveal a participant's identity. While efforts were made to protect individual identities, there may be instances when participants might be recognisable to others, especially in small or tightly connected groups.

I also explained that while I would take every possible measure to ensure that the data provided by the participants was kept confidential and used only for the purposes of the study, there could be limitations to this too. For example, confidentiality might be limited if there is a legal obligation to disclose certain information or if other researchers need to review the data for academic or ethical purposes.

In terms of access to their data, their data would be archived on the UP digital repository (Figshare) for 10 years. What cannot be uploaded would be stored in the UP Drama Department archive in Room 2-16. Access to the material would be limited to the researcher, the research supervisors, and the head of department. Were I to use the data for further research, I would obtain the renewed written permission of every participant. The raw data would not be made available to any other parties.

Besides the aspects of information and consent that aided the study's adherence to ethical standards, there was another ethical challenge I had to consider. McDermid, Peters, Jackson and Daly (2014:31) explain that ethical challenges can arise when colleagues are asked to take part in research conducted by another colleague. I had to consider this in particular, since I am an assistant manager in the department, which could lead to potential power-relations issues. I implemented several strategies to mitigate any imbalance and create an open, equitable environment for the participants. I recognised that my managerial position could unintentionally influence the participants' responses, either by making them feel obligated to participate or by affecting the honesty of their contributions due to my perceived authority.

First, I made it clear from the outset that participation in the study was entirely voluntary and that their decision to participate, or the nature of their responses, would have no impact on their professional standing or evaluation. This was reinforced by provision of informed consent forms, which outlined their rights as participants.

Second, to create a more neutral space, I arranged for the operational administrator to attend all the interviews and sessions of the EPP (which she recorded). This

external presence helped ensure that participants felt comfortable speaking openly, as it reduced the potential pressure that might arise from interacting directly with me as an assistant manager.

Additionally, during the study, I made a conscious effort to shift from a managerial role to a facilitative role during interactions. This included using language and body language that fostered a sense of collaboration rather than hierarchy. This links with footnote 11 (see p. 18), which indicates that in communication and conversation, I am committed to behave in a way that promotes diversity, equality, inclusivity, and belonging. By framing the process as a shared exploration and learning experience, I aimed to reduce the perception of authority and create an environment in which participants felt encouraged to express their views freely.

These measures helped to address and mitigate inherent power dynamics, ensuring that participants felt safe and respected and that the research process was both ethical and equitable. Researchers at the University of Pretoria ([sa]:15) commit to conducting ethical research that contributes to the well-being and quality of life of all South Africans. I approached the study's ethical considerations with care, ensuring the participants' welfare, and conducted the research in a way that contributes to the field of embodied prosilience and SWB as this relates to a South African call centre.

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed my research practice. I situated the research within my constructivist philosophical worldview, which incorporates a monist ontology and a constructivist epistemology. These philosophical foundations guided my selection of a constructivist research paradigm; I operationalised my worldview with a qualitative research approach. Using this approach, I selected the research design and methodology of phenomenography.

I have outlined the research's referential (what) aspect of experience as the EPP. I argued that phenomenography allows for an eclectic pedagogical approach, since I could draw from various somatic approaches to create the EPP in order to facilitate embodied learning. I further defined the research's structural (how) aspect of experience as the varied subjective experiences of the participants in relation to stress and SWB. With this foundation, I outlined how the phenomenographic research design

and methodology provided me with steps to take in order to effectively capture and analyse the diverse ways in which participants experienced the EPP.

Using qualitative phenomenographic methods such as semi-structured interviews, journaling, participant observation, body maps, video recordings, and the quasi-quantitative method namely the workplace PERMA profiler allowed me to effectively triangulate data in order to create a thick description. Rolls (2023:129) states that semi-structured interviews are the most common form of data collection in phenemonography but that adding other data collection methods "provides multiple sources of data for triangulation".

I have argued that to effectively analyse the data from these various methods, I could employ the process of theme extraction. I then provided Figure 5 (see p. 70) to outline the research trajectory in an attempt to clarify how my research process linked in terms of research phases, thesis chapters, and phenomenographic steps. This provided a foundation from which I could discuss the phases of the research with more clarity. I further explained how I selected participants for the study and how I adhered to the ethical principles of the University of Pretoria.

In the next chapter, I provide a critical discussion of embodiment and bodymind as the central theoretical constructs underpinning the research. This builds on the research practice I discussed in this chapter and relates to phase 1 of my research. The bodymind directly links to my monist ontology, which moves beyond dualist thinking to focus on how individuals can gain embodied cognition through experience. Embodiment can thus be described as central in the constructivist worldview, since individuals can shape their understanding of knowledge by embodying various experiences as part of their selves. I interpreted the participants' embodied experiences by examining how they interpret and embody the same phenomenon (EPP). In this way, the coupling of embodiment and bodymind are the central theoretical foundation of the entire study. By exploring the concepts of embodiment and bodymind, I provide an in-depth understanding of how these constructs relate to SWB in high-stress environments and of why facilitating embodied cognition through embodied learning in the EPP is crucial. Moreover, Chapter 3 strengthens the study's rationale and provides the insight necessary for integrating embodied prosilience strategies into the call centre environment.

CHAPTER 3: EMBODIMENT AND BODYMIND

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I outlined my research practice and briefly explained the relevance of embodiment and bodymind as the central theoretical constructs underpinning the research. The aim of this chapter is to explore these theoretical constructs and respond to the following sub-questions of the research: “What is embodiment?”, “What is the bodymind?” and, “What is embodied learning?”

Next, I connect these theoretical foundations to the problem statement I delineated in Chapter 1, where call centre agents, due to stress, develop limiting habits that inhibit their ability to meet both deficiency and growth needs (see pp. 21−26). By becoming aware of these limiting habits, individuals can adjust their stress responses and increase embodied awareness.

With increased embodied awareness, individuals can manage stress more effectively and improve their SWB. This awareness enables them to meet their deficiency needs (embodiment in response to stress), supporting the fulfilment of their growth needs. However, meeting these needs requires both embodied awareness and an awareness of the bodyminded self within the world. Embodied learning facilitates this awareness, allowing individuals to gain new embodied knowledge, or embodied cognition. Before elaborating on how embodied learning shapes this awareness, it is important to distinguish the conceptual underpinnings of the bodymind. Although body ‘and’ mind are inextricably interlinked, I discuss each concept separately in this chapter for the sake of clarity, and then I integrate them to explain my understanding of the bodymind.

As shown in Figure 6 (p. 85), the chapter begins with the theory of the body ‘and’ mind as separate entities, known as Cartesian dualism, to set up a framework from which to discuss the body. I consider perspectives that align with Cartesian dualism, namely the view of the body as an object and of the brain as an object within the body as an object. I then consider the view of the body as subject and, thereafter, as a process, from which I delineate the notion of the mind. In the course of this discussion, the mind is shown to exist within and as part of the body and the brain, an arrangement which facilitates embodiment. I then argue that all these concepts are inextricably linked to form the foundation of bodymindedness.

Having formulated an awareness of the bodyminded self in and as part of the world, I posit that individuals may participate in learning enhanced ways of being. These new ways of being can become embedded in, and exist as part of, the individual as embodied cognition. Embodied learning facilitates this through the experiencing of habits that are more optimal. In this way, participating in embodied learning provides an embodied individual with more effective ways to manage their stress and thereby fulfil their deficiency and growth needs. In order to fully understand embodiment, I first discuss Cartesian dualism.

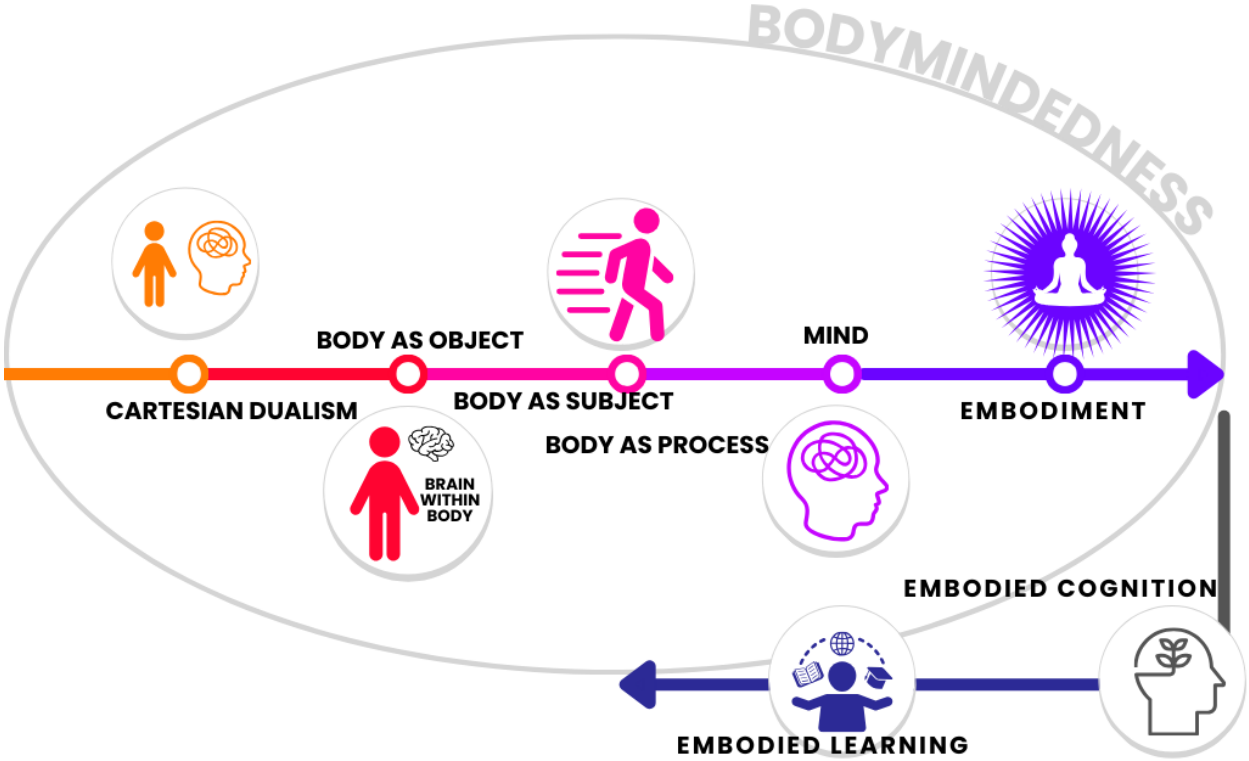


Figure 6: Summary of dualism to embodied cognition (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

3.2 Cartesian dualism

The supposed separation between body ‘and’ mind has a long history in Western[34] thought, dating back to the Renaissance and Enlightenment eras, with their emphasis

[34] I define what “Western” refers to in footnote 10 (see p. 16).

on science, rationality, individualism[35] and empiricism[36]. Dualism is predominantly associated with 17th century philosopher, scientist, and mathematician, René Descartes, who is often regarded as the father of modern philosophy (Jude 2018:1).

Broadly, Descartes' metaphysical dualism is based on a definite distinction between physical entities or matter (body) and non-physical entities (mind). Descartes (1664:19) argues that while a person can imagine being without a body, they cannot deny their own existence. For him, this demonstrated that the soul, as the source of consciousness and thought, is distinct from the body.

He posits that human beings consist of physical bodies capable of thinking, yet it is the soul, a non-material entity and identity, that enables higher-level mental capacities such as reasoning and self-awareness (Descartes 1664:132; Visala 2015:65). Descartes views the mind and soul as intertwined, providing the foundation for human cognition, while remaining separate from the physical body. Descartes argues that while the body is subject to physical laws and limitations, the mind is not bound by these constraints. This allows the mind to engage in abstract thought, imagination, and reasoning that transcend physical limitations.

According to Descartes (1641:18), the body distracts from the mind, since "our senses deceive us". Dualism thus stresses the idea that there is a definite mind–body hierarchy, where the body is a physical "thing", and the non-physical mind has higher–order capacity. When the non-physical (non-material) and the physical (matter) interact, dualism argues that the non-physical controls the physical. Dualism thus places the mind as the central location of thought, logic, and rationality, with the bounded body, as matter, taking up physical space in three dimensions. The work of Descartes (1637) proposes that the mind and body are two fundamentally distinct entities: the mind is responsible for thought, consciousness, and self-awareness, while the body, including the brain, is a physical entity governed by mechanical processes.

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[35] Individualism is the belief in the importance of the individual and their rights, independence, and self-reliance (Hartinger, Resnjanskij, Ruhose & Wiederhold 2021:5).
[36] Empiricism is a philosophical theory that states that knowledge comes primarily from sensory experience (Hossain 2014:225).

Descartes maintains that the mind itself is not confined to the brain; rather, it exists independently, with the brain acting as the interface between the non-material mind and the material body.

Descartes believed that he needed to identify some sort of truth, arguing that because individuals could think thoughts that doubt the truth of other phenomena such as the body, they knew themselves to exist. From this sprung his belief, “I think, therefore I am” (“Cogito ergo sum”; Descartes 1637:18).

Interpretations of the relationship between body ‘and’ mind, and understandings of dualism per se evolved, so that dualism has been greatly influential in philosophy, religion and psychology, and arguably still has an impact on thinking in contemporary times; for example, in the fields of medicine and health care (Slatman & Widdershoven 2015:89). In these fields, the body is often viewed as a separate entity that needs attention or treatment (Slatman & Widdershoven 2015:88). Młożniak and Schler (2016:3) state that in Western cultures (and not just in medicine), it seems to have become the norm to view the mind as dominant and separate from the body.

The problem with this view is that it does not acknowledge the intimate relationship between the body ‘and’ mind. This interpretation also considers individual beings to be separate from the environments they find themselves in, resulting in an observation of the human experience in which the body is an object governed by the mind.

Some argue that Descartes tried to move beyond dualism and that many have misinterpreted his theories (see, for example, Afloroaei 2010 and Heller 2021). However, dualism dominates the thinking of many theorists (Michel 2015:41). Some suggest that, for Descartes, the distinction between mind and body may have been a methodological tool and not necessarily an encapsulation of how the body ‘and’ mind function. Heller (2021:2) suggests that Descartes never subscribed to dualism and actively “fought against dualism, promoting a detailed interactionist and organismic approach of embodiment”.

It is easy to misattribute to Descartes the founding of dualism since little of his work is available in English (Heller 2021:3). Some researchers may simply have taken the limited available resources on Descartes and made assumptions about what his philosophy suggests. Afloroaei (2010:107) argues that, in recent history, attributing

Cartesian dualism to Descartes has been "accepted as the symbolic thesis of a whole tradition of thought".[37] In the following section, I expand on and critically examine ideas concerning dualism.

First, I define the notion of "body", including the brain as one of the organs within and part of the body. I then discuss "mind" – not to suggest that they are separate, but rather to delineate how they are inextricably united in the bodymind. In focusing on the bodymind, I adopt a monist approach rather than a dualist one. In this discussion, I draw on both dualist and monist perspectives to clarify the underlying theory in sections 3.3 to 3.8.

Fraser and Greco (2005:4) state that "the body is something we have (body as object), something we are (body as subject), but also something we become (body as process)". I commence with the explanation of the body as object since this most closely relates to the Cartesian lens that has dominated Western thinking. I then delineate the body as a subject of experience and then the body as a process of becoming[38] – and here, include the mind – to provide a clear explanation of how the bodymind operates.

3.3 The body as object

The body as object refers to what Fraser and Greco (2005:4) call "something we have". The body as object links directly to dualism, where the body is seen as an instrument governed by the mind. In this view "the subject is granted the status of the self, while the body is treated as a self-less, subservient object" (Młożniak & Schier 2016:2). Through the Cartesian lens, the body is seen as a mere corporeal object and instrument (a kind of container) that encompasses various biological systems and anatomical parts (Młożniak & Schier 2016:1).

The body as an object, focusing on its anatomical properties, can be perceived as the surface body, the outer layer of flesh, and the recessive body, the inner organs (Leder

[37] Detailed engagement with such critique falls outside of the scope of this thesis.
[38] I focus on the theories of Merleau-Ponty (1945), Fraser and Greco (2005), and Spatz (2020), among others, to lay the foundation for the concept of bodymindedness.

1990:1). If an individual becomes aware of the body and its anatomy (both the surface and recessive body) as “things”, the body inevitably becomes an object of reflection that is referred to in the third person (Slatman & Widdershoven 2015:89). This shift in perception creates a disassociation between the individual's sense of self and their physical form, reducing the body to a mere container for the mind. Individuals no longer experience their body as an integral part of their self, but as an object to be observed and scrutinised.

If the body is perceived as an object, individuals may feel detached from their own physical needs. This affects the deficiency needs in Maslow’s hierarchy. In such a case, they would have no agency in how they would fulfill their basic bodily deficiency needs, since the body would simply be an object that is removed from the self, rather than something they actively experience. In this way, the body becomes a usable object, “predominantly for its use to (or consumption by) others” (Fredrickson & Roberts 1997:174). When the body is seen as an object, it is treated as only having value in performing instrumental, task-orientated activities (Młożniak & Schler 2016:1).

I first outline the concept of the brain to explain how viewing the body as an object reinforces dualism. Then, I show how the body and brain are intertwined, representing not just what individuals possess, but who they *are*. I discuss the brain in order to outline the various structures thereof that are central to the study since they all interlink with the body. Understanding and exploring this link may help individuals to deal with stress effectively and in an embodied manner, to meet their deficiency needs, and to improve their subjective well-being.

3.3.1 Brain[39] within body

Through a dualist lens, the brain is viewed as the topmost organ in a hierarchy responsible for controlling bodily functions, while the mind is seen as a superior, non-physical entity governing reason, consciousness, and self-awareness. In this framework, the mind is positioned as the driver of cognitive processes, with the brain

[39] Neuroscience evolves quickly, so what is currently seen as fact might soon possibly be seen as fiction.

acting as its physical counterpart, executing the commands necessary for bodily activities and interaction with the external world (Spenard 2011:12). This hierarchical view suggests that the brain is subordinate to the mind, which is considered the seat of higher reasoning and personal identity.

This hierarchical view, which posits the brain as subordinate to the mind — the presumed seat of higher reasoning and personal identity — has been challenged by theorists who contend that the brain is an immobile organ functioning not by moving "spirits" or "energies" from the mind throughout the body, but through the process of neurotransmission. (López-Muńoz, Rubio, Molina & Alamo 2011:166). Building on this shift, David Hume postulated that the self is the sum of all sensory experiences, making any attempt to physically locate the mind or self within the brain, as some dualist thinkers had, an illusion (López-Muñoz *et al*. 2011:167). This indicates that there is no single spot in the brain or body where the self resides, as it is not a physical entity. Instead, it is the collection of our ongoing experiences, without a fixed or central essence (I elaborate on this in 3.5).

Another objection to the brain being the seat of the mind (which was, in a way, admitted by Descartes himself) is that we cannot ultimately separate ‘mind’ and ‘brain’, because “many of our mental operations depend in one way or another on the normal functioning of the brain” (Matthews 2017:351). While Descartes maintained a clear distinction between the mind (non-physical) and the body (physical), he admitted that the two are interconnected in such a way that the mind cannot function independently of the brain. Thus, the idea that we cannot fully separate the mind from the brain is a challenge to dualism and suggests that a more monist view may provide a better indication of what is occurring.

From a monist perspective, the brain is one of the interrelated systems of and within the body contributing to the self. Its purpose is to construct, maintain, and repair equilibrium through its interdependent relationship with the body (Bechtel 2019:624). The brain is the locus of cognition. However, the brain is not in a hierarchical, but rather in a heterarchical, interrelationship with multiple systems that are holistically present in the multimodal self. Damasio (1994:19) states that the brain, as part of the body, is connected through mutually interactive neural and biochemical circuits.

The body and brain are in a continuous feedback loop to ensure homeostasis (I discuss this in detail in Chapter 4.3; see pp. 130−134) through, among other mechanisms, hormone secretion (Flacks 2015:36). Hormone secretion aids individuals in maintaining their inner environments in relation to stressors in their external environments. This exchange of messages occurs through, amongst others, interoception, proprioception, and exteroception.

Interoception occurs when awareness is elicited through sensations in the "internal tissues of the body" (Blakeslee & Blakeslee 2007:182), whereas proprioception provides the self (or the brain, through a dualist lens) with information on the physical properties of the body and how these properties are moving in space (Blakeslee & Blakeslee 2007:214). Exteroception refers to how the self uses the senses to perceive the world outside the self (Blakeslee & Blakeslee 2007:212).

The brain senses the body and its properties in space (proprioception) while analysing impulses from the outer environment (exteroception) and within the inner self (interoception), and then responds in complex ways (e.g. changes in heart rate, perspiration, and breathing patterns) to serve the individual (Flacks 2015:36). Maté (2019:37) posits that the brain focuses on any threats and mobilises the body. This mobilisation occurs through various neural circuits that extend to the psychosomatic networks within the body (Pert 2004:23). Panksepp (1998:70) states that "the brain is an […] interconnected organ whose every part can find an access pathway to any other part".

The brain does not control the body in a top-down manner since the flow of chemicals arises from many physical sites simultaneously when stressors activate these sites. This includes sites of and within the body such as immune, nervous, endocrine, and gastrointestinal sites (Pert 1997:293). Changes in either the brain or the body affect changes in the other. In this way, the systems of the body are inextricably linked with centres in the brain (Maté 2019:69).

This interdependence is further illuminated by relevant theories that contribute to the understanding of the brain's role in the body 'and' mind connection. For example,

Maclean's triune brain[40] and Porges's polyvagal theory[41] emphasise this intricate relationship[42]. Updated interpretations of the triune brain – see, for example, Cory (1999) and Steffen, Hedges and Matheson (2022) – emphasise the fluidity of the triune structure. I refer to the fluidity of the triune brain, along with the polyvagal theory, to outline "the neurochemical regulation involved with bio-behavioural adaptive processes" (Hays 2016:25). This refers to the maintaining of homeostasis in response to stressors in the inner and outer environments by adapting in response to these stressors.

Stress disrupts homeostasis within individuals by eliciting certain emotional and physiological responses which cause strain not only on the self-directed behaviours of individuals, but also their interactions with others. Porges (2017:100) argues that the neural pathways that support health and growth are also shared with those that govern

[40] MacLean (1973:7) uses the notion of the triune brain to emphasise that the proto-reptilian brain, limbic system, and the neocortex are three brain structures that, although showing great difference in structure and chemistry, function together in a fluid interrelationship to form the triune brain. The model has a broad explanatory value since the brain arguably encompasses three regions, though they exist and operate in a fluidly interlinked manner. It is the collective of the three regions that creates human experience (Komninos 2021:2) in relation with the bodymind. Komninos (2021:2) postulates that the reimagined, fluid triune brain model provides a clear description of the structure of the human brain, but that "various regions (of the brain) are involved in the groups of activities" that culminate into the integrative function of the triune brain.

[41] The polyvagal theory provides a lens through which to discover how the vagus nerve, the sympathetic nervous system and the myelinated mammalian vagus elicit physiological states as intervening variables that influence behaviour and the ability to interact with others (Porges 2017:43). The five states that the vagus nerve, the sympathetic nervous system, and the mammalian vagus bring forth in an integrated manner are social engagement, mobilisation, play, immobilisation when there is a threat to life, and immobilisation without fear (Porges 2017:354). An awareness of these states in and as part of the bodymind affords individuals the opportunity to not just become aware of their basic needs in relation to maintaining homeostasis, but also their needs in relation to others. This links to not just deficiency needs of Maslow but also to growth needs.

[41] I mention these two theories as, together, they provide a comprehensive overview of how stress affects the self. More specifically, Maclean's triune brain theory gives a clear indication of the effect of stress on the self, while the polyvagal theory provides a clear indication of the interrelated, heterarchical body/brain. This provides me with a foundation for clarifying bodymindedness (see Section 3.8) while understanding the effects of stress on the bodymind when creating the EPP.

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social support and behaviours. This indicates that beneficial habits of the healthy self may encourage increased social support.

On page 132, I also explain how the forming of appropriate habits can aid the bodymind to foster prosilience towards stress. If individuals experience appropriate responses in the limbic system, these responses can aid the body in returning to homeostasis since the individual learns how to deal with the emotions that stress causes in the body. Porges (2017:43) uses polyvagal theory to explain that the sense of safety is not just acquired by removing threats but also by promoting and learning healthy habits in response to cues from the environment. In this way, the adult brain can learn more optimal ways of meeting Maslow's needs in order to maintain homeostasis. This occurs through neuroplasticity.

Neuroplasticity, or the "malleability of the adult brain to adapt in response to experience" (Chen & Goodwill 2022:2), is central to adult learning. Adult learning can be seen as a "safe emergency" in which a state of attention is evoked without debilitating anxiety, since a moderate level of arousal triggers neuroplasticity (Cozolino & Sprokay 2006:14). Facilitators or educators that are aware of how the brain works and of its malleable nature can create a safe space for adults to learn. This means that, because of neuroplasticity, adults can learn new ways to responding to stimuli. By rewiring neural pathways through neuroplasticity, individuals can experience an enhanced understanding how to handle the stressors of life so they can function at more effective levels (Amo, Beaulac & Berglund 2023:71). Regulating stressors through neuroplasticity directly increases subjective well-being (Amo *et al.* 2023:64). Human behaviour is thus linked to how the bodyminded being responds to stimuli.

In the context of call centres, this understanding of neuroplasticity is particularly relevant. Call centre agents, who often deal with high levels of stress and emotional labour, can benefit from learning new ways to handle stressors through the rewiring of their neural pathways. By creating environments that facilitate neuroplasticity, call centres can enable agents to manage stress more effectively, improve their prosilience, and enhance both their well-being and performance.

There are two major anatomical regions that link human brains to behaviour in response to stimuli; these are the limbic system and the hypothalamus, which is part

of the limbic system. The limbic system is a region of the brain that includes the hypothalamus, the thalamus, amygdala, hippocampus, and cingulate gyrus (Bayram-Weston, Andrade & Knight 2021:49). Through the hypothalamus, the limbic system ensures that the body returns to a state of equilibrium (see my discussion on homeostasis, p. 130−133).

The brain can be defined in two different ways: as a system that habitually and subconsciously responds to stimuli and as a system that can consciously become aware of stimuli and respond effectively (Kahneman 2011:43) to ensure homeostasis. For the purpose of this study, I define the brain as a system of and within the body that aids in facilitating the ongoing homeostasis of the body in its interdependent relationship with the body. Sensing and perceiving[43] stimuli by means of proprioception, exteroception, and interoception (see p. 91) therefore results in the monist view of the mind since knowledge and appropriate responses form by means of the inextricable link of the brain with the body (split here only for the purpose of analytic clarity). I explain the concept of mind fully in Chapter 3.6. To engage with stress in the most effective manner, the body (including the brain that gives rise to higher order thinking) needs to be understood as more than merely an object. The body can also be seen as a subject that makes meaning as part of the world.

3.4 The body as subject[44]

The body as subject refers to what Fraser and Greco (2005:4) call “something we are”. The body can be described as a living subject since it is central to sensing, moving, experiencing and being in and of the world around it (Wehrle 2019:500). Merleau-Ponty (1945:150) places the body at the centre of all humans’ sense of self within and in relation to the world when he states, “I am my body” instead of stating “I have my

[43] Sensation involves sense organs that are stimulated through physical stimuli and then constructing knowledge based on the initial contact with the stimuli, whereas perception involves the way we interpret our experiences (Walinga & Stangor 2014:168).
[44] I acknowledge that the binary of body as object and body as subject brings in another mode of dualism. However, discussing it in this way for the sake of clarity likely makes it easier to explain complex ideas concerning embodiment. By distinguishing these roles (object/subject), I am not endorsing dualism but using this framework to help clarify the tension between how the body is both experienced and perceived.

body". This statement positions the body not as an object an individual merely possesses, but a subject an individual is in relation to others and the environment.

William James (1976:86)[45] states that:

> The body is the storm-center, the origin of coordinates, the constant place of stress in [our] experience-train. The world experienced comes at all times with (the) body as its center, center of vision, center of action, center of interest.

In this way, the body is a subject that is the centre of experience and perception, as everything individuals experience holistically affects their bodies and is affected by their bodies.[46] Phenomenology, a philosophical approach that explores how human beings experience the world, aligns with this idea.

Phenomenology is "a philosophy for which the world is already there prior to human reflection […] and whose entire effort is to rediscover this naïve contact with the world in order to finally raise it to a philosophical status" (Merleau-Ponty 1945:xi). Fundamentally, meaning is not simply created through affections or experiences but also through reflections on each experience within a world that exists before reflection occurs.[47]

Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty are the theorists of phenomenology developed this idea. In building on one another's work, they provide a coherent and evolving framework for understanding the relationship between the body and experience. A full discussion of all these theories falls outside the scope of the study. I focus specifically on the theories of Merleau-Ponty who drew from and was

[45] This is a seminal source that encapsulates a foundational idea in psychology and philosophy: the central role of the body in human experience. I use it together with more recent, contemporary sources to inform my argument.
[46] This contributes to what I later define as the bodymind.
[47] Pre-reflexive understanding of experience refers to the immediate, non-conscious awareness or understanding we have before reflecting on an experience (Legrand 2007:584). These are experiences we understand directly through our body, without the need for conscious thought or analysis. In this sense, pre-reflexive experiences are indeed embodied, as they occur at a level at which the body 'and' mind are inseparable in their engagement with the world.

influenced by Husserlian phenomenology,[48] Heideggerian epistemology,[49] gestalt psychology,[50] Marxist materialism,[51] and Maussian anthropology[52] to inaugurate "a school of thought that associates human understanding not with cogitation but with embodied cogitation" (Noland 2009:55). Merleau-Ponty moves beyond dualist thinking to provide alternative ways of perceiving the body as the ground of experience (Diprose & Reynolds 2014:9). This introduces a view that goes beyond dualism and sees the body as part of the thinking and experiencing of the world, which inevitably includes the mind as an embodied entity.

Humans are never merely objects that are "passively located, affected or moulded from the outside"; […] rather, they "subjectively feel any external effect from the inside and thus have to somehow relate to it" (Wehrle 2019:500). Fraser and Grecko (2005:10) support this idea and state that the body is not merely a corporeal object but an active subject that can relate to and is shaped by external events and other beings in order to affect the social environment in a mutually active interplay.

As explained above, individuals receive, sense (experience), and perceive (interpret) stimuli by means of, amongst others, proprioception, exteroception, and interoception. Receiving, sensing, and perceiving stimuli affords individuals the opportunity to become aware of their possible responses in certain situations and to practise appropriate responses. Individuals can thus act with intent in their responses by becoming aware of how they sense and perceive the world, since intent is always filtered by perception (Sangati, Lobo, Estelle, Sangati, Tavassoli & Froese 2023:664).

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[48] Husserl's concepts of intentionality and lifeworlds deeply influenced Merleau-Ponty's focus on perception (Mildenberg 2017:8−11).
[49] Heidegger's idea of being-in-the-world shaped Merleau-Ponty's view that human experience is inseparable from the world we inhabit (Moran 2010:177).
[50] Merleau-Ponty was influenced by gestalt psychology's emphasis on perception as holistic and patterned (Moran 2010:180−183).
[51] Marxist thought influenced Merleau-Ponty's interest in the socio-political context of human existence. He incorporated materialist ideas to emphasise that the body is both a biological and social entity, linking subjective experience to concrete social realities (Onishi 2023:10−12).
[52] From Marcel Mauss, Merleau-Ponty adopted the notion of the body as a cultural and social phenomenon. Mauss's study of embodied practices like gestures and habits influenced Merleau-Ponty's view of the body as a medium for engaging with the world (Lévi-Strauss 2001:12).

Taking the argument of intent back to the body as subject, Morris (2010:236) argues that Merleau-Ponty's body as subject has motor intentionality. Jackson (2017:3) defines motor intentionality as "a bodily consciousness of something or other, a mobile directedness or orientation of the subject towards something". Humans use their senses to be conscious of not just their bodies, but also of the world in which they find themselves. Consciousness, therefore, develops in and due to the body, and it is through this consciousness that humans project themselves into and experience themselves in the environment (Merleau-Ponty 1945:159).

The relationship between consciousness and the body is both reciprocal and integrative, positioning consciousness as an emergent quality rooted in embodied experience. In this way, consciousness links to both the body as object and as subject. Sobchack (2004:2) posits that the body has a dual nature: it operates both as a subjective object and an objective subject. As a subjective object, the body is an object that is perceived and experienced by the self. This involves how individuals view their bodies from an external perspective, noticing sensations, appearances, and functions as if observing an object. As an objective subject, the body is the subject of experience and action. This highlights the body's role in perception, thought, and agency. In this sense, the body is an active participant in experiences, in making decisions, and in engaging with the environment. This is a factor in relation to the intentional movement of the body.

The body's intentional and conscious movement through space, and its complex relation to the world, can be understood as bodily intentionality. This intentionality combines the view of the body from something we have and experience (subjective object) and something we are in experience (objective subject) to a body that can act in relation to, and change in relation to, experiences (Slatman & Widdershoven 2015:98). This relates to the phenomenal body, or the body as process.

3.5 The body as process

The body as process refers to what Fraser and Greco (2005:4) call "something we become". The body is not simply a biological object or an active subject but an embodied process that is constantly shaped by and reshaping the world through interaction and perception. Whereas the body as subject refers to a living body that is

inscribed with meaning, the body as process refers to the lived body[53] that is in the constant process of becoming. Each experience has an impact, meaning that the body is always becoming something new, whether through physical movement, emotional response, or social engagement. This process of becoming aligns with phenomenological ideas, especially in Merleau-Ponty's work, where the body is described as a lived body that engages with the world in a continuous, dynamic manner.

When individuals perceive occurrences, they make meaning of these due to and through the phenomenal body as a processing of, and within, their experiences by referencing the "past and future, […] other places and […] human possibilities and situations" (Baldwin in Merleau-Ponty 1948:10). Merleau-Ponty (1945:82) holds that the body is neither an objective body nor a subject, but a lived body (in the process of becoming) that becomes irreducibly saturated with, and act in support of lived attitudes to the world.

Merleau-Ponty (1945:139) argues that the lived body is not simply present in space and time but intentionally moves in and inhabits space and time so that it becomes shaped by experiences and ideologies. Through sensing, moving, and experiencing the body in relation to the world around it, bodily engagement engenders a complex personal relation to the world (Merleau-Ponty 1945:82). The lived body and lived experiences are thus inseparable because the body is constituted through these lived experiences. The body thus does not exist in isolation but is defined by the ongoing experiences in which it is embedded.

It is through this constant interaction with the environment that the lived body creates and reflects cultural and historical change through experience (Munro & Coetzee 2007:99). Cultural or historical experiences are embedded in the lived body, and these all become part of an individual's lived experiences, and *vice versa*.

[53] The living body is a body that is alive; the lived body is a living body that is in the process of becoming in response to experiences in the world (Onishi 2023:107).

Freiser (2008:40) highlights that the body's involvement in every lived experience gives rise to bodily knowing, where the body itself becomes an active source of knowledge. This suggests that the body is not just a passive receiver of stimuli but an agent that participates meaningfully in the world. The body acts both in mundane ways, such as moving through space and manipulating objects, and in more complex, creative forms, such as engaging in social relations, assuming cultural roles, and occupying positions within society. Through these actions, the body not only interacts with its environment but also contributes to the ongoing search for meaning, integrating lived experiences into a broader cultural and social framework (Koopman & Koopman 2018:5).

The phenomenal body should not be perceived as a fixed subject or solid centre of our experiences but rather as an ever-changing and constantly "becoming" lived body. This view also reflects the premise that the lived body is a process. Coetzee (2018:1) describes how human bodies are continuously in the process of becoming to "organise our knowing, feeling and being". This occurs through body plasticity and neuroplasticity (defined on p. 93), which allows individuals to continuously 'become' and learn in response to experiences and change.

By recognising the brain's systemic integration with the body in its processing and experiencing of stimuli, this form of bodily knowing transcends dualism, moving towards a holistic concept of embodiment. In this embodied perspective, the body 'and' mind operate as a unified, dynamic system, constantly sensing, perceiving, and responding to experiences in a continuous process of interaction and meaning-making (Totton 2010:23). This ongoing process, which I elaborate on in the next section, redefines cognition as inherently embodied rather than as being split between mental and physical domains.

For the purpose of this study, I define the body as the physical locus of human experience that encapsulates knowledge and makes meaning by constantly adapting and allowing the becoming of the complex multimodal self in relation to ideology, culture, history, and various contexts.

The information outlined in this section illustrates how the body can be seen as an object, a subject, and as a process, and how the brain is part of the lived body and

involved in responses to stress. To fully understand how stimuli from the inner and outer environment influence individuals, I first discuss the mind as an internally related entity in order to outline how embodiment occurs through the bodymind of human beings

3.6 Mind

Human beings consist of many interrelated systems and modalities. The brain and neural pathways are part of one system within the body, and the mind is a result of, determined by, and determines the body as a seat of consciousness. Başar (2008:3) defines the mind as "the collective aspects of intellect and consciousness which are manifest in some combination of thought, perception, emotion, will, and imagination". The mind thus encompasses the systems of the brain used to interpret the world beyond the biological brain processes.

The mind is often described as a container with "ideas and concepts that are internal, existing somewhere in the inner space while what the mind refers to are things in the external, physical world" (Lakoff & Johnson 1999:266). The bodymind (see 3.8) moves beyond this idea of a container that is separate from the world, rather referring to the mind as part of the world in the creation of knowledge.

Various knowledges manifest because of worldly practices in relation to the body, including the brain. This might be the result of the complex multimodal bodyminded self continuously becoming in various contexts or "worlds". Spatz (2020:xiv) describes how the world is one of many worlds (pluriverse[54]), and the pluribody is "a body made up of knowledges understood as worldly practices".

The pluribody encompasses the idea that identity is formed at the intersection between the mind and the world (Spatz 2020:xv). In this way, the body and the brain do not work in isolation but, through their collective experience, form the mind. Without the brain, the mind ceases to exist; the mind cannot exist without the body either, thus

[54] The term "pluriverse" was coined by De la Cadena and Blaser (2018), with Escobar (2018) and Spatz (2020) adapting the term and coining "pluribody".

indicating the interdependence of the body and mind (Damasio 1994:17; Munro & Coetzee 2007:101).

The mind (as the concomitant result of the body/brain), in relation to the world, constantly gains meaning from situations and experiences in which it finds itself. This is how the complex, multimodal process of identity formation occurs. This means that an individual's self is discursively and biologically produced by means of world-making and world-tending (Spatz 2020:xv). To make meaning in this way is parallel with viewing the body 'and' mind as a process of becoming.

In the monist view, the mind and body thus transcend the dualist concepts of the brain and body. The mind uses a flexible network of body maps that exist in the brain to determine "mapped" patterns such as various responses to stimuli (Damasio 2010:60). Damasio (2010:60) describes how "the images in our minds are the brain's momentary maps of everything and of anything, inside our body and around it, concrete as well as abstract, actual or previously recorded in memory".

Blakeslee and Blakeslee (2007:11) posit that the brain uses maps of the "body's surface, its musculature, its intentions, its potential for action, even a map that automatically tracks and emulates the actions and intentions of other people around you". The mind creates mental phenomena to understand self, other people, and the world as a whole.

Mental phenomena[55] refer to non-physical, subjective representations within the self that create meaning from external experiences (Brentano 1874:68), allowing humans to interact effectively with their environment (Furlough & Gillian 2018:1). These phenomena, such as thoughts, reasoning, or memories, are not isolated from the body but are embodied; they arise from and are shaped by the individual's experiences, which are processed through the body and brain. In other words, mental phenomena are not purely abstract; they are rooted in the physical, lived experiences of the body. The mind's ability to contain and interpret thoughts is possible only because of the

[55] Mental phenomena are also known as mental modes/models (Jones, Ross, Lynam, Perez & Leitch 2011:47).

sensory and cognitive experiences that the body undergoes. Furthermore, these phenomena are not universal but are shaped by the individual's interactions within their current and past cultural and social environments (Sekimoto 2012:233). Thus, the mind is an embodied entity, inseparable from the body's role in shaping perception and meaning.

These mental phenomena may be recorded as implicit memories[56] that accumulate over time. These are memory systems that influence current perceptions and responses without "knowledge, awareness, or intention" (May & Einstein 2013:7). This indicates that mental phenomena can result from unconsciously embodying experiences. In this way, long-term implicit memories may be formed on the basis of mental phenomena (Gottschling 2006:213) to make meaning of the world. However, if individuals become aware of their mental phenomena and which responses they elicit, new memories can be formed through conscious awareness. These are known as explicit memories, or memories created deliberately with effort and intention (May & Einstein 2013:6).

Personally unique mental models are important to consider when focusing on how identify is formed by means of perception and what influence this has on the embodiment of an individual. The mind facilitates embodied knowledge through bodily experiences embedded in memory. This results in a bodymindedness as all the interrelated systems of the bodymind are connected in a feedback loop (Lakoff & Johnson 1999:1) to make sense of being in and of the world.

For this study, I define the mind as the set of interpretive abilities that emerge from the brain's continuous mapping of and interaction with the body's internal systems, which allow it to dynamically resonate with and respond to the external world. The mind is not something that stands outside the body, but it can only be due to, manifested, understood, and exist through the embodiment of the multimodal self.

[56] Implicit memories are long-term memories that do not require conscious retrieval, while explicit memories are memories that individuals can remember and declare (Chung 2020:473).

Embodiment is the multimodal navigation and facilitation of self, and at times, individuals may not be fully embodied. The concept of embodiment is central when individuals engage with their environment.

3.7 Embodiment

Embodiment as a concept has a wide array of interpretations. Coetzee (2018:1) describes how "the common thread between interpretations of the concept is that engaging with 'embodiment' is an acknowledgement of the failure of the practices, discourses and traditions that uphold body-mind dualism".

Embodiment is dynamic rather than fixed, with the self constantly inscribed with personal and cultural meanings (Shaw 2003:33) through personal lived experiences. Embodiment encompasses lived experiences that individuals deliberately engage with through their self in action and in relation to the environment in which they find themselves (Lindgren & Johnson-Glenberg 2013:445). Embodiment is thus a way for the self to consciously engage with the world. Totton (2010:23) echoes this in describing embodiment as how the self enables engagement with the world.

Krieger (2005:350) explains how embodied individuals actively take agency to shape the relationship between themselves and the contexts in which they find themselves. This is not to suggest that the body and the environment are separate, but rather that they make meaning as a unified whole. The self makes meaning by forming meaning as part of the world rather than as separate from it.

Embodiment does thus not refer to the body as an object but rather to a bodymindedness of being that constantly unfolds and shapes itself in relation to and as part of the environment (Spatz 2017:14). It involves tacit knowledge since it is not easily put in words but rather realised through the conscious experience of the self in relation to the environment. Embodiment becomes the way in which individuals can consciously take agency as part of the world, since the body is not seen as a passive vessel but integral to how individuals think, feel, and make decisions.

Spatz (2017:261) refers to embodiment as the first affordance, meaning it is the initial or foundational way in which an individual gains the capacity to engage with the world. He argues that embodiment is "the first site at which the dialogue between agency (the

self) and materiality (the external environment) takes place" (Spatz 2017:261). To engage in embodiment is thus to acknowledge one's holistic self in a dynamic interplay of subjective socio-cultural experiences through deliberate engagement in the moment (Menary 2008:79).

This should not imply that embodiment is dynamic only in the moment. Embodiment is a complex, multidimensional space that moves beyond just what is repeated by the self in the moment to "how the repetition of actions takes us in certain directions" (Ahmed 2006:56). In other words, being embodied involves internalising the repetition of various choices within the self that gradually develop into how individuals make meaning of the world and its history (Ahmed 2006:16). These repetitive choices may become habitual patterns, which is why I focus on repatterning as a part of the worlds of the multimodal self of individual agents.

For this study, I define embodiment as the complex multimodal self[57] that takes agency and makes progress in a continuous and committed relationship to and with the environment, and as part of the environment. Embodiment therefore involves using constantly shifting embodied knowledges from lived experiences to actively engage with the inner and outer environment of the multimodal self. In this way, embodiment moves beyond viewing the body merely as an object, the brain as part of the body, the body as a subject, or the body as a process. Embodiment rather collapses these inextricable dualist concepts in a monist bodyminded self that embodies experiences and takes agency, to act intentionally in relation to and within the world.

3.8 Bodymindedness

The bodymind[58] is a systemic interweaving of the concepts I have described in this chapter thus far. For the sake of constructing the argument, I explained the concepts of the body and the brain within the body to detail how these intertwine in the

[57] The view of the multimodal self is influenced by the perceptions of Munro and Coetzee present in several of their writings as well as those of their students/colleagues.
[58] I am using the term "bodymind" to deliberately counteract dualism. If dualism was not something we have to counteract, I could have just used body. The fact that we still have to use "bodymind" implies that dualism is still engraved in human perceptions on being.

bodyminded self. I outlined how the body can be described as a subject, object, and also as a discursively created body that is constantly in the process of becoming. However, experiences of the body cannot be analysed without an understanding of being in the world, and therefore no meaning can be created without the bodymindedness of being (Minton & Farber 2016:4).

Shibolet (2018:73) describes the bodymind of the human as “a complex and unified system”. Munro (2018:7) states that it is the integration within the bodymind that constitutes a multimodality of being. The presence and expression of this multimodality results in the bodymind (Munro 2018:7). The bodymind perceives experiences and then stores embodied knowledge of changes it has undergone in the form of habits (Merleau-Ponty 1945:127) that support the identities formed by individuals.

In this way, the bodymind encompasses embodied knowledge of previous lived experiences and affords individuals the capacity to be conscious of themselves and their situations in various contexts. Being conscious of, and sensing and perceiving, the bodymind in space and time allows individuals to recognise how change can emerge by drawing on embodied knowledge to navigate and refine their responses. It is for this reason that I add to Merleau-Ponty’s statement to posit not “I am my body” but rather “I am my bodymind”. Munro and Coetzee (2007:102) explain that the bodymind operates as an integrated system, constantly adapting and evolving in response to the environment, rather than functioning as isolated parts. Munro *et al.* (2017:96) expand on this, stating that the bodymind works “holistically and organically in fluid and continuous relation to the outer environment”, which in turn influences neural processing (Phillips 2018:206). This dynamic interplay is essential for maintaining homeostasis.

Pert (1997:21) further emphasises that the bodymind is a form of intelligence aimed at achieving wellness and homeostasis by effectively responding to both external stimuli and internal states, such as emotions. This integrated and adaptive nature of the bodymind aligns with the polyvagal theory and the triune brain model (see p. 90), both of which emphasise how different neural systems (from the brainstem to higher brain functions) work together to regulate emotional responses, social engagement, and physiological states in response to environmental challenges.

I previously stated that the bodymind utilises emotion to relate the outside world and the inner environment of individuals (through various pathways and systems) in order to make meaning (Munro & Coetzee 2007:103). This experiencing of the world does not always occur consciously. Thurman and Welch (1997:15) describe how 90% of the "bodymind's processing capacity is unconscious". In various contexts, the bodyminded self unknowingly perceives and constructs certain information as part of and due to lived experiences. The bodymind is thus the locus through which individuals facilitate embodied knowing and understanding of experiences of and in the world.

For this study, I define bodymindedness as the holistic interrelatedness of the bodymind to adapt and shift in response to external stimuli while gaining knowledge that contributes to the continuous processes of being and becoming. Kriegar (2005:350) explains how lived experience (which facilitates the making of meaning of bodyminded beings) influences our self, since bodyminds cannot be divorced from the conditions of their existence.

The bodymind constantly shifts and adapts in response to various cultural and historical experiences and "activates movement, sensation, perception, mood, feeling/emotion, behavior, thought and memory" (Munro & Coetzee 2007:102). These experiences of how individuals are embodied are influenced greatly by where they find themselves and the way in which they connect to others.

Figure 7, below, is a visual model of how the concepts I have discussed in this chapter link together. I do not use solid lines as these aspects are not separate but fluid and interrelated. This is a model I use; each of the concepts have been separated for the sake of clarity. Figure 7 illustrates how the view and experience of the body as object, subject, or process can shift to embodiment by focusing on the elements that are displayed by the arrows (these are elements I have explored in this chapter). The body as object, the brain, the body subject, and the body as process are all interweaved in embodiment and result in the bodymindedness of being once there is an active engagement with the multimodal sense of self in the contexts in which it finds itself.

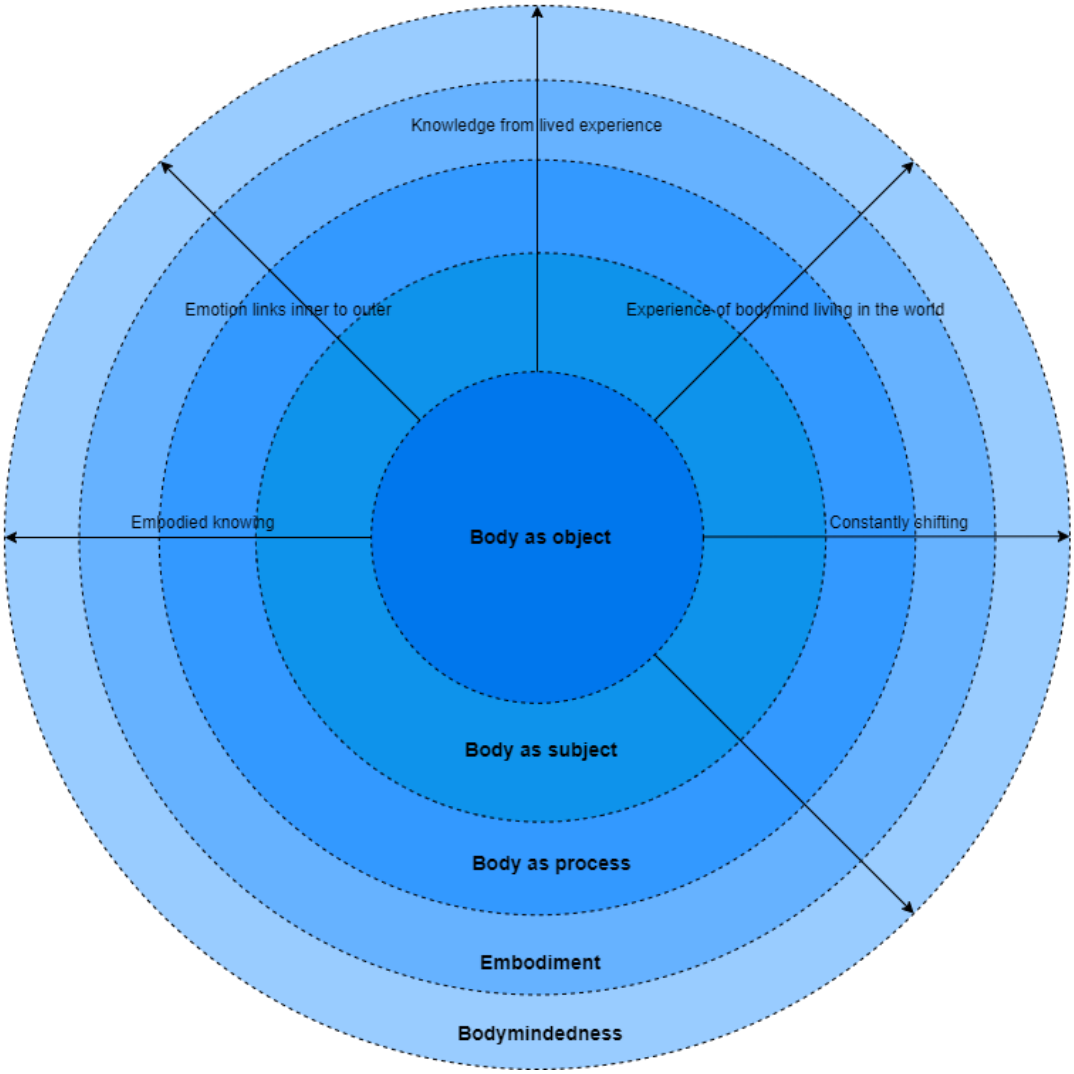


Figure 7: The links between body, bodymindedness and embodiment (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

In this study, I guide call centre agents to deliberately experience their multimodal bodyminded self in context, with the goal of fostering a heightened sense of subjective well-being. Through various methods designed to encourage embodiment, agents may not only become more attuned to their physical presence but also gain deeper insight into how their bodily experiences influence their thoughts, emotions, and decision-making. This embodied awareness lays the foundation for understanding embodied cognition, where the mind and body operate as a unified system in shaping perception and action. To explore how embodied learning leads to embodied cognition, I first explain the latter concept.

3.9 Embodied cognition

Gallagher (2015:97) suggests “it may be too early […] for there to be anything like a unified theory of what counts as embodied cognition”. This section does not intend to provide such a theory; rather intends to clarify what the concept means in the context of this study. Embodied cognition links to the discussions of the bodymind (pp. 102−105) and rests on two main arguments:

1. “Cognition is not abstract and amodal”; this indicates that cognition is multimodal and is represented in the brain through the actions of the bodymind (Ionescu & Vasc 2014:276).
2. “Cognition is not just about thinking”. In the case of embodied cognition, the theoretical starting point is “not a mind working on abstract problems, but a body that requires a mind to make it function” (Wilson 2002:625).

Ionescu and Vasc (2014:275) define embodied cognition as “cognition fundamentally grounded in sensory-motor processes and in our body's morphology and internal states”. Embodied cognition is thus highly dependent on sensory-motor processes, and acting and sensing can be seen as manners of thinking (Ionescu & Vasc 2014:276). This includes acting and sensing in relation to other human beings and situations.

Embodied cognition therefore does not simply refer to cognition that is grounded in personal and exclusive experiences but includes cognition that is embodied due to affect (Gallagher 2015:16). In this way, intersubjective being with others forms our embodied cognition in relation to social and cultural (pp. 14−19) beliefs. However, embodied cognition often reduces the experiences that affect the bodymind to mere embodied representations that aid individuals in understanding the world.

Chemero (2009:17) argues that embodied cognition theorises about the mind in a “representationalist” manner. Representationalists argue that “there are states of the mind which function to encode states of the world” (Fodor & Pylyshyn 1988:7). This alludes to bodily states that are produced by the functions of the brain, instead of through experiences of the living body whilst being in the world. In this way, embodied cognition focuses on lower levels of cognition, such as that involving as neurons and

molecules, rather than cognition that spreads across the bodymind in and as part of the environment.

Goldinger, Papesh, Barnhart, Hansen and Hout (2016:959) state that even though some embodied cognition theorises about connection with the world, these “mental representations are an empty and misguided notion” since embodied cognition finds value in the information that is perceived through the lived body, but only insofar as the brain is concerned. The rest of the body (not the brain) is thus disregarded as far as making meaning is concerned, since it is argued to have no explanatory role, and cognition is entirely in the brain (Alsmith & Vignemont 2012:6). This means that embodied cognition potentially still favours the hierarchical position of the brain over the body. This gives the concept of embodied cognition a dualistic quality. Radical embodied cognition, as a sub-division of embodied cognition, includes the entirety of the bodymind in the making of meaning.

Radical embodied cognition can be defined as the view that the mind is not a disembodied information processor but is instead entirely embodied in the bodymind and the environment (Chemero 2009:29). From this point of view, cognition, perception, and action are not events that occur inside the head but happen in and as part of the bodymind within world. For the purpose of this study, I define embodied cognition (with radical embodied cognition as a sub-division) as cognition that occurs and is embedded throughout the subjective history of the bodymind in relation to and as part of the intersubjective experiences with other bodyminds in and of the world.

Embodied learning provides a practical framework for applying embodied cognition in real-life contexts. Embodied learning focuses on using embodied knowing and emotion to bridge inner and outer experiences, drawing on lived knowledge and the shifting experiences of the bodymind. By actively engaging with one’s multimodal sense of self, embodied learning allows individuals to understand and practice embodied awareness more fully. In doing so, it fosters a sense of creative self-fashioning, encouraging individuals to cultivate prosilience in relation to stress in an ever-changing world of uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA), brittleness, anxiety, non-linearity, and incomprehensibility (BANI).

3.10 Embodied learning

Individuals with ineffective habitual patterns may need to re-educate themselves by finding ways in which to explore both having a bodymind and being embodied. This can be accomplished through embodied learning. Munro (2018:6) argues that embodied learning is a vital educational approach because it represents “an active process through which changes and shifts are experienced in, through, with, and because of the body”. She emphasises that by paying mindful attention to this process, individuals can experience a continual emergence of self, which is crucial for deep learning and cognitive development (Munro 2018:6). This stands in contrast to traditional learning methods that often prioritise cognitive processes centred in the brain. Instead; embodied learning, on the other hand, fosters the instillation and repatterning of knowledge through the integration of the bodymind, ultimately contributing to the formation of a multimodal self (Barrat 2010:48).

Foglia and Wilson (cited in Kosmas, Ioannou & Zaphiris 2018:1) describe the process of embodied learning as multimodal since it “requires the involvement of the human body in the cognitive process”. The physical actions that bodyminded selves execute in the world can enhance their learning and ensure “the development of knowledge, understanding and capability” (Hyland 2019:458). This is the premise of embodied learning: fostering engagement with the bodyminded self, including knowledge in and of the body in order to appreciate and use an embodied sense of self in the socio-cultural environment.

It is for this reason that I focus on embodied learning strategies in this study; embodied learning moves beyond cognitive/dualist ways of learning explicit knowledge, and rather focuses on the learning of tacit embodied cognition by means of the entire bodymind and its relation to the environment.

Munro (2018:8) argues that the efficacy of embodied learning lies in how it is approached and provides nine principles that one can use as guides when designing strategies for embodied learning. These principles are as follows (Munro 2018:8–12):

- Holistic integration: the intrarelatedness of the multimodal presence of self through the bodymind. Mindfulness originates from this holistic integration (Damasio 2004:6). Mindfulness is “the self-regulated committed and continuous

non-judgemental bodyminded attention to, and acceptance of, a specific event or experience in the moment of the event or experience with the aim to contribute to well-being and human flourishing" (Munro, Turner & Munro 2017:26).

- Organic congruencies: acknowledgement of the common anatomical, physiological, and psychological denominators in human beings;
- Personal uniqueness: each human is unique due to a variety of social, cultural, and other subjective influences that lead to engagement with embodied learning processes in various ways. Hackney (2002:48) explains that movement patterning is a personal journey that differs for individuals since "there is no one pathway for all persons to achieve full functioning". Embodied learning should account for all the possible individual realities;
- Sensory awareness: promoting the concept of sensing and feeling within bodies to pave the way to bodyminded consciousness. Blakeslee and Blakeslee (2007:214) describe sensory awareness in terms of both interoception (awareness of sensations in the body) and proprioception (awareness of how and where the body moves in space);
- Inner and outer: encouraging the fluid interplay between the personal inner environment and the outer environment in which individuals find themselves. Hackney (2002:46) examines how experiences in the outer world influence the inner environment of human beings and *vice versa*;
- Continuous change: an awareness of shifts that are continuously occurring in the bodymind and actively accepting or rejecting these changes;
- Habitual patterns: using patterns that have become habitual due to repetition as a positive contribution for self-teaching and critical reflection. Certain habits might serve the individual at some stage. Having said that, if protective habits become limiting and the default option in the bodymind, and stress continues in an ever-changing VUCA/BANI world, emotional and behavioural exhaustion can occur, which lead to a lower sense of SWB;
- Repatterning: using conscious choice, as well as repetition and habit, to adapt functional and expressive behaviour to contribute to well-being. Repatterning relies on the notion of neuroplasticity that indicates how humans can change neurological pathways (Blakeslee & Blakeslee 2007:11); and

- Self-teaching: mindfully engaging with the other principles by means of self-reflection and bodyminded awareness (Burns 2012:40).

These nine principles are important when using embodied learning pedagogies to ensure that they adhere to embodied learning (Munro 2018:12). These principles also align with VUCA prime (p. 13) since they aid practitioners in facilitating embodied learning in a way that encourages vision, understanding, certainty, and agility. Embodied learning also addresses the BANI world (p. 14) since this type of learning facilitates resilience and flexibility to address brittleness, empathy and mindfulness to address anxiety, context and flexibility to address non-linearity, and transparency and intuition to address incomprehensibility.

Addressing the needs of the individual in the VUCA/BANI world is possible since embodied learning "involves the exploration of the world from where (an individual) is, and a clear understanding of how things relate to each other and to (individuals) in the world" (Stolz 2015:482). Individuals can become aware of their bodymindedness and how they can, as embodied beings, encounter and address external and internal stimuli, through embodied learning that adheres to principles outlined above.

Hyland (2019:455) highlights that embodied learning enhances bodymind awareness, enabling individuals to repattern behaviours shaped by past dualistic tendencies. This insight is directly relevant to the concept of adult learning, which emphasises neuroplasticity as the foundation for repatterning behaviours and responses. By engaging in embodied learning, individuals gain awareness of how they have historically dealt with emotional experiences, enabling them to consciously use their bodymind to avoid habitual and potentially limiting reactions to similar events.

Embodied learning encourages individuals to repattern the responses that activate the limbic system and hypothalamus (see Section 3.3) through heightened awareness of their bodymind. This repatterning allow individuals to respond to external stimuli in a more adaptive manner and thereby maintain homeostasis. In this way, embodied learning affords individuals the opportunity to become aware of how they habitually deal with stress, in order to learn behaviours that make them more prosilient. In this manner, individuals can fulfil their deficiency needs (in Maslow's hierarchy), which affords them the opportunity to grow, therefore enhancing their SWB.

Individuals can facilitate embodied learning to create an awareness of the bodymind as a starting point for a programme addressing SWB. As I describe in Section 3.7 (p. 103), being embodied implies an awareness of how the bodymind encompasses knowledge gained from lived experience. This relates directly to embodied learning, which is encompassed within embodied cognition. To understand how embodied learning is encompassed within embodied cognition and embodiment as a whole, I provide Figure 8 as guidance.

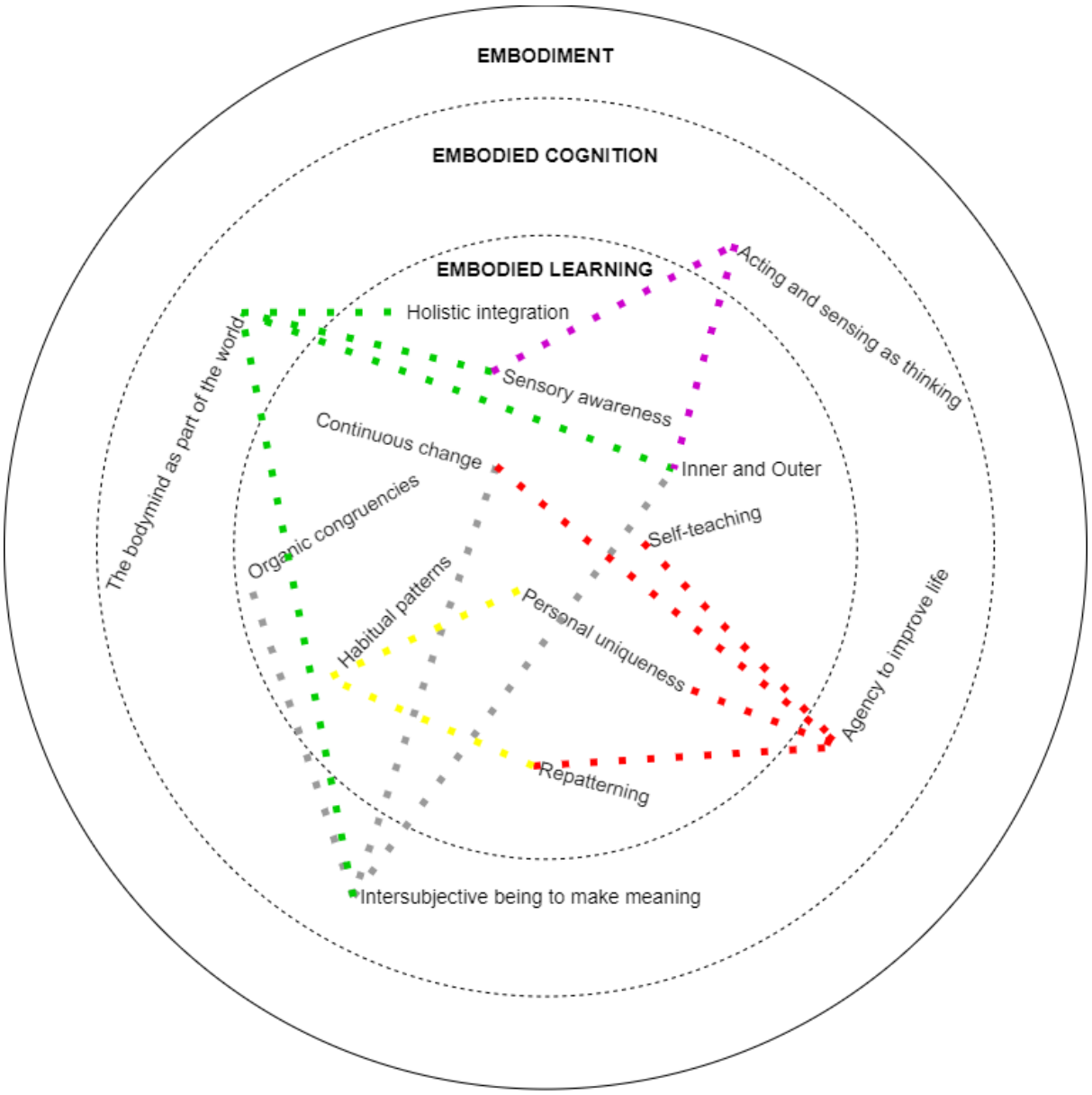


Figure 8: Summary of embodiment (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

Figure 8 summarises embodiment in relation to the study by outlining the main elements of embodied learning encompassed by embodied cognition and its main

elements. I define each concept within the chapter but scatter the concepts and their elements throughout each circle to indicate that there is no hierarchical relationship between them. The dotted line illustrates that while embodied cognition and embodied learning overlap, there may be many other concepts that, depending on the context, a researcher can include in the study of embodiment. I exclude these links since they are not necessarily relevant to the study of embodied stress prosilience, SWB, and embodied learning. I focus on concepts that are relevant to the study and those that will aid the call centre agents the most. That being said, each call centre agent is unique and should be treated as such.

In Figure 8, *personal uniqueness* links with *habitual patterns* since every individual has their own unique histories that inform their patterns (Hackney 2002:48). It also links to the *agency* (see p. 89) to improve life, since an individual's agency is what allows them to acknowledge their personal uniqueness in order to repattern habitual patterns. As I have explained in the previous section on the bodymind, personal histories and lived experiences result in mental phenomena that aim to aid the self in being in and of the world. Due to neuroplasticity, these phenomena can be repatterned to result in more appropriate responses. This cannot occur without agency. This agency then allows the embodied individual to gain new embodied knowledge in and as part of their environment.

Agency to improve life further connects with *continuous change* and *self-teaching* since, when individuals are guided to improve their life by acknowledging their continuously changing self by means of reflection and bodyminded awareness (Burns 2012:40), they can arrive at a point where they can use this realisation to self-teach and repattern habitual patterns. As detailed on p. 93, adult learning can initiate this type of agency by offering a space for focused attention and arousal (Cozolino & Sprokay 2006:14).

Being in an intersubjective relationship with others also links with *continuous change*, *organic congruencies*, and *inner and outer*. This is because being in and of the world as embodied individuals requires these individuals to acknowledge and become aware of their inner environments and how, in some ways, there are organic congruencies with other human beings who may influence their outer environments and engagements. Congruencies refer to the alignments and consistencies between an

individual's internal states (thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations) and their external behaviours, interactions, and the environment around them. Recognising these congruencies can enhance self-awareness, foster empathy, and promote adaptive interactions in various contexts, such as during the EPP.

Congruencies link back to culture and mental phenomena that are the result of culture. Becoming aware of your inner environment, in relation to the inner environments of others, leads to intersubjective meaning-making and understanding. This interplay between the inner and outer (Hackney 2002:46) can lead to the continuous change of an individual and how an individual is present as bodyminded self.

Inner and outer therefore also include a relation with sensing, perceiving, and responding since an individual's bodyminded self makes meaning by sensing and feeling within the inner and outer environments (Blakeslee & Blakeslee 2007:214) – which is why, in the figure, these concepts also link to *sensory awareness* and to *the bodymind as part of the world*. This latter further connects to the *multimodal presence of self through the bodymind*, which is also known as *holistic integration* (see p. 110).

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the concepts of embodiment, the bodymind, and embodied learning, emphasising the holistic integration of body 'and' mind rather than accepting a dualistic separation. In understanding the body as both subject and object and recognising the continuous process of becoming through lived experiences, I have framed the bodymind as an interrelated system. This interrelated system deeply influences the ability of call centre agents to manage stress and enhance their subjective well-being.

The argument here is that embodiment fosters greater self-awareness, allowing individuals to develop healthier responses to stress and thus meet both deficiency and growth needs. This bodyminded approach challenges traditional views of dualism and opens new pathways for enhancing well-being through embodied learning, highlighting the importance of conscious, intentional engagement with one's environment.

The insights developed in this chapter contribute to the overall argument of the thesis by illustrating how call centre agents can transform their stress responses into opportunities for growth through embodiment. As I move into the next chapter, I build on these foundations to explore practical applications of embodiment, showing how agents can cultivate lasting well-being.

The key conclusion of this chapter is that the bodymind functions not merely as a vessel for thought but as a dynamic process of becoming, continually shaping and being shaped by lived experience. With embodiment as the first affordance, the bodymindedness of being encourages agency of the self in the material external environment.

In the chapter that follows, I focus further on the bodymind by outlining how the relationship between the outer and inner environment causes stress in the multimodal self. The next chapter discusses how individuals can not only practise resilience in relation to stress, but also prosilience, in order to ensure that the bodymind is capable of proactively preparing and engaging with inner and outer stress while maintaining homeostasis. Before I explore that, however, it is imperative to understand the effect of stress on the bodymind.

CHAPTER 4: SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AND STRESS

4.1 introduction

In the previous chapter, I explored the concept of the bodymind and its integral role in human experience and well-being. Building on that foundation, this chapter delves into a challenge that deeply affects the bodymind: stress. The World Health Organization deems stress the “Health Epidemic of the 21st Century” (Fink 2017:1); and its impact on both physical and mental health is well-documented. Prolonged stress can lead to a variety of health issues, including cardiovascular diseases, anxiety, depression, and weakened immune responses (Lazarus 2015:42).

Stress is increasingly prevalent in the workplace, where employees face mounting pressure in environments defined by VUCA and, more recently, BANI conditions. These frameworks describe the chaotic and unpredictable nature of work environments, where the speed of change and instability can intensify stress and disrupt the bodymind connection. As a result, stress can create imbalances that hinder one’s ability to function optimally, both at work and in daily life. Given these widespread effects, addressing how individuals can better manage stress is of critical importance, particularly in the context of employee well-being.

One approach to mitigating the negative impact of stress is by cultivating resilience. Resilience refers to the capacity to recover and adapt when faced with difficulties or challenges (Lawson 2017:6). Resilience enables individuals to deal with negative experiences that have occurred by fostering flexibility and adaptability. However, resilience alone may not be enough, especially when individuals are repeatedly exposed to stress.

This is where the concept of prosilience comes into play. Unlike resilience, which focuses on recovery after challenges, prosilience is a proactive skill set that helps individuals prepare for future stressors and challenges (Hoopes 2017:1). By equipping individuals with strategies to anticipate and manage stress before it overwhelms them, prosilience strengthens resilience. Therefore, prosilience is not only a complementary practice but a necessity for navigating the complexities of modern life.

Central to this discussion is the bodymind's ability to maintain homeostasis, a state of balance and equilibrium amidst the challenges posed by stress. When stress disrupts this balance, the bodymind engages mechanisms to restore stability, whether through physiological processes or mental adaptability. Resilience helps restore homeostasis after a disruption, while prosilience anticipates and mitigates the impact of stressors, preventing extreme imbalances from occurring in the first place.

This chapter continues phase 1 of the research and aims to answer the sub-questions: "What is stress?" and, "What are resilience and prosilience and how do they relate to subjective well-being?" In this chapter, I examine stress in relation to homeostasis within the bodymind and explore strategies for managing stress. I define and analyse key concepts such as subjective well-being, stress resilience, and stress prosilience, using these frameworks, along with embodied movement, as the foundation for developing the EPP.

I evaluate selected stress management approaches in the workplace to demonstrate the need for the EPP. I also outline considerations for those designing and facilitating embodied prosilience programmes, including how to prioritise stress prosilience over resilience, how to facilitate the repatterning of stress-related habits, and how embodied movement bridges the gap between resilience- and prosilience-based interventions.

A main element underpinning these approaches is SWB, which plays a pivotal role in how individuals experience and respond to stress. Subjective well-being, encompassing both life satisfaction and emotional regulation, is directly influenced by how effectively stress is managed. By improving SWB through proactive stress management, individuals are better equipped to navigate the challenges of modern work environments. In the following section, I explore the concept of SWB in greater depth, highlighting its relationship to stress, resilience, and prosilience, and the role it plays in the effectiveness of embodied interventions.

4.2 Subjective well-being

Many different terms and definitions are used to delineate well-being (Diener, Pressman, Hunter, Delgadillo-Chase 2017:134). Simmons and Baldwin (2021:985) describes how well-being has been defined as, amongst others, life satisfaction, wellness, welfare, biopsychosocial health, biomedical health, and happiness in

research, policy, and practice. Although well-being has been defined in various ways, most definitions relate to “how people feel and how they function both on a personal and social level, and how they evaluate their lives as a whole” (Jarden & Roache 2023:1).

In much of the scholarly literature, terms such as “well-being”, “life satisfaction”, and “happiness” are often used interchangeably, though they reflect diverse definitions and perspectives. However, for the purposes of this study, I follow the common usage of SWB as a distinct concept. Subjective well-being refers specifically to a self-reported measure that provides direct insight into how individuals evaluate their lives, including cognitive and affective components (OECD 2013:29; Sahai & Mahapatra 2020:808). This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how individuals perceive their well-being, beyond general or external assessments.

Dodge, Daly, Huyton, and Sanders (2012:229) suggest that SWB refers to the balance between an individual’s challenges and their resource pool to deal with these challenges. Subjective well-being has many focus areas. Das, Jones-Harrel, Fan, Ramaswami, Orlove and Botch (2020:6–8) posit that the four main areas are:

- Fulfillment and engagement (focused on reaching goals and improvement);
- Personal orientation (focused on personality);
- Evaluative (focused on comparing life with ideal conditions); and
- Emotion (focused on the positive experience of emotions).

Liang, Luo and Liu (2020:4) add five more focus areas that link to the ones above:

- A hedonistic focus as a balance of pleasant over unpleasant experiences;
- A focus on desire that is synonymous with an evaluative focus (since this focus also evaluates whether desires or goals are being met by comparing life as it is to how an individual wishes it to be). Both a desire and evaluative focus are based on comparing actual and ideal environments;
- A focus on the experience of authentic happiness (happiness experienced as true to the self) that focuses on SWB as living autonomously in pursuit of happiness;

- A eudemonic focus that aligns with both a fulfillment and engagement focus since they are both based on self-realisation by acknowledging the multimodalities within the bodymind; and
- An objective list approach that incorporates key elements from other areas of SWB, such as a focus on knowledge, health, wealth, and relationship.

Jeffrey, Mahony, and Abdallah (2014:10) condense the diverse focus areas of SWB into three key types: hedonic, eudemonic, and evaluative. Hedonic measures capture feelings, experiences, or emotions, focusing on the pursuit of pleasure and satisfaction to reflect SWB (Samman 2007:461). Eudemonic measures, also known as eudaimonia, refer to the pursuit of human flourishing through meaningful interaction with the world, which is often linked to psychological well-being. Evaluative measures encompass the way individuals assess or judge their lives overall, integrating these experiences and interactions into a more holistic view of well-being. By considering all three dimensions, SWB provides a thorough picture of well-being that extends beyond fleeting emotions to include deeper life satisfaction and purpose.

Eudaimonia, as Heintzelman (2018:1) explains, emphasises human flourishing through the development of “virtue” and the realisation of one’s full potential by seeking meaning, purpose, and connection. This focus on human flourishing, central to eudaimonic well-being, complements SWB by fostering growth and fulfilment.

Eudaimonic well-being adds depth to the broader SWB framework, which also includes hedonic and evaluative dimensions. While eudaimonia prioritises meaning and purpose, hedonic well-being reflects the pursuit of pleasure and emotional satisfaction, and evaluative well-being captures how individuals assess their overall life satisfaction. Together, these dimensions provide a holistic view of well-being. When individuals are flourishing, they not only experience higher levels of emotional satisfaction (hedonic well-being) but also perceive their lives as fulfilling and meaningful (evaluative well-being), contributing to a broad sense of SWB. As Eraslan-Capan (2016:933) notes, flourishing represents an optimal range of human functioning associated with wellness, generativity, growth, and resilience, all of which link directly to the three components of SWB.

Flourishing enables individuals to perceive their lives and well-being as fulfilling, leading to a deeper awareness of their abilities and a drive to achieve, thrive, and contribute meaningfully to society (Eraslan-Capan 2016:933). Unlike the pursuit of short-term pleasure, flourishing is rooted in long-term fulfilment across various dimensions such as health, social relationships, and personal character (Van der Weele 2017:8148).

To fully comprehend positive human functioning, it is crucial to consider not only overall life evaluations but also the role that their occupation plays in individuals' lives. Understanding the impact of occupation on employee well-being provides a more nuanced perspective on how the different domains contribute to overall flourishing and optimal functioning (Oliveira-Silva & Porto 2021:3).

Employee well-being is central to addressing HR management challenges, as it is closely linked to issues such as employee disengagement, lack of motivation, burnout, reduced job satisfaction, and mental health concerns, including stress, depression, and anxiety (Pont, Underdown, Hamilton & Tee 2022:655). Pruyne (2011:7) provides the following working definition for employee well-being:

> Employee well-being is a positive state in which the individual is able to function at or near their effective level, whether defined and measured in terms of physical, mental, emotional and/or social functioning, with significant implications for the individual, their family and community, the organisation and society at large.

Employee well-being therefore connotes how people evaluate their lives and how they feel and function in and as part of their work environment. When individuals experience prolonged excessive stress at work, job burnout (Lubbadeh 2020:7), which influences employee well-being, can result. This can have serious effects on health, engagement, motivation, and absenteeism levels. Excessive stressors at work can, in this way, limit individuals from finding professional fulfilment.

In environments like call centres, which are heavily impacted on by the VUCA/BANI world, SWB often declines due to factors such as insufficient employee assistance and excessive performance monitoring. Enhancing SWB in the workplace has been

shown to improve physical health, problem-solving abilities, social behaviour, and creativity, while also boosting employee engagement (Bryson, Forth & Stokes 2017:1).

The positive impact of SWB at work extends beyond the workplace, influencing overall life satisfaction. As Oswald (cited in Bryson *et al.* 2017:1) found, increasing employees' SWB enhances productivity; Sahai and Mahapatra (2020:809) demonstrate that higher levels of SWB at work contribute to greater life control, fewer stressors, and higher self-esteem. These benefits not only improve professional performance, such as active participation in meetings and efficiency, but also foster a sense of balance and fulfilment in life more broadly, showing how workplace well-being is deeply interconnected with overall quality of life.

Oliveira-Silva and Porto (2021:17) posit that well-being at work also influences general happiness and flourishing in life. With a higher level of SWB at work, individuals may be more actively prepared for stress, which results in productivity and effectiveness in not just their work, but also in the way they engage with peers, family members, and friends. Individuals should be able to be prosilient in relation to stress not just for themselves, but also in relation to others, even if they are in or from different environments.

Amo *et al.* (2023:53) argue that when individuals are attuned to their holistic sense of self in the present moment, they can proactively prepare for stressors (that is, generate prosilience) at work, which safeguards their bodyminded self from burnout and supports their subjective well-being. In this way, individuals can experience flourishing at work, since they handle and prepare for stressors with greater ease. By engaging in and building prosilient habits, individuals can prepare for stress, enhancing their subjective well-being and enabling them to flourish at work with greater ease.

Because the definitions of SWB are so diverse, ever-present, and unique to each individual, with no generally accepted description of SWB (Fabian 2018:31), the building of prosilient habits requires a personalised approach that can adapt to these varying interpretations of well-being. For this study, I define subjective well-being as how people experience and evaluate their lives, with specific reference to the subjective experiencing and interpretation of pleasure, fulfilment, emotions,

engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment – each as a bodyminded self in and as part of the world.

The study takes a broad approach to SWB within the call centre context, covering not just fulfillment but also pleasure and life evaluations. This allows me to consider all aspects of well-being in approaching and evaluating the effectiveness of the EPP. In the next section, I consider SWB in call centres specifically.

4.2.1 Subjective well-being in call centres

Call centres can be stressful environments, so how organisations support and effectively engage with agents is essential for promoting the agents' well-being (Akroyd, Gordon-Dseagu & Fairhurst 2006:13). Holman, Batt, and Holtgrewe (2007:17) explain that South African call centres rank as the third most intense globally, following India and South Korea, in terms of performance monitoring and feedback. Pandy and Rogerson (2014:210) note that this intensity makes South African call centres an undesirable form of work, leading to lowered levels of SWB.

Sprigg, Smith, and Jackson (2003:49) note that telecommunications call centre agents in the UK (ranked the fifth most intense) report the lowest levels of SWB among nine economic sectors. Although South African call centres are not identical to those in the UK, they are heavily influenced by Western practices particularly in terms of how they address employee well-being and performance monitoring.

Fewer than half of South Africa's top 100 organisations had programmes specifically aimed at promoting employee health and well-being or helping staff adapt to rapidly changing work environments (Naidoo & Jano 2003:7). Although this source is over two decades old, the relationship between employee well-being and workforce effectiveness has become increasingly clear. In the years since then, more employers globally, including those in South Africa, have recognised the need to implement initiatives that promote well-being as a means of fostering a more effective, adaptable workforce (Pandy & Rogerson 2014:211).

Such initiatives may include programmes to assist employees with psychosocial support towards enhancing productivity, performance, workplace relations, and employee well-being. The programmes are often referred to as employee wellness,

employee aid, or employee assistance programmes. Barker (2003:141) describes an employee assistance programme (EAP) as a work-based programme for employees that prevents, identifies, and addresses personal, or productivity issues and improves the workplace by aiding employee effectiveness.

Nel and Van Niekerk (2023:16) observe that there is growing interest in understanding how well-being relates to the complexities of the modern world. However, despite this increased awareness, the implementation of well-being programmes remains limited in South Africa, particularly in sectors like call centres where high stress levels persist, though well-being is critical to maintaining workforce effectiveness.

I work for an insurance company, in one of the departments that employ call centre agents. In the company and the particular department in which I work, there are no specific EAPs in which call centre agents can actively participate. Here, management briefly focuses on the SWB of call centre agents during one-on-one talks and group meetings, but the overall focus remains performance monitoring so that certain targets are met. The department employs counsellors-in-training who visit the office once a week, but no one in our company is employed specifically to continuously help with employee well-being or adaptation in the VUCA/BANI world. The company does however provide a free-of-charge helpline that employees can contact for telephonic and eventually face-to-face counselling with external psychologists.

To my mind, and based on my engagement with call centre agents in the workplace, they seem too scared or too unsure to call or visit the counsellor and use this only when their well-being has deteriorated to unmanageable levels. There are not any interventions or EAPs in the office that prohibit and prevent the deterioration of well-being from occurring, or that actively monitor the well-being of the agents.

In the company, members of management attempt to help, but mainly resort to extrinsic motivation through creative competitions to foster engagement in the workplace, or even presentations to cognitively share information. This type of extrinsic motivation does not always appropriately engage all the call centre agents, since they know that the main reason for it is that targets must be met.

In general discussions with the call centre agents I work with, I often hear them talking about not feeling ready for the day and constantly feeling tired from their studies, along

with the workload. The agents cannot maintain effective levels of energy throughout the day since they are tired, lethargic, and disengaged. When monitoring their calls, I note that it seems there are many moments when agents are not focused. Since they work while studying, they must actively balance multiple roles simultaneously. Many agents frequently mention in office conversations the significant stress that arises from constant, daily performance monitoring[59] at work, compounded by the academic pressure that results from studying at university. This combination of responsibilities contributes to heightened occupational stress, as they are required to meet demanding performance expectations while managing their educational commitments. The continuous strain from these overlapping roles can lead to burnout and diminished well-being if not properly addressed.

Shahsavarani, Abadi and Kalkhoran, (2015:233) describe how occupational stress has far-reaching effects on physical and psychological well-being. In call centres, high levels of performance monitoring are linked to high stress levels (Benner *et al.* 2007:30). More than just occupational stress, university students experience elevated stress due to stressors such as academic commitments, financial pressures, and lack of time-management skills (Sossah & Asiedu 2015:47). This aligns with the lack of eudaimonia since it influences the agents' flourishing in terms of health, social relationships, meaning and purpose, character and virtue, and happiness.

Morley and Robinson (2006:285) describe how call centre management often measures what can be quantified (performance statistics) and not necessarily the fulfilment and engagement of call centre agents (stress levels and/or subjective workplace-related well-being). Fulaedzah (2022:393) considers research on the topic and shows how most of the research only focuses on the experience of call centre agents, and what is lacking in these centres, whereas there is minimal focus on actively engaging in addressing stress by fostering resilience to increase the well-being of call centre agents.

[59] This type of monitoring cements the hierarchical power structure.

Figure 9 outlines the effect of not addressing stress has on the SWB of call centre agents, including in terms of the concepts I have discussed thus far. Figure 9 demonstrates how stress impacts the SWB of student call centre agents, particularly in the context of the VUCA and world. The figure highlights how stress, inadequate coping mechanisms, and limiting behaviours reduce the ability of student call centre agents to fulfill essential their needs in terms of Maslow's hierarchy.

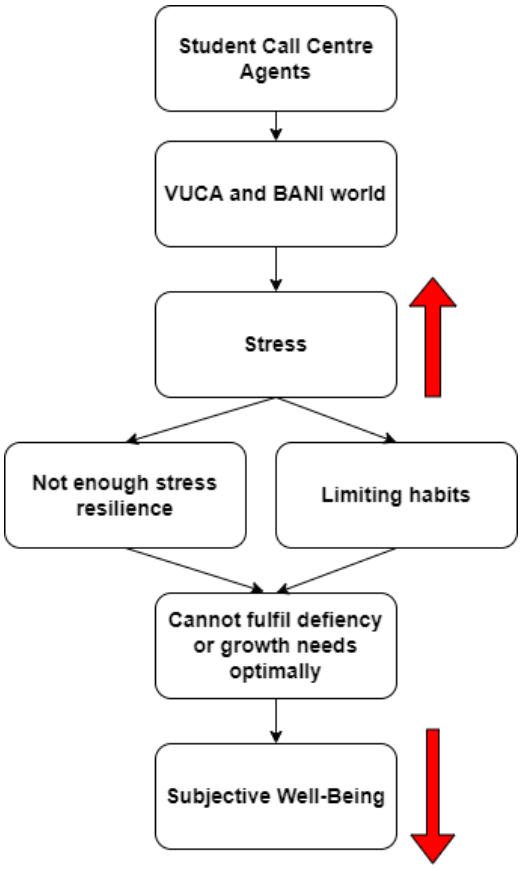


Figure 9: Effect of VUCA/BANI world on the SWB of call centre agents (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

The challenges individuals face can be linked to their unmet needs at various levels of Maslow's hierarchy. For example, challenges in meeting basic physiological needs or safety needs create stress, impacting hedonic well-being. If these needs are met, individuals may be able to shift their focus towards higher-order needs, such as a sense of belonging and esteem, leading to greater satisfaction and engagement. These are the key components of both eudaimonic and evaluative well-being.

Individuals who cannot fulfil their physiological, safety, and belonging (deficiency needs) needs are less likely to evaluate their lives positively, and therefore not feel a

sense of accomplishment and purpose (growth needs) that aligns with Maslow's esteem and self-actualisation levels. As Figure 9 illustrates this, in turn, leads to diminished SWB.

Focusing on SWB moves beyond merely externally engaging and motivating employees; it includes a focus on creating an organisational structure that maximises employee's internal resources so that they function at their best and have a positive overall work experience (Jeffrey *et al.* 2014:15). By employing embodied learning, I aim to improve employee stress prosilience by designing, applying, and assessing the effectiveness of an EPP based on the bodymindedness of being. In the long run, this may improve quantitative results such as the achievement of performance targets, which may inform the practices of the workplace and encourage the further use of EPPs.

When creating an EPP, it is important to consider divergences in theories on SWB because these differences can influence how well-being is understood and applied in practice. Different perspectives on SWB may emphasise a variety of aspects, such as emotional states, life satisfaction, or eudaimonic factors like meaning and purpose. By acknowledging these divergences, the programme can be designed to address multiple dimensions of well-being, ensuring a more holistic approach that aligns with participants' diverse experiences and supports their resilience and adaptability. This thorough understanding helps create a programme that effectively enhances prosilience by integrating various components of embodied well-being.

The following discussion addresses the complexities within SWB theories, highlighting the overlaps in terminology and the broad, variable nature of SWB across cultures and demographics. It examines SWB as part of the human pursuit of a good life, encompassing not just happiness, but also growth and purpose, with the definition varying widely among individuals and cultures. The discussion concludes by connecting SWB to themes relating to stress and flourishing, preparing for an exploration of how stress impacts on homeostasis and enhances SWB through positive habitual patterns.

4.2.2 Divergences in theories of subjective well-being

The first divergence in theories of SWB is the overlap and interconnection between its focus areas. Different theorists approach SWB from various perspectives, resulting in terms such as “evaluative theories” being used by one group of scholars, while others refer to similar concepts as “desire theories”. Despite a definition of SWB having been provided earlier, its definition remains broad, and there are “variations across different nations, cultures, language groups, and generations of people” (Kim-Prieto & Kukoff 2018:464). Kim-Prieto and Kukoff (2018:464) cite numerous studies that illustrate how domains of SWB, such as personality traits, positive self-regard, social support, and religion, exhibit similarities across cultures.

These variations extend to cultural concepts such as individualism versus collectivism – where some cultures emphasise individual goals while others prioritise the well-being of the group – as well as demographic factors such as national wealth, governance, and income (Kim-Prieto & Kukoff 2018:468). The dynamic nature of these factors renders the measurement of SWB complex and means the concept rests on unstable and ambiguous grounds. This reflects the inherent subjectivity of SWB, with the focus areas differing depending on individual and cultural contexts.

Liang *et al.* (2020:3) describe how SWB arises from the fundamental human pursuit of a good life,[60] whereby individuals seek meaning, happiness, and fulfilment in various domains of life. This pursuit extends beyond hedonic pleasures, such as momentary joy or satisfaction, to include deeper, more enduring elements such as personal growth, purpose, and the cultivation of meaningful relationships. Ultimately, this quest for a good life directly contributes to human flourishing (see p. 121). However, this aspect of SWB presents another challenge: the definition of a good life varies significantly across individuals and cultures, making it a subjective and variable notion.

[60] In other words, seeking pleasure and avoiding harm. The concept was introduced by Aristotle and is linked to flourishing. I am aware that Aristotle’s writings were produced through a specific cultural lens thousands of years ago. I simply refer to them since they have influenced the domain of SWB.

Different individuals or groups, in varying environments, may hold diverse values, morals, emotions, and achievements to be indicators of a good life.

Furthermore, equating SWB with the pursuit of happiness has been criticised. Happiness is often seen as transient, and the boundaries between happiness and satisfaction are frequently blurred (Samman 2007:460). Kopsov (2019:103) argues that happiness is only one emotion and does not encompass the full range of emotional experiences that contribute to SWB.

Moreover, individuals tend to have habitual or conditioned expectations regarding their SWB. As Thompson and Marks (2008:20) explain, individuals often revert to a baseline level of SWB, even as life circumstances temporarily push their levels of well-being up or down. Habitual responses to scales and questionnaires may occur, with participants defaulting to a familiar rating (e.g., consistently selecting “5” on a scale from 1 to 10). These expectations may also be influenced by psychological factors, such as underlying disorders.

The central message from this section is that SWB is a complex and multifaceted concept shaped by cultural, demographic, and individual differences. Theories of SWB vary, with overlapping terms and diverse interpretations making its definition broad and subjective. Factors such as individualism vs. collectivism and economic conditions contribute to these variations, complicating the measurement of SWB.

The discussion highlights that SWB goes beyond momentary happiness, encompassing a deeper pursuit of meaning, growth, and personal fulfilment. Nonetheless, what constitutes a “good life” can vary greatly across different contexts and individuals. Additionally, the transient nature of happiness and the habitual ways individuals assess and respond to their well-being further emphasise the truly subjective nature of SWB.

These habitual responses, often shaped by long-term patterns of behaviour and thought, can influence how individuals react to stress. When stress becomes a recurring part of daily life, it disrupts the bodymind’s natural equilibrium or homeostasis. This connection between habitual responses to well-being, stress, and the body’s attempts to maintain balance through homeostasis is essential to understanding how stress affects overall well-being. In examining these relationships,

the next section delves into the impact of stress on homeostasis and explore strategies to support both resilience and prosilience.

4.3 Stress

Stress is a state of tension caused by challenging or adverse situations (Adesina & Adesiyan 2024:75). This state of tension affects the bodyminded self in various ways and can "significantly impact both personal well-being and professional performance" (Adesina & Adesiyan 2024:74). Stress can disrupt the balance within the bodymind by overwhelming the mechanisms responsible for equilibrium, causing physiological and emotional strain. This desired equilibrium is referred to as homeostasis.

Walter Bradford Cannon (1932:24) introduced the term homeostasis (derived from the Greek *homoios*, meaning "similar", and *stasis*, meaning "position") to describe the coordinated physiological processes that regulate and maintain stability within the internal environment. Homeostasis is thus the bodymind's tendency to automatically maintain a relatively constant internal environment (Caon 2018:139). Internal environment here refers to the various modalities within the bodyminded self.

The automatic nervous system, as part of the inner environment, functions to facilitate restoration and growth of the internal organs of an individual. These processes occur with ease when there are no significant outer environmental demands (stressors that act upon the bodyminded self through external experience). When there are demands in the outer[61] environment, Porges (2011:104) argues the following:

> Homeostatic processes are compromised and the autonomic nervous system facilitates increased metabolic production, down regulating the functions of growth and restoration to deal with these external challenges.

[61] Inner and outer environment are Lessac Kinesensic terms (Hurt 2018:7) that also link to inner-outer in Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies (Hackney 2002:41). These terms refer to the awareness and interaction of both the internal sensations and processes within the bodymind (the inner environment) and the external stimuli and surroundings outside the bodymind (the outer environment), emphasising a holistic approach to bodymind awareness and movement.

In this way, stress hampers an individual's ability to fulfil their growth needs since the focus of the internal processes shift to adapting in response to external stimuli and fulfilling deficiency needs (see Maslow's hierarchy; pp. 21−26). Stress can affect any modality of the bodyminded self. All modalities[62] impact on physiology, which then responds (in various ways).

As I described in the previous chapter, the hypothalamus is a part of the limbic system that focuses on maintaining homeostasis by controlling the endocrine (hormone) system. The limbic system receives information from the outer environment and stimulates the endocrine system to respond to these messages. The limbic system, through the workings of the hypothalamus, activates the endocrine system (consisting of the glands that produce hormones) to initiate all responses in the bodymind (Silva 2014:44). As the "main control centre" of conscious and unconscious responses in the bodymind (Villines 2019:1), when stress occurs, the limbic system activates to initiate appropriate responses in the inner and outer environment of the bodymind. Depending on which hormones are secreted, these responses include fight, flight, and freeze.

When these responses are constantly activated by stress, the inner environment cannot effectively complete all the processes and demands required by the external environment. In this way, stress is "a state of disharmony[63] or a threat to homeostasis […] when perceived demands exceed perceived resources" (Raju 2019:742). When homeostasis is threatened in this way, the bodymind unconsciously reacts with

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[62] The self encompasses multiple, interwoven modalities, each representing unique dimensions of personal identity and experience. The bodily self refers to one's experience of their physical form, including body image, proprioception, and sensory awareness, which ground the individual in the physical world. The emotional self reflects affective states, playing a crucial role in shaping identity and interpersonal interactions. The cognitive self involves thoughts, beliefs, and memories that influence perception and behaviour, while the social self emerges through roles, relationships, and affiliations in society. Additionally, the ecological self connects the individual to their environment, fostering a sense of place and ecological awareness (Neisser 1993:1−24). The narrative self constructs identity through personal stories that integrate past, present, and future, contributing to a coherent sense of self. The interpersonal self is shaped by close relationships and social communication, while the conceptual or reflective self engages in philosophical reflections on identity. The agentic self underscores the self's capacity for intentionality, autonomy, and purposeful action, and the transcendent or spiritual self connects to broader existential or spiritual meanings, grounding the individual's identity in purpose and interconnectedness (Gallagher 2000:14). These modalities collectively contribute to a holistic understanding of the self as a dynamic and multifaceted construct.

[63] A state of disharmony relates to dis-ease.

habitual patterns (see the previous chapter) that are not necessarily beneficial[64] in an attempt to regain equilibrium.

Stress causes physiological arousal, the threatening of safety, low self-esteem, and a lack of belonging since one may feel alone. In terms of Maslow's hierarchy, the deficiency needs are (discussed earlier) not met, which makes it difficult to focus on fulfilling cognitive and aesthetic needs and those of self-actualisation and transcendence. As discussed in the previous chapter, effective habitual patterns can be taught through embodied learning. Most of the multimodal responses occur unconsciously. Conscious knowledge and repatterning of habitual patterns that influence behaviour can aid individuals in understanding how and why their bodyminds respond the way they do to stress.

Through conscious knowledge-making due to experience, tacit knowledge (Oragui 2023:[sp]) of effective habits can form part of an individual's practice. In this way, individuals can gain agency to repattern their habits through a process that can be referred to or aligns with the theory of embodied cognition, which may help them (as bodyminded beings) respond in a more efficient way. Habitual patterns then become beneficial behaviours that form to protect individuals and are positive contributions to self-teaching and critical reflection. Such patterns form due to the consistent interaction between the inner and outer environment (Munro 2018:11).

When stress continuously activates responses in the bodymind, it can cause damage to brain tissue and maladaption in the systems[65] that facilitate homeostasis (Lawson 2017:7). In a VUCA/BANI world, constant stress, coupled with a lack in effective embodied habits for resilience and prosilience, overstimulates this feedback loop within the bodymind. When these habitual patterns are no longer required for survival and homeostasis, but continue to be followed out of habit, they lose their usefulness and can become detrimental.

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[64] Habitual patterns occur since the human organism aims to seek pleasure and avoid harm.
[65] Homeostasis is facilitated by the nervous, endocrine, respiratory, circulatory, renal, integumentary, and digestive systems, which work together to maintain a stable internal environment (Fink 2017:3).

Through the lens of embodied cognition, these responses become ingrained as part of the individual and causes individuals to form behaviours that do not necessarily assist them any longer or improve their lives in relation to their environments in the long run. Although these patterns may have been used for survival, they become redundant when the stress or stimuli from the outer environment is removed (Munro 2018:11). When the stress is removed and the patterns still occur, this might cause tension that inhibits certain processes in the bodymind's feedback loop.

Constant stress impedes the feedback mechanisms in the reaction cycle, which can result, for example, in tension and pain in the body since the neural networks are constantly activated in response to the impulses from the external environment (Yehuda 2004:65). When stress disrupts homeostasis over long periods, individuals cannot engage with the world outside of them in an effective way as their neural pathways cannot facilitate effective responses in relation to the environment. I visually explain the disruption of homeostasis by means of stress in Figure 10 below[66]:

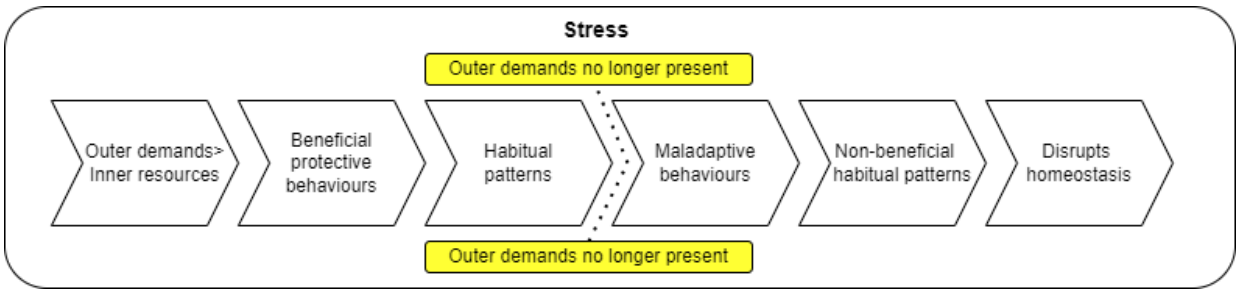


Figure 10: How stress disrupts homeostasis (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

By potentially contributing to the formation of non-beneficial habitual patterns, stress hampers equanimity, which in turn impedes the basic functioning of the bodymind, thus hindering the effective expression of the self in the world. This aligns with Hackney's (2002:230) description of function and expression as interrelated polarities on a continuum, both of which aim to create meaning and purpose in life.

As mentioned earlier, the participants in this study are call centre agents who also study at university, and who thus face a dual burden of work and academic pressures.

[66] The process is not necessarily as linear as I present it in Figure 10.

Sossah and Asiedu (2015:47) explain that university students experience elevated stress due to academic demands, relationships with faculty, and time constraints. This constant exposure to a wide variety of stressors[67] requires significant exertion as students strive to manage multiple responsibilities. Hackney (2002:42) emphasises that exertion must be balanced by recuperation, a process in which the body "replenishes itself and maintains movement vitality". Without adequate recovery, students are likely to continue exerting themselves under increasing stress, which can accumulate and potentially lead to burnout or breakdown. The lack of effective recuperation strategies intensifies the strain, further complicating their ability to manage both academic and work-related stressors.

The bodymind of working students is constantly stimulated by a wide range of stressors from the outer VUCA/BANI environment. As explained above, this stimulation can cause protective behaviours that over time may become habitual patterns that hamper effective function and expression of the bodymind. To become aware of these habitual ways of executing tasks to effectively function and express themselves, an embodied awareness is necessary that affords individuals the capacity to be resilient and prosilient to stress.

I discussed earlier that most of the bodymind's processing occurs unconsciously. When individuals become aware of themselves and how they are embodied, this affords them the agency to engage with the world in a more effective manner. This links back to Spatz's (2017:261) view of embodiment as the first affordance or site where dialogue between agency and the external environment occurs. With embodied agency, individuals can become aware of their limiting habits and react not merely in a resilient manner, but rather in a prosilient manner in relation to their external environment.

I argue that while there are various approaches to managing stress, developing prosilience skills may allow individuals to take a proactive role in stress management,

[67] The prefrontal cortex (see the discussion on the brain) is involved in impulse control and is only fully developed by the age of 25 (Arain, Haque, Johal, Mathur, Nel, Rais, Sandhu & Sharma 2013:449).

allowing them to anticipate and respond to stressors more effectively. This is the contribution I am to make to existing knowledge. Prosilience goes beyond traditional stress management techniques by equipping individuals with the skills to actively cultivate resilience before stress arises. To provide a thorough understanding of stress prosilience, it is essential first to critically examine general stress management strategies and the concept of stress resilience, as these form the foundation upon which prosilience builds.

4.4 Stress management

Stress management can be defined "as the tools, strategies, or techniques that reduce stress and reduce the negative impacts stress have on your mental or physical well-being" (Davis 2023:[sp]). Rostam (2020:1) states that stress management starts by identifying the source(s) of the stress and then deciding what people can do about these stressors. Healthy ways of managing stress would be strategies that help and improve an individual's physical and/or mental health (Rostam 2020:3) so that homeostasis is maintained with greater ease. In other words, managing stress in an effective way should contribute to improved well-being.

Through the lens of embodied cognition (see p. 108), healthy strategies for managing stress would all be linked to encouraging and facilitating readiness in and through the bodymind to take action (Kiverstein & Miller 2015:9). This occurs through facilitating embodied processes as a means towards agency in relation to the internal and external environment and in relation to other individuals or groups of individuals (see the previous page). In this way, the bodyminded individuals may gain the agency and embodied cognition to understand the world and manage the stress within it effectively. Stress management programmes currently available do not necessarily encourage becoming aware of embodied being in response to stress.[68] I discuss this

[68] See for example Vanhove *et al.* (2015:10) and Panigrahi (2017:159) that outline programmes such as anti-stress spaces, employee assistance programmes, physical interventions, and education and awareness campaigns.

shortfall and outline various stress management and resilience-building programmes at the end of this chapter after defining the key concepts of resilience and prosilience.

Raju (2019:743) describes the two main ways of managing stress as coping and resilience. Raju (2019:243) further defines coping as the ability to think rationally, control one's emotions, and solve problems. In this study, I do not focus on coping but specifically consider resilience in order to later focus on prosilience.

4.4.1 Stress resilience

The word resilience stems from the Latin verb *resilire*. Breaking the roots down even further, *resilio* means to spring away and *salire* means to leap. The two combine to form *resilire*, meaning to jump back or rebound (Gößling-Reisemann, Hellige & Thier 2018:3). Resilience is the ability to bounce back and recover from difficulty or challenges by adapting to and managing stress (Lawson 2017:6).

Leipold and Greve (2009:41) describe resilience as "an individual's stability or quick recovery (or even growth) under significant adverse conditions''. Resilience is not fixed but rather "complex, multidimensional and dynamic in nature" since it varies across different contexts as well as in relation to the nature of the stress that individuals experience in each of these contexts (Lawson 2017:6).

In each of these contexts, various forms of stress and arousal can influence the bodymind to form habitual patterns that initially serve the individual but that may hamper fulfilling deficiency needs when the arousal is removed. In this way, habitual patterns also impact on growth needs in the long run. Being resilient means that individuals are aware of their habitual responses to stress and engage with the environment as their bodyminded self in a way that effectively manages stress. This effective engagement may allow the navigating of habitual responses in more effective ways so that they result in a heightened sense of subjective well-being during times of stress.

Resilience to stress allows individuals to respond to "neurobiological stress and not develop adverse consequences of persistent stress and arousal" (Lawson 2017:14). Stress resilience is a protective factor that alters how individuals respond to environmental stress that would normally produce limiting habits or maladaptive

outcomes (Sutton 2020:[sp]). In this regard, Seppälä (2021:[sp]) states that resilience affords individuals the capacity to successfully manage their stress so that they can adapt to challenging conditions.

Being resilient may thus be a way to enhance homeostasis, since individuals become aware of how to deal with, and adapt to, stressful conditions. When focusing on finding effective habitual patterns, individuals find improved ways to respond to stress since the systems in the bodymind's feedback loop responsible for certain processes can complete these processes instead of being aroused by stress.

Fogel (2021:49) posits that resilience allows individuals to use appropriate activities to recover from moments by remaining embodied when stressors are present. Rowe and Kid (2018:83) list certain practices for fostering resilience, including muscle relaxation, mindfulness, visualisation, and deep breathing. Harris (2007:134) suggests that using the movement of the body mindfully to expand and encourage creativity, intrinsic learning, and self-reflexivity may foster resilience.

De Visser *et al.* (2016:358) describe how "building resilience results from the process of transforming resilience knowledge into measurable skills that can be strengthened through practice, then transferring those skills from practice sessions into life situations". In this way, by building resilience, individuals gain practical ways to manage their stress in response to changes in the VUCA/BANI world while they "replace old dysfunctional ways of being" and experience themselves as embodied (Fay 2021:29).

This links back to the repatterning of habitual patterns that I discuss on the previous page. Kain and Terrel (2018:179) refer to repatterning as remapping and state that it increases resilience, not because the old territory is no longer relevant, but because the new map (or habitual pattern) may provide more effective ways of experiencing the self as embodied in the face of stress. When individuals overcome stress through an embodied presence of and within the bodyminded self, this fosters well-being in everyday life (not just during stress-filled times) and therefore encourages ease of engagement between embodied beings and their socio-cultural environment (Fogel 2021:60).

There is a strong correlation between the socio-cultural environment and the development of resilience. Cultures (see p. 15) that have positive experiences of cooperation and successfully overcoming collective challenges tend to be less vulnerable and are more adept at fostering resilience (Neher & Miola 2016:15). This principle can also apply to organisational culture. McEwen (2018:4) defines personal work resilience as "the capacity to manage the everyday stress of work while staying healthy, adapting and learning from setbacks and preparing for future challenges proactively".

By introducing programmes that encourage resilience-building within an organisation, it is possible to positively transform the overall organisational culture. When organisations adopt strategies that align with these socio-cultural principles, promoting collaboration and problem-solving, organisations can enhance their resilience, making employees better equipped to handle stress and adversity (Neher & Miola 2016:15). This socio-cultural influence is vital in shaping organisational practices that prioritise employee well-being and resilience.[69]

However, these practices are often reactive, focusing on helping employees adapt to challenging circumstances rather than addressing the root causes of those challenges. A critique of this reactive approach is that it places the burden of resilience on individuals, asking them to adapt to situations that may perpetuate personal, systemic, and structural oppression. This approach risks overlooking the need for more proactive strategies that address the underlying factors contributing to stress and inequality within the workplace.

Fletcher and Sarkar (2013:14) explain how resilience and positive adaption have usually been framed out of a Western perspective that does not necessarily honour cultural sensitivity to other contexts. When there is a failure to acknowledge socio-cultural conditions, resilience is framed as a fixed "phenomenon with relevance to only

[69] Yet it should be reiterated that this study uses a programme that focuses on prosilience since I argue that resilience is insufficient.

a minority of persons in select circumstances" (Mahoney & Bergman 2002:212). That is, resilience is attributed to, and framed from, only one perspective.

A resilience framework may therefore perpetuate and reinforce existing power imbalances rather than challenging or transforming them,[70] since resilience excludes certain cultural contexts and may require different approaches – and navigating structural and systemic oppressors may not be in the hands of individuals. As such, stressors may be framed solely as individual matters that can (and should) be managed by means of action on the part of the individual.

Another critique is that resilience requires adversity to be present. Luthar and Ciccheti (2000:858) describe how adversity typically delineates negative life circumstances that are associated with adjustment difficulties. Fletcher and Sarkar (2013:14) explain how adversity links to value-laden connotations that link to risk and maladjustment. In other words, individuals are involved in building resilience only in negative circumstances. This means that the only way to acquire resiliency skills is while adversity is present. Researchers, facilitators, and practitioners must be clear about their intention when engaging with resilience-building to ensure that they do not encourage or facilitate negative connotations in relation to adaption. In this study, the focus is on prosilience: proactively preparing before stress is even present and not just dealing with stress in the moment of occurrence, thereby removing the need for adversity to be present.

Crane (2017:87) posits that it is essential for employees to be resilient since challenges such as change impact on their well-being and therefore on their ability to perform their jobs. Nonetheless, being resilient is not enough. Employees need to be ready to deal with stress before it occurs, not just in the moment it occurs.

4.4.2 Stress prosilience

Linda Hoopes is often accredited as coining the term prosilience in her book *Prosilience: Building your resilience for a turbulent world* released in 2017. However,

[70] In the call centre, there is inevitably also a power relationship at work; however, an in-depth discussion of power within this context falls outside the scope of the study.

Morris (2024:12) attributes the term to Thagard who, in 2013 wrote the following in Psychology Today (Thagard 2013:[sa]):

> Even better than resilience is the ability of a person, ecology, economy, or other system to respond to difficulties by getting better, not just recovering to a previous state. I propose to use "prosilience" to capture this idea.

By combing *pro* (which means before, for, towards or in preparation of; Claria 2017:8), instead of *re*, with *salire* (to jump or leap), *prosalire* forms, meaning to jump forward or to jump towards. Stress prosilience is to jump or leap before stress even occurs, instead of just having to rebound in the moment of stress (Morris 2024:1). Hoopes (2017:1) states that resilience helps humans deal with negative experiences that have already happened, while prosilience is a skill that prepares humans for challenges before they occur.

To understand prosilience with more ease, Hoopes (2017:1) provides the following formula: "Proactivity + resilience = prosilience". Prosilience is thus the proactive attitude a person has; one that makes it possible for them to strengthen their resilience (Enriquez 2024:463). In this study, I define prosilience as a dynamic process that leads to the effective and proactive adaption of the bodyminded self to taking action in possibly adverse and stressful circumstances.[71]

Akanji and Baderinwa (2021:50) argue that being resilient is valuable, but, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic, it is not enough to be able to simply cope in tough times. Individuals need to be able to actively prepare for uncertainties, especially in the work environment, by being prosilient (Akanji & Baderinwa 2021:50). As has been indicated in the field of embodied cognition (see p. 109), individuals constantly and dynamically embody the experiences they undergo. They need to actively become aware of themselves as bodyminded beings in order to navigate their own prosilience. In this way, individuals become aware of what stressors stimulate their limbic system

[71] In this study, I do not address emotional competence or cognitive prosilience but only physical practices that might contribute to equilibrium, which then in turn contribute to equanimity. This ensures that the study stays focused on the appropriate concepts.

(amongst other modalities) by becoming aware of certain responses within their bodyminds. This allows them to become aware of what events disrupt homeostasis, so they can learn embodied activities that help them prepare for stress.

When individuals are actively able to prepare and be prosilient before stress occurs, they can live a more embodied life in the VUCA/BANI world. Fowler (2017:[sp]) states that “prosilience is resilience with consciousness of environment, self-awareness, and the capacity to evolve” and that it can aid individuals in gaining perspective of how to fulfil not just their deficiency needs, but also their growth needs in the environment in which they find themselves. Here, deficiency needs have to do with the capacity of embodied individuals to regulate their physiological selves more effectively so that homeostasis is maintained while stress is present. The ability to regulate the physiological self then aids individuals in improving SWB. In a VUCA/BANI world, being prosilient means not just to “operate through disruption” (resilience) but to anticipate disruption and adapt behaviours before it even occurs (Fowler 2017:[sp]).

I argue that the forming of new proactive behaviours aids individuals in flourishing by helping them to form more efficient prosilient habitual patterns in preparation for stressors so that they experience heightened SWB. This makes specific reference to the positive interpretation of emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment (the PERMA layers; Seligman 2011). I aim to encourage the forming of new proactive behaviours by providing individuals with opportunities to constantly change and adapt in their physiological preparation to stress. This focus on physiological responses is grounded in the concept of bodymindedness, as the body ‘and’ mind are intrinsically connected in how they experience and manage stress. By fostering this bodymind awareness, individuals can better understand and regulate their responses to stress, promoting a more holistic sense of well-being.

The programme does not directly attempt to facilitate the enhancement of the PERMA layers, but rather focuses on the individual’s habitual and proactive preparation for stressors. The participants may experience new habitual patterns and strategies in order to become more prosilient, and these new behaviours may facilitate the enhancement of SWB in terms of PERMA.

This adoption of new behaviours links back to embodied cognition, in terms of which being embodied involves not only an awareness of the bodyminded self but also recognising how, in behaviour and action, this bodymindedness provides individuals with the opportunity to consciously act as agents of change, beginning with self-change. Encouraging prosilience requires a focus on more than theoretical assumptions based on the internal world of an individual; it must also include the life-world in which individuals find themselves (Psyllos 2022:31).

Fostering flexibility and adaption towards stress in an entire organisational culture will aid that organisational culture as a whole to become prosilient by allowing every individual to become more embodied. The EPP may aid the call centre agents not merely to become prosilient themselves, but, if every individual has a desire to become more prosilient, can eventually aid the organisation in its entirety to become more prosilient in response to stress.

Before discussing how such a programme can facilitate a prosilient and embodied way of being, I critically engaged with existing stress management approaches and the manner in which they facilitate resilience (see pp. 30−32). To ensure a prosilience programme is effectively designed, there are concepts that I, as the facilitator and designer, must understand. These include how a prosilience programme can move beyond traditional resilience approaches towards embodied prosilience, as well as how habitual patterns can be repatterned to foster proactive stress management. In the following sections, I explore these ideas in depth, beginning with the Sustain 7 model.

4.4.3 Towards embodied prosilience: Repatterning habitual patterns

The Sustain 7 model is a resilience framework that outlines seven key components to sustaining well-being and performance in the workplace, including physical health, emotional health, sense of purpose, mind fitness, connection, resources, and rest (McEwen 2018:4). The EPP can serve as a bridge between the resilience strategies discussed earlier and the Resilience @ Work Sustain 7 model (see Figure 11; McEwen 2018:4).

This is achieved by drawing from and expanding on the foundational principles outlined in the Sustain 7 model. While McEwen (2018:4) positions her model as a

resilience framework, I argue that her emphasis on initiating proactive behaviours within each of the model's components aligns closely with the concept of prosilience. The potential for this model to fall within the domain of prosilience ultimately depends on the facilitator's approach, particularly if the focus is on fostering anticipatory skills and forward-thinking strategies during the programme.



Figure 11: The Resilience @ Work Sustain 7 model (McEwen 2014)

Since the Sustain 7 model is focused on resilience, it is imperative to demonstrate how the EPP can draw from components of the Sustain 7 model in a proactive way. Below, I explore how each component can be approached to be utilised proactively rather than merely reactively.

- Authenticity refers to living authentically by acknowledging strengths and building new awareness (a proactive behaviour; McEwan 2018:7).

McEwan (2018:7) posits that this is a "proactive element [since it] involves having a good self-awareness of personal strengths and values" that prepare individuals for the future and are not just of the moment. Dammann, Friederichs, Lebedinski and Liesenfield (2021:2) argue that this type of authenticity affords individuals the ability to

be in a congruent relationship both with the self and with society by learning how to live in connection with socio-cultural norms.

The EPP should encourage participants to live authentically by fostering bodyminded awareness, which helps individuals recognise their strengths and vulnerabilities. By engaging in embodied practices, participants develop a deeper connection with themselves, building self-awareness of their physical and emotional states.

- Purpose alludes to challenging core beliefs to find a sense of belonging (McEwan 2018:7).

Damon (2009:84) states that purpose is essential in understanding why individuals perform the actions they do in order to belong. This sense of belonging to a purpose sets individuals up for the future since they adjust their core beliefs, thereby indicating that future responses or interpretations of certain situations will change. The EPP should enable participants to challenge core beliefs and to develop a sense of purpose by fostering awareness of how their habitual responses to stress are formed. By consciously repatterning these responses, individuals can align their actions with their values and goals.

- Adaptability indicates that individuals can maintain perspective and have solution-focused mindsets (McEwan 2018:8).

This is proactive since individuals with an evolved perspective focus on solutions and may be adaptable before situations call for reaction. This indicates that adaptability offers individuals the capacity to constructively prepare for various situations (Collie & Martin 2016:3). Through embodied practices, participants in the EPP should learn to remain grounded and to maintain perspective, even in stressful situations. This proactive adaptability aligns with McEwan's (2018) view that individuals with a solution-focused mindset can better navigate challenges.

- Self-care is directly related to mastering stress by building routines and making time for balance and recovery (McEwan 2018:8).

Duhigg (2012:63) explains that building new routines can cause new habits. Building a routine with beneficial habits is a proactive behaviour as it prepares individuals for future events. With the EPP, this should be the focus, with the other six principles

occurring as results of this focus. A central focus of the EPP should be building routines and practices that promote balance, recovery, and well-being. I explain this fully in the next section. Participants learn how to use their bodymind to manage stress, developing proactive habits that prepare them for future challenges.

- Support refers to receiving feedback and advice from others (McEwan 2018:8).

This is proactive since individuals can develop effective skills for feedback and recognise obstacles in advance (Stone & Heen 2015:22). The EPP should encourage participants to cultivate supportive relationships within their work and personal networks, thereby emphasising the importance of feedback and collaboration. By fostering these connections, participants can anticipate challenges and work proactively with others to navigate them.

- Energy involves staying healthy by building effective habits (McEwan 2018:7).

A proper understanding of habits and how to adapt them to invest energy wisely (Clear 2018:46) is a proactive behaviour. The EPP should teach participants to invest their energy wisely by developing habits that optimise physical and mental well-being. By engaging in practices that support bodymind integration, participants learn how to conserve and manage their energy more effectively.

- Networks involve creating connections and relationships so as to positively experience social functioning (McEwan 2018:8).

Fostering a network of relationships enables individuals to repattern the bodymind so that they experience less distressed responses to situations (Tabibnia & Radecki 2018:59). Through the lens of proactivity, fostering networks before troubling situations occur allows individuals to find more appropriate ways of responding and networking. The EPP should emphasise the importance of building networks and relationships as part of developing prosilience. By fostering these connections, individuals are better equipped to repattern their responses to stress, thereby reducing distress and promoting positive social functioning. Drawing from the above, I deduce that the EPP should be based on the principles of the Sustain 7 model to bridge the limitations of the resilience programmes I have already discussed. In what follows, I outline how the model also links to components that address the VUCA/BANI world (see pp. 11−14):

- Authenticity can link to vision through the attaining of an awareness and understanding of strengths.
- Purpose can lead to understanding and clarity through a clear understanding one's goals and values.
- Adaptability can link to agility and flexibility, to the capacity to navigate and stay responsive to the constant change caused by stress.
- Self-care can link with mindfulness as individuals are able to take care of themselves by being more engaged with and aware of their bodyminded self.
- Support can lead to transparency since individuals will feel safer engaging with others and asking for help.
- Energy and networks link to context, as energy can be utilised in the appropriate networks, thereby providing individuals with a context in which they can live in an embodied manner.

To further create the EPP in an effective way, I need to ensure that I understand how to guide individuals in the programme to repattern their habits. To repattern habitual patterns in a programme, a facilitator and designer of a programme needs to first understand how habits form. Duhigg (2012:23) states that all habits have three stages: cue (a stimulus that triggers an impulse), routine (acting on the cue without much thought), and reward (a short-lived benefit). Clear (2018:9) builds on this, holding that habits are formed through a four-step habit loop: cue, craving, routine, and reward. By including craving, Clear (2018:48) includes a motivational force that provides a reason and desire to act. Each of the four steps links to a law of behaviour that individuals can use to either create or break a habit (Clear 2018:54). These steps are presented in Table 3, below.

Table 3: Laws of creating or breaking a habit (Clear 2018:54)

Step	Law of creating habit	Law of breaking habit
Cue	Make it obvious	Make it invisible
Craving	Make it attractive	Make it unattractive
Response	Make it easy	Make it difficult
Reward	Make it satisfying	Make it unsatisfying

Because this is a circular process, it is effectively demonstrated as in Figure 12:

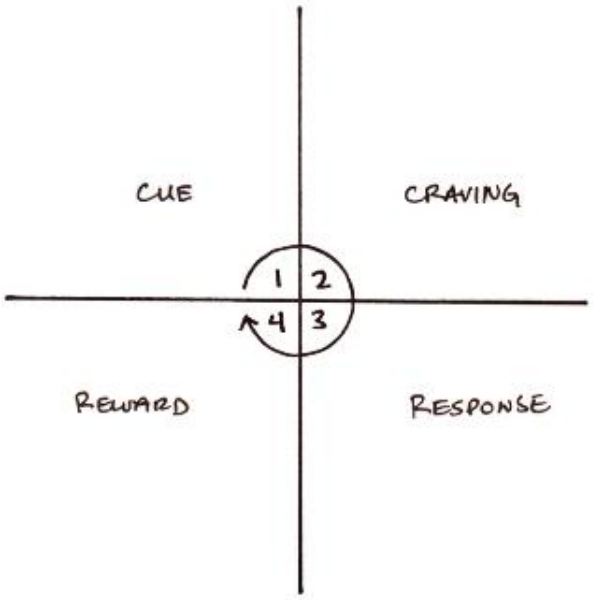


Figure 12: The habit loop (Clear 2018)

Repatterning habitual patterns relies on the body and neuroplasticity (as discussed on p. 93) and affords individuals an effective manner for their bodyminded selves to function in relation to stress. For example, when the cue of a stressful event occurs, the concomitant craving may be to feel more at ease. An easy response can be to guide participants to use familiar events (from Lessac Kinesensics), such as pleasurable smelling (imagine you are smelling a pleasurable aroma) to facilitate ease while breathing. In other words, individuals do not hold or force their breathing when they experience stress, but breathe without restricting their breath (Lessac 1997:63). The reward may then be gaining more ease in the bodymind since individuals have established an awareness of the habitual pattern in response to stress.

As regards creating new habits, as soon as individuals feel any strain in the body, they can be guided to use familiar events as a cue to repattern their habitual responses. By craving the change of ineffective habits, individuals can then use their familiar events (as a response) to habitually centre themselves and release the strain. The reward is then having more effectively formed habitual patterns. Munro *et al.* (2017:96) explain how familiar events can form the basis from which individuals can “take efficient action to dispel restrictive habits” that impede the function and expression of the self.

This enhanced functioning, along with other factors, allows individuals to maintain homeostasis, leading to a more expressive and fulfilling life. Individuals who are guided to create new habitual patterns that aid in maintaining homeostasis can thus become prosilient to stress. In this way, they can live more embodied lives with optimal habits in relation to the VUCA/BANI world in which they find themselves. I elaborate on this in the next chapter.

The VUCA/BANI attributes of the world increase stress since any change (such as the recent Covid-19 pandemic) creates pressure and stress, not merely by creating uncertainty but by eliciting chaos. In a VUCA/BANI world where chaos is ever-present such as the chaos caused by constant performance monitoring in the call centre, habitual patterns for protecting individuals may become more apparent since individuals are expected to execute tasks while constantly dealing with stress.

In high-performing companies, there is often a high level of productive energy (Klann 2004), which provides these organisations with a competitive advantage in an ever-changing VUCA/BANI world. Managers and employees frequently contribute this energy voluntarily, but when faced with difficulties or challenges, the energy required to adapt can lead to dangerous levels of fatigue and stress (Drath 2016:36). This redirection of energy, typically reserved for daily tasks, towards managing stress and change can significantly deplete individuals' capacity to perform effectively.

This depletion is further explained by the polyvagal theory, which posits that when faced with stress, the vagus nerve and sympathetic nervous system are activated to ensure survival, making it more difficult for the body to maintain homeostasis (Porges 2009:31). In such situations, employees must focus on meeting their deficiency needs, basic physiological and safety needs, before they can achieve growth, as outlined by Maslow’s hierarchy (Uysal & Genç 2017:215–216). This highlights the importance of supporting employee well-being, as unaddressed stress can prevent employees from reaching their full potential and contributing productively to the organisation.

Using the words of Clear (2018), employees thus need a craving to change in response to the cue stress affords. This craving acts as a motivation for them to develop the necessary patterns that aid them in practising resilience to stress. Otherwise, employees will not have a way of developing prosilient behaviours.

The reward here would be to feel less stressed in response to the same cues. In this way, pressure and stress at work directly influence growth, since basic deficiency needs cannot be met. Being prosilient may aid employees in identifying when stress is about to occur, while also affording them the necessary habits to adapt to stress so that they can fulfil their growth needs.

Below, in Figure 13, I graphically connect the significant information provided above on stress prosilience and stress prosilience at work as these form the basis for connecting stress prosilience with embodiment in the section that follows.

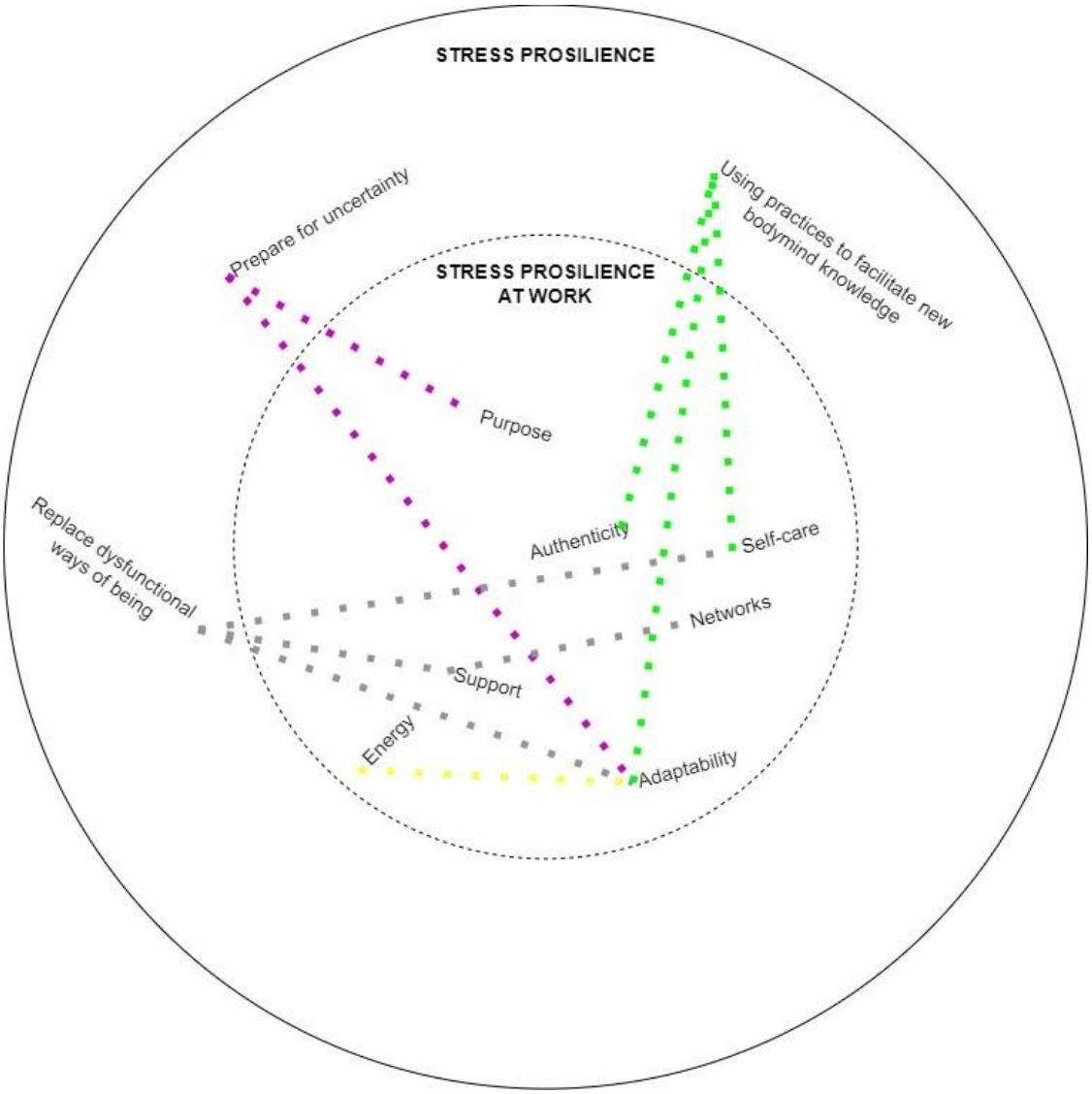


Figure 13: Overview of stress prosilience (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

In Figure 13, I depict stress prosilience at work within a dotted line, symbolising its integration with broader stress prosilience concepts. While these areas may overlap

and may encompass additional ideas not directly relevant to this study, my focus is on the connections that have emerged from prior research and are most pertinent to this work. The purpose of the following discussion is to explore these connections in depth, unpacking how they contribute to the overall understanding of stress prosilience in the workplace.

In doing so, I aim to provide a clearer framework for understanding how prosilience can be cultivated in professional environments, linking each element of the figure to the broader goals of enhancing employee well-being and performance. In the sections that follow, I examine each of the connections illustrated in the figure and their relevance to the study's objectives.

Replace dysfunctional ways of being links to *self-care* and *adaptability* since replacing dysfunctional patterns requires an individual to be open to change so that more *beneficial ways of being* can aid in the care of the embodied self. Being adaptable to creating more beneficial habitual patterns in response to stress can aid individuals in fulfilling Maslow's deficiency needs, specifically physiological needs and feeling safer in (and feeling more of) their bodyminded nature.

This links further to *support and networks* since having a community of individuals who understand and encourage each other can aid in the rewiring of neural pathways (Tabibnia & Radecki 2018:59) by means of open and honest facilitation towards more *functional ways of being*. A prosilient approach towards stress can also fulfil the deficiency need of belonging allowing individuals to interact in a more embodied manner.

Preparing for uncertainty connects to *adaptability* since having a solution-mindset (McEwan 2018:8) can aid individuals in changing their ways in order to prepare for uncertain circumstances, which, in turn, relate to *purpose* since preparing for any such situations requires holding on to core beliefs (McEwan 2018:7) and sometimes challenging them.

This then aligns with the *authentic* self, which can facilitate *new bodyminded knowledge* through practice which further requires being *adaptable* in care of the self. In this way, stress prosilience allows individuals to become aware of their bodyminded

nature in relation to others, which means that they can become more embodied, so as to meet their deficiency needs and then fulfil their growth needs in relation to others.

Using the Sustain 7 model can therefore provide a framework through which to navigate stress in the workplace within a VUCA/BANI world. The gap that remains, however, is that the model has broad and explanatory value but no practices that actively facilitate embodiment and increasing prosilience capabilities.

4.4.4 The creation of the EPP to facilitate embodied stress prosilience

As detailed on p. 1, the main aim for the EPP is to assist the call centre agents to enhance their subjective well-being. In the previous three chapters, I have explained what improved SWB can lead to. In Table 4, I represent these as sub-aims of the EPP.

Table 4: Sub-aims of the EPP (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

Concept	Sub-aims of the EPP
Prosilience (pp. 139−141)	Develop a proactive approach to stress management within the programme, equipping participants with strategies to anticipate and address stress before it escalates, rather than merely reacting to stressors.
Maslow's adapted hierarchy of needs (pp. 21−26)	Address both deficiency needs and growth needs by providing practices that support participants' physiological and safety requirements in relation to stress, while also fostering connections with others to meet higher needs. Encourage participants to grow as individuals who can adapt and thrive under stress.
Cultural difference (pp. 15−20)	Cultivate respect and awareness for the diverse cultural backgrounds that influence individuals and groups. Honour each participant's uniqueness by incorporating culturally sensitive approaches and practices.

The VUCA world (pp. 11−13)	Guide participants to develop the skills of VUCA prime, vision, understanding, clarity, and agility, enabling them to effectively navigate and respond to the complexities of a rapidly changing world.
The BANI world (p. 14)	Foster resilience, flexibility, empathy, mindfulness, context-awareness, transparency, and intuition within the programme, equipping participants to adapt to and thrive in unpredictable and challenging environments.

The EPP encompasses sub-aims related to cultural difference, VUCA prime, and principles addressing the BANI world. These aims help fulfil Maslow's deficiency and growth needs. This illustrates "what" the programme needs to lead to, but not the "how" of getting there.

To get to the "how", I connect Chapter 3, which focuses on embodiment, with Chapter 4 that outlines stress prosilience. I have previously explained how SWB is linked to both embodiment (Chapter 3) and stress prosilience (Chapter 4). Below, I use Figure 14 to explain how embodiment and stress prosilience interlink. There are many other possible connections, but I focus on those that are most central to the study and to my own experiences.

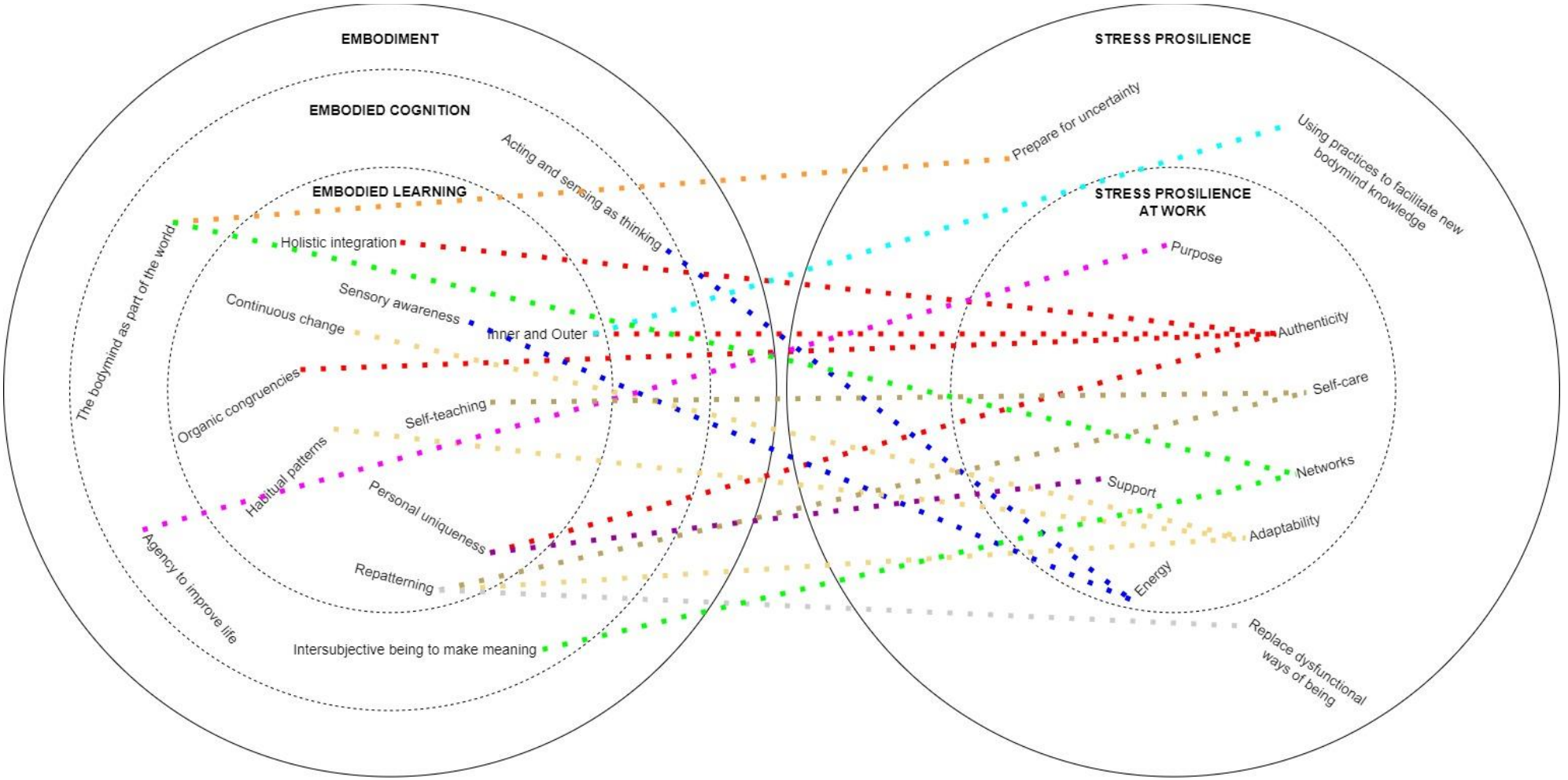


Figure 14: Linking embodiment and stress prosilience (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

Authenticity resulting from prosilience links to *holistic integration, organic congruencies*, and *personal uniqueness* from embodied learning. This is, since being authentic links to understanding the self (McEwan 2018:7), while living in an embodied manner facilitates and includes acknowledging similarities or congruencies with other individuals.

Adaptability relates to *repatterning habitual patterns* by means of *self-teaching*, since being adaptable requires changing in relation to new perspectives (McEwan 2018:8). This occurs by focusing on *sensory awareness*, which requires *energy* (a link in Figure 14), since becoming aware of the senses aids individuals in understanding how to invest energy in more effective ways. In this way, *self-care* relates to *self-teaching* as individuals can sense and explore their own personal uniqueness and teach themselves by mindfully engaging with self-reflection and bodyminded awareness (Burns 2012:40).

Personal uniqueness then links to *support*, while *networks* links to *intersubjective being to make meaning*, for the same reason. Each individual has personally unique and subjective ways of creating mental phenomena (Sekimoto 2012:233) that allows individuals to make meaning in relation to others. I posit that an individual who finds themself within a supportive network that aids connection (McEwan 2018:8) may be aware of their personal uniqueness while making meaning with the intersubjective being of others. This network includes the personally unique histories of each agent as well as the collective organisational culture. Subjective well-being manifests differently for each individual, but networks are important for understanding culture.

Networks thus link to *culture*, which also link to *inner and outer* which, in turn, link to *new bodyminded knowledge*. The inner environments of individuals are in a constant intersubjective interplay with the outer environments of other individuals (Hackney 2002:46), aiding individuals in using practices that can change knowledge of the subjective experience of the bodymind.

By *using agency to improve life*, individuals may then find more *purpose* at work by challenging their core beliefs regarding their bodymindedness. In this way, *preparing for uncertainty* connects to the *bodymind as part of the world*, since a focus on

exploring the world and how individuals relate to each other affords them the opportunity to live in a more embodied manner (Stolz 2015:482).

Now that I have visually connected the frameworks of embodiment and stress prosilience, I provide a definition for embodied stress prosilience for this study: embodied stress prosilience is the proactive agency of the complex multimodal bodyminded self in a continuous and committed relationship to and with the environment to make progress and maintain homeostasis in the presence of stress on a physiological level. The question that remains after the preceding discussion is that, even though I have linked embodiment with stress prosilience, "what" can be used in the EPP, so that it focuses on both facilitating embodiment and prosilience towards stress. I argue that embodied movement has the potential to bridge this gap.

4.4.5 Embodied movement

Embodied movement refers to the conscious integration of the bodymind in movement, which allows an individual to become more self-aware, mindful, connected, and self-regulated (Madeson 2021:[sp]). While all movement involves the body, not all movement is embodied. Embodied movement is characterised by a heightened awareness and attention to the bodymind's internal and external experiences. This requires focusing on proprioception (Pilotti 2020:3), interoception, and exteroception (Blakeslee & Blakeslee 2007:214; see p. 91). It is not merely a matter of moving the body but of moving the self, with the intention of understanding and adapting to internal cues to maintain homeostasis and balance (Payne 2021:4).

This distinction is crucial: while movements such as physical exercise or dance might involve gross motor skills and the use of the body as an instrumental object (see pp. 89−94), they do not necessarily require embodied awareness. Embodied movement, on the other hand, centres around practices that guide individuals to engage with their bodyminds through curiosity and play (Embody by Lo 2023:[sp]). This goes beyond mere physicality by encouraging participants to sense their own movement from within, and, in so doing, to understand and reshape habitual responses to stress in order to maintain balance.

In the previous chapter, I clarified how effective embodied learning can aid individuals in adapting their habitual patterns in response to their needs. Facilitating an awareness

of the bodyminded self in relation to stress allows individuals to experience an inner world, in relation to an outer world, as a component of holistic learning (Kroflič 1999:143), in this case through embodied movement. Pilotti (2020:xv) argues that

> Movement is an integration of senses, senses that can be developed with practice, focused attention, and play. Moving well isn't about moving right; rather, it's about exploring, tapping into it subtly, and integrating the entire physical system [bodymind] into an experience that makes us feel whole.

Embodied movement contributes to an awareness of the bodyminded self. To encourage individuals to become aware of their bodyminded self takes more than merely using embodied movement as a practice; it must include an overt awareness of applying embodied cognition in the continuous processes of being and becoming.

Practices that focus on embodied movement will lead to an awareness of familiar events in the form of beneficial habits that will lead the call centre agents to practice prosilience towards stress since they have an embodied understanding of themselves as multimodal bodyminded beings within and as part of their external environments. This will allow for more adaptability in each context of the VUCA/BANI world they find themselves in and part of, in terms of their student, work, and personal lives. I argue that this will facilitate an enhanced sense of subjective well-being.

From the perspective of the mover, embodied movement involves a subjective awareness of the state of the bodymind and how it interacts with the world. The individual knows they are moving in an embodied manner when they feel connected to their internal sensations, consciously adapting their movement to their needs and surroundings. As Pilotti (2020:xv) suggests, this process allows the mover to experience movement "from the inside out", making each movement meaningful in relation to their bodymind and context.

For an observer and facilitator, recognising embodied movement may be challenging, as it is an internal experience for the mover. However, signs of embodiment may manifest externally through smoother, more fluid, and intentional movements. The mover may appear more attuned to their bodymind's responses, displaying less rigidity or tension compared to someone moving mechanically or habitually. This nuanced

awareness can be cultivated through practices that encourage curiosity, play, and subtle explorations (Pilotti 2020:xv), as emphasised in the EPP.

By guiding participants through embodied movement practices, I aim to assist them to become aware of their habitual patterns and how these may contribute to or alleviate stress. This awareness allows them to consciously develop more adaptive responses and to build stress prosilient behaviour.

Figure 15 summarises the discussion within this chapter. It indicates how embodied learning and stress prosilience, which I connected earlier (see Figure 14; p. 153) are all encompassed within the concept of embodied movement.

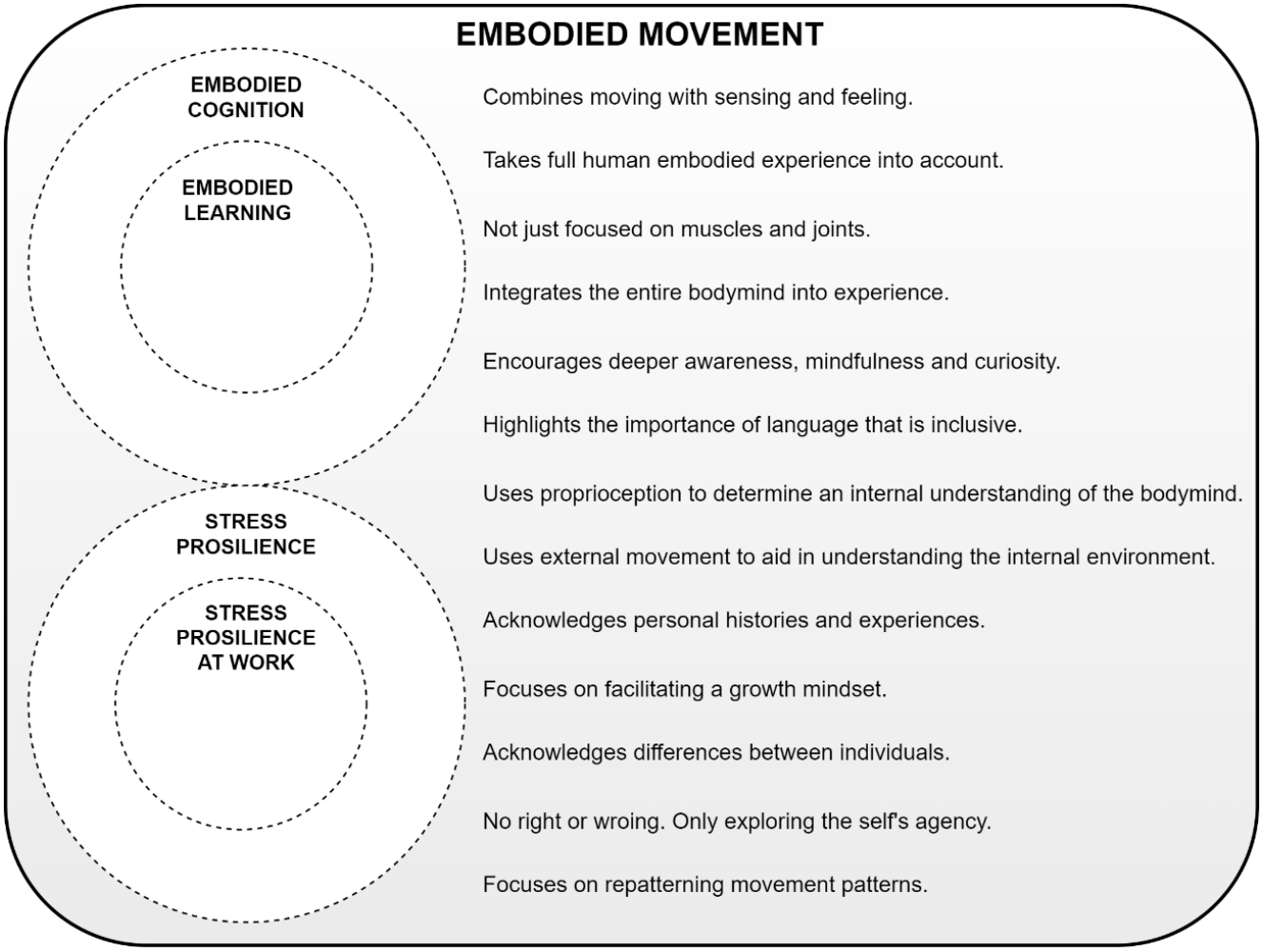


Figure 15: How embodied movement encompasses embodiment and stress prosilience (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the intricate relationship between SWB, stress, and the necessity for stress prosilience in the modern workplace, particularly in call centre environments. By exploring various theories of SWB, including the hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions, I have highlighted how effectively managing stress is crucial for fulfilling both deficiency and growth needs.

To fully understand how stress impacts on SWB and how prosilience can be cultivated, it has been necessary to delve into scientific concepts, such as homeostasis, and the polyvagal theory. Homeostasis, as a state of physiological equilibrium, underscores the body's ongoing efforts to manage stress and to maintain internal balance. When stress disrupts this balance, it triggers survival mechanisms that make it harder for individuals to function optimally. Understanding these physiological processes, alongside psychological theories like Maslow's hierarchy of needs, provides a broad view of how stress affects both the body 'and' mind. This integrated approach provides a clearer rationale for why prosilience, anticipating and mitigating stress before it becomes overwhelming, is important in environments prone to high levels of stress, such as call centres.

A key argument I developed here is that cultivating prosilience, rather than merely resilience, offers a proactive approach to managing stress. Prosilience enables individuals to anticipate and prepare for stressors before they occur, fostering the development of new, beneficial habits that not only enhance personal well-being but also contribute to greater productivity and effectiveness in the workplace. This proactive management of stress helps employees maintain higher levels of engagement, reduces burnout, and improves overall performance. In high-stress environments like call centres, this distinction between resilience and prosilience is particularly valuable, as it equips employees with the tools to stay ahead of stress, rather than merely recovering from it. The EPP is designed with these workplace benefits in mind; it aims to guide call centre agents to manage stress more effectively, leading to improved well-being and sustained workplace success.

The main insight in this chapter is that prosilience is the key to unlocking well-being in high-stress environments, as it encourages both the anticipation of stress and the

development of adaptive responses. Embodied engagement in this process is crucial because it integrates the bodymind in the experience and management of stress. By physically engaging with stress through embodied practices, individuals can develop a heightened awareness of their physiological and emotional responses, allowing them to more effectively repattern habitual stress reactions. This embodied approach promotes a deeper connection between the cognitive and physical aspects of well-being, making adaptive responses more instinctive and sustainable. In high-stress workplaces, such as call centres, this embodied prosilience not only enhances individual well-being but also leads to more resilient and adaptable teams, ultimately fostering a healthier and more productive work environment.

Certain strategies, such as the approaches I use in the EPP, leave space for the possibility of embodied movement by aligning to somaesthetic principles. Since embodied movement, as I utilise it, combines embodiment and stress prosilience (as I have explained in the last two chapters), I refer to these strategies that allow for embodied movement as embodied prosilience strategies. Building on the concept of embodied prosilience strategies, which integrate embodiment and stress prosilience, the next chapter translates these strategies into a practical framework for the EPP.

CHAPTER 5: EMBODIED PROSILIENCE STRATEGIES TOWARDS CREATING THE EMBODIED PROSILIENCE PROGRAMME

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued that stress prosilience is the key to facilitating enhanced SWB in high-stress environments such as call centres. In this chapter, I draw on key notions from the theoretical discourses discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 to create a concrete pedagogical framework for creating the EPP. This chapter encompasses phase 2 of the research and aims to answer the following sub-questions: “What embodied learning approaches can facilitate prosilience to stress through the bodymind?” and “How can these approaches be used to create an embodied prosilience programme?”

The implementation of the EPP allowed for my data collection. The EPP is situated within the field of somatics. Somatics moves beyond practices that encourage the subjective involvement of the body alone, rather referring to practices that facilitate the experience of the bodyminded self in the present moment from a first-person perspective (Magalhães 2023:6). The field of somatics encompasses the framework of somaesthetics. Somaesthetics is a framework in which the bodymind is the locus of “sensory-aesthetic appreciation (aesthesis) and creative self-fashioning” to enrich (embodied) knowledge in relation to somatic experiences (Shusterman 2012:27). Where somatics refers to a field that shifts thinking beyond dualism to monism, somaesthetics is a framework that involves embodied disciplines and practices that focus on protecting and taking care of the bodymind, aspiring towards somatic care and improvement (Shusterman 2008:19).

My intention in this chapter is to adapt various approaches by applying somaesthetic strategies that focus on overtly encouraging embodiment during and after the EPP. I refer to these as embodied prosilience strategies. To create the EPP, I utilised an eclectic pedagogical framework, drawing from my own experiences of various movement and somatic approaches. While certain somatic approaches align closely with embodied learning and thereby support embodied pedagogy, others may diverge from these practices. An embodied pedagogy is an approach to teaching and learning that translates the focus on embodiment into pedagogical practices (Clughen 2023:2).

The EPP attempts to adhere to an embodied pedagogy by drawing from approaches that include principles encouraging embodied somatic practice and embodied learning principles, namely Lessac Kinesensics (LK), Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies (LBMS) and Skinner Releasing Technique™ (SRT).[72] Some of these approaches, such as the Horton technique and tap dancing, are not as overtly aimed at embodied somatic practice. Though these approaches do not overtly aim to encourage embodied learning and embodied somatic practice, facilitators may still be able to utilise them in a manner that encourages bodymindedness in participants.

By applying somaesthetic practice, I reimagine these approaches not as fixed forms but as explorations that can be adapted to encourage bodymind awareness and reflective engagement. This reimagining shifts the focus from mere execution to a focus on embodied learning, aligning these techniques with the principles of somaesthetic practice. Somaesthetic practices underlie the approaches I use in this study to integrate a "diverse range of theorising, empirical research, and meliorative (focused on enhancement) practical disciplines concerned with bodily perception, performance, and presentation" (Shusterman 2012:142).

I position somaesthetic practice as a central thread in the EPP, transforming diverse movement explorations into opportunities for cultivating embodied reflection and enhancing SWB. Importantly, the EPP did not rely on the acquisition or mastery of formal dance or codified movement techniques. Rather than teaching participants the embodied prosilience strategies in a prescriptive sense, I introduced selected explorations from these modalities as invitations to engage with embodied awareness. Appendix C and F provide detail on the manner through which I applied the embodied prosilience strategies, namely the delineation of each exploration and the structure of each session.

Each movement-based exploration was adapted to suit the unique physicality, mobility, and lived experiences of participants. Movements were framed as personal

[72] LBMS, and LK are accredited by The International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association. LBMS, LK, SRT, tap dancing, Horton technique are some of the embodied practices I have had exposure to and represent the vocabulary I am most experienced in exploring and sharing.

expressions rather than technical performances, allowing each individual to engage at their own level of comfort and capacity. As such, the programme cultivated somatic insight without privileging physical 'ability' in any singular or exclusionary form.

Somaesthetic practice provides the philosophical and practical foundation that underpins the entire pedagogical framework, guiding how each approach is taught and experienced. Through this lens, participants are encouraged to engage deeply with their bodily experiences, thereby fostering heightened awareness and reflective engagement. This alignment of various approaches with somaesthetic practice is situated within the broader field of somatics, which I discuss next.

5.2 Field: somatics

Somatics focuses on studying the body from a subjective viewpoint (Hanna 1976:30).[73] Lester (2017:31) explains that "the root of somatics is *soma*, a Greek reference to the self". Emerged into prominence in the 1970s, the field of somatics emphasises the holistic integration of the bodymind in practices aimed at promoting wellness (Eddy 2009:7). Thomas Hanna (1979:6) coined the term somatics to describe the innovative approach he and his team developed; one which centres on the interconnectedness of body 'and' mind to enhance self-awareness and well-being.

Hanna's work is grounded in the concept of embodiment, a view of the living body as a dynamic whole inherently linked with cognition. This approach adopts a monistic perspective, rejecting the traditional separation of body 'and' mind, and instead contextualising them as an integrated, unified experience. Through this perspective, Hanna's somatics aims to cultivate a deeper awareness of bodily experiences as a means of fostering well-being and self-understanding. This awareness extends beyond mere physical sensations to involve the integration of body 'and' mind in response to change − a fundamental human experience. Having transcended

[73] The work of Thomas Hanna is seminal since, through his teachings and writings, he has made significant contributions to the field of somatics.

Cartesian dualism, somatics operates on the philosophical premise that the mind is inherently embodied, and the body possesses a form of mindfulness (Leigh 2011:4).

Somatic approaches use movement to explore the bodymindedness of being (Hartley 2004:4) in "therapeutic, educational, creative, and physically expressive" ways (Mullan 2014:253). This embodied exploration allows individuals to cultivate a deeper awareness of their integrated self, leading to meaningful changes in their physical habits, emotional responses, and cognitive patterns, ultimately promoting more effective and authentic ways of being (Rouhianien 2010:58). Somatic approaches "encourage […] individuals to harmoniously align their physical and mental well-being [by focusing on] internal awareness, mindfulness and holistic health" (Penrose 2023:8).

The themes of somatics that can be derived from the above discussion are:

- subjective body perspective;
- embodiment of the dynamic whole;
- self-awareness and well-being;
- bodymindedness and exploration;
- holistic health, internal awareness and mindfulness; and
- the transformation of habits.

These themes are activated through, for example:

- "postural"[74] and movement evaluation;
- communication and guidance through touch and words;
- experiential anatomy and imagery; and
- the patterning of new movement choices- also referred to as movement patterning, movement re-education or movement repatterning" (The

[74] I use the terms "dynamic alignment" and "optimal integration" throughout the study since posture denotes a fixed position, whereas individuals rather consistently and dynamically align themselves in relation to gravity.

> International Somatic Movement Education[75] and Therapy Association, cited in Eddy 2009:8).

In addition to these overarching themes and their means of activation, specific principles are integral to somatic education. Key principles in somatic education include the active application of conscious will for growth and development (Batson 2009:1), and the self-regulation and autonomy of the bodyminded self in, and as part of, each environment (Penrose 2023:6).

Somatic education occurs through embodied learning since the former affords participants the opportunity to identify and repattern habitual patterns that keep individuals from being effectively present as their bodyminded selves in relation to external change. Individuals need to learn not merely how to become aware of their limiting habitual patterns, but also to learn how their patterns are embodied as part of their identities. In this way, individuals can learn, through sensing and feeling, how their habitual patterns and responses to stress influence their bodyminded selves.

This focus on embodied self-awareness aligns with the foundations of somaesthetics. However, it is important to note that not all somatic practices incorporate the reflective and aesthetic explorations central to somaesthetics. This distinction underscores the distinctive emphasis of somaesthetics on cultivating an attentive and reflective engagement with one's bodily experiences.

Somaesthetic practices build on the foundational principles of somatics, emphasising the cultivation of awareness and self-regulation, but extend this into the realm of aesthetic appreciation and ethical self-fashioning. By framing the bodymind not only as a site of movement but as an integral part of sensory perception and cultural expression, somaesthetics provides a framework that includes both personal and societal dimensions of embodied experience. In the next section, I define

[75] On its website, the association provides myriad ways for somatic practitioners around the world to train and connect for the common purpose of evolving the field of somatic movement education and therapy.

somaesthetics, position the study within the framework of experiential somaesthetics, and then explore the strategies that inform somaesthetic training.

5.3 Framework: somaesthetics

In somaesthetics, “soma” refers to the body from a first-person perspective, while “aesthetics” refers to the way humans appreciate and use the senses with emotions and bodily movements (Höök 2018:32). Somaesthetics provides a framework for this study since it specifically enables the connecting of different embodied practices to provide a logical whole for the improvement of the self, thus contributing to subjective well-being.

This connection between emotions, the body and the resultant mind feeds directly into bodymindedness (see Chapter 2). Levy (2015:25) describes how somaesthetic practices emphasise neither the body nor the mind as a separate entity, but rather the bodymind as an integrated whole that can effectively become present in every moment. This means that somaesthetic practices align with monism in centring the bodymind in, through and as the lived experience.

By focusing on the care and enhancement of the embodied self, somaesthetic practices can be used in learning to emphasise embodied and experiential ways of knowing (Shusterman 2008:1). Bae (2020:217) adds that this experiential way of knowing and learning through practice needs to be “embodied in the real world” so that somatic care and enhancement can occur. Somaesthetic practices do not include only the practical dimension of learning but focus on the art of living effectively by guiding individuals in “overcoming limitations and in the process […] cultivating the self through enhanced sensibility, control, and consciousness”. Somaesthetic knowing is more than merely being embodied in the real world; it is also about learning to be embodied while becoming one’s most effective bodyminded self, not just in, but as part of and in relation with the world.

Effective somaesthetic practices enable embodied cognition. Individuals gain embodied knowledge through the interaction of the bodymind as part of (not just in relation to) the physical world (Chemero 2009:1). Somaesthetic practices focus on how individuals gain cognition of themselves and/or their environment in novel ways through practices that encourage the experiencing of the bodyminded self as part of

the world, and as the core of experience. In this way, somaesthetic practices can result in embodied cognition through a bodyminded approach to somatic experience and performance in a multitude of programmes.

Somaesthetic practices can be present in representational, experiential (Shusterman 1999:305) or performative artistic practices (Mullis 2006:108). Representational somaesthetics refer to altering external appearance to enhance beauty.[76] Experiential somaesthetics refers to heightening attention to inner experiences in order to free individuals from limiting habits that impair sensory experiences of outer environments. Performative somaesthetics refers to developing aesthetic expression (Mullis 2006:108).

This study centres on experiential somaesthetic practices, recognising the complexities of the VUCA/BANI world that challenge how individuals experience and inhabit their embodied selves. To address this, the study adopts the lens of embodied cognition (see p. 108), which conceptualises the bodymind as intrinsically connected to and shaped by lived experiences in the world. From this perspective, somaesthetic practices not only promote somatic care (Shusterman 2008:19) but also facilitate a deeper understanding and more effective navigation of the bodymind within and as part of the dynamic environment. This integration of embodied cognition underscores the holistic approach to exploring the bodymind's role in perception, action, and self-awareness. In this way, an understanding of their bodyminded self enables individuals to navigate challenges (Kocik 2018:3) in the world which they are part of by having gained embodied cognition.

Somatic approaches that align with somaesthetic practices aim to improve awareness of habitual patterns in and of the bodymind (Shusterman 2009:20). The somaesthetic framework encourages an awareness of the bodymind through practices that study and improve "appreciative perception", which includes the perception of that which

[76] In this context, beauty refers to aesthetically pleasing qualities that individuals seek to enhance through representational somaesthetic practices. It involves modifying or shaping the external body to meet cultural or personal standards of appeal. Shusterman (2000:267) describes beauty as not just a superficial quality but one that can be cultivated and refined through attention to the body's presentation, thereby linking outer appearance with the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of somaesthetic practice.

could be limiting (Höök 2018:32). Practically, this means that individuals are able to gain habitual awareness of any patterns or responses to stress that are no longer beneficial and then repattern them in an effective manner.

Shusterman (1999:304) describes how one can incorporate somaesthetic practices by using training in specific practices that are intended for somaesthetic appreciation and efficiency. These practices are all embodied and actively acknowledge the importance of the bodyminded self. Using somaesthetic appreciation therefore aligns with the principles of embodied learning (the pedagogical framework of this study) to facilitate somaesthetic appreciation.

The following strategies ensure a somaesthetic practice (Höök 2018:145):

- Focusing on change and interest

Shusterman (cited in Höök 2018:145). refers to “the importance of subdividing bodily experiences into more specific areas or functions and then engaging in activities that shift focus from one area to another and back to provide a more nuanced and rich perception of fine-grained movements”. By focusing on specific parts or functions of the bodymind, and then being attentive to and across these areas, individuals can develop a more detailed and refined awareness of their bodily sensations and movements. This practice enables them to perceive and appreciate the finer nuances of their physical experiences, which in turn can deepen their overall bodyminded awareness and improve their capacity for intentional and precise movement. Lee, Lim, and Shusterman (2014:1056) suggest methods for providing heightened attention to and interest in the body:

    - Questions: Asking questions about what individuals perceive. These can be used as guided reflections or self-checks that can be answered personally and not necessarily out loud.
    - Sustained attention: As indicated above, practitioners should encourage an awareness of the bodymindedness of being by deliberately concentrating on certain parts of the body for a sustained length of time. This is aimed not at denoting a disconnected sense of dualism, but rather at focusing on individual parts or concepts (such as breathing or body parts such as the shoulders) so there is an awareness of each part in

the interconnected whole. Interest links to “finding means to achieve sustained attention toward a specific body part” (Höök 2018:145).

- Contrasts of feeling: Discriminate between different feelings in the various parts of the body. Once again, these reminders should be used as self-checks. Carel (2016:12) describes how somaesthetics, through this sensory awareness, leads to “a greater appreciation of the richness and complexity of life”.
- Associative interests: Noticing what individuals are trying to feel, tied to what they care about. In this study, I associate the interest in each participant’s dealing with stress effectively by focusing on living in a more embodied manner.
- Avoiding distracting interests: Removing any interests that compete with the intended interests. This does not mean that practitioners do not respect the personal unique experiences of each individual or remove outside influences completely. It rather means that somaesthetic approaches need to take place in an environment in which the focus of the experience can be attended to. In this study, the explorations took place in a secluded building where I could control most variables.
- Pre-perception: Guiding the attention of participants to notice what they are aiming to gain interest in or change. I did this in each session by means of proper briefing beforehand, though one which avoided cognitive overload, and through guided reflection in the moment. I provided a clear context and parameters so that they were not inclined to overshare.

Approaches that create awareness of various specific bodily parts in order to develop interest in each part as part of the bodymind use the six methods described above to enact somaesthetic change. This links directly to the second technique of somaesthetic appreciation, of repatterning habitual patterns.

- Disrupting the habitual

In Chapter 1, I define habitual patterns and explain how protective habits can become a limiting default for individuals. I also examine the effect of these patterns on stress (Chapter 3). Much like other approaches focusing on the bodymind, those that involve

somaesthetic practices, repatterning habitual movement patterns through self-teaching (discussed in the previous section) is “a core principle […] based on the rationale that only by bringing to the surface what has become automatic and tacit can we change deeply ingrained, habitual patterns of movement” (Höök 2018:149).

Before this repatterning can occur, somaesthetic practices first enable individuals to become aware of their habitual responses to their outer environments. These include experiences that have become embodied within the self’s continuity as part of society and culture (Bae 2020:219). Somaesthetic practices focus on gaining awareness through somatic reflection to bring personally unique backgrounds and habitual patterns “to the foreground of consciousness for critical reflection and possible reconstruction” (Csuka 2023:302).

In this way, somaesthetic practice serves as a field of enquiry that provides individuals with the opportunity “to reflect upon and explore one’s senses, movements, feelings, and even current norms that are unconsciously inhabiting our body” (Bae 2020:219). Disrupting the habitual thus occurs by first bringing that which is unconsciously part of the self into conscious awareness so new responses can be formed. Schusterman (2012:35) explains that the self is constantly changing to become something else; through somaesthetic practices, this change can be directed at self-improvement.

In this manner, a somaesthetic framework encompasses approaches that allow individuals to become aware of habits that are not ideal for reaching an overt goal: “improving and practicing the highest art of all – living better lives” (Hurt 2018:33). I acknowledge that human flourishing has different connotations to individuals in various socio-cultural contexts, yet somaesthetic practice encompasses various somatic approaches that aim to improve limiting habits so that individuals can live effectively.

In this study, I employ somatic approaches that align with somaesthetic practices to promote effective embodied learning. This alignment aims to help call centre agents identify habitual responses to stress that hinder their prosilience; in so doing, it enables self-teaching and repatterning. These somatic approaches comprise techniques and explorations that enhance the efficient experience of the bodymind (Ginot 2010:18) through embodied movement, which in turn facilitates embodied cognition. By integrating these approaches, the study supports agents in developing a deeper

awareness of their habitual patterns and the capacity to reshape these patterns for greater adaptability and well-being. Some examples of somatic approaches are:

- Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies (LBMS);
- Lessac Kinesensics (LK); and
- Skinner Releasing Technique (SRT).

These somatic approaches were fundamental to most of the speech and movement classes I attended during my undergraduate and honour's studies. In this study, I also draw elements from the non-somatic practices, tap dancing and the Horton technique, but attempt to apply them using a somatic lens by aligning them with somaesthetic practices.

The combination of elements from LBMS and tap dancing was the focus in my honour's dissertation. I successfully completed Gold Lower of the Association of International Dance Teachers (AIDT) tap dancing examinations, while also completing my AIDT 1A Tap Teaching Diploma. I have taught tap dance since 2015 at various dance centres, and I have also given workshops focused on connecting tap dance with acting through LBMS, LK, the Horton technique and SRT at institutions such as Tshwane University of Pretoria.[77]

In my master's studies on choreography, I used elements from LBMS to practically inform and shape my own choreographic processes. I have further also completed an LK intensive workshop,[78] an LK tune-up workshop,[79] a LBMS introductory workshop,[80] various physical theatre workshops based on the Horton technique and SRT[81] and a range of tap dance classes, workshops, and seminars.[82] I am not an expert in any of

[77] This occurred during 2016 and 2017, when I was an honour's student. I build on this foundation.
[78] This intensive workshop took place from 9–28 January 2017 under the guidance of master teachers Marth Munro and Nancy Krebs, as well as certified trainers, Morné Steyn and Valentina Lončarić.
[79] This LK tune-up workshop took place from 24–26 November 2017 under the guidance of master teacher Deborah Kinghorn.
[80] The LBMS introductory workshops took place from 1–2, 8–9, and 15–16 September 2016 under the guidance of certified movement analysts Marth Munro, Anchen Froneman, and Tarryn-Tanille Prinsloo.
[81] These workshops took place under the guidance of Bailey Snyman and Nicola Haskins during my undergraduate and honour's studies (2014–2017).
[82] These classes, workshops, and seminars took place under the guidance of AIDT advanced teachers Tanya van Zyl, Nastassja Fourie and Elanie le Roux from 2015–2017.

these practices. Rather, my background allows me to combine elements of these approaches and techniques to fulfil my research aim.

I am aware that all these approaches are mainly Western[83] approaches. At the same time, they have been widely explored in and adapted to African contexts. In this study, I acknowledge my training with South African educators who focus on creating and facilitating tacit knowledge and learning through somatic approaches. These practitioners adapt somatic practices to accommodate the diverse personal histories and experiences of individuals in South Africa, fostering an inclusive and context-sensitive approach to embodied learning.

All the practices that I listed have the capacity to overlap and connect because they share the common goal of somatics: allowing an individual to explore their bodymind by focusing on internal sensation in relation to external stimuli (in this case, stress), so that the newly gained embodied cognition can enact change (Fortin 2018:157). In what followed, I first discuss critiques of somaesthetics, since it is a framework that falls within the field of somatics and underlines all the other approaches from which I create the eclectic pedagogical approach to the EPP.

It is necessary to provide a critique of somaesthetics because it underpins and influences the various approaches that are integrated into the eclectic pedagogical approach that resulted in the EPP. Critiquing somaesthetics allows a deeper understanding of its strengths and limitations, ensuring that its application to the EPP is relevant. This critique also highlights the nuances of somaesthetic principles, clarifying their role in supporting embodied learning across the diverse approaches utilised within the EPP.

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[83] I recognise that while these somatic approaches primarily originated in the West, they have been explored and adapted in African contexts. At the same time, African concepts have significantly contributed to the development of Western somatic paradigms (Eddy 2022:[*sp*]). This interplay highlights how somatic practices span an African/Western binary, with room for mutual influence. Although this study does not focus on the African vs Western dynamic, many practitioners continue to work towards decolonising somatics (see Bambara 2022; Blackwell 2019; Johnson & Reyes 2018; Ma-Kellams 2014; Spatz 2019), making them more inclusive.

5.3.1 Critique of somaesthetics

Critique of the concept of somaesthetics includes, for example, Määttänen (2010:56) arguing that somaesthetics often reduces the body to being primarily an object of aesthetic appreciation, overlooking its role in embodied experience and placing great emphasis on language. This links to the dualistic view of the body being an object that does not experience the world and that can simply be appreciated from a distance; illustrating that Shusterman does not ground his theories in experience through the body but rather focuses on language that centres the body as an object.

Carlson's (2008:18) critique of somaesthetics is that it can fall into the trap of over-intellectualising the body, focusing too heavily on the mind's relationship to the body and potentially neglecting the raw, visceral aspects of embodied experience (Carlson 2008:18). In this way, somaesthetics risks maintaining the very dualisms it seeks to overcome, particularly between mind and body (Johnson 2009:70). This critique suggests that, while somaesthetics purports to offer a holistic approach, it may inadvertently reinforce divisions by overemphasising cognitive processes over the sheer physicality of movement and sensation (Carlson 2008:20).

Furthermore, some scholars question whether somaesthetics sufficiently addresses the diverse cultural interpretations of bodily experience, particularly in non-Western contexts (Johnson 2009:63). Somaesthetics' focus on individual bodily awareness may overlook the socio-political factors that shape embodied experiences, such as race, class, and gender, awareness of which is critical to a more holistic understanding (Johnson 2009:66). Additionally, the emphasis on aesthetic experience may appear somewhat elitist, aligning more closely with those who have the privilege and time to engage in reflective bodily practices (Shusterman 1999:28).

Nonetheless, African practitioners have explored somaesthetic practice as a feminist and political practice (Botha 2020). An example is Matchett (cited in Botha 2020:165) who examines an example of using somaesthetic practice as embodied activism to address violence and rape in South Africa in a non-traditional manner. African cultures and African politics utilise various forms of somaesthetic practices to reject dualism and focus on the improvement of the bodyminded self. In these cultures, somaesthetic

practices are used “evaluate the [bodymind] and its role in the living of a fulfilled life” (Botha 2020:3).

The application of somaesthetic practices in African contexts grounds somaesthetics in cultural traditions that “integrate the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of our being through movement, rhythm, music, and other forms of sensory engagement” (Ogundipe-Leslie 2014:4). Thomas (2019:8) suggests that somaesthetic strategies in African contexts offer a holistic approach to the experience of the bodymind’s engagement in, as part of, the cultural world in which it finds itself. This engagement with somaesthetic practice cultivates a deep connection with the self and the community, enabling a healing of the self through communal embodied knowledge (Meketa 2020:107). In this way, somaesthetic practice focuses on how the bodymind is shaped by the social and cultural dimensions (Kocik 2018:4). Somaesthetic practice shapes these dimensions and influences well-being and stress management (Levy 2015:25).

In this study, the call centre students and management collectively form a community within the call centre environment. A workplace functions as a community because it consists of individuals who are assumed to share common goals, roles, and interactions that shape their collective experience (see pp. 15−20). This sense of community is characterised not only by professional duties but also by mutual challenges, shared values, and the social bonds that develop among its members. While each person’s cultural background inevitably influences their approach to and experience of this community, these cultural elements lie beyond the specific focus of this study. Instead, the study centres on how individuals in this workplace community manage their stress and engage within the broader context of embodied practices and the cultivation of stress prosilience.

The EPP discussed in this study aims to aid participants to move beyond habitual ways of preparing for and responding to stress in the community and culture of the organisation, to ensure that call centre agents prepare better for each day and can keep themselves present and focused when faced with stress, in order for them to live a stress-prosilient life. As individuals cultivate prosilience by focusing on their SWB and on learning new ways to manage stress, they contribute to the collective culture of the organisation. A healthier organisational culture emerges when employees are

better prepared to face stress and stay mindful, leading to more positive interactions and a more cohesive, supportive workplace environment and a sense of community in the workplace (Parashar 2021:6638). Thus, improving SWB at the individual level can directly impact on the overall culture, fostering an atmosphere in which prosilience and SWB become embedded values.[84]

Of the five approaches[85] I use in the programme, three fall within the framework of somaesthetics (LK, LBMS, and SRT); I adapt two, the Horton technique and tap dancing) to adhere to somaesthetic practice. It is from these five approaches that I draw clusters of strategies to form the eclectic, embodied pedagogical framework from which I created the EPP. I offer a broad overview and then home in on elements I deem relevant for this study. These key components align with the programme's goal of enhancing stress prosilience, focusing on the integration of body 'and' mind and movement to foster resilience and well-being. An in-depth discussion or critical reflection of each approach falls outside of the scope of my study.

[84] This study does not imply that systemic or structural challenges within the workplace culture are absent or negligible. On the contrary, structural issues that may contribute to stress within the organisational culture fall outside this study's specific focus. Instead, the EPP presented at the workplace aims to support individual well-being and stress prosilience within the existing organisational framework. While the programme fosters individual stress-management strategies and encourages personal prosilience, it does not directly address potential systemic or structural issues within the workplace culture that may perpetuate stress for employees.

[85] The question of whether the frameworks of the somaesthetic approaches can be separated from their ideological and cultural roots is yet to be answered in full. That the varied manifestations of the elements of movement identified by these practitioners can be used to read and reconstruct movement across cultures has been demonstrated. How the biases of looking impact on reading and reconstruction is yet to be fully researched. It is not the purpose of this study to fully analyse the reliability of each model or its application to any context. My study utilises and acknowledges the basic components of each approach throughout the EPP, since together they can aid in establishing radical embodied cognition (as I explain in each section) within the bodyminded self of the participants in relation to and as part of the call centre environment, so that they become more stress prosilient and experience enhanced SWB.

5.4 Lessac Kinesensics (LK)[86]

Lessac Kinesensics[87] is a comprehensive approach to voice and movement training that emphasises the intrinsic connections within the bodymind. Munro, Turner, Munro and Campbell (2011) define Lessac Kinesensics as:

> an approach to voice, speech and movement that offers a unique way of learning and developing by discovering the synergy amongst all three modalities. Based on sensory learning and kinaesthetic awareness, Lessac training is a bio-sensory approach that uses body and vocal energy states to awaken a largely untapped reservoir of knowledge, spirit, and perceptive awareness.

Munro (2017:8) further defines Kinesensics as an embodied educational approach, or an educationally embodied practice, that honours the natural multimodal bodymindedness of humans while recognising each individual's uniqueness. It actively engages both the self and the environment to promote the optimal integration of body 'and' mind, including the voice, for enhanced existence and communication. Kinesensics is a neologism coined by Lessac by combining the following concepts (Grama, Barrichelo-Lindström, Englert, Kinghorn & Behlau, 2021:3; Munro & Kinghorn 2021):

- *Kine*: movement/motion and the ongoing process of becoming in and of the bodymind of human beings
- *Esens*: essence/essential and the process of being aware and embodying cognition as a bodyminded gestalt.
- *Sens*: sense/sensation as part of the feeling process within the bodymind and in interaction with the environment.

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[86] All the terms within LK are capitalised since this is standard practice to indicate that it is approach specific and not general terms.

[87] I am aware of critiques of LK, particularly concerning its reliance on musical metaphors, which can be culturally specific and may not resonate universally across diverse cultural backgrounds. Some aspects have also not been verified by science. Despite these critiques, LK remains a respected approach to voice and movement training.

- *Sic*: acknowledging the original and personally unique self in performance and daily life.

Kinesensics refers to the ongoing sensing and feeling process within the bodyminded self in relation to the outer environment to find the most effective way of being. In what follows, I discuss the founder of and key contributors to LK.

5.4.1 Founder and key contributors of LK

Arthur Lessac (1909–2011), an American voice and movement educator, founded Lessac Kinesensics. His career, which began in the mid-20th century, was rooted in theatre and performance, in which he served as a voice coach and educator. Lessac developed his approach in response to a perceived need for performers to cultivate a more holistic and embodied understanding of their voices and bodies. He believed that by sensing the natural vibrations of the voice and the kinaesthetic motion of the body, individuals could achieve optimal performance, effective communication, and overall well-being (Lessac 1996:3). His work centred on what he called “Kinesensic training” that emphasises the development of bodymindedness and embodied presence.

Lessac’s work has been expanded and formalised by key figures such as previous master teacher Sue Ann Park, retired master teachers Barry Kur and Richard Cuyler, current master teachers Deborah Kinghorn, Marth Munro, Crystal Robbins and Nancy Krebs, and certified trainers such as Melissa Hurt, Sean Turner, and Karina Lemmer, all of whom have contributed to the dissemination and development of Lessac’s pedagogy through the Lessac Training and Research Institute (LTRI; Munro *et al.* 2017:93).[88] These contributors have deepened the theoretical and practical foundations of LK, ensuring its continued relevance in contemporary performance and communication training. Figure 16 presents a bird’s-eye view of the broader scope of LK.

[88] Information about the master teachers, including their names, is not available on the LTRI website but are taken from the LK tune-up workshp I attended in 2017.

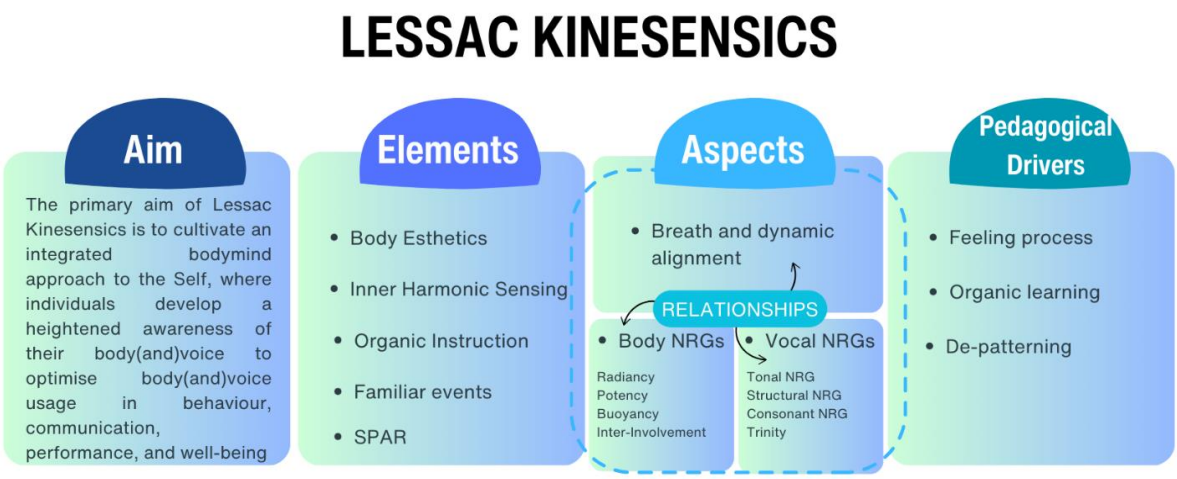


Figure 16: A bird's-eye view of Lessac Kinesensics (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

5.4.2 Aim of LK

Lessac Kinesensics is

> a well-established, holistically developed approach that is ever emergent and continuously evolving as a bodyminded method for optimising body and voice usage in behaviour, communication, performance, and well-being (Munro 2017:93).

Kinesensics is also described as "a comprehensive and creative approach to developing bodyvoice holistically, leading to effective functioning and enhanced expressiveness in all behaviour and communication" (Munro 2020:[sp]). According to Kinesensics, every person has a teacher-within[89] that can guide them in this process. The teacher-within in Kinesensics refers to the innate capacity of individuals to guide their own learning and development through sensory awareness and organic instruction (Lessac 1997:10). The teacher-within is the internal process by means of which individuals can access and respond to their bodymind's feedback, using sensations, perceptions, and inner harmonic sensing to self-regulate and improve performance.

[89] In this context, the term was coined by retired master teacher Barry Kur (LK tune-up workshop 2017).

The teacher-within emphasises that everyone possesses an internal guide that can lead them to the most effective and easeful ways of being their bodyminded self (Hurt 2017:38; Lessac 1997:6). Munro (2017:8) asserts that effectively and mindfully engaging with the inner self, as it is expressed outwardly in behaviour, can lead to well-being through conscious choice. This resonates strongly with the idea of the teacher-within or internal guide. In LK, the focus on sensing and feeling one's vocal and physical vibrations nurtures a deeper connection with the self, allowing for more intentional and mindful outward expression. By tapping into this internal guide, individuals can make conscious choices that align their behaviours with their embodied experiences, ultimately promoting well-being and self-awareness.

Lessac Kinesensics consciously focuses on an effective monistic manifestation of the self in vocal and bodily training, one which is collectively referred to as the bodyvoice (Munro *et al.* 2017:97). Bodyvoice refers to the kinaesthetic feeling of the whole-body resonating during vocal expression (Lessac 1997:126). Lessac Kinesensics focuses on training vocalisation while facilitating knowledge creation and skills building through the bodymind to promote an organic and effective bodyvoice.

In a call centre, the bodyvoice is part of the agents' daily occupation. By facilitating an awareness of and the effective use of the bodyvoice, the call centre agent can, through their teacher-within, find the most effective way of using the bodymind and voice amid stress caused by a VUCA/BANI world. This encourages embodied cognition since the bodyminded self learns how to have embodied agency to make meaning and to better understand the self in relation to and as part of the VUCA/BANI world.

5.4.3 Guiding elements of the LK approach

Lessac (1997:4) posits that there are four primary elements[90] that are integral to the bodymind in Kinesensic training, namely body aesthetics, inner harmonic sensing,

[90] I call these elements as to not confuse them with the several principles of LK namely the human likeness principle, the human musical instrument principle, the principle of inner harmonic sensing, the perceptive awareness principle, the habitual awareness principle, the de-patterning principle, the carefreeness principle, the balanced muscle-tonicity principle, the vocal sound stream principle, the curvo-linear principle, the generalisation principle, the unique event principle, the feedback principle, the distribution principle, the diminishing fatigue principle, the time-lag catch-up principle, the wave

organic instructions, and familiar events. Hurt (2017:187) states that these four elements "lay the groundwork for tending to sensations each moment [and can be used] to develop healthy ways of being". Lessac provides a fifth element to ascertain habits and patterns in what he calls sensation-perception-awareness-response (SPAR) (Hurt 2009:108).

- Body esthetics[91] refers to the promotion of sensitivity and the awareness of sensation for effective function (Grama *et al.* 2021:2). Examples include "balance, lightness, carefreeness, gratefulness, feeling inner rhythm and vibration, and body flexibility" (Lessac 1997:5). Body anaesthetic refers to actions that contribute to numbing, stress building, and illness (Munro 2017:15). Individuals can therefore choose to take esthetic actions over anaesthetic actions to contribute to their well-being.

By becoming more sensitive to and aware of their internal sensations, the agents could gain the capacity to determine what in the call centre environment causes them the most distress. Such a determination could be aided by the second concept integral to LK, inner harmonic sensing.

- Inner harmonic sensing is the process of gaining kinaesthetic understanding deeper than merely through outer senses – also by feeling "through organic sensation and perception" (Lessac 2019:34). Inner harmonic sensing refers to a sensory system that "registers outside signals internally, and transfers them into sensory information" (Grama *et al.* 2021:3).

Through inner harmonic sensing, the agents could become aware of how the distress that is caused in the bodymind is disrupting homeostasis and of their habitual responses to these stimuli. However, as I have discussed earlier, not all these habitual

principle and the kinematic principle (Lessac 2019:33–39). I align the study with the four primary elements since they inform the programme.

[91] Lessac Kinesensics uses the term esthetics to emphasise the experiential and sensory dimensions of the approach. In Lessac's work, esthetics refers not just to artistic beauty or form, but to the sensory appreciation and kinaesthetic experience of the bodymind.

responses are effective[92] and using organic instruction can aid the agents in repatterning these responses.

- Organic instruction occurs when there is initially a conscious requirement to perform activities that then, through "sensations, acquiring perception, responding to awareness and, finally, through the inner harmonic senses, [leads to] training […] to use these […] as organic instructions" to the bodymind in order to reduce complexity (Lessac 1997:6). Hurt (2017:38) posits that these instructions can instinctively feel good and thus be used for self-teaching.

If the agents are guided to use their teacher-within, by employing self-teaching and organic instruction through familiar events, they can find personally unique ways through which to become aware of the most effective usage of their bodymind in any given moment.

- Familiar events refer to rediscovering and regaining the bodymind's innate resources by finding and executing easeful actions that make being in the world more pleasurable and efficient (Lessac & Kinghorn 2014:11). Familiar events can be employed by the teacher within so that self-teaching and repatterning of ineffective patterns can occur (Lessac 2000:192).

Through conscious repetition and habitual awareness, familiar events are embodied as part of the agents' lived experience. In this way, familiar events lead to embodied cognition strategies that guide how the agent reacts to and prepares for certain events. These strategies may aid the agents to proactively prepare for situations that they have, through inner harmonic sensing, noted as causing stress to the bodymind and resulting in a disruption to homeostasis. Constantly drawing on the teacher-within to proactively prepare for stress-filled situations can thus help agents to become more prosilient to stress, aiding them in fulfilling their deficiency needs so that growth and enhanced well-being are enabled. This can occur through the process of SPAR.

[92] Some habitual responses aid individuals in the moment, but once the threat to homeostasis is removed, these responses may become ineffective (see pp. 130−133).

- SPAR refers to the process of sensation, perception, awareness and response (Lessac 1990:23). Humans engage with their environments through the processes of sensation, perception, and response; by cultivating awareness, this interaction evolves into SPAR (Munro & Kinghorn 2022:8).

Individuals' sense (experience) and perceive (interpret) stimuli by means of proprioception, exteroception, and interoception (p. 91). Sensing and perceiving stimuli affords individuals the opportunity to become aware of themselves in certain situations and to practice appropriate responses (SPAR). Individuals, such as the call centre agents, can thus become intentional with their responses by becoming aware of how they sense and perceive the world, since intent is always filtered by perception.

However, the process is not necessarily linear or predictable. Kinesensics as a somatic approach is non-linear and interlinked. During the EPP, the participants were led through various aspects of the approach, namely dynamic alignment and breath, body NRGs,[93] inter-involvement, vocal NRGs, and trinity. These can all be present at the same time. I discuss these aspects below.

5.4.4 Aspects of LK

The aspects of LK are dynamic alignment and breath, body NRGs, inter-involvement, vocal NRGs, and trinity.

- Dynamic alignment and breath

Breathing, as a source of life, can be consciously controlled though it is "not a learned technique or a skill" (Lončarić 2017:58). Instead of controlling their breath in a mechanical manner and possibly building anaesthetic tensions, the agents can deepen their awareness of breath in the bodymind.

In LK, the synergy within dynamic alignment is central to understanding embodied training, where optimal breath flow enhances physical alignment, and in turn, alignment supports deeper, more effective breathing. This approach allows for the full

[93] NRG is an acronym for energy and neuro-regenerative growth.

expansion of the lungs into the lower back and belly, facilitating a “bucket” feeling in which the breath fills from the bottom up (Lessac 1969:25).

Dynamic alignment refers to how the body is aligned in relation to itself and gravity so that it supports free and full breath, with key areas such as the knees, hips, ribs, and shoulders in balance, allowing the breath to flow unimpeded. Dynamic alignment suggests a flexible, fluid and “energetic arrangement of the body’s components for coordinated functioning” (Lessac 2019:12). When breath and alignment work harmoniously, they enable the individual to release tension and increase presence, facilitating deeper awareness of the bodyvoice. This synergy enhances both physical performance and emotional expression, as alignment reflexively impacts on breath depth and quality, and vice versa (Hurt 2017:37; Munro & Lemmer 2019:175).

Kinesensics emphasises the breath as both an energiser and a relaxer, with explorations used to guide the person into a state of dynamic relaxation. Individuals can experience ease by exploring how pain relievers within the bodymind relieve tension (Munro *et al.* 2017:97). The three primary pain relievers are floating, muscle yawning, and shaking, all of which lead to what I defined earlier as body aesthetics (Lessac & Kinghorn 2014:19), meaning that they promote sensitivity and eventually aid in the effective functioning of the bodymind.

The primary pain relievers develop organically during the body’s development phases[94] and become relaxer-energisers that individuals instinctively and often involuntary resort to (Lessac 1997:50) as a means of balancing action and rest. Lessac and Kinghorn (2014:21) posit that “energy and relaxation are complementary opposites which function simultaneously to produce balance and ease”. The pain relievers create the relaxer-energisers, which are yawning, floating, shaking, humming, sighing, smiling, singing, laughing, and dancing (Lessac & Kinghorn 2014:24; Hurt 2017:37).

[94] Floating occurs when the foetus is in the amniotic fluid. A foetus then muscle yawns when the space for movement decreases and muscle yawns once again at birth. Once the baby is born, the drop in temperature results in shivering, or shaking (Munro 2020:[sp]). A full discussion of this process falls outside the scope of the study.

Lessac and Kinghorn (2014:24) argue that "when these physical activities are organic, they are initiated on impulse stimulated by need and inspiration, rather than by intellectual choice". In Kinesensic training, individuals are guided to mindfully observe these pain relievers and how they may relax and energise the bodymind (Munro *et al.* 2017:97).

- Body NRGs and inter-involvement

Relieving pain with explorations that are organic relaxer-energisers can, through habitual awareness and habit formation, lead to them becoming familiar events in the bodymind (Munro *et al.* 2017:97). The conscious use of the pain-relievers as relaxer-energisers results in non-derived energy states, also known as the body NRGs (Lessac 2019:124): radiancy (emerging from the muscle-shaking pain-reliever), potency NRGs (emerging from the yawning pain-reliever), buoyancy (emerging from the muscle-floating pain-reliever) and inter-involvement.

Individuals can use the deliberate application and exploration of the pain-relievers as relaxer-energisers to sense the NRGs present in and as part of the bodymind. Continuous explorations with and application of these NRGs can contribute to habitual repatterning since individuals explore new ways of being and doing.

Radiancy refers to using an impulse-charged,[95] electric-like physical reach to support an agile and darting body (Lessac 2019:84). An example of radiancy can be internal, like a shimmer of delight or external, like jumping up and down for joy (Lessac & Kinghorn 2014:37). If, for example, talking to certain clients causes stress in the bodymind of the agent, agents can use radiancy to shake their bodies out. This is a proactive behaviour that can help combat unnecessary stress in the bodymind, thereby becoming prosilient behaviour. Simply standing up and shaking the body could also benefit the agents as a form of relaxing or energising the body when they have either had a tough call or they need to feel more wakeful.

[95] Some aspects of LK are not yet verified by science. "Impulse-charged" here is pre-scientific and refers to shaking or tremors in the human body.

Potency refers to when the body feels like it is chemically charged[96] to support a powerful yawn (Lessac 2019:84). The feeling of potency can be illustrated by reaching for a fruit that is just out of grasp or pushing with your legs to swing you higher on a swing (Lessac & Kinghorn 2014:37). In the call centre environment, there might not be a need for potency as the space around the agent is limited to a small cubicle. It might still benefit the agents to reach into space and yawn, since this could lead to deeper breathing and freer movement of the bodymind.

Buoyancy focuses on experiencing the body as oxygen-charged[97] by using a legato and elastic reach with a sustained extended flow to facilitate a state of dynamic alignment and ease of movement (Lessac 2019:84). This experience can be likened to weightlessness such as that achieved by floating in a pool (Lessac & Kinghorn 2014:37). The agents can, for example, use buoyancy to float their arms, bodies, and the crowns of their heads upwards to experience a free and weightless floating sensation to counter the monotonous sitting the call centre agents do every day.

Inter-involvement refers to an emotionally charged sustained extension or reach from self to other (Lessac 2019:84). Whereas the other three body NRGs focus on self-to-self sensations and perception, inter-involvement focuses on taking these sensations and applying them in the outer environment (Lessac 2019:124). This may contribute to effective communication and self-soothing.

In these ways, these NRGs can aid body aesthetics to facilitate a state of readiness for stressful situations. This suggests that the call centre agents can practice specific strategies based on the NRGs to gain habits to help them live embodied lives in relation to and as part of their work environment.

[96] Chemicals here may refer to hormones released in the baby during the birthing process.
[97] The foetus, while in the amniotic sac, floats in amniotic fluid, creating an early and familiar experience of buoyancy. This sensation of floating forms part of a cellular memory that humans carry even when not in water. Similarly, when humans float in water later in life, this experience reconnects them with that primal sense of buoyancy. This connection becomes significant in relation to body NRGs, as floating naturally encourages relaxation and optimal breath capacity.

- Vocal NRGs and trinity

Lessac Kinesensics encompasses three vocal NRGs: consonant, tonal, and structural NRGs (Munro *et al*. 2017:16). These three vocal NRGs are developmental and are present in all languages. They are the result of "intricate inner movements and are holistically intertwined in the act of expression" (Munro 2018:19). The vocal NRGs have the "unique ability to reveal our inner selves to the outer world" (Munro *et al.* 2017:100). Much like body NRGs, vocal NRGs are also formed in early childhood development[98] (Lemmer 2018:24). Returning awareness to these organic NRGs enables effective vocal usage.

Tonal NRG is "the physical perception and control of sound waves through vibratory sensations rather than through the manipulation of the breath stream" (Lessac 1969:120). This occurs by individuals using "interoception to gauge the concentration of the tone" (Munro 2018:20). Tonal NRG thus refers to sensing and feeling vibrations on the hard palate, upper gum ridge and beyond onto the forehead and cranium (Hurt 2014:3) while enhancing tonal quality by shaping the depth, length, and width of the oral cavity, which allows for acoustic output.

These vibrations can become familiar events to guide individuals to healthy vocal production (Munro *et al.* 2017:100). The focus for call centre agents might not necessarily be on applying concentrated tone. While they usually speak quite softly and do not use their whole range, an awareness of tone could still aid them in understanding individuals on the other side of the line who do use a lot of tone; agent can then adapt their tone so as to not feel overpowered by the prospect. Tone could also help warm up the bodyvoice in preparation for each day, thereby proactively preparing for any unnecessary strain, hence, linking the practice directly to prosilience.

[98] A baby is born with tone as a need to survive, interact and communicate with the outer environment. This relates to tonal NRG. After two months, babies start mimicking the behaviour of their primary caretakers, sensing and feeling the shape of the oral cavity for vowels. This relates to structural NRG. At about 8–10 months, the baby starts exploring various ways and points of constriction in the oral cavity to "taste the consonants". This relates to consonant NRG (Lemmer 2018:24).

Structural NRG occurs by establishing a flexible and open space and shape of the oral cavity by using the kinaesthetic memory of certain muscular sensations (McQuirk 2017:76) to provide clear vowels. The reverse megaphone (using the relaxer-energiser of yawning the cheek muscles forward, releasing of the lower jaw and lifting of the soft palate) aids in the deliberate use of the space and shape of the oral cavity, resulting in structural NRG, which promotes clear vowels (Hurt 2014:3). This reverse megaphone or forward facial orientation could aid call centre agents in ensuring that their resonating cavity is utilised effectively and that the voice does not experience unnecessary tension or stress.

Consonant NRG is when individuals explore various “obstructions, frictions, and impedances” of the oral cavity as it relates to consonant formation (Munro *et al.* 2017:101). To explore the various qualities of consonants, Kinesensics offers a metaphor that supports the musicality of all languages, associating consonants with different instruments of the orchestra to sharpen the perception and expression of consonantal qualities (Lessac 1969:120). This aims to provide opportunities for clarity of expression when using consonants (and vowels). The musical metaphor is a point of reference only and the real exploration is feeling the musicality and then developing it in oneself (Hurt 2014:2) for effective communication.

The agents may be able to use consonant NRG the most of the three vocal NRGs since humming (using a sustained “m”) and the tapping, as with percussive sounds (such as “t” and “d”) may aid the agents in activating the musicality of the bodyvoice as well as ensure that the individual has the tools to recuperate after constant exertion in the course of phone calls.

Vocal trinity refers to the interplay and combination of the three vocal NRGs. Through the combination of tonal, structural and consonant NRGs, individuals can produce clear and effective speech (Lončarić 2017:63). The deliberate use of all three vocal NRGs supports a healthy voice, clear vowel and consonant usage, and clarity of intent.

All three vocal NRGs, as trinity, can become familiar events that lead to embodied cognition since they work together as a cohesive unit to create familiar sensory and kinaesthetic experiences. These vocal NRGs can help the call centre agent to develop a heightened awareness of their vocal state and bodymind connection, enabling them

to respond adaptively to stressful situations, for example difficult customers, loud noises in the call centre, or a tired voice. They can therefore be used to prepare the agent for each day or to allow them to recuperate before the next stressful event occurs, resulting in prosilient behaviours that may improve the overall well-being of the agent. This links to eudaimonia, which I defined in Chapter 1.

5.4.5 Pedagogical drivers of LK

To derive the pedagogical drivers of LK, I synthesised key principles and themes within the approach that highlight the method's focus on promoting bodymindedness and embodied learning through sensory awareness, de-patterning, and fostering organic, self-directed exploration. These drivers were identified by examining how LK encourages individuals to engage deeply with their bodymind's sensations and break free from limiting patterns to achieve authentic and adaptive performance. Below, I elaborate on each pedagogical driver, explaining how these themes were identified and how they contribute to the pedagogical framework of LK.

Lessac Kinesensics is an embodied pedagogy that aims to promote bodymindedness by using somatic explorations, familiar events, and sensing and feeling to get to the core of the responses of the bodymind (Hurt 2014:2). It focuses on the organic sensing[99] of energy, vibrations, and muscular action[100] to enable awareness of one's bodyminded self (Lessac 1969:3). The cornerstone of the Kinesensic approach is the feeling process, in which performers learn to rely on sensory feedback from their bodymind to guide their actions. This process teaches individuals to feel the vibrations of their voice and the movements of their body, allowing for a more embodied approach to learning and performance (Hurt 2017:42).

Kinesensics promotes organic learning – individuals are encouraged to follow their own learning processes. This involves breaking down habitual patterns and fostering a more intuitive, adaptive approach to performance. By foregrounding the bodymind,

[99] Organic sensing refers to self-reflective perception that is rooted in and arises from the lived experiences of the bodymind (Hurt 2014:6).
[100] Sensory awareness occurs through interoception, proprioception, and exteroception. I define this in the section on the brain.

sensing and feeling can lead individuals to discover new possibilities for expression and creativity (Lessac 1969:119).

A critical aspect of Lessac Kinesensics is de-patterning,[101] which involves breaking down ingrained physical and vocal habits that limit creativity. By disrupting these patterns, individuals can rediscover their wider potential for expression, enabling more effective performance (Hurt 2017:46). This ensures that the bodyminded self[102] engages both physically and vocally with the environment and with others. De-patterning is based on the notion that individuals are inherently designed for optimal functioning and possess a natural inclination to seek effective and efficient ways of being (Munro *et al.* 2017:96). In what follows, I discuss the explorations that I use in the EPP. (See Appendix C for a discussion on each exploration and how I adapted it for the EPP.)

5.4.6 Lessac Kinesenics explorations used in the EPP

- Pleasure smelling and sighing;
- Lip radiance, yawning and forward facial orientation;
- Humming for bone-conducted vibrations;
- Consonant exploration;
- Tune-in (various orientations);
- Pain relievers;
- Pleasure smelling and sighing in supine orientation;
- Consonant exploration (expanded);
- Bend-over series;
- Bend-over series, wafting and waving, and habitual awareness;
- Wafting and waving;
- Shaking to amplify consonant awareness and tapping feet;
- Bone-conducted tone awareness;
- Exploring structural, consonant, and tonal NRGs;

[101] For the purposes of the study, de-patterning is the same as repatterning.
[102] This refers to the inner environment in Kinesensics.

- Carrying over structural, consonant, and tonal NRGs (trinity) to scripts and professional documents; as well as
- Improvisation to explore vocal NRGs.

By using LK, the participants could possibly acquire more optimal habits to reach their potential, which could aid them in flourishing, thus potentially enhancing their SWB. The next somatic approach I use to focus on aiding in facilitating prosilient behaviours for the agents is LBMS.

5.5 Laban/ Bartenieff Movement Studies[103]

Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies[104] is a conceptual and practical framework for observing, recording, analysing, and creating movement (Fernandes 2015:84); consists of an integration of Laban Movement Analysis and the Bartenieff Fundamentals™. Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies is an approach to exploring the total bodymindedness of human movement and how this impacts on movement patterns and expression (Hodgson 2001:221).

5.5.1 Founder and key contributors of LBMS

Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies originated through the work of Rudolf Laban (1879–1958), an Austro-Hungarian-born movement theorist and choreographer who began developing his theories in the early 20th century. Laban sought to abstract and categorise the basic elements of human movement, creating a comprehensive framework for understanding and analysing it. His work laid the foundation for what today is known as LBMS (Imus, Robinson, Blanc & Young 2022:177). Laban's work

[103] All the terms within LBMS are capitalised since this is standard practice to indicate that it is approach specific and not general terms.
[104] I am aware of the critique of LBMS. Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies categorises movement elements that combine and manifest uniquely depending on individual and cultural influences. However, critics argue that this structured categorisation, including linking sensations to dynamics and direction, and scales that reflect a particular aesthetic, while insightful, can sometimes oversimplify the fluid and culturally diverse nature of movement expression (Nichols 2019:2). Some view LBMS as reflecting a Western-centric framework, potentially limiting its adaptability across diverse cultural contexts and individual styles (Imus, Robinson, Blanc & Young 2022:169). Additionally, the emphasis on formal analysis may impose a rigidity that restricts creative freedom and spontaneity. Despite these critiques, LBMS remains a respected approach to understanding human movement.

was later expanded and refined by Irmgard Bartenieff, a German American physiotherapist and dancer (Burton 2016:95). Bartenieff, who trained under Laban, introduced a somatic dimension to the framework by integrating her understanding of anatomy and rehabilitation; thus, the current title of the approach.

Irmgard Bartenieff applied Laban's concepts to the field of physical therapy to develop an approach to proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation or 'body repatterning', initially referred to as the Bartenieff Correctives, later renamed the Bartenieff Fundamentals™ (Miranda [sa]:1). Bartenieff's methodology draws from her extensive studies with Laban and integrates Laban's Movement Analysis with principles of kinesiology. Subsequent scholars, including Regina Miranda (Brazil), Tony Zhou (China), Warren Lamb (UK), Karen Bradley (USA), and Peggy Hackney (USA), contributed to further conceptual and practical developments within LBMS, deepening its applications across various fields such as dance, therapy, and performance (Wahl 2018:11).

These conceptual and practical developments of LBMS explore the body's functional movement patterns, linking somatic approaches to the efficient use of the body in motion. Bartenieff's work, much like other somatic practices, is grounded in the idea of bodymindedness, focusing on how movement reflects internal states and how these movements can be refined for greater physical and expressive potential. It connects with other somatic approaches by emphasising embodiment and the dynamic relationship between the mover's internal experiences and their external physicality (Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies 2019:[sp]). Figure 17, below, is a bird's-eye view of the broader scope of LBMS.

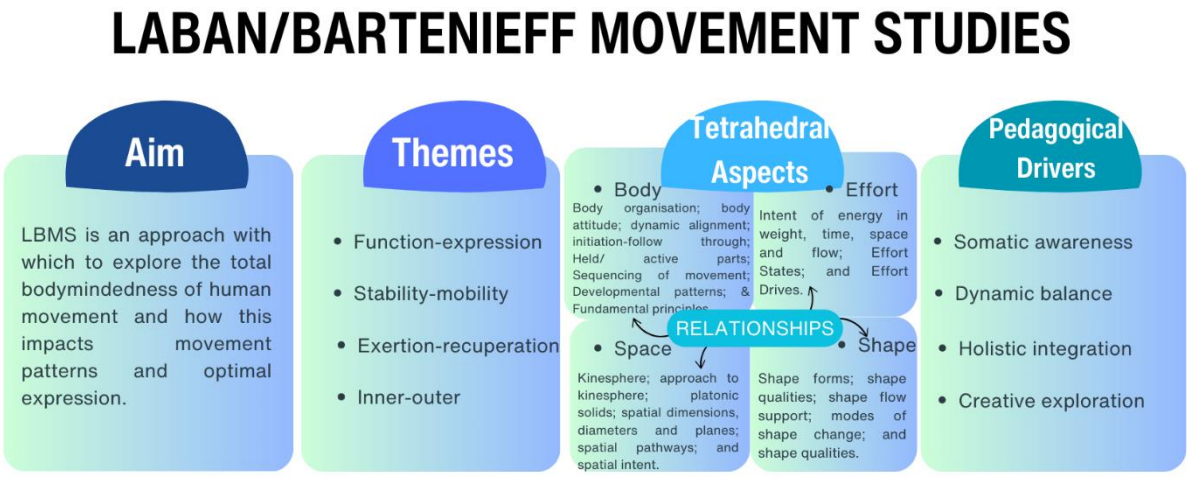


Figure 17: A bird's-eye view of Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

5.5.2 Aim of LBMS

Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies seeks to enhance an individual's awareness of how they move in space and how their movement patterns influence physical performance, emotional expression, and overall well-being. By cultivating a deeper understanding of movement dynamics, spatial awareness and kinaesthetic connections, LBMS helps individuals develop a more integrated and efficient use of their bodymind, improving both physical function and expressive potential (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:21).

Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies encompasses four themes which, from an LBMS perspective, underscore all human movement. These are function-expression, stability-mobility, exertion-recuperation and inner-outer. Although offered as binaries, these themes are always fluid and interrelational. In the following section, I outline and define each theme.

5.5.3 Guiding themes of LBMS

The four movement themes of function–expression, stability–mobility, exertion–recuperation and inner–outer are central in LBMS:

- Function–expression:[105] In this context, expression refers to the personal, emotional, or communicative aspects of movement, often driven by internal impulses. Expression is informed by the mover's self-awareness and embodied experience, allowing movement to convey emotions, thoughts, or messages in and through movement. Expressive movement extends beyond simple task completion, involving a more intentional and communicative purposes (Bradley 2009:67). While functional movement refers to a more instrumental use of the body and serves to complete a task,[106] expressive movement thus communicates emotion or intent. Bradley (2009:67) states that the altering of movement quality can shift a functional action into an expressive one, thus blending the two modes. This transformation occurs because movement quality – such as changes in weight, flow, space, and time – affects not just the physical execution but also the emotional and communicative dimensions of an action. Hackney (2002:41) further explains that movement gains meaning through this intimate relationship between function and expression, in which the same movement can have different meanings depending on the context, the mover's intention, and the embodied experience. This dynamic and binary interplay is what makes movement a powerful form of communication. Expressive movement is thus informed by the self and realised through multimodal forms of movement that embody and convey meaning beyond the physical execution of tasks.
- Stability–mobility:[107] Stabilising one part of the body allows another to be mobile for effective movement possibilities (Fernandes 2015:97). The relationship

[105] Function-expression differentiates between the aspects of movement that serve a need and the movement qualities that are expressive of affect (Burton 2016:94). Discussing function-expression in this study is important because it highlights the distinction between movements that fulfil a practical or functional purpose and those that convey emotional or expressive qualities. This differentiation is crucial for understanding how participants engage both their body's mechanical needs and their emotional experiences in somatic practices, providing insight into their embodied responses within the context of the study.

[106] That is, action through the physical body, involving anatomy and physiology. Primarily, this involves movement of an objective subject (Sobchack 2004:2). See p. 97.

[107] Stability–mobility describes the natural interplay of components of the body that function to allow the full scope of human movement and balance to occur (Burton 2016:94). Discussing stability–mobility is important in this study because it describes the natural interplay between body components that allows for both dynamic movement and balance. This concept is crucial for understanding how participants

between stability and mobility is fundamental to all human movement. Stability refers to the body's ability to maintain balance and support, while mobility refers to the capacity for dynamic movement and fluidity. In LBMS, the analysis of movement patterns goes beyond merely identifying physical efficiency; it engages with the deeper dynamics of how stability and mobility interact to support expressive and functional movement. According to Bartenieff and Lewis (1980:28), this stability is not just about maintaining a rigid core but rather about cultivating a responsive and adaptable centre that supports efficient and fluid motion. When the core is stabilised effectively, the limbs can explore a wider range of movement without compromising balance or alignment, leading to a fuller embodiment of movement. The dynamic relationship between stability and mobility enhances both efficiency and expressiveness by allowing movements to be grounded yet expansive. This interplay fosters greater somatic awareness, as individuals become more attuned to the connection between their centre and extremities, as well as to the shifts between support and freedom. This heightened awareness deepens the integration of the bodymind, enabling individuals to express themselves with greater clarity and intention while maintaining physical ease and adaptability. This insight is crucial for recognising how functional support translates into heightened expressive capacity, deepening the participant's embodied engagement with movement.

- Exertion–recuperation:[108] The body utilises an active cycle of recuperation after every moment of exertion to remain vitality in movement (Hackney 2002:42). Exertion refers to the active expenditure of energy in movement, while recuperation refers to the process of recovering and restoring energy. This

navigate between moments of stillness and motion, providing insight into their ability to remain grounded while also adapting to changing physical and emotional demands in their embodied practice.

[108] Exertion–recuperation speaks to the rhythms and phrasing of movements, which, as with the rhythms of breath, may be said to create a "dance" between muscular tension and release (Burton 2016:94). Discussing exertion–recuperation is important in this study because it highlights the cyclical nature of effort and rest in movement, which mirrors the body's natural rhythms, such as breathing. By exploring how participants navigate the balance between muscular tension and release, we gain valuable insights into how they manage energy, prevent burnout, and achieve greater body awareness. This concept is essential for understanding how somatic practices contribute to sustainable movement patterns, enhancing both physical well-being and the participants' capacity for self-regulation and embodied resilience.

theme highlights the importance of balancing dynamic movement with moments of rest and recovery, thereby promoting sustainability in movement practices (Hackney 2002:60).

- Inner–outer:[109] Movement is made meaningful by means of the relationship between inner experiences and outer stimuli (Hackney 2002:41). Inner impulses are reflected in outer form and the outer world in turn also influences the inner environment (Hackney 2002:41). Inner movement refers to the subjective experience of the body, sensations, emotions, and awareness. Outer movement refers to how the body interacts with and navigates external space in relation to inner experiences. Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies encourages individuals to navigate their internal body awareness in relation to their external awareness, allowing them to move with ease, efficiency and expression, responsively engaging with their environment (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:35).

The themes within LBMS provide a foundation for exploring more complex dynamics within movement. From these themes, the framework of LBMS that is currently in use and acknowledged by a large sector of the international community consists of the tetrahedral relationship between the aspects of Body, Effort, Space and Shape (BESS)[110] framed by the concepts of interrelationship and phrasing (Fernandes 2015:86). Wahl (2018:154) states that “the framework of BESS provides the elements of movement”, while phrasing alludes to the way in which these aspects are used in relation to one another to “give a phrase its expressive and functional life” (Wahl 2018:154). Bradley (2009:67) adds that there are countless ways of approaching

[109] Inner–outer addresses the connection between our needs and feelings within ourselves to our movement out in the world and the return flow of a response to our environment (Bradley 2009:94). Discussing inner–outer is important in this study because it emphasises the reciprocal relationship between internal sensations, emotions, and outward movement. This concept illustrates how participants’ internal needs and feelings shape their physical actions in the world, while also acknowledging how the external environment influences their embodied responses. By examining this dynamic flow, individuals can gain a deeper understanding of how participants integrate their inner experiences with external realities, which is key in exploring their embodied awareness and engagement with their surroundings.

[110] I define each of these concepts in the following section.

Body, Effort, Space and Shape in relation to one another for effective functionality and expressivity.

5.5.4 Tetrahedral aspects of LBMS

The tetrahedral aspects of LBMS relate through a dynamic interplay between Body movement, Effort, Shape processes, and Spatial organisation. The tetrahedral structure functions as an interconnected system. It is through movement, coupled with an integrated awareness of these elements, that coherence is achieved (Adrian 2008:74). This relationship encourages a holistic embodiment of movement, connecting internal motivations and external spatial orientation.

5.5.4.1 Body (that which moves)

In the LBMS framework, Body refers to the organisation of the human body as a cohesive and interconnected whole, encompassing how different body parts work together to facilitate movement (Kennedy 2016:2). This organisation is informed by anatomical structure, principles of kinesiology, sensory-motor perception, and developmental movement patterns (Bradley 2009:92). The focus, therefore, is on the coordinated interaction of body parts to produce fluid and integrated movement.

Body incorporates principles which “evolved from breathing and alignment to Effort and relation to Space” (Fernandes 2015:91). These include breath support, core support, dynamic alignment, weight shift, initiation and sequencing, effort intent, developmental patterns, gradated rotation, and spatial intent[111], which guide how the body supports itself during movement (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:28; Fernandes 2015:91). These principles are interrelated and integrate in the complexity of movement.

Hackney (2002:238) suggests that to fully understand the Body category, one must consider the organisation of the body as a cohesive whole. *Body attitude* refers to the body’s shape, its spatial alignment, and the positioning of its parts relative to one

[111] Spatial intent links to the body’s organisation and expressiveness. Spatial intent provides a clear focus or goal for movement, guiding how the body engages with the surrounding space.

another (Prinsloo 2018:73). This dynamic alignment involves recognising the connections between various body parts and how these relationships support the body's ability to move dynamically and efficiently. *Body organisation* includes the patterns of total body connectivity,[112] which link breath, core–distal connectivity, head–tail connectivity, upper–lower connectivity, and body–half connectivity, ensuring fluid and integrated movement (Hackney 2002:44).

Movement sequencing is central to Bartenieff's approach to LBMS. Bartenieff combined Laban's concepts of the body and its meaning with somatic practices and physical rehabilitation to explore the foundational connections established during developmental progression (Fernandes 2015:91). These connections organise the whole body by means of connections (Hackney 2002:238) and can be referred to as the Bartenieff Fundamentals™ in adulthood. Bartenieff Fundamentals are key principles designed to enhance movement efficiency and connectivity, such as core-limb integration, dynamic alignment, and breath support (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:21). These body organisations can be explored with, amongst others, Bartenieff's Basic 6 (Thigh Lift, Forward and Lateral Pelvic Shift, Body Half, Knee Drop and Arm Circle), explorations that each align with one of the fundamental patterns of total body connectivity. Bartenieff's Basic 6 provide foundational movement patterns since they connect to body organisations. These foundational movement patterns improve overall coordination and functional efficiency (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:44).

The Body category further comprises of *body actions*, which include fundamental movements such as flexion, extension, rotation, locomotion, shift of support, spring and fall, further contributing to a synthesised bodymind connection (Kennedy 2016:2). The Body category also includes the sequencing of movement. This sequencing can occur in three different forms: simultaneous, where all active body parts move at the same time; successive, where movement flows progressively from one body part to the next adjacent part; or sequential, where movement transitions from one part to non-adjacent body parts (Hackney 2002:240). Together, the Body principles,

[112] Hackney (2002:14) capitalises the concept as the Fundamental Patterns of Total Body Connectivity. In this study, I avoid this capitalisation as to ensure ease of reading.

organisation, Basic 6 and body actions ensure that the body operates as a unified and connected whole, optimising both physical function and expressive movement (Hackney 2002:62).

These principles and fundamentals may offer the agents in the call centre new ways of living as bodyminded individuals, establishing a readiness for stressful situations. I am able to guide the agents to revisit with these connections and principles that are already present within their bodymind so that they can deal with their stress, not just in their outer environment but their inner environment too. They can, for example, use the Basic 6 to learn what habitual patterns they have in their bodies and find optimal ways of being and living as embodied individuals.

Individuals can cultivate embodied cognition by actively engaging their agency to recognise and repattern habitual movement patterns, leading to more efficient and intentional movement. This process involves not only improving physical actions but also enhancing the integration of the bodymind for a deeper, more embodied understanding of their actions and experiences. This embodied cognition can thus enable the embodied individual to be more stress prosilient since the agent remains embodied in each moment and is actively in a state of readiness for any distress. Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies does not, however, merely focus on the Body component; there are other ways through which I could aid the agents in creating prosilience-related behaviours. The next category of LBMS that I discuss is Effort.

5.5.4.2 Effort (how individuals move)

Translated from the German word “antrieb” (meaning: “an” – on and “trieb” – drive), Effort can be described as the inner drive or central motivation to move (Hackney 2002:239). The Effort component of LMS can be defined as the qualitative and dynamic traits of any performed movement (movement dynamics or movement qualities) that is the result of inner motivation finding outer manifestations (Studd &

Cox 2013:137). Effort reflects how the mover invests energy in the four basic motion factors of weight, space, time and flow[113] (Hackney 2002:239).

Laban assigns Effort, and therefore the four motion factors, to actions subject to human volition and therefore to voluntary movements, rather than involuntary movements. Each of the four motion factors "represent a different sort of inner intent" (Moore 2009:151). They operate on a continuum between binary oppositions, which are revealed in varying degrees of emphasis by the mover's intentions to expand or condense in the binary opposites (Moore 2009:151).

Weight effort (the intention factor) is the motion factor utilised to sense the body in space to optimally balance and overcome the gravitational pull of the earth (Newlove 1993:64). It refers to the "quality of assertion of body weight" (Groff 1990:88). Space effort (the attention factor) is applicable to how one focuses attention on the environment. It can also refer to the thoughtful aiming of movement towards points or objects within the environment (Moore 2009:151), the "consciousness […] involved in its activation" (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:55).

The motion factor of time effort (the decision factor) is a rhythmic factor wielded to control the change in attitude towards time by means of altering movement velocity (Fernandes 2015:157). It describes the mover's internal attitude toward "exertions in time" (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:56) or the passage of time that can be a lingering or fleeting experience for the mover. To regulate the fluidity and ongoingness of movement, the motion factor of flow effort (the adaptive and emotive factor) can be utilised (Moore 2009:151). It is the baseline of all movement out of which changes in the qualities of the other Efforts can materialise as emphases amongst continuing flow changes. It relates to the mover's inner attitude towards the "quality of continuity" of their body movement (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:53).

Flow refers to the "how" of movement, which means it also refers to the emotion and feeling with which action is executed (Fernandes 2015:146). This is why flow is

[113] The basic motion factors of weight, space, time and flow are written in lowercase so as to avoid any confusion with the four components of the BESS (Body, Effort, Space and Shape) system.

described as “the degree of the control of expressive energy” (Fernandes 2015:144). Flow might not be the dominant motion factor, but its “neutral continuity as flux” still underpins the other Effort elements (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:55). Since each motion factor has two qualities, there are eight Effort qualities/single Efforts in total (Fernandes 2015:143). One of the Effort qualities of each motion factor is an indulging or expanding quality (no resistance, but still active) with the opposing resisting quality described as fighting or constricting (Adrian 2008:112).

Humans present intent through their choice and combination of the four Effort motion factors. Each factor represents a spectrum of movement qualities, allowing the mover to communicate nuanced intent. For example, changes in body weight reflect a mover’s intention to demonstrate strong weight or lightness, while variations in space effort indicate directness or flexibility in response to environmental demands (Kennedy 2016:56). Similarly, time reflects quickness or sustained movement, and flow reveals a sense of boundness or freedom in motion (Kennedy 2016:57). The interaction of these factors, as Prinsloo (2018:64) notes, reveals more than just the technical quality of movement; it also unveils the underlying intentions and emotions of the mover. To further explore both the Body and Effort component of LBMS, Space is crucial since it affects how individuals orient themselves within their environment, how they move through it, and how they express themselves in relation to it.

5.5.4.3 Space (where individuals move)

The Space category emphasises the exploration of the kinesphere, general space, and the dynamic interactions of spatial pulls. It examines how the kinesphere (the mover’s personal space) interacts with and expands into the general space (the space outside of the kinesphere). Additionally, it addresses the influence of spatial pulls, which guide and shape movement pathways in the kinesphere.

Laban did not view space as empty but as a form of spatial architecture (Moore 2009:112). In his conceptualisation, the general space and the kinesphere are both three dimensional and in a continuous interplay. The general space surrounds the kinesphere and pertains to how one moves through, and orients oneself in, the larger shared environment in which the movement action occurs (Prinsloo 2018:52).

Laban's spatial architecture is dominantly centred in, around, and in relation to the mover's kinesphere. The kinesphere is the space of physical reach around the body in which all movement occurs (Hackney 2002:84) and is accessed by reaching into space without any locomotion (Fernandes 2015:199). Prinsloo (2018:52) explains that the kinesphere serves as an organising principle for movement within personal space. Moreover, the kinesphere is where movement and dynamic changes occur (Moore 2009:112).

Moore (2009:111) posits that "the kinesphere provides a conceptual starting point for mapping movements in three dimensions". It considers the spatial architecture of human movement and the relationships within movement (Maletic 2005:172). One's kinesphere can be small (near-reach; near the body), medium (mid-reach; at about elbow-distance away) and large (far-reach; as far as the mover can reach; Hackney 2002:223). Since the call centre agents are in cubicles, they might not be able to employ far-reach in their kinespheres. However, they could if they step into the open spaces between the various workspaces in the office.

To further articulate and structure the exploration of spatial possibilities, Laban drew upon the geometric precision of the platonic solids. By imagining the kinesphere as the tetrahedron, octahedron, hexahedron, dodecahedron, and icosahedron, shapes defined by their congruent angles and sides, Laban provided a framework for organising movement within the kinesphere (Prinsloo 2018:86). These solids organise space into a framework of points and lines of connectivity.

As movers engage with these geometric forms, they can systematically explore and refine their spatial awareness, connecting the abstract geometry of the platonic solids with the lived, embodied experience of their kinesphere. This connection enhances the mover's ability to navigate and express within their personal space, grounding movement exploration in a clear spatial framework.

Laban outlines spatial pulls[114] to reveal the direction of movement and the number of active pulls within the kinesphere (Hackney 2002:243). These arise from the spatial relationships defined by Laban's work with the platonic solids. These pulls create a sense of direction and intention within the mover's kinesphere, subtly drawing the body towards specific points or pathways. They arise from the spatial relationships defined by Laban's work with the platonic solids, which organise space into a framework of points and lines of connectivity.

To explain how spatial pulls are constructed and the solids are formed, Laban considers dimensions in space,[115] where each dimension is a single spatial pull with two opposing ends (Hackney 2002:244). The vertical dimension, an up–down pull, divides the body into lateral halves and relates to gravity. The horizontal dimension, an imaginary side–side pull, splits the body into upper and lower halves, while the sagittal dimension completes the cross of axes with a front–back pull (Bradley 2009:80).

When these dimensional pulls are connected through their midpoints, they create diameters. Diameters are more complex spatial pulls that traverse through two or more planes, moving through multiple dimensions simultaneously. A diagonal combines three equal spatial pulls of the vertical, horizontal, and sagittal dimensions, creating dynamic and multi-directional movement pathways (Fernandes 2015:208). Diagonals cut across the kinesphere by connecting opposite corners of the three primary planes resulting in more dynamic and expansive pathways. This cross-dimensional movement allows the body to reach towards the furthest extents of its kinesphere, creating a sense of depth and three-dimensionality in space.

The development from dimensions to planes involves connecting spatial pulls into more complex spatial relationships. The spatial planes each have two spatial pulls – one primary pull and one secondary pull. The planes are the vertical plane (up–down

[114] Hackney (2002:263) defines a spatial pull as "an invisible line of inherent power (potential energy) which can be revealed in movement".
[115] Laban considered the body's three dimensions and the Newtonian concept of space as having three dimensions.

and side–side), horizontal plane (side–side and forward–backward), and sagittal plane (up–down and forward–backward); all of which influence the direction of movement (Hackney 2002:88). However, Laban also identified uneven spatial pulls, which are created when movement pathways do not follow the diametric lines but instead explore the spaces between them. This progression from single dimensions to intersecting diameters that form planes, to intersecting places forming more complex pathways, allows for a layered and dynamic understanding of movement in space.

Engaging with spatial pulls through Laban's directional pathways allows movers to tap into the embedded energy within these pathways, fostering an internal sense of orientation that informs and shapes their movements. This connection to spatial pulls adds a dynamic intention, prompting the body to respond expressively to what Laban identified as the inherent energy within the lines and points of surrounding space (Fernandes 2015:243).

The solids served as a means to delineate specific pathways and points within the kinesphere, which Laban conceptualised as spatial scales (Fernandes 2016:206). Space involves the integration of Body, Effort, and Shape within the spatial scales or sections of these scales (Moore 2016:1; Fernandes 2015:249) and serves as a tool to access the full range of an individual's physical potential for motion and dynamic expression (Fernandes 2015:198). By perceiving and exploring these pulls within the polyhedra, movers can establish a more grounded and expressive relationship with their kinesphere, transforming abstract geometric structures into tangible, embodied experiences. Practising scales brings these spatial pulls to the forefront, guiding the mover through defined pathways and enhancing their spatial awareness and engagement. By navigating both even and uneven spatial pulls, movers can experience a fuller range of spatial possibilities, enhancing both stability and expressiveness in their movements.

As mentioned in Section 5.5.4.1 on Body, spatial intent guides how the body supports itself during movement. Spatial intent plays a role in grounding movement within the body. With spatial intent established in relation to the body, it also plays a key role in how space effort is used, with movements expanding or condensing, focusing inward or outward, and exploring space with either focus or openness (Hackney 2002:90). Spatial intent connects with movement through the kinesphere, particularly through

the practice of scales. Engaging with spatial pulls within the kinesphere enables movers to actively embody these directional pathways, enhancing their kinaesthetic relationship with space and promoting dynamic movement. Spatial intent thus informs how movement unfolds in relation to space, affecting both the physical execution and the expressive intent of movement (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:50).

If, for example, an agent normally moves back when stressors arise, they could explore what occurs if they move forward. This use of agency by the bodyminded individual in and as part of the world may result in embodied cognition that changes the way agents are present and prosilient. LBMS sees Space and Shape as mutually reinforcing aspects of movement, where spatial intent provides the directionality, and shape articulates the body's response, creating a coherent and expressive movement experience that is sensitive to both internal and external factors. The fourth component of BESS is Shape.

5.5.4.4 Shape (how individuals relationally adapt)

Shape is a 21st century development of LBMS, which was further progressed by a number of theorists, such as Warren Lamb (1923–2014; Bradley 2009:67). Shape refers to the changes in the volume of a moving body in relation to space, itself, and other objects and bodies (Fernandes 2015:181). Shape thus helps to identify the ways in which the body's form can change relationally.

Shape reflects the conditions of one's inner environment to the outer world and is thus the link between Body (that which moves) and Space (where the body moves; Adrian 2008:67). Due to the close relationship between the form and function of the human body, alterations in form lead to corresponding changes in functionality (Studd & Cox 2013:94). Shape focuses on how, through modes of shape change and shape qualities, the connection between the inner and the outer space is bridged (Fernandes 2015:199).

There are different ways of moving in a shape or from one shape to another; these are known as the modes of shape change (Hackney 2002:242). The three modes of shape change, representing different levels of relational engagement in human movement, are known as shape flow, directional movement, and shaping (Studd & Cox 2013:97-100).

Shape flow reflects internal changes in the body, indicating personal, inner experiences. Shape flow support refers to the internal process by which the body adjusts and adapts its form in response to its own needs, particularly those related to breath, balance, and alignment (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:52). It reflects the continuous flow of changes in the body's shape that maintain and support internal bodily functions, rather than external interactions with the environment or other people. Shape flow support primarily focuses on the self, manifesting through subtle, often unconscious movements that enhance the body's alignment and support efficient movement. Hackney (2002:50) emphasises that shape flow support is foundational to all movement, providing the underlying organisation for more complex movement patterns like directional movement and shaping.

Directional movement includes arc-like (curved) and spoke-like (linear) movements, showing how the body extends outward to interact with the environment (Fernandes 2015:186). Spoke-like or arc-like directional movement focuses on connecting the internal and external environments (Fernandes 2015:188). This goal-oriented mode involves reaching out towards external objects or people, shifting from a self-contained relationship to one that expresses intention (Prinsloo 2018:80).

Shaping involves a three-dimensional interaction with people or objects, using shape flow and directional movement as supportive modes. This mode of shape change addresses the three-dimensional relationship, interaction, and adaptation of the self in relation to others and the surrounding environment (Prinsloo 2018:81).

In addition to the modes of shape change, shape qualities are applied to provide further information on the attitudinal experience when shape change occurs (Hackney 2002:242). Davies (2006:42) describes these qualities in three ways in relation to the dimensions: those qualities with vertical emphasis (rising and sinking[116]), horizontal emphasis (enclosing and spreading), or sagittal emphasis (advancing and retreating).

[116] These are also referred to as ascending and descending.

Shape forms represent the fundamental ways the body takes form (Fernandes 2015:191). These include pin (a vertical, elongated shape), ball (a rounded, contracted shape), wall (a flat, two-dimensional shape), screw (a twisting or spiralling shape), and a pyramid (a tetrahedron; Fernandes 2015:191). Shape forms help articulate the body's changing dynamics in relation to space and movement.

These shapes represent specific forms or configurations that the body adopts during movement and can be used to identify habitual patterns, body attitudes, and how individuals relate to their self, to others, and to the environment when stressed. If I guide the agents in exploring these basic shapes, they can become more aware of their default attitudinal orientations and ways of holding and moving their bodies. This awareness of their habitual shape patterns allows them to recognise limiting or inefficient tendencies that may not serve them. I could also use the forms in the explorations of the other approaches; to provide additional guidance of the form their body should take in movement.

By encouraging the agents to explore non-habitual shapes, they can experiment with different ways of moving and holding themselves. This exploration opens opportunities to discover more effective and adaptive body patterns, helping the agents to develop prosilience. Through these new movement possibilities, agents can find more efficient and sustainable ways of responding to stress or challenges, potentially enhancing their overall well-being.

In summary, the moving body can thus change from one shape to another in relation to the environment. These aspects of Shape in LBMS provide a framework for understanding how the body expresses and responds to various stimuli through various forms and manners of changing Shape.

5.5.5 Pedagogical drivers of LBMS

To derive the pedagogical drivers of LBMS, I synthesised foundational principles and key theoretical concepts from LBMS into broader pedagogical themes. These drivers support and guide the teaching and application of LBMS, reflecting the integration of movement theory and practice. The drivers stem from the underlying philosophy of LBMS that views human movement as an expression of a unified bodymind, highlighting the interconnectedness of physical, cognitive, and emotional processes in

movement. By drawing on the principles of somatic awareness, dynamic balance, holistic integration, and creative exploration, the pedagogical drivers aim to create a comprehensive framework for embodied practice.

- Somatic awareness: One pedagogical driver of LBMS is the cultivation of somatic awareness, which refers to an individual's ability to sense and perceive their body from within. LBMS encourages individuals to develop an internal understanding of their bodymind's movement patterns, helping them to move more efficiently and expressively. Somatic awareness is essential for achieving integration and alignment, allowing for the effective application of the Bartenieff Fundamentals (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:37).
- Dynamic balance: LBMS emphasises the importance of dynamic balance between stability and mobility, as well as between function and expression. This principle encourages individuals to find balance within their movements, whether through the co-ordination of different body parts or the modulation of effort. Dynamic balance ensures that movements are both functional and expressive, reducing strain and enhancing performance (Bradley 2009:11).
- Holistic integration: LBMS adopts a holistic approach to movement, integrating physical, emotional, and spatial awareness. The pedagogy encourages individuals to view movement as a complete, interconnected experience, rather than as isolated parts or techniques. This holistic integration supports the development of more authentic, embodied movement that reflects the interconnectedness of the body, mind, and environment (Hackney 1998:62).
- Creative exploration: LBMS promotes creativity and self-expression through movement. By encouraging individuals to explore different movement dynamics, spatial patterns, and body shapes, the method fosters greater freedom and expressiveness in movement. This principle is particularly important in performance contexts, where creative exploration allows for the development of unique and nuanced movement qualities (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:46).

5.5.6 Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies explorations used in the EPP

Below, I list explorations from LBMS that I use in the EPP:[117]

- Becoming aware of the themes of the programme (Inner/Outer, Exertion/Recuperation, Stability/Mobility, and Function/Expression connectivity) through breathing.

The following explorations focus on the Basic 6 tied to body organisations and developmental patterning:

- Explore core-distal connectivity. Using shapes[118] such as pin, wall, and ball in movement to encourage the visualisation of expanding and decreasing volume;
- Playing with the head and tail as partners to increase awareness of head–tail connectivity;
- Pelvic forward and lateral shifts to explore stability and mobility and the upper–lower connection;
- Using the body half exploration to specifically explore habitual patterns that impede this connection; and
- Exploring the pre-thigh lift to develop to knee drops to enhance the contralateral connection in the body.

The following explorations focus on the concepts of Space such as the kinesphere in relation to the inner environment:

- Repetition of the personally unique pattern phrase based on the other explorations; and
- Open monitoring of the body while walking in the general space.

The following explorations focus on Shape concepts such as Shape flow support and Shape forms:

[117] See Appendix F for full outline of each exploration.
[118] I explain how I connect developmental patterns with shape forms in Appendix C.

- Body scan through shape flow support; and
- Exploring shape forms such as the pin by lengthening upwards and settling downwards.

These explorations within the Laban framework facilitate a deep understanding of movement patterns, fostering body awareness and connectivity. Through the repetition of these exercises, participants can increase their sensitivity to habitual patterns, improve their movement efficiency, and cultivate new, more functional movement responses. The next somatic approach I use in the programme is SRT.

5.6 Skinner Releasing Technique

Skinner Releasing Technique[119] is a holistic approach to movement facilitation that encourages a deep kinaesthetic awareness[120] of movement (Neuhaus 2010:1). In my interpretation, this kinaesthetic awareness can encourage individuals to sense, perceive, and become aware of their habitual responses, so they can respond to situations with more ease.

Skinner Releasing Technique is a practice that engages the bodymind by allowing for "an exploration and recognition of many dimensions of the self" (Emslie 2009:171) during which individuals are moved from "doing" movement to "becoming" movement as multifaceted bodyminded individuals (Emslie 2009:173). In this way, SRT allows individuals to experience the self in and as part of the world and move through life by gaining embodied knowledge as part of the bodyminded self (Agis & Moran 2002:20).

Mao (2014:1) states that in SRT "process is more important than outcome". This process involves a state of openness while following a scaffolded approach through

[119] I am aware of the critique of SRT. This includes that its reliance on culturally specific imagery and poetic prompts, while fostering creativity and sensitivity, may be challenging for movers who require more structured or concrete guidance, potentially limiting accessibility for those less familiar with abstract or somatic approaches. Despite this criticism, SRT remains a valuable approach for approaching movement facilitation.
[120] Kinaesthetic awareness is a term for somatic perception of embodied states of being.

various aspects, which I delineate in Section 4.6.4. Below, I discuss the founder and key contributors of SRT.

5.6.1 Founder and key contributors of SRT

Joan Skinner danced with the Martha Graham Company[121] for three years and wanted to find a way beyond the rigid, melodramatic formality of strict movement styles (Emslie 2009:171). Influenced by Merce Cunningham,[122] John Cage,[123] and the Alexander Technique,[124] Skinner founded and developed the concept of SRT in the United States in the 1960s (Emslie 2009:171).

A key contributor to the development of SRT is Mary Whitehouse, whose influence from Authentic Movement[125] provided a foundation for integrating embodied awareness into dance practices. Another influence is Polly Hudson (2017), an advocate of SRT who has contributed to its expansion into performance and

[121] The Martha Graham Company, renowned for its pioneering role in modern dance, is known for its highly expressive and codified movement vocabulary, which often emphasises dramatic emotional content and formalised techniques (White-McGuire 2022:33). Skinner's experience in this environment inspired her to explore more fluid and organic movement, ultimately leading to the development of her own approach, SRT, which focuses on ease, spontaneity, and the natural flow of movement.
[122] Developed by modern dance pioneer Merce Cunningham, the Merce Cunningham technique breaks from traditional narrative structures and emphasises movement for its own sake. Cunningham's approach prioritises movement over story and often incorporates chance operations, allowing random elements to influence the choreography. His technique also involves a deep exploration of the body's movement possibilities and spatial relationships. As a key principle, Cunningham separates dance from music, with the two often created independently and only combined during the performance (Vaughan 1997:72).
[123] John Cage, a composer and influential avant-garde artist, is best known for his use of chance operations and indeterminacy in music and performance. His approach challenges traditional notions of composition by allowing random elements, such as the roll of dice or the I Ching, to determine musical outcomes. Cage's techniques emphasise the idea that any sound or silence can be music; this opened up new possibilities for interdisciplinary work, especially in collaboration with dancers like Merce Cunningham (Revill 1992:185).
[124] The Alexander Technique, developed by F.M. Alexander, focuses on improving posture and movement efficiency by increasing awareness of habitual tension patterns and allowing for more natural alignment and ease in movement. The technique helps individuals unlearn harmful movement habits and develop greater body–mind coordination, leading to improved overall well-being. It is widely used by performers to enhance body mechanics and reduce strain, offering tools for optimising movement in everyday activities as well as performance contexts (Gelb 1994:34–36).
[125] Authentic Movement is a somatic and therapeutic approach to movement that emerged in the 1950s (Hendricks 2010:64).

screendance, incorporating it into contemporary dance education and practice. Figure 18, below, is a bird's-eye view of the broader scope of SRT.

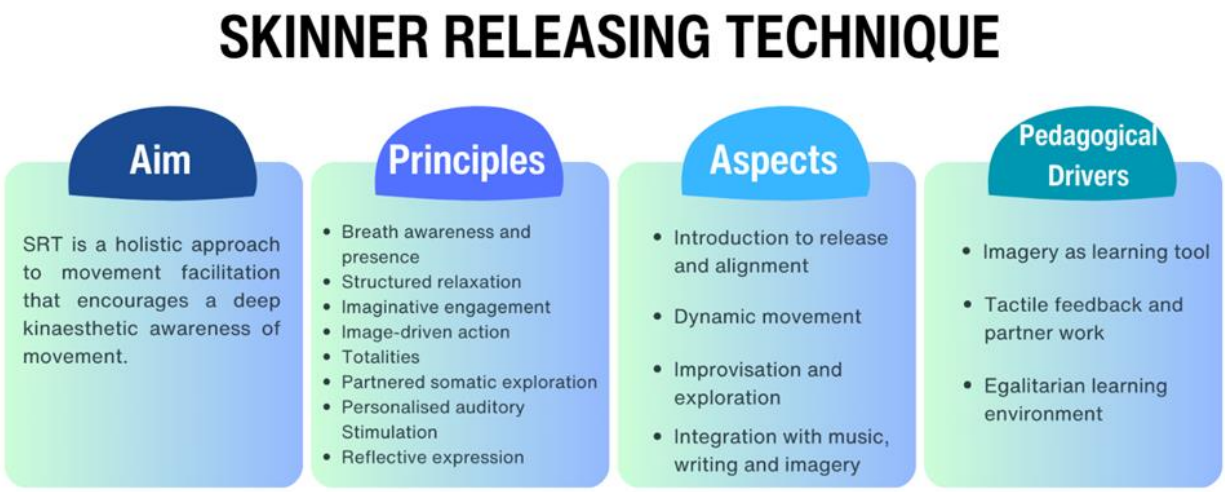


Figure 18: A bird's-eye view of Skinner Releasing Technique (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

5.6.2 Aim of SRT

Skinner Releasing Technique aims to release kinetic energy (Agis & Moran 2002:21) by encouraging participants to let go of habitual holding patterns using imaginative visualisations and improvisational movement. This release of energy allows for a more efficient and free flow of movement, enhancing both physical and emotional expression. This enables individuals to access their power and strength in order to move with the utmost ease, efficiency, and economy (Emslie 2009:171).

Skinner describes the technique as "peeling away layers of programmed behaviour and thought" (Neuhaus 2010:4). In this way, knowledge that has become embodied in and as part of the bodyminded individual can be repatterned to bring forth a new relationship of bodyminded knowledge as part of the world in which it finds itself. In other words, SRT encourages individuals to create new embodied knowledge.

Skinner Releasing Technique seeks to free the bodymind of habitual holding patterns in a continual, fluid process that remains adaptable, ensuring the bodymind stays actively responsive to potential stimuli from both the internal and external environment (Agis & Moran 2002:21). This approach promotes a state of readiness, allowing for

spontaneous interaction with varying conditions and experiences. This aligns SRT directly with the purpose of prosilience: to be prepared when stress of any kind arises.

I attempt to guide the agents in releasing their holding patterns to become more stress prosilient. In this way, SRT uses various elements to encourage embodied cognition that can guide individuals to practice “more easeful and efficiently ways of being” so they have “more creative expression and compassionate presence in the world” (Le Quesne 2018:86). In this way, individuals can use movement to explore new possibilities that, through repetition, can result in new habitual patterns and therefore new ways of embodying their selves.

5.6.3 Guiding principles of SRT

The underlying principles of SRT reflect a deep somatic awareness, offering participants tools to navigate both internal and external stimuli with ease and presence (Le Quesne 2021:16; Skinner 2010:[sp]). Skinner Releasing Technique has the principles listed below (Le Quesne 2021:17), which feed into the EPP:

- Breath awareness and presence

Skinner Releasing Technique emphasises breath as a grounding mechanism that anchors participants in the present moment. Breath awareness fosters a deep connection between body ‘and’ mind, helping to release tension and maintain focus on the here and now (Emslie & Emslie 2021:5). This principle encourages moments of rest and stillness in which breathing becomes a tool for recuperation and prepares participants to engage fully with the next movement or stressor (Le Quesne 2021:17). For call centre agents, integrating breath awareness helps maintain composure and balance in high-stress environments.

- Structured relaxation

Skinner Releasing Technique employs a systematic approach to relaxation and release, often referred to as checklists, which guides participants through a process of softening, lengthening, sighing, and melting (Emslie & Emslie 2021:7). This principle enables participants to release habitual tension gradually, and, when practised regularly, these steps become second nature. In stress-inducing contexts, such as the

call centre environment, structured relaxation allows individuals to proactively prepare their bodymind for challenges, building resilience and ease (Le Quesne 2021:17).

- Imaginative engagement

Skinner Releasing Technique uses kinaesthetic imagery (mental images that evoke physical sensations or movements) drawn from natural elements, such as clouds and sea sponges. These images help participants visualise effective alignment, autonomy, buoyancy, and freedom of movement (Skinner, Davis, Davidson, Wheeler & Metcalf 2008:[sp]). The principle of imaginative engagement encourages participants to move beyond their immediate environment, allowing them to create a mental space that fosters relaxation and ease. This principle is especially useful in helping call centre agents find mental and emotional relief in stressful situations (Le Quesne 2021:18).

- Image-driven action

In SRT, movement is initiated and shaped by imagery. This principle, called Image-driven action, allows participants to respond naturally to verbal prompts or kinaesthetic images (Skinner *et al.* 2008:[sp]). As they tune into their habitual responses to these images, they can begin to repattern their movements in a way that fosters resilience and adaptive responses to stress (Le Quesne 2021:17). By engaging with these image-driven actions, individuals learn to shift from habitual tension towards more prosilient movement patterns.

- Totalities

Totalities refer to the integration of the whole body in movement, where participants focus on the complete, interconnected nature of the body rather than isolating individual parts. This term involves the idea of the body functioning as an integrated, cohesive system (Skinner *et al.* 2008:[sp]). Totalities involve participants immersing themselves in a state of stillness in which kinaesthetic images guide them toward deep relaxation. The principle of totalities enables participants to release physical tension across their entire body. This practice can be adapted for seated or standing positions, offering a way for call centre agents to access moments of relaxation even within their work environment (Le Quesne 2021:18).

- Partnered somatic exploration

Skinner Releasing Technique encourages participants to engage with gentle, hands-on guidance through a principle known as partnered somatic exploration or partner graphics (Emslie & Emslie 2021:13). This principle uses soft touch[126] and movement to introduce new sensations into the body, helping participants release habitual holding patterns and experience new ways of moving.

Through this guided interaction, participants gain an opportunity to release ineffective habitual patterns, allowing the body to soften, respond, and explore alternative ways of moving that are less constrained by muscular tension. This tactile support fosters an increased sense of embodied awareness and fluidity, enabling participants to find ease and adaptability in movement. For those in high-stress environments, this principle offers a method for discovering new movement patterns (Le Quesne 2021:18).

- Personalised auditory stimulation

Music plays a key role in SRT, supporting movement through rhythm and texture. The principle of personalised auditory stimulation allows participants to use their own accessible music as a tool for emotional and physical release (Skinner *et al.* 2008:[sp]). Their use of their own music honours their personally unique socio-cultural histories and influences. In stressful environments, music can help individuals create kinaesthetic sensory images that aid in letting go of tension and achieving a sense of freedom (Le Quesne 2021:17).

- Reflective expression

Writing and drawing are incorporated into SRT as a means of reflecting on and externalising the sensory experiences of the body. The principle of reflective

[126] Ethically applied touch in somatic practices fosters trust and provides participants with the autonomy to engage with or decline physical contact, as needed. Practitioners are encouraged to cultivate a clear, non-intrusive form of touch, respecting cultural and personal differences, and to maintain open dialogue to continuously affirm consent. By feeling respected, participants can gently meet themselves where they are and trust that their bodies will give them the needed information (Johnson & Reyes 2018:86).

expression helps participants transition from a receptive state into active awareness by allowing them to express their internal sensations through creative outlets (Le Quesne 2021:17). For call centre agents, this reflective practice can aid in consolidating learning and understanding how their movements impact on their emotional and physical states.

By engaging with these principles, SRT enables participants to develop a deep connection with their bodyminded being, fostering resilience, adaptability, and creative freedom in both movement and daily life. Each principle supports a holistic approach to embodied cognition, where movement and creative expression are fully integrated.

Skinner Releasing Technique thus fosters embodied cognition through a variety of principles, blending the technical and creative aspects of movement into a unified experience. The technique's core principles enable participants to engage in spontaneous movement explorations, where alignment, flexibility, stamina, and a range of movements are intricately woven with imaginative processes (Emslie 2009:171). Next, I discuss the scaffolded aspects of SRT.

5.6.4 Aspects of SRT

- Introduction to release and alignment

The first phase introduces participants to the foundational principles of release and alignment (Le Quesne 2021:81). Using guided imagery and gentle physical touch, participants develop a deeper awareness of their internal structures and movement patterns, encouraging a shift from habitual tension to a state of ease (Emslie & Emslie 2021:12).

- Dynamic movement

Building on the principles I discussed in the first phase; the second phase incorporates more dynamic movement sequences. Participants are encouraged to integrate the principles of release into increasingly dynamic movement sequences while maintaining dynamic alignment. Dynamic alignment refers to the body's ability to maintain alignment while in motion, allowing for ease, efficiency, and responsiveness throughout a range of movement sequences. The goal of dynamic movement is to integrate the principles of release into more challenging movement sequences while

sustaining a sense of lightness and responsiveness in the body. Participants are encouraged to maintain the sense of release and flow while engaging in increasingly complex and expansive movement tasks, allowing for a fuller range of motion (Batson 2016:121).

- Improvisation and exploration

As the practice progresses, improvisation becomes a key focus. Improvisation in SRT refers to the spontaneous exploration of movement without pre-set structures, offering participants the freedom to explore the principles of SRT through open-ended movement explorations. This fosters personal expression and deepens kinaesthetic awareness, enabling participants to engage with movement in a more intuitive and creative manner (Fortin, Vieira & Tremblay 2014:44).

- Integration with music, writing, and imagery

The final phase integrates the usage of the participants' own music, as well as kinaesthetic imagery, and reflective practices such as writing and drawing (Hudson 2017:71). These creative tools help participants internalise and integrate the lessons from the movement explorations, facilitating a deeper connection between body 'and' mind and supporting the application of SRT principles in daily life (Le Quesne 2021:17).

5.6.5 Pedagogical drivers of SRT

To derive the pedagogical drivers of SRT, I synthesised key principles and themes within the approach that emphasise the importance of creating an intuitive, collaborative, and egalitarian learning environment. These drivers emerged from an understanding of how SRT uses kinaesthetic imagery, tactile feedback, and the minimisation of hierarchical structures to facilitate embodied learning.

The approach aims to cultivate personal insights and somatic awareness by encouraging participants to engage deeply with their internal sensations, fostering a sense of freedom and ease in movement. Below, I elaborate on each pedagogical driver, explaining how these themes were identified and how they contribute to the pedagogical framework of SRT.

- Imagery as a learning tool

SRT employs kinaesthetic imagery to help participants discover alignment and ease within their bodies. Rather than relying on traditional technical movement corrections, imagery allows participants to engage with movement in a more intuitive, natural way, fostering deeper internal awareness and freeing movement from rigidity (Batson 2016:122).

- Tactile feedback and partner work

Partnered explorations involving gentle touch foster a collaborative learning experience in SRT. Participants not only develop self-awareness but also gain valuable insights from the tactile feedback provided by their partners. This interactive approach supports mutual learning, allowing for shared somatic discoveries and the release of habitual tension (Fortin *et al.* 2014:45).

- Egalitarian learning environment

Skinner Releasing Technique nurtures an egalitarian learning environment, where the traditional teacher–student hierarchy is minimised. Participants are encouraged to trust their internal sensations and cultivate personal insights about movement, aligning with the core values of somatic education. This approach empowers participants to become active agents in their own learning process, valuing personal experience over external authority (Morgenroth 2013:59).

5.6.6 Skinner Releasing Technique explorations used in the EPP

- Imagery-based release;
- Partner graphics;
- Writing and drawing as reflection;
- Participants using their own music; and
- Partner graphics (expanded):

While Horton technique and tap dancing are not necessarily somatic approaches, but I adapt them in the EPP to align with somaesthetic principles. At the end of each approach, I discuss how I apply somaesthetic principles in each exploration.

5.7 Horton technique

5.7.1 Founder and key contributors of Horton technique

Lester Horton (1906-1953), an American dancer and choreographer, developed the Horton technique between the 1920s and 1940s. Influenced by Native American dance, anatomical studies, and other movement forms, Horton sought to create a dance technique that broke away from the rigid formality of classical ballet. His goal was to retain the discipline and rigour of ballet while introducing a more open and versatile approach that allowed for creative interpretations, such as turning upside down or jumping sideways (Legg 2007:94). Horton's innovative technique emphasised flexibility, strength, and fluidity, making it adaptable for various styles and artistic expressions (Forsythe cited in Burke 2010:182). Figure 19 below provides a bird's-eye view of the broader scope of Horton technique.

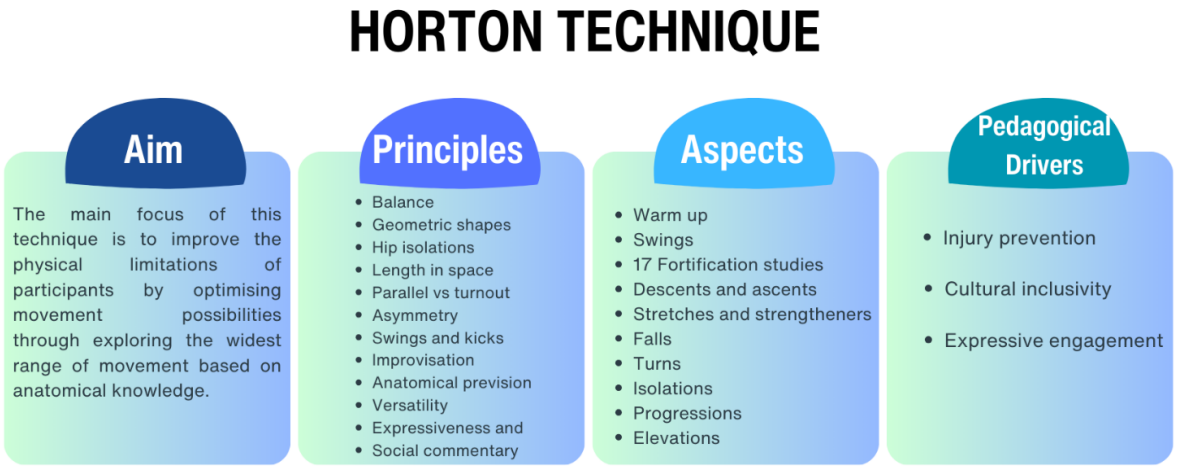


Figure 19: A bird's-eye view of Horton technique (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

5.7.2 Aim of Horton technique

Perces, Forsythe and Bell (1992:7)[127] posit that Horton technique attempts to lengthen the body by isolating each section of the body while initiating movement from the torso.

[127] This book is a seminal source since it is the first written and codified account that preserves Horton technique.

This approach to movement involves activating the torso as the central source of energy and direction, allowing for more controlled and expressive movements throughout the body. By focusing on individual areas – such as the shoulders, hips, arms, or legs – Horton technique encourages dancers to articulate each segment independently while maintaining a strong core connection (Bronner, Hash-Campbell & Ojofeitimi 2004:2). his isolation not only enhances flexibility and strength in each area but also promotes a balanced, elongated posture. Through this focused practice, the body achieves a sense of extended, three-dimensional length that is both dynamic and structurally sound, supporting the mover's ability to perform complex movements with precision and fluidity.

The technique is inclusive because it does not require a specific body type or physical ability from participants. Movements are non-forceful and can be easily adapted to accommodate each individual's unique body, making it accessible to a wide range of participants (Forsythe, cited in Burke 2010:182). The main focus of this technique is to improve the physical limitations of participants by optimising movement possibilities (Legg 2007:95). The aim is to ensure that the body is lengthened effectively by focusing on the widest range of movement based on anatomical knowledge (Forsythe 2010:2). In the programme, the participants can be guided to explore the widest range of possibilities within and as part of the world in which they find themselves, therefore gaining new knowledge that optimises movement possibilities. The widest range of movement possibilities could guide the call centre agents in preparing for stressors.

5.7.3 Guiding principles of Horton technique

Horton technique is primarily based on the following principles (Legg 2007:95; Bronner *et al.* 2004:2):

- balance;
- geometric shapes created by the arms, especially horizontal (parallel to the floor) and lateral (to the side of the body);
- isolations;
- the length of the body in space (and off the spine and hamstrings);
- parallel vs turnout dynamics (working with one leg turned out against the other in parallel);

- working with asymmetry of the body (sides of the body in relation to each other);
- contrast (for example, leg swings, kicks and the difference between the two); and
- improvisation.

Other principles of the approach include anatomical precision, versatility and expressiveness.

- Anatomical precision: Horton technique places a strong focus on anatomical precision, aiming to develop balanced and efficient movement patterns. The exercises target strengthening weak areas of the body while lengthening tight muscles, ultimately promoting alignment and reducing the risk of injury. This approach to anatomical accuracy fits well with the EPP, where the goal is to help participants manage stress through safe, full-body movement. By focusing on body alignment and balance, the Horton technique enhances the physical resilience that is essential for maintaining well-being in stressful environments, which mirrors the EPP's emphasis on prosilient practices (Bronner *et al.* 2004:3).
- Versatility: Horton technique equips individuals with a broad range of movement capabilities by integrating elements from ballet, jazz, and modern dance. This adaptability aligns well with the goals of the EPP, as it helps participants develop versatile movement skills that can be applied in various contexts. The technique’s emphasis on flexibility, strength, and precision mirrors the EPP’s aim of helping individuals manage stress through dynamic, full-body movement explorations. By preparing individuals for diverse movement styles and contexts, the Horton technique becomes a valuable tool in cultivating physical and mental resilience, key components of prosilience (Holtzman 2020:139).
- Expressiveness: A key principle of the Horton’s technique is the dancer’s ability to convey emotion and narrative through movement. The exercises encourage dancers to explore a wide range of dynamic variations, giving them the tools to express complex emotional and social themes through physicality (DeFrantz 2006:118). This focus on expressive movement directly supports the goals of the EPP, which emphasise the use of bodyminded practices to process and manage stress.

By equipping participants with the ability to channel emotions and experiences through movement, Horton technique complements the EPP's aim of enhancing emotional resilience and subjective well-being (DeFrantz 2006:118). Horton's goal with these principles was to "develop strong, fearless and richly emotive participants who were unafraid of their sensuality"[128] (LaPointe-Crump 2006:66).

The explorations within Horton technique encourage participants to extend their bodies in space, aligning with an emphasis on spatial and sensory awareness in bodywork. This approach allows individuals to express and communicate internalised embodied knowledge. Through these interactions, participants engage with others, creating and reshaping their embodied understanding. Horton's explorations foster shared experiences, enabling participants to generate new embodied knowledge through meaningful interactions. In what follows, I discuss the aspects of Horton technique.

5.7.4 Aspects of Horton technique

Horton technique comprises an array of technical terms that each focus on a different concept of movement such as descent/ascent laterals, or body parts such as the Achilles tendon, deep floor vocabulary, dimensional tonus, torso language, pelvic actions, fall variations, aerial vocabulary, hand-foot-face vocabularies, and turn motivations (Enache 2020:17). More specifically, Horton technique is divided into 10 major aspects (Enache 2020:19; Forsythe 2010:2):

- The warm-up

Horton believed that the body should be warmed up by stimulating blood circulation so Horton classes always start with the participants standing (Legg 2007:95) and use movements focused on the following: round over and round up (rolling the spine), flat backs (bend the torso on a 90-degree angle to lengthen the hamstrings and the spine),

[128] In the context of the Horton technique, sensuality refers to the mover's ability to connect deeply with their body, embracing its full expressive potential without fear or inhibition. In this context, sensuality is not limited to physical allure but encompasses a broader engagement with bodily awareness, expression, and emotional depth, vital for creating authentic and powerful performances (Holtzman 2020:138).

laterals (laterally bending and stretching the torso and arms), primitive squat ascent and descent (dynamic bending and stretching of the knees; Enache 2020:20).Warming up by rolling the spine, bending the torso or laterals or squatting could be used with the call centre agents.

This could proactively ready them for each new day – or even when they know a stressor is about to occur, such as a challenging meeting with their executive or before a challenging call. By encouraging the participants to warm up habitually, they could gain new habitual patterns that influence how they are embodied in and embody the world as part of themselves.

- Swings

Release swings are when the upper body dynamically swings, while lengthening the lower body and the back of the calves (starting from flat back). Leg swings occur in the supine orientation when individuals complete leg brushes on the floor until the thigh is parallel to the floor (Enache 2020:21). Swings are intended to improve "flexibility, range of motion, weight shift from one leg to the other and balance, and, most importantly, develop musicality and rhythmicity" (Enache 2020:21).

- 17 Fortification Studies

Fortifications are a series of 17 combinations that build the body technically, artistically, and musically (Rizzuto 2013:60). They prepare the body for further requirements by focusing on "building stretch, strength, resilience, range of motion, precision, endurance, postural alignment, balance, isolation of body parts, and coordination" (Enache 2020:21).

Preludes are six short fortifications that stimulate musicality and dynamic and rhythmic structures by connecting to music and having participants develop their sense of rhythm, timing, and phrasing. Dimensional tonus is a yawn stretch designed to lengthen the body until the individual feels more open. Lengthening the body in this way could benefit the agents greatly, since they will have fewer stressors in or on the body, so they can prepare for stressors that lie ahead. Falls are explorations that encompass the extending of the body in space and across the floor.

- Descents and ascents

These are a series of studies that encompass combinations in the left, right, up, and down directions, connecting the feet with the floor and using abdominal and inner thigh strength (Enache 2020:22). This connection with the floor could aid the agents in staying grounded while they are seated and/or standing, which provides stability for their lower bodies so their upper bodies can be more mobile and prepared for any possible stressors.

- Stretches and strengtheners

These explorations lengthen and strengthen the muscles used in everyday life (Enache 2020:22). An example is deep lunges where the individual bends and extends the knees while the torso lengthens. To effectively execute these movements, the participants need to be guided to work from the joint outwards (Perces *et al.* 1992:142). Some form of lunges could aid the agents to recuperate after the exertion of sitting for a long time. In this way, their muscles will remain lengthened and strengthened so that the habitual holding patterns we work on repatterning do not resurface.

- Falls

Falls make use of the floor for support and focus on falling and recovering in order to understand and become aware of gravity (Enache 2020:22). Perces *et al.* (1992:152) posit that these falls "display the most dynamic and spectacular motion" of the technique, by making the participants aware of the floor as part of the space.

- Turns

These include explorations where individuals progress across the floor without spotting[129] with a torso that is always engaged (Enache 2020:22). The torso in these explorations is seldom erect (Perces *et al.* 1992:164).

[129] Spotting "is a typical isolated head coordination used by many dancers during rotation" where "preparing to turn, a dancer fixes the head and gaze toward a visual object at eye level as the body begins to rotate. When the head reaches maximal rotation and the fixation can no longer be sustained, the head quickly rotates, overtaking the body to return to the same spot" (Haber & Schärli 2021:1).

- Isolations

Explorations are where one body part is isolated to improve and strengthen its mobility and expressive capabilities (Enache 2020:23). During these explorations, the feet remain flat on the floor and the knees are bent while the rest of the body remains still (Perces *et al.* 1992:182).

- Progressions

These are sequences that require the individual to locomote in creative patterns while changing levels and directions (Enache 2020:23). Shelver (2013:37) explains that progressions combine natural movement with artistic design in an attempt to aid the mover to “travel across the floor making use of the applications of weight distribution and propulsion”.

- Elevations

These are explorations that include jumping and skipping, with suspension in the air, which are completed with enthusiasm and the exertions of energy (Enache 2020:23). Perces *et al.* (1992:192) note that that elevations are always at the end of Horton explorations since they require the most concentrated energy and allow the mover freedom. In what follows, I discuss the pedagogical drivers of Horton technique.

5.7.5 Pedagogical drivers of Horton technique

To derive the pedagogical drivers of the Horton technique, I synthesised key principles and themes within the technique, highlighting its focus on injury prevention, inclusivity, and expressive engagement. These drivers were identified through an examination of how Horton’s approach seeks to develop the physical body while fostering an inclusive and expressive environment. Below, I elaborate on each pedagogical driver, explaining how these themes were identified and how they contribute to the pedagogical framework of the Horton technique.

- Injury prevention

Horton understood the importance of injury prevention, particularly given the physically demanding nature of his technique. He developed exercises that focus on body

alignment, stabilisation, and the prevention of common stressors, particularly in the hamstrings and lower back (Bronner *et al.* 2004:1).

- Cultural inclusivity

Horton's commitment to racial integration and social activism was reflected in his pedagogy, as he created an inclusive space where individuals from diverse backgrounds could train and perform together.[130] This inclusivity remains one of the defining features of the technique, influencing its continued use in institutions today (Holtzman 2020:139).

By using the technique, individuals who are completely different can experience and embody new knowledge from others in their environment. Not only did Horton produce a technique that can be used to develop the body of individuals all over the world, but he showed that this technique is available to people of all backgrounds and cultures (Holtzman 2020:139) to create new embodied knowledge.

- Expressive engagement

Horton believed that dance should not only train the body but also engage the individual's emotional and intellectual faculties. His technique is designed to cultivate individuals who are both technically proficient and capable of embodying deep emotional narratives (LaPointe-Crump 2006:66). For example, while his exercises emphasise strength, flexibility, and control, they also require dancers to connect to the underlying emotional qualities of each movement. By integrating both demanding physical drills and expressive components, Horton's technique invites dancers to explore the emotional resonance of each sequence, cultivating an awareness of how movements can communicate complex narratives and emotions (Holtzman 2020:138).

[130] Horton's inclusive approach embraced movers from diverse backgrounds and developed a teaching style that valued varied physicalities and cultural expressions (Legg 2007:94). By integrating elements from various traditions, he cultivated a multicultural movement style that honoured various students' backgrounds. This commitment fostered a collaborative environment in which movers supported one another, engaged with social issues, and used dance as a means of community building and advocacy, reflecting Horton's broader vision of equality and integration.

5.7.6 Horton technique explorations used in the EPP

In the EPP, I adapt Horton technique explorations to align with somaesthetic principles by focusing on the embodied experience rather than solely on the physical demands of the technique. Although, due to its rigorous nature, the technique is traditionally used for dancers, I emphasise the internal awareness of movement and body alignment, enabling participants to engage with their bodily experiences more fully. This adaptation allows the technique to foster prosilience through heightened body awareness and self-regulation, integrating the physical challenges of Horton with a mindful, somaesthetic approach that promotes both physical and emotional well-being. Below, I list the explorations I use in the EPP.[131]

- Flat back series (somaesthetic awareness of alignment);
- Lateral fortifications (exploring the bodymind's internal and external space);
- Body half isolations (differentiation and integration through somaesthetic awareness);
- Pelvic and spine awareness (integration of upper and lower body through somaesthetic practice); and
- Breath integration in Horton movements (breathing as a somaesthetic practice).

The final approach that I discuss and utilise in the EPP is tap dancing, an approach that is more body focused, though I apply it in a way that encourages bodymindedness through somaesthetic principles.

5.8 Tap dancing

5.8.1 Founder and key contributors of tap dancing

Tap dance[132] as a genre is generally accepted as being American in origin, though it evolved over a period of some three hundred years with different influences at its origin

[131] See Appendix C for a full description of each exploration.
[132] I am aware of the critique on tap dancing. Its origin in racially insensitive minstrel shows raise ethical concerns about cultural appropriation, prompting debate on how its history is acknowledged today. Additionally, the lack of a formalised training structure can lead to inconsistencies in teaching quality, while the physically demanding nature of tap, particularly on the knees and ankles, poses potential risks for dancers. Some also argue that tap's adherence to traditional forms can limit its adaptability and

(Hill 2010:2). Since tap dance is so widely influenced, the initial technique could not be codified or set. The technique was rather spontaneously transmitted by means of dancers who listened to and watched one another in the streets and clubs. Tap movements therefore evolved by means of rhythmic exchanges between dancers (Hill 2010:3). Figure 20 below provides a bird's-eye view of the broader scope of tap dancing.



Figure 20: A bird's-eye view of tap dancing (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

5.8.2 Aim of tap dancing

Tap dance can be described as a performing art which focuses on using the feet with tap shoes as percussive instruments (Meyers, Bronner, Agraharasamakulam & Ojofeitimi 2010:3) and the ankle, knees and hips to aid in the movement (Rocha, McClelland, Sparrow & Morris 2017:126). A tap dancer creates his or her own music using four metal plates at the bottom of a pair of shoes, at the heels and the balls of the feet (Pecina 2016:1). This requires the dancer to have control of the smallest muscles in the feet and legs, as well as rhythm and coordination (Pecina 2016:1).

Hilberman (2013:[sp]) shows how tap dancing is not a "feet only" dance style but that there are myriad complex details, from arm movements to facial expressions. Tap

relevance within modern, hybrid dance practices. However, the way I adapt it by drawing from somaesthetic practice affords me a way to apply it with somatic value.

dancing also includes “complex motor skills (that require) an advanced ability to control movement timing, movement amplitude, and inter-limb coordination” (Rocha *et al.* 2017:123).

Classes in tap dancing are centred on the mastering of specific techniques including, but not limited to, a keen ear for rhythm and muscular control of the feet and arms (Pecina 2016:35). Rhythm can be taught by playing music and clapping out the beat, then using the feet to mimic the beat (Hernandez, Ozmun & Keeto 2013:33). Dancers from the Association of International Dance Teachers (AIDT) mostly have the freedom to use their arms in any way to assist the movement of the torso, pelvis, legs, and feet (Isaacs 2015:16). In AIDT tap dancing the whole body is involved since, for technical proficiency, the feet need to make clear and efficient sounds while the upper body is used to aid in stability.

Actual tap movements can be used to explore grounding. The AIDT is my personal frame of reference. The basic tap dance movements I outline in Appendix E can specifically be used by the call centre agents to explore grounding, both standing and seated. A study by Wang and Zhao (2021:7) reveals that tap dance aids in mobility by improving ankle strength and plantar flexion in both feet.

The set combination has precise footwork, but a free style and arm lines (Isaacs 2015:16). For technical proficiency in dance, the body should stay connected while the arms extend through the joints and past the shoulders (Krasnow, Wilmerding, Stecyk, Wyon & Koutedakis 2011:12). In the call centre, the agents should also consistently stay connected through their joints and be able to extend through their joints so that the arms and legs are not held in positions that cause tension or strain on the bodymind. Exploring moving the bodymind in and as part of the call centre with intentional, embodied cognition can guide the agents to learn new prosilience-related behaviours.

To fully understand the AIDT tap dancing syllabus that I have embodied as part of my personal experience, I also include musical notations in Appendix E, since I refer to these in the EPP.

5.8.3 Guiding principles of tap dancing

Lewis (2013:43) lists certain principles that are important when tap dancing, which I use in the programme in various ways:

- Agility: Changing orientations of body parts in different directions

In tap dance, dancers are guided to complete various movements in different directions, as part of phrases. They are guided in relation to how to keep their upper body stable so the lower body can change directions, and vice versa. I guide the call centre agents in relation to how to stay agile by exploring which parts of the body they habitually hold in certain positions. By using the agility of free arms, pelvis, torso or legs (like in tap dance), the agents may gain embodied cognition that focuses on new ways of exploring the bodymind in space.

- Balance: Maintaining equilibrium in the body in motion

In tap dancing, it is important for the dancers to learn how to use their ankles to aid the maintaining of balance throughout their entire body (Wang & Zhao 2021:7). Various ways of rolling the ankles and all the other joints are taught so that the limbs can move to consistently maintain balance. The focus is on increasing range of motion and muscle strength (Wang & Zhao 2021:3).

By learning how to have effective and dynamic balance in the body, as in tap dancing, I guide the agents to become aware of the effect of stressors on and in the bodymind. This could aid them in identifying how to keep their bodymind in a state of homeostasis before stressors occur. By gaining new habitual patterns for maintaining balance, the agents are afforded the opportunity to gain embodied cognition regarding their proactive preparation for stressful situations.

- Coordination: Integrating upper and lower body movements to keep the body moving as a harmonious whole

In tap dancing, the upper and lower body are continuously in interplay to maintain integration in the body. Tap dancing focuses on learning how to move the lower body and upper body not only in relation to other but also in opposition, without any pain.

The dancers focus on isolating certain parts of the body so others can move more effectively.

I use the principle of coordination to guide the agents to identify any habitual holding patterns in their upper and lower bodies that restrict movement or impede coordination in their body. By continuously using their agency to explore this relationship of the upper and lower body in the call centre environment, the agents can become aware of what facilitates a harmonic whole in their personally unique bodyminded self. In this way, the agents can gain embodied cognition in and as part of the call centre, so that they can remain in homeostasis before stressors arise, and remain present within their bodyminded self while stressors are present, thereby facilitating homeostasis in the bodymind.

- Power: Producing the required amount of energy in the necessary period of time

Tap dancing focuses on using the arms and upper body to lift the body so the feet can apply various amounts of power. Although I would not recommend the usage of force in any way during the programme, the idea of applying various amounts of effort in certain situations can facilitate various possibilities for the agents. By applying effort in relation to the floor through the feet, grounding can occur, which can aid in stabilising the bodymind in preparation for stressors.

- Reaction time: Initiating responses to the preceding stimulus

In tap dancing, it is essential to react to the movement of your feet and arms so that the next movement occurs with ease. The focus of the programme is on proactively preparing the agent for situations and not necessarily on reacting in the moment (such as with tap dancing, reacting to the music and the preceding movement).

Becoming aware of how, over time, the agents have embodied reactions in the call centre could provide valuable information regarding how they respond to stressors. This could aid the agent in proactively preparing for the next reaction, so that stress prosilient behaviours can be learnt through embodied cognition, with the bodyminded self learning how to react to and as part of the stimulus.

- Speed: Propelling the body from one place to another

While agents may not need to propel themselves physically from one location to another, as in tap dancing, they can still benefit from learning how to intentionally slow down their responses before stressors arise. By practising this proactive slowing down, agents can focus on their breathing, creating a moment of pause that allows them to react more thoughtfully and effectively to stressful situations. This approach helps them stay grounded and composed, enhancing their ability to manage stress with greater ease and resilience.

- Rhythm: Central to tap is the dancer's engagement with rhythm, both in terms of creating beats and responding to external musical cues

Seibert (2015:6) posits that the tap dancer becomes a vehicle for rhythm and must, along with the principles listed below, focus on rhythmical intricacy and gradations of movement quality for the technique to be executed effectively. In tap dancing, certain steps have accents to give the movement a certain rhythm and quality (Lewis 2013:83). Lewis (2013:84) states that varying rhythm in this way is what gives dancers the ability to create fluctuation in each step. The rhythm and accents required in tap dance therefore determine the quality of feet movement (Longstaff 2003:18).

Call centre agents can use these rhythms and accents not only in the feet but in the body as a whole, as this type of intricacy could provide possibilities not only in terms of identifying habitual patterns, but also in exploring more effective ways of rhythmically preparing the bodymind for stressors.

- Improvisation: Historically, improvisation has been integral, allowing individuals to innovate new steps or sequences during performance

In the call centre, the agents are often seated, making it important for them to adhere to the proper principle of grounding so their upper bodies are free to move. I guide them to improvise various tap movements so they can explore grounding. Next, I outline the aspects of tap dancing.

5.8.4 Aspects of tap dancing

The structured approach to tap dancing generally follows a progression from foundational techniques to advanced improvisational and stylistic interpretations:

- Basic rhythms and steps: Dancers begin by mastering simple rhythms and basic steps such as shuffles, flaps, and taps. This phase focuses on establishing a clear connection between the foot's movement and the production of sound.
- Intermediate combinations: At this stage, dancers learn more complex sequences, including cramp rolls, time steps, and syncopated patterns. These combinations enhance the dancer's rhythmic vocabulary and improve timing.
- Musical interpretation and improvisation: Advanced students move to interpreting and improvising with music. This section emphasises how dancers manipulate rhythms and respond creatively to the music, fostering individual expression.
- Choreography and performance: Finally, dancers apply their technique in choreographed works, either solo or in groups. The emphasis here shifts to performance dynamics, stage presence, and audience engagement (Seibert 2016:148).

Although the call centre agents mostly only explore basic rhythms and steps in the EPP, I still need to consider the pedagogical drivers of tap dancing to determine how I can use the approach in alignment with somaesthetic practices.

5.8.5 Pedagogical drivers of tap dancing

The pedagogical drivers of tap dancing offer a comprehensive approach to cultivating rhythmic and physical dexterity. These drivers were derived from key principles of the technique, focusing on rhythmic awareness, kinaesthetic learning, creativity, and collaboration. Below, each pedagogical driver is elaborated on, emphasising its relevance to the practice of tap dancing and how it supports both technical and creative development. The pedagogy of tap dancing centres on several core drivers designed to support the development of rhythmic and physical dexterity. Key drivers include:

- Kinaesthetic learning: Tap dancing is a physically driven practice in which the body learns through repetition, muscle memory, and auditory feedback. The constant engagement of the feet with the floor heightens spatial and body awareness (Foster 2002:89).
- Rhythmic awareness: Teachers focus heavily on developing the dancer's internal sense of rhythm. This can involve practising with metronomes, clapping exercises, or working with live musicians to synchronise movement with sound.
- Sequential skill-building: Tap classes typically employ a scaffolded learning process in which simple steps build into more complex sequences. This approach not only solidifies technique but also helps dancers grasp musical concepts gradually.
- Improvisation and creativity: Given the historical roots of improvisation in tap, educators often encourage students to explore their personal rhythmic ideas within the dance, thereby fostering creativity alongside technical development.
- Collaborative learning: In many tap environments, learning takes place within a group context, which enables dancers to share rhythms, observe different styles, and work in unison with or counterpoint to others. This social element is pivotal to the community-driven tradition of tap dancing (Stearns & Stearns 1994:125).

By focusing on these pedagogical strategies, tap dancing not only strengthens rhythmic and performance skills but also imbues a sense of musical and creative autonomy, forming a comprehensive approach to the art form. The pedagogical drivers of tap dancing offer valuable strategies for call centre agents to develop stress prosilience. Kinaesthetic learning enhances body awareness, helping agents recognise physical signs of stress and adjust their alignment or breathing.

Rhythmic awareness encourages pacing, allowing agents to pause and respond thoughtfully to stressors. Sequential skill-building, where simple steps build into complex actions, mirrors the gradual development of stress management skills. Improvisation fosters adaptability and creative problem-solving, essential for handling unexpected challenges. Collaborative learning promotes teamwork and empathy, creating a supportive work culture. These drivers help agents enhance awareness, adaptability, and collaboration, equipping them to navigate stress effectively.

5.8.6 Tap dancing explorations used in the EPP

The EPP integrates tap dancing in alignment with somaesthetic principles by emphasising the individual's heightened bodily awareness and rhythmic engagement. Tap dancing encourages individuals to become acutely attuned to their body's movements, sensations, and rhythms. Tap dancing includes precise footwork and rhythmic coordination, which draws focus to specific areas of the body – particularly the feet, legs, and core – and necessitates a continuous awareness of balance, posture, and alignment.

The rhythmic engagement inherent in tap further amplifies this bodily awareness, as movers must synchronise movements with complex rhythmic patterns. Through an alignment with somaesthetic principles, participants develop a more refined sensory connection to their bodies, enhancing their awareness of tension, release, and spatial orientation as they move. Through the rhythmic patterns and percussive footwork characteristic of tap dancing, participants can cultivate a deep sensory connection between movement, rhythm and sound, fostering a heightened somatic experience.

Somaesthetic principles encourage mindfulness and sensory attunement, which can be nurtured in tap by focusing on the embodied awareness of the rhythms that individuals produce. This practice promotes an internal and external sensory dialogue, reinforcing prosilience by allowing participants to engage actively with the dynamic balance between control, improvisation, and creative expression. Tap dancing, therefore, becomes not only a physical exploration but also an experiential practice that enhances the participant's bodily awareness, coordination, and resilience through rhythmic movement.

Below, I list the explorations that draw from tap dancing in the EPP:[133]

- Foot tapping and weight shifts (sensing groundedness and balance through somaesthetic awareness);
- Heel and ball beats with brushes (dynamic awareness of flow and release);

[133] See Appendix C for a full discussion of each exploration.

- Tapping to three-point weight distribution (exploring spatial and bodily awareness through somaesthetics);
- Rhythmic exploration with personal expression (enhancing body awareness through self-directed rhythm); and
- Breath integration in tap dance (synchronising breath with rhythm and movement).

Next, I outline the movement themes that underlie all the approaches I have discussed thus far as the overarching themes of the EPP.

5.9 The four principles of the EPP

The four movement themes from Laban Movement Studies – Inner/Outer, Exertion/Recuperation, Stability/Mobility, and Function/Expression – serve as the foundational themes of the EPP. These themes fundamentally underscore all human movement. These themes provide a comprehensive framework that captures the breadth of physical and psychological experiences during movement, making them a strong foundation for the programme.

Additionally, their presence across various movement approaches ensures that they integrate seamlessly into the overarching structure.[134] The common denominators between LK, LBMS, SRT, Horton technique, and tap dancing, when applied through somaesthetic practice revolve around shared principles that emphasise holistic, embodied practices that integrate self-awareness, alignment, and expressive movement. Despite their differences, these approaches converge on several foundational elements:

- Focus on breath and alignment: Each of these approaches places significant emphasis on breath and dynamic alignment as central components for effective and expressive movement. Lessac Kinesensics highlights the connection between dynamic alignment and breath for optimising the flow of energy and maintaining physical ease. Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies incorporates

[134] In some approaches, they may be applied or named differently.

breath support as a foundational principle, aligning breath with dynamic movement and stability. Similarly, SRT uses breath awareness as a grounding mechanism, encouraging release and relaxation. Horton technique focuses on the length and alignment of the body, promoting effective use of breath to enhance movement. Even in tap dancing, breath awareness plays a role in maintaining rhythm and grounding, allowing the dancer to stay aligned and balanced during complex movements.

- Embodied awareness and sensory learning: All five approaches emphasise developing an embodied awareness of the bodymind connection through sensory learning. Lessac Kinesensics focuses on engaging with sensations to create bodyminded awareness, while LBMS explores the internal and external connections within movement patterns. Skinner Releasing Technique cultivates kinaesthetic awareness through guided imagery and structured relaxation, allowing participants to sense and release tension. Horton technique, though more physically oriented, also engages participants in developing body awareness through anatomical precision and isolated movements. Tap dancing, too, fosters sensory feedback through rhythmic footwork and bodily engagement with the floor.
- Integration of the bodymind: These approaches all reject a purely mechanical understanding of movement, instead focusing on the integration of body ‘and’ mind for holistic well-being and performance. Lessac’s concept of bodyvoice integrates voice and body as a unified system, while LBMS examines the interplay between movement, spatial intent, and expressiveness. Skinner Releasing Technique fosters integration by moving from “doing” to “becoming” movement, aligning internal sensations with external expression. Horton and tap engage participants in linking internal focus with external form through principles of anatomical alignment and rhythmic awareness.
- Holistic learning and expressiveness: Each approach moves beyond functional execution to embrace the expressive and communicative potential of movement. Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies includes the theme of function–expression, blending utilitarian and communicative aspects of movement. Lessac integrates sensory learning and kinaesthetic awareness to enhance expressive capacity. Skinner Releasing Technique encourages

creative exploration through imagery, while Horton and tap engage participants in cultivating expressive and rhythmic skills.

- Kinaesthetic and somatic exploration: All five approaches encourage kinaesthetic exploration to deepen self-awareness and expand movement possibilities. Lessac Kinesensics involves explorations of body and vocal energy states, while LBMS explores developmental patterns and spatial relationships. Skinner Releasing Technique uses kinaesthetic imagery and partner work to deepen self-awareness, while Horton focuses on dynamic physical engagement. Tap dancing incorporates kinaesthetic learning through rhythmic footwork and improvisational creativity.
- Adaptability and creative problem-solving: A common emphasis across these approaches is adaptability and creativity in movement. Lessac focuses on self-guided learning and organic instruction; LBMS encourages exploration of inner–outer connections; and SRT promotes flexibility through imagery-based action. Horton and tap dancing both incorporate improvisational elements that foster adaptability and responsiveness to changing stimuli or rhythm.

Aligning on the basis of these foundational elements – breath, alignment, embodied awareness, holistic learning, kinaesthetic exploration, and adaptability – these approaches support a comprehensive understanding of the bodymind connection. This shared focus on developing expressive and adaptable movement, contributes to the participants' ability to manage stress, cultivate prosilience, and enhance their overall well-being.

The shared elements, as well as the four themes of the programme also feed into the LK process of SPAR (sensation, perception, awareness, and response), reinforcing the programme's focus on sensory engagement and embodied responsiveness. In selecting these four themes, the programme taps into applicable aspects of movement that enhance awareness, habitual repatterning, and prosilience. Below, I provide a bird's eye view of the programme themes (Figure 21) to present a visual connection of how the themes feed into SPAR to eventually lead to enhanced SWB.

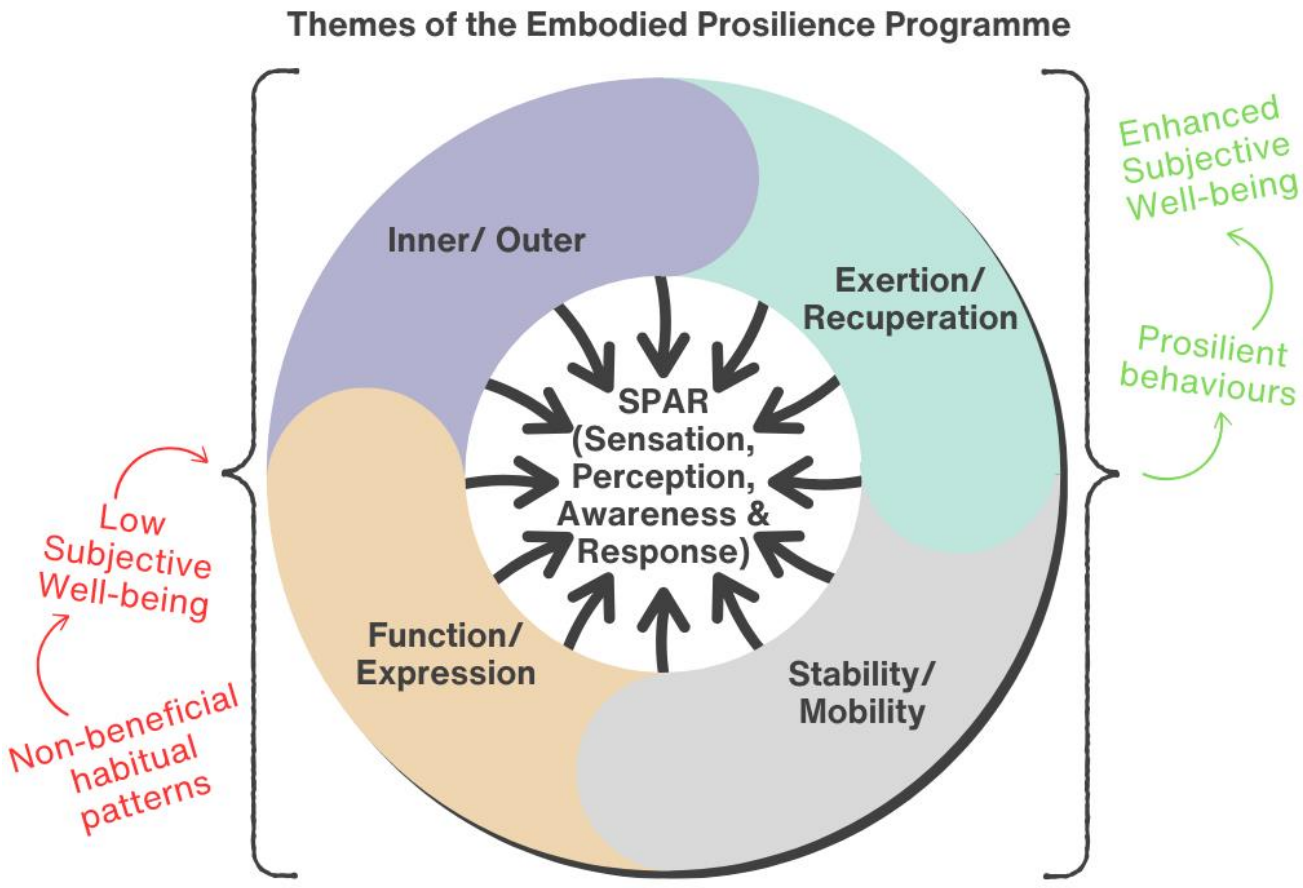


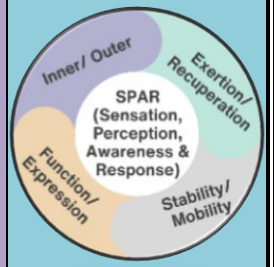
Figure 21: Themes of the EPP (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

On the following pages, I outline each session of the EPP in Table 5. This table clarifies how each of the sessions is inspired by the five approaches of Lessac Kinesensics, Laban/ Bartenieff Movement Studies, Skinner Releasing Technique, Horton technique, and tap dancing. In the table, I indicate how each session adheres to the themes of the programme, as well as to somaesthetic practices, embodied learning, embodied cognition, and stress prosilience at work. For a detailed breakdown of each exploration, please refer to Appendix C, and for a breakdown of each session, please refer to Appendix F.

The first two rows in Table 5 serve as headings for everything underneath. The table and the bird's eye view of the themes that precedes it aim to clarify the motivation for each decision I made for each session, as well as how the programme can enhance the subjective well-being of call centre agents.

5.10 Outline of each session in the EPP

Table 5: Outline of each session in the EPP (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

12 Sessions	**5 Approaches**					**Somaesthetic strategies**	**Embodiment**		**Stress Prosilience**	**Programme Themes**
Aim of session	**Lessac Kinesensics**	**Laban/ Bartenieff Movement Studies**	**Horton technique**	**Skinner Releasing Technique**	**Tap dancing**	**Experiential somaesthetic strategies**	**Embodied learning**	**Embodied cognition**	**Stress prosilience at work**	
Session 1: Awareness of inner–outer and breath										
Awareness of inner in relation to outer and increased awareness of breath.	Pleasure smelling, sighing, tune-in and pain relievers.	Inner–outer connectivity .		Deep release imagery and drawn body maps.	Tapping of the feet through stamps, brushes and ball beats and heel beats (see Appendix E).	The embodied sensing and perceiving self is the main source of the data. Pre-perception to gain interest in habitual holding patterns.	Sensory awareness of the inner and outer.	Agency to improve life by becoming aware of tension or pain.	Focusing on self-care (through an awareness of safety in the body) to ensure better adaptability for future stressors.	A focus on sensing and perceiving the inner–outer relationship so that awareness of sense of safety can increase (SPA).

Session 2: Breath and core–distal connectivity										
Identify how to navigate habitual patterns by using core-distal connectivity and a focus on breath through visualisation.	Pleasure smelling and sighing, tune-in and the bend-over series.	Core–distal connectivity using shape forms such as pin, wall, and ball.	Adapted flat back and arm isolations next to the head. Squats.	Collapsing and releasing.	Tapping heel and ball beats and brushes, to aid in becoming aware of grounding.	Sustained attention to become aware of breath in the body and to connect to the other principle of contrast of feeling, where participants gain an awareness of tension and holding patterns.	Using self-teaching with individual tune-up and becoming aware of the continuous change of breath and with core-distal connectivity.	Exploring the bodymind as part of the world by focusing on using breath to release patterns so that core-distal connectivity can improve.	Focusing on self-care by using the teacher within to focus on supporting the self. Focus energy to reduce excess or unnecessary tension.	Expansion of the body into space as exertion, with retreating as recuperation. Function focusing on the core–distal connection by sensing and perceiving safety and becoming aware of responses in the body (SPAR).
Session 3: Core–distal and head–tail connectivity										
Identify habitual patterns that hamper the dynamic and effective integration of the spine by gaining an awareness of head–tail connectivity.	Bend-over series, wafting and waving as well as habitual awareness.	Playing with the head and tail as partners.	Isolations of the hips and pelvis while seated.	Applying visualisation while exploring a body map to release tension.		Sustained attention by focusing on certain areas over a longer period to focus on habitual holding patterns and then, with creative self-fashioning, using explorations to become more connected through the core.	Reflecting on own habitual patterns, focusing on personal uniqueness and effectively connecting through the spine.	Acknowledging the sensing process by allowing new awareness and responses to form to improve life.	Gaining new bodyminded knowledge through practices that aid in self-care. Focusing on the effective and unique usage of breath to adapt and use energy effectively.	Connecting the inner and outer environments with sensing and perceiving that which is impeding function through the head–tail connection and allowing appropriate responses to form (SPAR).

Session 4: Head–tail and upper–lower connectivity and consonant NRG										
Gain an awareness of the connection between the upper and lower body and become aware of using the voice as part of the bodymind, specifically starting with consonants.	Exploring with consonant NRG. Allowing shaking to amplify consonant awareness.	Pelvic forward and lateral shifts to explore stability and mobility and the upper-lower connection.		Use of imagery to encourage the release of pain, tension or patterns.	Tapping of the feet and hands to shake the body even further.	Focusing on the contrast of feeling to discover the difference between pain and tension in the upper body and the lower body. This allows for complexity in the experience of habitual patterns.	Becoming aware of habitual patterns by focusing on sensory awareness and allowing the teacher within to guide self-teaching and repatterning of habitual patterns.	Agency to change, encouraging greeting each other and moving together with others. This allows the experience of intersubjective being to make meaning.	Support by considering how the upper and lower body can support each other so the rest of the body is mobile and free, to make meaning with more ease in the world. This further links to guiding where energy is focused while networks are explored.	Focus on stability–mobility by focusing on how keeping the upper body provides stability with the lower body gaining mobility. In terms of SPAR, the participants are encouraged to gain more awareness through sensing and perceiving any habitual tension in the bodymind.
Session 5: Upper–lower and homolateral connectivity and structural NRG										
Gain an awareness of the connection between the body halves while exploring the structure of	Yawn of the body into the yawn of the facial muscles.	Body half exploration to explore habitual patterns.	Adapted fortifications and isolations of the body halves.	Including visualisation focused on colours to aid with release of habitual tension or pain.		Focus on sustained attention towards acquired familiar events (from Lessac Kinesensics) such as pleasure smelling and embracing the incipient yawn to	Becoming aware of their personal unique ways of experiencing change in the body.	Further build on the previous sessions to create agency in the bodymind of each participant to make meaning and facilitate change.	Exploring the structure of the oral cavity and the connection between the two body halves to create new bodyminded knowledge.	Focus on stability–mobility in the two body halves in an attempt to sense and feel the connection so they can gain awareness, and learn new responses (SPAR) to the habitual way of being

the oral cavity.						acquire forward facial orientation.				
Session 6: Homolateral and contralateral connectivity with consonant, structural, and tonal NRG										
Gain an awareness of the contralateral body connection while expanding structural and consonant NRG and introducing tonal NRG.	Bone-conducted tone as a familiar event through humming. Using horselips to explore FFO and breathe.	Pre-thigh lift, knee drops and the kinesphere to enhance the contra-lateral connection in the body.	Working with asymmetry while lengthening in space. The falling or folding of the upper body over the lower body also aids release in the body.	Deep focus with key markers (see explorations) to ensure release and awareness in the body. Using storytelling as a method of reflection.	Tapping of the feet to aid in the experience of dynamic weight shifts and the shaking of the body.	Pre-perception to gain interest in all the connections that have already been explored in the bodies of the participants and to include the final connection through sustained attention.	Use awareness of their inner and outer environments to utilise all the explored connections and become aware of new possibilities.	Focusing on acting and sensing as interrelated with thinking to explore which connections and vocal needs need to be improved so there is agency to improve life.	Focusing energy and breath into the appropriate spaces of the body to encourage self-care so that the participant can use the connections in the body to be more adaptable.	Exploring function–expression by ensuring all the connection that have been explored are recapped and built on with a focus on tone, to establish enhanced expression.
Session 7: Recap body connections, Consonant NRG, Structural NRG and Tone NRG										
To solidify what the participants have sensed and felt in the previous sessions and encourage the start of what could	This session recaps all the explorations that have been explored during the previous sessions and encourages the combination of them all in a phase that includes a focus on Laban/ Bartenieff Movement Studies, Lessac Kinesensics, the Horton technique, Skinner Releasing Technique and tap dance.					Somaesthetic principle of focusing on change and interest by increasing interest in the habitual patterns and held parts that the participants have identified. Through	Habitual patterns and repatterning come to the fore by means of repeating that which has been sensed and	Becoming aware of agency to improve life since I encourage the participants to recap the sessions thus far and use their own agency to	Use of various practices to facilitate new bodyminded knowledge by replacing dysfunctional ways of being with new habitual patterns. This can	In terms of SPAR, the participants have sensed and perceived all their habitual patterns to gain awareness throughout all the previous sessions. This session is specifically focused

aid in repatterning of habitual patterns through repetition and awareness.						a focus on the habitual patterns and new prosilience-related behaviours, participants may facilitate change with a further interest in new explorations and patterns.	felt as the most effective for the participants. They can self-teach with their new awareness.	create a new pattern phrase that can aid them in facilitating a new way of living in an embodied manner.	encourage stress prosilience at work by focusing on self-care, the effective usage of energy, and finding proactive support in preparation for stress.	on response by encouraging the participants to find more effective ways of being.
Session 8: Language and phrases										
To encourage participants to move their awareness of vibrations as well as consonant, structural and tonal NRG into spoken words and phrases.	Exploring structural, consonant and tonal NRG with various words and phrases. Remaining aware of the body NRGs.	Staying aware of the body connection during exploring by ensuring the repetition of the pattern phrase.		Using deep-release imagery to encourage release in the body and voice so the participants can start exploring phrases effectively.	Tapping the feet while shaking the body to relax and energise the body.	This session builds on the previous focus of changing or repatterning habits through elevated interest in these habits and then exploring new ways of being specifically focused on the sustained attention of the participants on consonant, structural and tonal NRG.	The session focuses on embodied learning specifically through sensing and feeling of vibrations in and of the bony parts of the face and moving this awareness into phrases.	The session uses the principle of intersubjective being to make meaning by encouraging duo work so the participants can help each other identify any patterns and help each other make meaning of their own	The session encourages the usage of practices to facilitate new bodyminded knowledge by actively applying the vocal NRGs to the language and phrases the participants use at work.	The session mainly focuses on ensuring that the body and voice that is now likely functioning in a more efficient manner can lead to effective expression by starting to add the voice. Sensing and feeling that has led to new awareness, leads to new responses (SPAR) by means of exploring the vocal NRGs along with the

								personal uniqueness.		body NRGs and connections.
Session 9: Exploring the script										
To encourage the participants to move their awareness of consonant, structural and tonal NRG into their script they use every day by means of embodied explorations.	Carrying over Structural, consonant and tonal NRG to a script and the objection-handling[135] documents the participants use every day.	Staying aware of the body connection by ensuring the repetition of the pattern phrase.	Using improv of movements to explore and enhance experience.		Tapping the feet while shaking the body to relax and energise the body. Playing around with various rhythms and speeds of movement.	Sustained attention remains at the forefront since, through a repetitive focus on sensing and feeling consonant, structural and tonal NRGs, the participants can use creative self-fashioning of adapting their script to their personal uniqueness.	The vibrations and awareness of vocal NRGs explored during the previous session are used to identify any habitual tension or strain in the voice or jaw that the participants	The focus of the session is to use agency to improve their lives. By becoming aware of how they habitually use their script and adapting it to use it effectively, they can improve their way of communicating, whether on the phone or not.	In terms of stress prosilience at work, exploring the script aids the participants to prepare for uncertainty that comes with new calls with new customers, therefore actively preparing for stress by replacing dysfunctional ways of being, such as limiting habitual patterns.	The responses (SPAR) of the previous session are amplified by moving the awareness of vocal NRGs from the previous session to the script the participants are using daily.

[135] The objection-handling document is a few pages of possible responses the participants are encouraged to use when a prospect does not want to answer questions from the script.

							have encountered.			
Session 10: Role-playing on calls, Session 11: Role-playing in the office & Session 12: Role-playing a day in the life										
To encourage the participants to keep and carry over their awareness of consonant, structural and tonal NRG as well as explorations of the body into roleplaying with various types of customers or experiences.	The last three sessions focus on solidifying all the explorations of the previous sessions by combining them in different ways in preparation for various scenarios. The last three sessions combine the material from the various approaches (Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies, Lessac Kinesensics, Horton technique, Skinner Releasing Technique and tap dance) used in this programme.					The last three sessions focus on creative self-fashioning by specifically identifying how the participants can use the self as the main source of data to gain agency and improve their way of living.	Utilise their teacher within so they can keep focusing on the repatterning of their habitual patterns while sensing and feeling what they still need to do to self-teach themselves to become their most effective selves.	The embodied cognition focus of gaining agency to improve life reaches the peak in the last three sessions, by encouraging the participants to role-play regarding any changes they still need to make in and as part of their bodyminds.	The focus of the last three sessions is to solidify the awareness of replacing dysfunctional ways of being (habitual patterns) in preparation for and during each day by ensuring the participants learn new bodyminded knowledge.	The last three sessions revisit sensation, perception and awareness (SPA) during real-life scenarios so the participants can learn the most effective responses (the R in SPAR) in every possible circumstance.

Table 5 above provides a broad overview of each session of the EPP. I propose that, through these sessions, participants can develop embodied cognition by forming optimal habitual patterns. These patterns can help them navigate and respond to stress more effectively, fostering resilience and adaptive behaviours.

While each of the twelve EPP sessions introduced a distinct theme aligned with embodied prosilience strategies, the structure of the programme explicitly integrated mechanisms to support repetition, contextual application, and habit reinforcement. Rather than presuming a single exposure to material was sufficient to alter ingrained behavioural patterns, I scaffolded the learning through three key design features:

1. Weekly thematic layering, where each new session subtly revisited and deepened the prior one;
2. between-session journaling prompts, which asked participants to reflect on real-time application in workplace stress scenarios; and
3. reinforcement via post-session video messages, designed as environmental cues to revisit and explore embodied awareness during the workday.

This aligns with Clear's (2018) habit loop model (see p.147), which emphasises the importance of cues (in this case, video reminders or internal sensations of stress), cravings (the desire for relief or grounding), responses (e.g., a subtle form of movement, grounding breath, or shift in alignment), and rewards (subjective reduction in tension or increase in proactivity in relation to stress-filled events). During post-programme reflections, several participants reported that recognising bodily tension or shallow breathing became cues that triggered a prosilient response. In this way, habit transformation was not expected to occur instantly but was initiated through a combination of somatic anchoring, repetitive exploration, and personalised reflection.

Next, I provide a bird's eye view of the programme (Figure 22) in order to synthesise the discussion thus far, along with the sessions I outlined.

5.11 Bird's eye view of the EPP

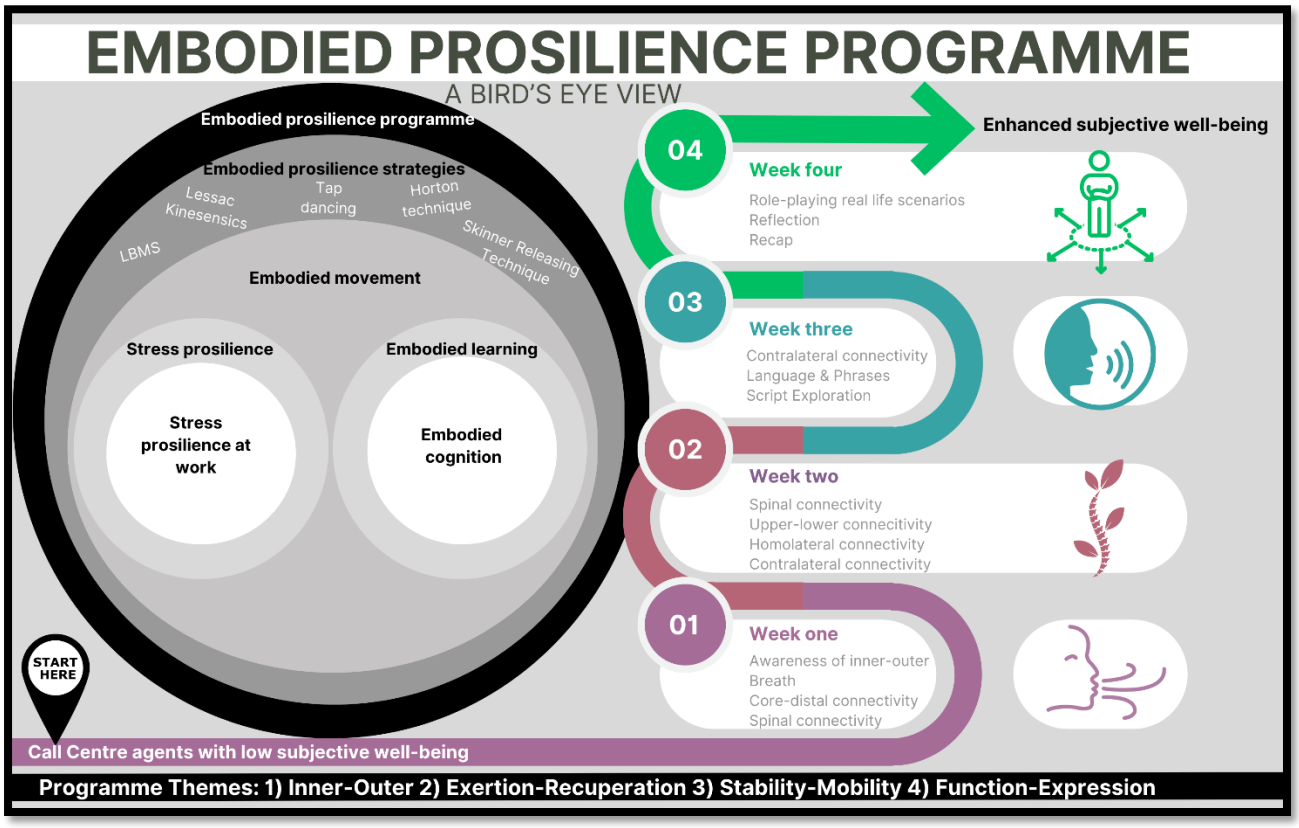


Figure 22: A bird's eye view of the EPP (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

This chapter has outlined the session structure of the EPP, through the lens of the themes, Inner/Outer, Exertion/Recuperation, Stability/Mobility, and Function/Expression, that feed into the process of SPAR.

5.12 Conclusion

The EPP aims to encourage an awareness and repatterning of habitual patterns by guiding the participants through 12 sessions based on the four LBMS themes. The practices will become familiar events through embodied cognition that agents can use regularly. In this way, individuals may gain vision, understanding, clarity, agility, resilience, flexibility, empathy, mindfulness, context, transparency and intuition in relation to stress in the VUCA/BANI world. This enables participants to cultivate a deeper sense of embodiment, allowing them to explore ways to build prosilience in relation to stress. I argue that this may enhance their SWB.

This chapter synthesises theoretical notions from earlier discussions to form a distinct eclectic pedagogical framework for the EPP. By drawing on an eclectic mix of approaches, I have developed a structure that promotes embodied somatic practice, while also adapting techniques that may not inherently encourage bodymindedness. As Magalhães (2023:6) observes, all approaches possess the potential to be taught somatically or mechanically. Through the lens of embodied pedagogy and eclecticism, I have demonstrated how both somatic approaches (LK, LBMS & SRT) and approaches that do not necessarily encourage somatic practice (tap dancing and Horton technique) can be applied to support bodymindedness in participants by aligning with somaesthetic practices.

In this chapter, I described phase 2 of the research. I focused on outlining the practical application of the theoretical concepts introduced in the previous chapters. This phase transitioned from theory to practice by defining somatics as the field and employing somaesthetics as the pedagogical framework. In this chapter, I unpacked the embodied prosilience strategies drawn from somatic practices that are essential for the development of the EPP. The purpose of this phase was to translate the theoretical underpinnings of bodymind and embodiment into implementable strategies that facilitate prosilience through embodied learning.

By specifically defining and outlining each embodied somatic strategy used in the programme, I ensured an understanding of how these approaches engage the participants' bodyminded selves. The EPP aims to help participants transition from habitual, stress-inducing patterns to more adaptive and prosilient ways of being.

The table and strategies presented in the EPP are designed to operationalise this eclectic pedagogical framework, offering targeted pathways to cultivating bodymindedness and prosilience. By integrating diverse approaches, each with specific pedagogical drivers and explorations, the EPP may facilitate the development of embodied cognition and new habitual patterns that are required to practice prosilience in relation to stress. The EPP's structure aligns with somaesthetic principles, ensuring that participants not only learn techniques but internalise them as embodied knowledge. Consequently, the EPP aims to help participants transition from habitual, stress-inducing patterns to more adaptive and prosilient ways of being.

The combination of various approaches in the EPP reflects the fostering of efficient embodiment through the application of somatic approaches aligned with somaesthetic practice, referred to here as embodied prosilience strategies. This integration of diverse approaches offers a flexible framework for participants to engage with and sustain embodied learning, both within and beyond the EPP. This integration of diverse approaches provides participants with multiple pathways to engage in embodied learning, accommodating individual differences in movement preferences, physical abilities, and learning styles.

In phase 3, I shifted from the design of the programme to its implementation. This phase involved me following a specific session breakdown of the EPP to ensure that each session is aligned with the principles of embodiment, stress prosilience, and the somatic strategies outlined in the previous chapters. I outlined each session in Table 4 (in this chapter), and I provide a more detailed breakdown in Appendix F. I also explained the explorations of each session in Appendix C. This detailed breakdown allowed me to cross-reference the actual sessions with video recordings to confirm that the programme was facilitated as planned, ensuring consistency and integrity in the research process. Additionally, in this phase, participants completed the pre-programme workplace PERMA profiler and semi-structured interviews, which provided baseline data on their subjective well-being.

In phase 4, I focused on facilitating the EPP with the call centre agents. The programme ran for three hours a week for one month – in an office building adjacent to the office in which the call centre agents work – with the primary goal of fostering an awareness of the participants' bodymindedness. The programme took place in the mornings before the participants started working, and they received video reminders directly after the completion of each session. This encouraged the participants to continuously apply what they have learned during each session in their work life, and to journal about how they experienced or dealt with stress due to the practices, until the next session commenced. The participants wore movement-friendly clothing, journaled during this phase and, following the programme, completed the post-programme workplace PERMA profiler.

By drawing on a variety of practices, the EPP aimed to encourage participants to experiment and discover which explorations resonate best with them, fostering a

sense of personal agency and adaptability. This flexibility may support not only continuous learning within the EPP but may also equip participants with tools to apply embodied practices in everyday life, possibly enhancing their ability to respond resiliently to stress in different contexts. As a result, the programme may cultivate lasting skills for managing stress and sustaining well-being through adaptable, body-centred practices.

In the next chapter, I focus on theme extraction for the EPP based on the pre- and post-programme workplace PERMA profilers, semi-structured interviews and the participant journals. The theme extraction illuminates how participants experienced the EPP in relation to stress prosilience and SWB. In the following chapter, I specifically outline how each participant responded to the EPP in order to describe the ways in which each participant transitioned from habitual, stress-inducing patterns to more adaptive and prosilient ways of being in the VUCA/BANI world so as to address the needs of Maslow’s hierarchy.

CHAPTER 6: DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I commence with the first part of phase 5 of the research, namely post-programme data analysis. Data analysis takes place from step 6 to 9 of the phenemonographic process, namely data transcription, identifying of concepts, hierarchy of concepts, and analysis of links. I analyse the data by undertaking theme extraction. I perform theme extraction four times: first with the pre-programme interviews, then with the journals (including body maps), followed by the post-programme interviews, and finally with the workplace PERMA profilers.

I delineate the codes that ATLAS.ti identified. I then categorise these codes, by comparing the categories I identified with the categories that various AI tools (ChatGPT 3.5, POE, and Claude) detected. The categories I present in this chapter are those most prevalent in the analysis conducted by me and the AI tools. After categorisation, I outline sub-themes and resultant themes. To produce a final theme extraction report, I connect the theme extraction of the pre-programme interviews, journals, post-programme interviews and workplace PERMA profilers to identify the overall sub-themes and themes of the EPP. I then group all sentences and remarks from the participants that link to these sub-themes and themes. I present this report in Appendix G.

I thus follow the six steps of theme extraction outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006:6) namely familiarisation with the data[136], generating an initial code, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing a report (Braun & Clarke 2006:16–23). For a thicker description, I adapted Braun and Clarke's (2006:16–23) steps and added the steps of arranging the codes into categories, searching for sub-themes, and reviewing sub-themes (see Chapter 2.6.2 for a detailed explanation).

[136] This step is not demarcated in this chapter as it involves the transcribing of the raw data and highlighting striking remarks. The remarks and sentences of the participants that I highlight are however present in the final theme extraction report (see Appendix G).

6.2 Theme extraction from pre-programme interviews

6.2.1 Codes

ATLAS identified the following codes from the pre-programme interviews:

Table 6: Pre-programme codes (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

Academic pressure	Desire for improvement	Financial stress	Monotony	Seeking support
Adaptation: Change in personality	Disappointment	Frustration	Negative consequences	Self-awareness
Adaptation: Ineffective coping mechanisms	Distraction	Habit	Negative emotions	Self-care
Adaptation: Ineffective coping strategies	Effective communication	Happiness	Negative thoughts	Self-doubt
Adaptation: Lack of coping tools	Effectiveness	Identity	Negativity	Self-reflection
Adaptation: Mental rigidity	Efficiency	Impatience	Nervousness	Sleep
Adaptation: Speech difficulty	Emotional distress	Insecurity	Overwhelm	Stress
Adaptation: University stress	Emotional expression	Irritability	Panic	Stress management
Addiction	Emotional stability	Irritation	Performance	Stress relief
Aggression	Emotional suppression	Isolation	Personal life	Time management
Agitation	Excitement	Lack of appetite	Pessimism	Trauma
Anger	Exhaustion	Lack of assertiveness	Physical discomfort	Uncertainty
Anxiety	Existential crisis	Lack of control	Physical symptoms	University
Avoidance	Fatigue	Lack of energy	Positive emotion	Verbal aggression
Body sensations	Fear	Lack of self-awareness	Pressure	Voice changes
Communication difficulties	Fear of failure	Learning	Procrastination	Work
Confidence	Fear of judgment	Learning from mistakes	Relaxation	Work stress
Coping mechanism	Feeling overwhelmed	Low energy	Remote work	Work-life balance
Coping mechanisms	Finances	Meaningful participation	Restlessness	
Coping strategies	Financial	Mental health	Seeking external validation	

6.2.2 Categories

Based on the codes, I used various AI tools and compared them to my own analysis, to divide the codes into the following categories:

Mental health and well-being

Codes in category:				
Anxiety	Coping mechanisms	Coping strategies	Mental health	Personal life
Relaxation	Restlessness	self-awareness	self-care	self-doubt
self-reflection	Stress	Stress management	Uncertainty	

Emotional regulation

Codes in category:				
Adaptation: Ineffective coping mechanisms	Emotional distress	Emotional expression	Emotional stability	Emotional suppression
Happiness	Negative emotions	Positive emotion		

Challenges and stressors

Codes in category:				
Academic pressure	Adaptation: Change in personality	Adaptation: Ineffective coping strategies	Adaptation: Lack of coping tools	Adaptation: Mental rigidity
Adaptation: Speech difficulty	Adaptation: University stress	Agitation	Anger	Avoidance
Desire for improvement	Disappointment	Distraction	Fatigue	Fear
Fear of failure	Fear of judgement	Financial	Financial stress	Frustration
Impatience	Insecurity	Irritability	Irritation	Lack of assertiveness
Lack of control	Lack of energy	Lack of self-awareness	Low energy	Meaningful participation
Monotony	Negative consequences	Negative thoughts	Nervousness	Being overwhelmed
Panic	Pessimism	Physical discomfort	Physical symptoms	Pressure
Procrastination	Remote work	Seeking external validation	Seeking support	Stress relief
Time management	Trauma	University	Verbal aggression	Voice changes
Work stress				

Coping and wellness practices

Codes in category:				
Coping mechanisms	Coping strategies	Effectiveness	Efficient communication	Learning from mistakes
Relaxation	self-care	Stress management		

6.2.3 Sub-themes

I identified the following sub-themes into which I divided the categories:

Internal experiences

- Mental health and well-being
- Emotional regulation

Life challenges

- Challenges and stressors

Management and growth

- Coping and wellness practices

6.2.4 Themes

I then divided the sub-themes into the main themes:

Intrapersonal experiences

- Internal experiences

Interpersonal experiences

- Life challenges
- Management and growth

Figure 23 below outlines the two themes, three sub-themes and four categories (with multiple codes) extracted from the pre-programme semi-structured interviews.

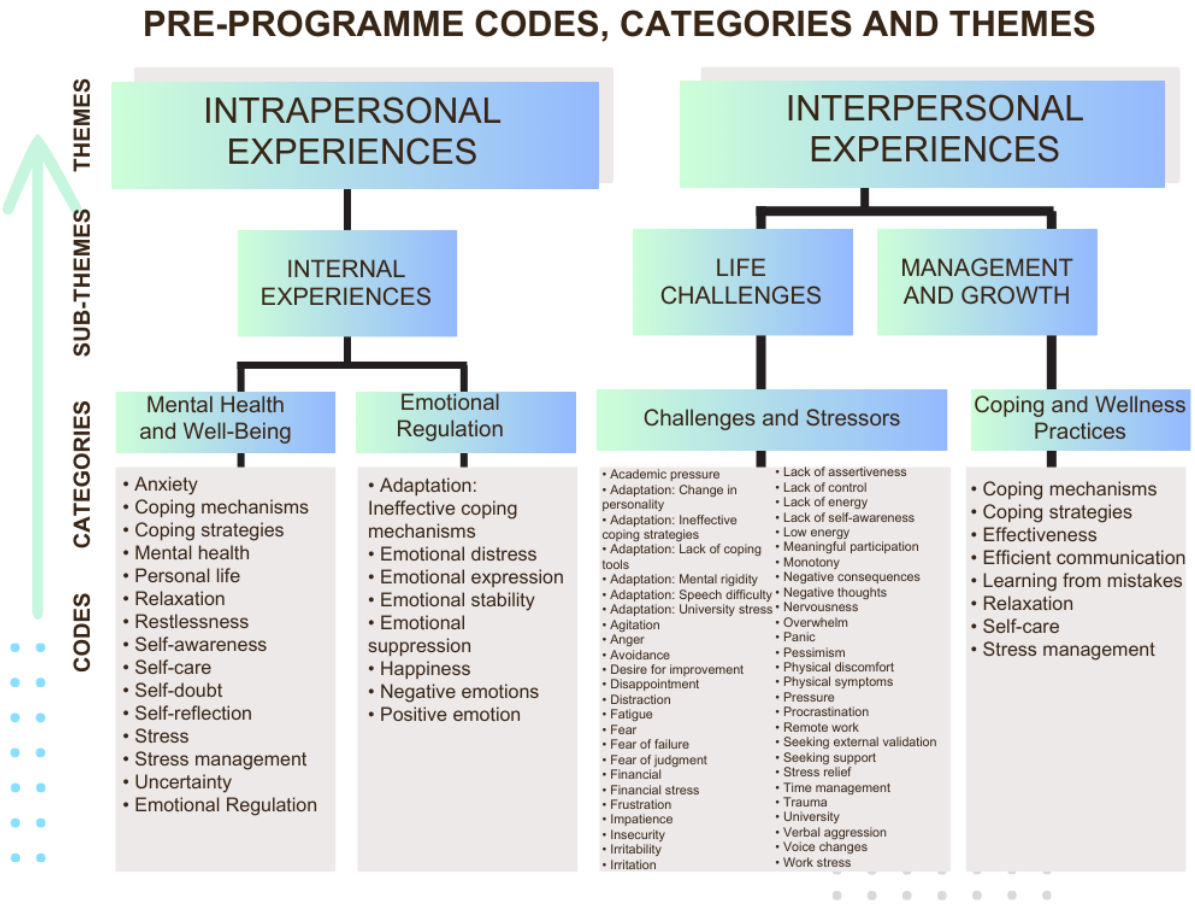


Figure 23: Themes extracted from pre-programme interviews (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

6.3 Theme extraction from post-programme interviews

6.3.1 Codes

ATLAS identified the codes presented in Table 7 from the pre-programme interviews.

Table 7: Post-programme interview codes (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

Academic performance	Emotional awareness	Leisure activities	Recommendation	Self-empowerment
Accomplishment	Emotional expression	Medical diagnosis	Relaxation	Self-expression
Adaptability	Emotional regulation	Mental health	Relief	Self-improvement
Anxiety	Emotional support	Mental well-being	Resilience	Self-reflection
Appreciation	Emotional well-being	Mindfulness	Restlessness	Self-regulation
Attention to detail	Empathy	Mindset shift	Self-assessment	Sensory experience
Authenticity	Enjoyment	Morning routine	Self-awareness	Sensory stimulation
Behavior change	Family dynamics	Oral communication	Self-care	Social connection
Body awareness	Focus	Pain relief	Self-care: Conscious breathing	Social engagement
Body movement	Goal setting	Performance improvemer	Self-care: Emotional acceptance	Stress
Calmness	Gratitude	Personal growth	Self-care: Improved appetite	Stress management
Comfort	Grounding	Personal life	Self-care: Positive affirmations	Success
Communication	Growth	Perspective shift	Self-care: Speech control	Uncertainty
Communication skills	Habits	Physical exercise	Self-care: Stress coping strategies	Vulnerability
Connection	Happiness	Physical well-being	Self-care: Voice modulation	
Consciousness	Health concerns	Positive change	Self-care: Voice training	
Coping mechanism	Impact	Positive impact	Self-confidence	
Coping mechanisms	Improvement	Positive mindset	Self-consciousness	
Coping strategies	Increased confidence	Preparation	Self-control	
Effectiveness	Joy	Privilege	Self-doubt	

6.3.2 Categories

Based on the codes, I used various AI tools and compared them to my own analysis, to divide the codes into the following categories:

Mental processes and perspectives

Codes in category:				
Academic performance	Calmness	Consciousness	Emotional regulation	Empathy
Focus	Gratitude	Mental well-being	Mindfulness	Oral communication
Perspective shift	self-awareness	self-care: Conscious breathing	self-care: Voice modulation	self-care: Voice training
self-confidence	self-consciousness	self-regulation	Uncertainty	

Emotional states and wellness

Codes in category:				
Anxiety	Emotional awareness	Emotional expression	Emotional well-being	Happiness
Impact	Joy	Relaxation	Restlessness	Sensory experience
Stress	Vulnerability			

Behaviour and habits

Codes in category:				
Behaviour change	Coping mechanisms	Coping strategies	Habits	Improvement
Personal growth	Preparation	self-care	self-improvement	

Physical experiences

Codes in category:				
Body awareness	Body movement	Comfort	Physical exercise	Physical well-being
Sensory stimulation				

Relationships

Codes in category:				
Communication	Connection	Emotional support	Empathy	Family dynamics
Social connection	Social engagement			

Growth and development

Codes in category:					
Accomplishment	Adaptability	Appreciation	Attention to detail	Authenticity	Effectiveness
Goal setting	Growth	Increased confidence	Medical diagnosis	Mental health	Mindset shift
Pain relief	Personal growth	Positive change	Positive impact	Positive mindset	Privilege
Recommendation	Relief	Resilience	self-assessment	self-care: Emotional acceptance	self-care: Improved appetitive
self-care: Positive affirmations	self-care: Speech control	self-confidence	self-control	self-doubt	self-empowerment
self-expression	self-reflection				

Health and wellness

Codes in category:				
Emotional well-being	Health concerns	Leisure activities	Mental well-being	Mindset shift
Morning routine	Physical exercise	Physical well-being	Sensory stimulation	Stress management

6.3.3 Sub-themes

I identified the following sub-themes into which I divided the categories:

Inner experiences

- Mental processes and perspectives
- Emotional states and wellness

Actions and routines

- Behaviour and habits
- Physical experiences

Relationships and support

- Relationships

Growth over time

- Growth and development

Holistic health

- Health and wellness

6.3.4 Themes

I then divided the sub-themes into the main themes:

Intrapersonal experiences

- Inner experiences
- Growth over time
- Holistic health
- Intra-actions and routines (physical experiences)

Interpersonal experiences

- Actions and routines (behaviours and habits)
- Relationships and support

Figure 24 below outlines the two themes, five sub-themes and seven categories (with multiple codes) extracted from the post-programme semi-structured interviews.

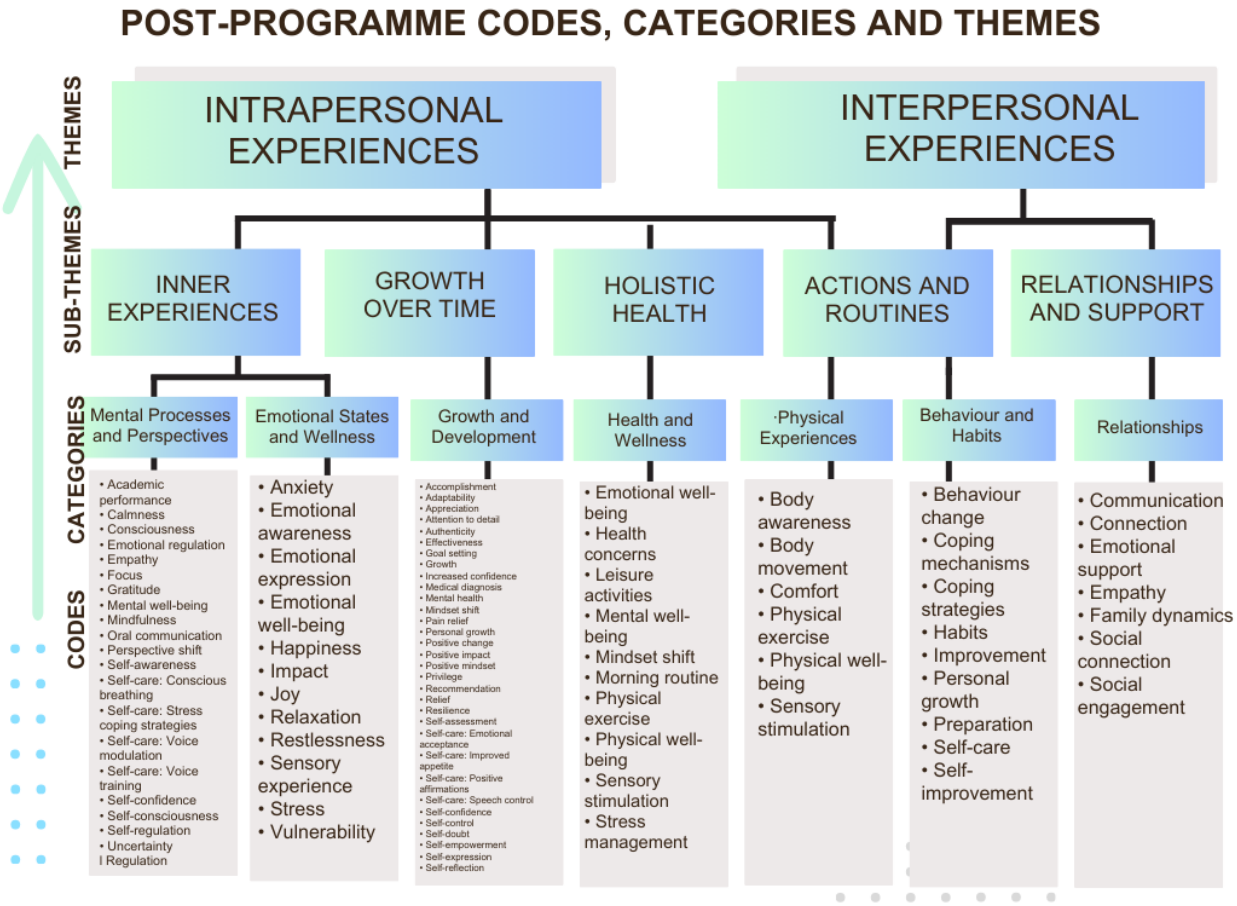


Figure 24: Themes extracted from post-programme interviews (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

6.4 Theme extraction from participant journals

6.4.1 Codes

ATLAS identified the codes presented in Table 8 in the participant journals.

Table 8: Participant journal codes (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

Adaptability	Desire	Future orientation	Overcoming fear	Seeking support
Alignment	Difficulty expressing emotions	Gender stereotypes	Overthinking	Self-affirmation
Anxiety	Discomfort	Goal-setting	Overwhelm	Self-awareness
Anxiety reduction	Discomfort: Physical discomfort or pain	Gratitude	Pain	Self-care
Appreciation	Discomfort: Soreness	Grounding	Pain management	Self-confidence
Attention to detail	Disconnection	Growth	Pain relief	Self-control
Awareness	Disorientation	Growth mindset	Paranoia	Self-exploration
Awkwardness	Distractibility	Habit	Pattern	Self-expression
Bodily sensations	Distraction	Habit formation	Peace	Self-improvement
Body awareness	Efficiency	Habits	Perception	Self-reflection
Body language	Embodiment	Happiness	Performance improvement	Self-regulation
Body mechanics: Body alignment	Emotional connection	Health	Personal development	Sensation
Body mechanics: Body habits	Emotional exhaustion	Health maintenance	Personal growth	Sensory awareness
Body mechanics: Body movements	Emotional experience	Helpfulness	Physical activities	Sensory experience
Body mechanics: Body reactions	Emotional fluctuation	Hydration	Physical awareness	Sensory experience: Environmental stimuli
Body mechanics: Body tension	Emotional regulation	Imagery	Physical discomfort	Sensory experience: Metaphorical experience
Body mechanics: Favorite movements	Emotional response	Impact	Physical exercise	Sensory experience: Physical exploration
Body mechanics: Habitual behavior	Emotional state	Improvement	Physical health	Sensory experience: Positive physical sensations
Body mechanics: Hunching	Emotional well-being	Inattention	Physical pain	Sensory perception
Body mechanics: Weight distribution	Emotions	Individual differences	Physical relief	Sensory stimulation
Body posture	Empathy	Injury	Physical sensation	Skill development
Body relaxation	Empowerment	Integration	Physical sensations	Stability
Body sensations	Encouragement	Intention	Physical symptoms	Stiffness
Breathing	Energetic	Intentionality	Physical well-being	Stress
Breathing techniques	Energized	Issue	Positive change	Stress management
Burnout	Energizing	Issues: Neck issues	Positive emotion	Stress management: coping mechanism
Calmness	Energy	Issues: Personal life issues	Positive experience	Stress management: Effects of posture
Change	Energy management	Laughter	Positive feedback	Stress management: Physical movement
Clarity	Engagement	Learning	Positive mood	Stress management: Physical posture
Color perception	Enhancement	Learning difficulties	Posture	Stress management: Physical relaxation
Comfort	Enhancement: Elevated mood	Learning process	Preparation	Stress management: Physical tension
Comfortable	Enhancement: Emotional tension	Management	Pressure	Stress management: Recuperation
Communication	Enhancement: Higher target	Memory	Procrastination	Stress management: Release of tension
Communication effectiveness	Enhancement: Improved focus	Mental clarity	Productivity	Stress management: Self-soothing
Communication skills	Enhancement: Mental energizing	Mental resilience: Mental strength	Professional development	Stress management: Sound therapy
Communication skills: Improving communication skills	Enjoyment	Mental resilience: self-control	Professionalism	Stress relief
Communication skills: Speech clarity	Environment	Mental resilience: Stress-management	Progress	Struggle
Communication skills: Vocal health and physiology	Exploration	Mental well-being	Relaxation	Success
Communication skills: Vocal projection	Expression	Mind-body connection	Relaxation techniques	Technique
Communication skills: Voice control	Facial expression	Mindfulness	Release	Techniques
Compliance	Familiarity	Mobility	Relief	Tension
Confidence	Fatigue	Motivation	Renewal	Trust
Confusion	Fatigue and stress: Mental fatigue	Movement	Resilience	Visualization
Contentment	Fatigue and stress: Physical fatigue	Muscle tension	Response	Well-being
Control	Fatigue and stress: Stress response	Nausea	Rest	Wisdom
Coping mechanism	Fatigue: Tired	Nonverbal communication	Rest and relaxation	Work
Coping mechanisms	Financial resources	Nostalgia	Restlessness	Work satisfaction
Coping strategies	Flexibility	Observation	Rotation	Work stress
Creativity	Focus	Openness	Sacrifice	Work-life balance
Curiosity	Focused attention	Optimization	Sadness	

6.4.2 Categories

Based on the codes, I used various AI tools and compared them to my own analysis, to divide the codes into the following categories:

Mental and emotional states

Codes in category:				
Anxiety	Calmness	Coping mechanisms	Coping strategies	Emotional regulation
Emotional well-being	Empathy	Focus	Gratitude	Mental well-being
Mindfulness	Restlessness	self-awareness	Stress	Confusion
Being overwhelmed	self-regulation	Positive emotion	Enhance: Elevated mood	

Physical experiences

Codes in category:				
Body awareness	Bodily sensations	Comfort	Physical discomfort	Physical exercise
Physical sensations	Physical symptoms	Physical well-being	Sensory experience	Sensory awareness
Sensory perception	Pain	Pain relief	Physical relief	Body mechanics

Personal development

Codes in category:				
Adaptability	Appreciation	Communication	Communication skills	Grounding
Habits	Improvement	Personal growth	Preparation	Relaxation
Relief	Resilience	self-care	self-confidence	self-control
self-expression	self-improvement	self-reflection	Stress management	

Health and functioning

Codes in category:				
Alignment	Awareness	Clarity	Discomfort	Emotional exhaustion
Fatigue	Health	Hydration	Issues	Mobility
Muscle tension	Stiffness	Tension	Well-being	Work satisfaction
Distractibility				

Techniques and practices

Codes in category:				
Breathing techniques	Energy management	Goal setting	Habit formation	Imagery
Motivation	Pain management	Physical activities	Posture	Progress
Relaxation technique	Skill development	Stress management techniques		

Challenges

Codes in category:				
Burnout	Change	Difficulty expressing emotions	Disconnection	Emotional distress
Emotional fluctuation	Emotional state	Fatigue	Health concerns	Inattention
Injury	Issues	Lack of focus	Learning difficulties	Negativity
Overthinking	Pain	Physical pain	Pressure	Procrastination
Sadness	Seeking support	Struggle	Work stress	

6.4.3 Sub-themes

I identified the following sub-themes into which I divided the categories:

Inner experiences

- Mental and emotional states
- Physical experiences

Personal growth

- Personal development

Holistic functioning

- Health and functioning

Practices and routines

- Techniques and practices

Life challenges

- Challenges

6.4.4 Themes

I then divided the sub-themes into the main themes:

Intrapersonal experiences

- Inner experiences
- Holistic functioning
- Personal growth

Interpersonal experiences

- Practices and routines
- Life challenges

Figure 25 below outlines the two themes, five sub-themes and six categories (with multiple codes) extracted from the participants' journals.

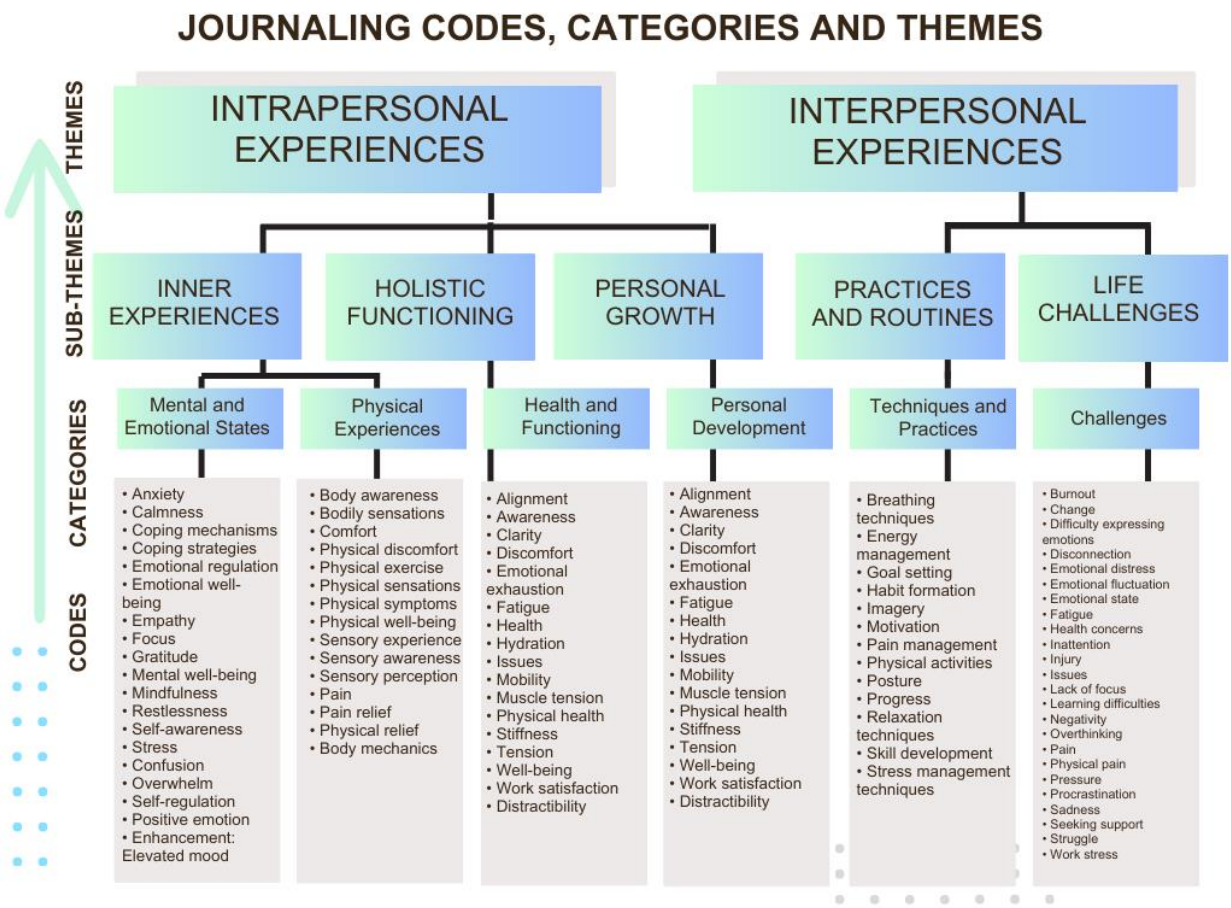


Figure 25: Themes extracted from participant journals (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

6.5 Theme extraction from workplace PERMA profilers

Since the PERMA profilers are responses to the subjective experience of certain aspects of well-being, I decided to take a different approach with the theme extraction. If I were to look at pre- or post-programme PERMA profilers in isolation, they would provide no relational data to work with. I therefore undertook the theme extraction by focusing on the changes that occurred for each participant, and for the participants overall, to outline which PERMA codes, categories, and themes are most prevalent in this study.

I first outlined the results for each participant, and then overall, after which I generated codes, categories, sub-themes, and themes.

6.5.1 Changes in subjective well-being based on PERMA profilers

In this section, I provide the results from the workplace PERMA profilers that the participants completed before and after the programme. In Chapter 2.6.1.6 (see p. 62), I outlined exactly how the calculation for each section was done, and what the result of each component means. The bar graphs for each participant indicate the mean of their experience of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment, overall well-being (PERMA), negative emotion, health, and loneliness. The grey bar graph indicates the pre-programme experience of the participant and the blue their post-programme experience.

Following the analysis of the graph for each participant (Figure 26 to Figure 33), I provide a bar graph that is based on the overall changes in SWB resulting from the programme, one which combines the responses of all the participants (Figure 34). This section indicates to what extent the creation of prosilience-related behaviours in an EPP facilitates an enhanced sense of SWB for call centre agents, and what themes can be drawn out of such an analysis.

6.5.1.1 Participant A

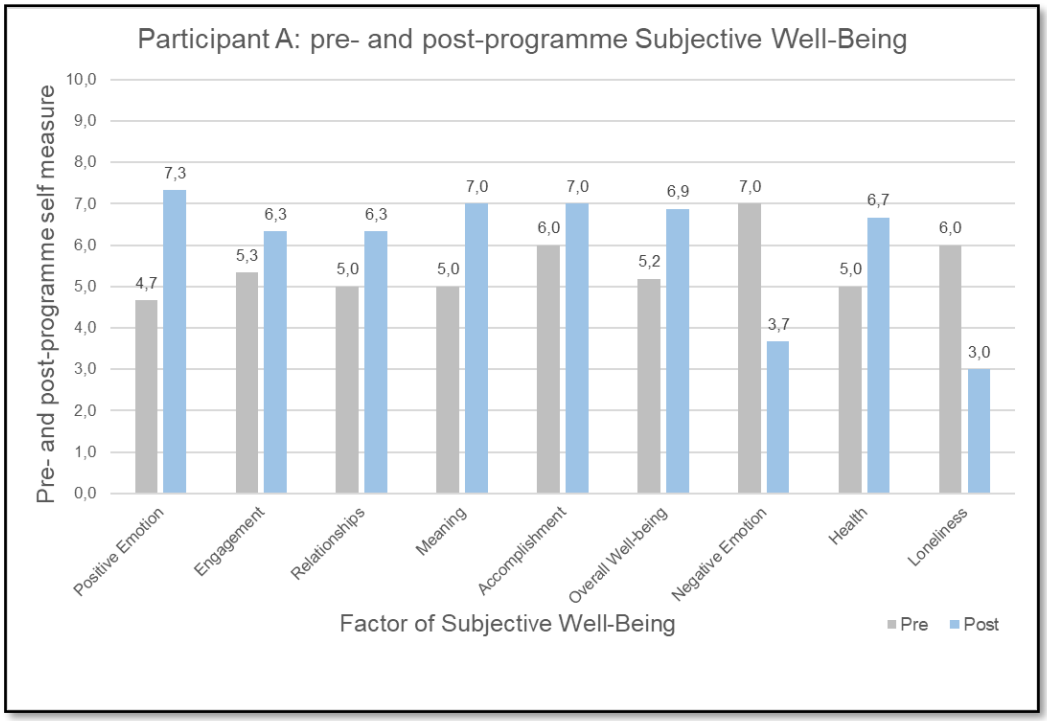


Figure 26: Participant A – pre- and post-programme SWB (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

- Positive emotion: From 4.7 (languishing) to 7.3 (normal functioning) = +2.6
- Engagement: From 5.3 (sub-effective functioning) to 6.3 (sub-effective functioning) = +1
- Relationships: From 5 (sub-effective functioning) to 6.3 (sub-effective functioning) = +1.3
- Meaning: From 5 (sub-effective functioning) to 7 (normal functioning) = +2
- Accomplishment: From 6 (sub-effective functioning) to 7 (normal functioning) = +1
- Overall well-being: From 5.2 (sub-effective functioning) to 6.9 (normal functioning) = +1.7
- Negative emotion: From 7 (languishing) to 3.7 (normal functioning) = -3.3
- Health: From 5 (sub-effective functioning) to 6.7 (normal functioning) = +1.7
- Loneliness: From 6 (sub-effective functioning) to 3 (high functioning) = -3

Participant A's experience of positive emotions increased the most of all their factors (+2.6), shifting from languishing to normal functioning. Engagement (+1) and relationships (+1.3) improved but remained in the sub-effective range, possibly indicating that some challenges with motivation and social bonds persisted after the programme. Meaning improved for the participant (+2) and rose into the normal range, reflecting a stronger sense of purpose regarding their role as a call centre agent. Accomplishment (+1) was also enhanced though it remained sub-effective, denoting a lower than ideal level of productivity and achievement. Overall well-being (PERMA) increased (+1.7) though remaining sub-effective, which demonstrates that Participant A's subjective well-being improved but remains an area for further growth.

Participant A's experience of negative emotions improved the most of all the factors (-3.3), transitioning from languishing to normal. Health was enhanced (+1.7), though it remained sub-effective. Loneliness was reduced (-3), shifting from sub-effective to high functioning, signifying decreased isolation and disconnectedness from others. This indicates that Participant A has not only gained prosilience-related behaviours, but that SWB has increased, with their experience of negative emotions and loneliness decreasing and their health increasing.

6.5.1.2 Participant B

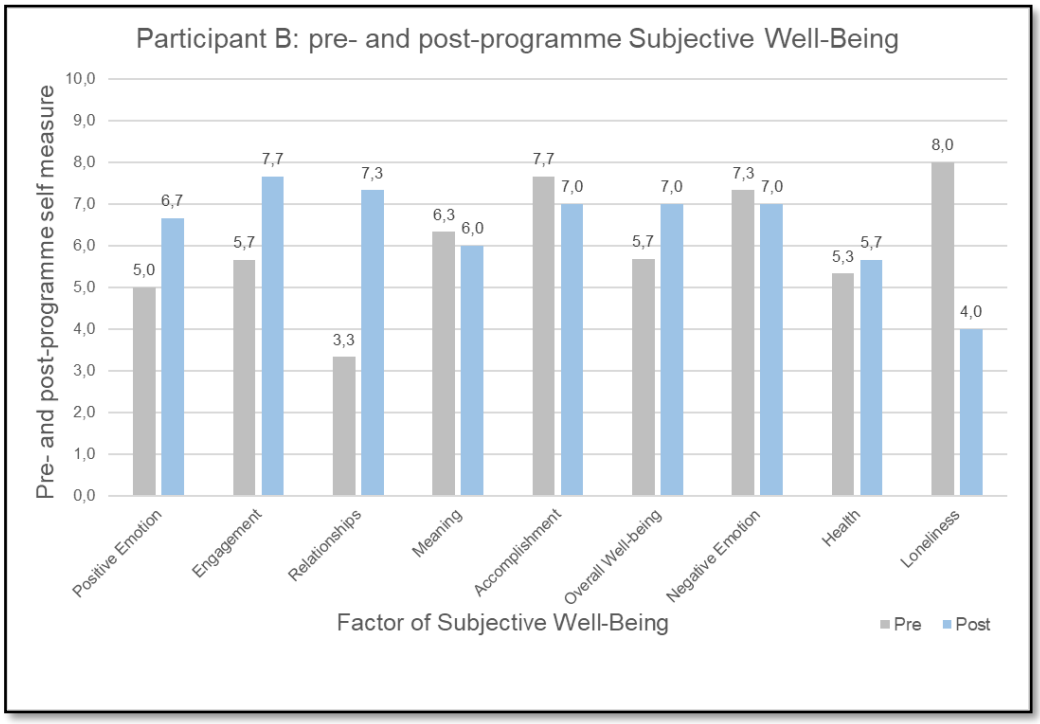


Figure 27: Participant B – pre- and post-programme SWB (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

- Positive emotion: From 5 (sub-effective functioning) to 6.7 (normal functioning) = +1.7
- Engagement: From 5.7 (sub-effective functioning) to 7.7 (high functioning) = +2
- Relationships: From 3.3 (languishing) to 7.3 (high functioning) = +4
- Meaning: From 6.3 (sub-effective functioning) to 6 (sub-effective functioning) = -0.3
- Accomplishment: From 7.7 (normal functioning) to 7 (normal functioning) = -0.7
- Overall well-being: From 5.7 (sub-effective functioning) to 7 (normal functioning) = +1.3
- Negative emotion: From 7.3 (languishing) to 7 (languishing) = -0.3
- Health: From 5.3 (sub-effective functioning) to 5.7 (sub-effective functioning) = +0.3
- Loneliness: From 8 (languishing) to 4 (normal functioning) = -4

Participant B's experience of positive emotions rose moderately (+1.7) to the normal range, pointing to a elevation in subjective positivity. Engagement (+2) and overall well-being (+1.3) advanced into the high-functioning range, highlighting growth in

Participant B's vitality and general life satisfaction at work. Relationships expanded (+4) from languishing to the high-functioning range, denoting strengthened bonds and connection with other individuals. Meaning (-0.3) and accomplishment (-0.7) minimally declined within the sub-effective and normal functioning ranges respectively, suggesting a minor weakening of sense of purpose and productivity. Participant B's experience of negative emotions decreased slightly (-0.3), remaining at a languishing level.

Health improved slightly (+0.3) and remained within the sub-effective range. Loneliness decreased the most of all factors (-4), entering the normal functioning range, denoting diminished isolation. Even though Participant B did not experience improvement with regard to all PERMA factors, their overall SWB increased to a normal functioning level following the programme, indicating the successful usage of prosilience-related behaviours to enhance SWB.

6.5.1.3 Participant C

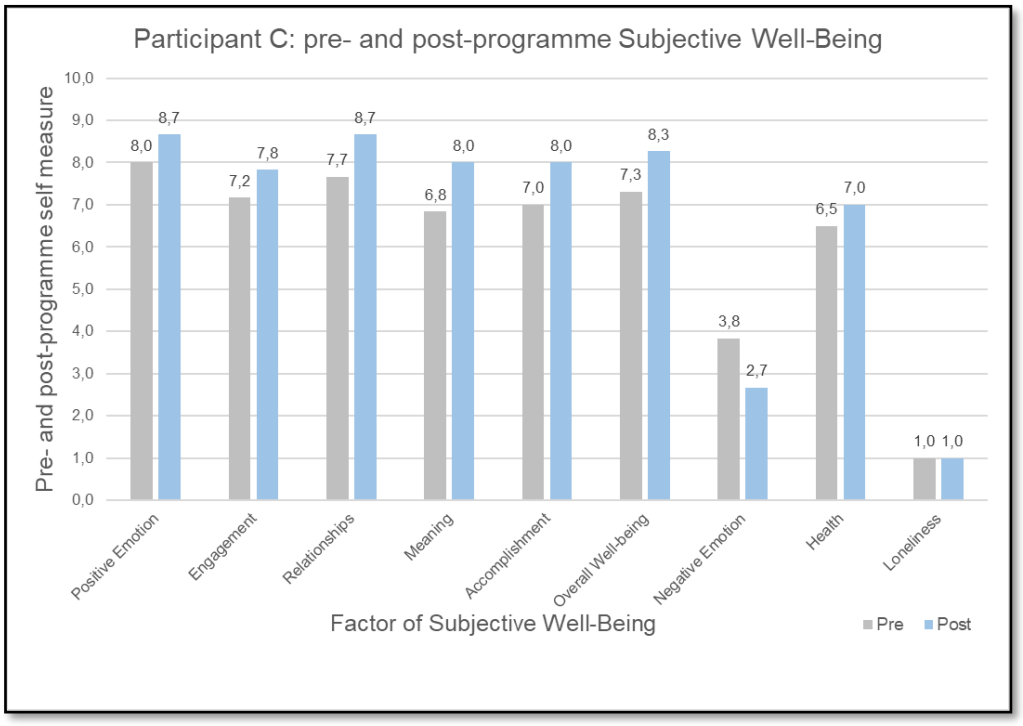


Figure 28: Participant C – pre- and post-programme SWB (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

- Positive emotion: From 8 (high functioning) to 8.7 (high functioning) = +0.7
- Engagement: From 7.2 (normal functioning) to 7.8 (normal functioning) = +0.7

- Relationships: From 7.7 (normal functioning) to 8.7 (high functioning) = +1
- Meaning: From 6.8 (normal functioning) to 8 (high functioning) = +1.2
- Accomplishment: From 7 (normal functioning) to 8 (high functioning) = +1
- Overall well-being: From 7.3 (normal functioning) to 8.3 (high functioning) = +1
- Negative emotion: From 3.8 (languishing) to 2.7 (languishing) = -1.2
- Health: From 6.5 (normal functioning) to 7 (normal functioning) = +0.5
- Loneliness: Remained at 1 (very high functioning)

Participant C's experience of positive emotion (+0.7), engagement (+0.7), relationships (+1), meaning (+1.2), accomplishment (+1), and overall well-being (+1) all advanced within the high or normal ranges, pointing to increases in mood, participation, connections, purpose, and success, plus general work-life satisfaction. Participant C's experience of negative emotion diminished (-1.2), remaining in the languishing range, reflecting a slight drop in levels of distress.

Health (+0.5) rose, remaining in the normal functioning range. Loneliness was already at very high functioning and did not change, suggesting that strong social bonds were maintained. Given that Participant C's pre-programme functioning was mostly high or normal, only slight gains were feasible, but the benefits of the programme are still discernible across multiple areas. Participant C managed to improve functioning in terms of all factors, indicating the enhancement of SWB after the adoption of prosilience-related behaviours.

6.5.1.4 Participant D

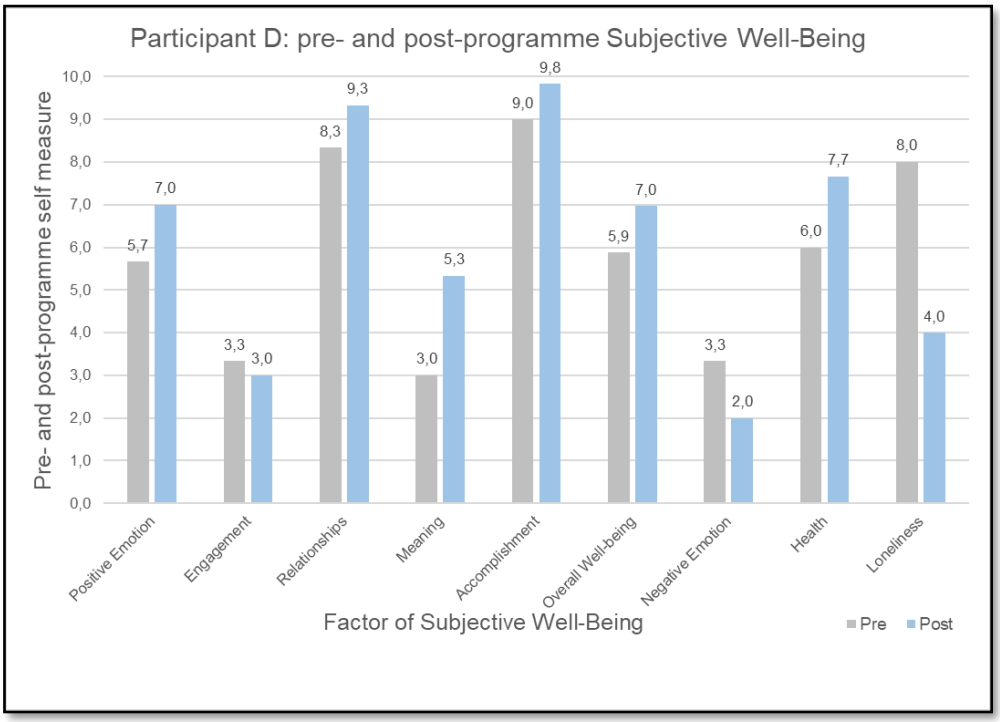


Figure 29: Participant D – pre- and post-programme SWB (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

- Positive emotion: From 5.7 (sub-effective functioning) to 7 (normal functioning) = +1.3
- Engagement: From 3.3 (languishing) to 3 (languishing) = -0.3
- Relationships: From 8.3 (high functioning) to 9.3 (very high functioning) = +1
- Meaning: From 3 (languishing) to 5.3 (sub-effective functioning) = +2.3
- Accomplishment: From 9 (very high functioning) to 9.8 (very high functioning) = +0.8
- Overall well-being: From 5.9 (sub-effective functioning) to 7 (normal functioning) = +1.1
- Negative emotion: From 3.3 (normal functioning) to 2 (high functioning) = -1.3
- Health: From 6 (sub-effective functioning) to 7.7 (normal functioning) = +1.7
- Loneliness: From 8 (languishing) to 4 (normal functioning) = -4

Participant D's experience of positive emotions (+1.3) and overall well-being (+1.1) improved into the normal functioning range, signifying heightened joy and life satisfaction. Engagement (-0.3) declined very slightly into the languishing range,

implying continuing challenges for Participant D with involvement in the workplace. Relationships (+1) rose to very high functioning, denoting substantially strengthened bonds. Meaning (+2.3) enhanced from languishing to sub-effective functioning, showing a boost in Participant D's work-life purpose. Accomplishment (+0.8) increased within the very high range, pointing to near-ceiling productivity and achievement at work.

Participant D's experience of negative emotions diminished (-1.3), entering the high functioning range, emphasising reduced distress. Health (+1.7) advanced into the normal functioning range. Loneliness declined the most of all factors (-4) into the normal functioning range, pointing to decreased isolation. This was echoed in Participant D's responses: post-programme, they no longer removed themself from the office or made phone calls to try and escape their stress but rather engaged with their colleagues. Overall, Participant D fully embraced the learning of prosilience-related behaviours, showcasing enhanced SWB following the programme.

6.5.1.5 Participant E

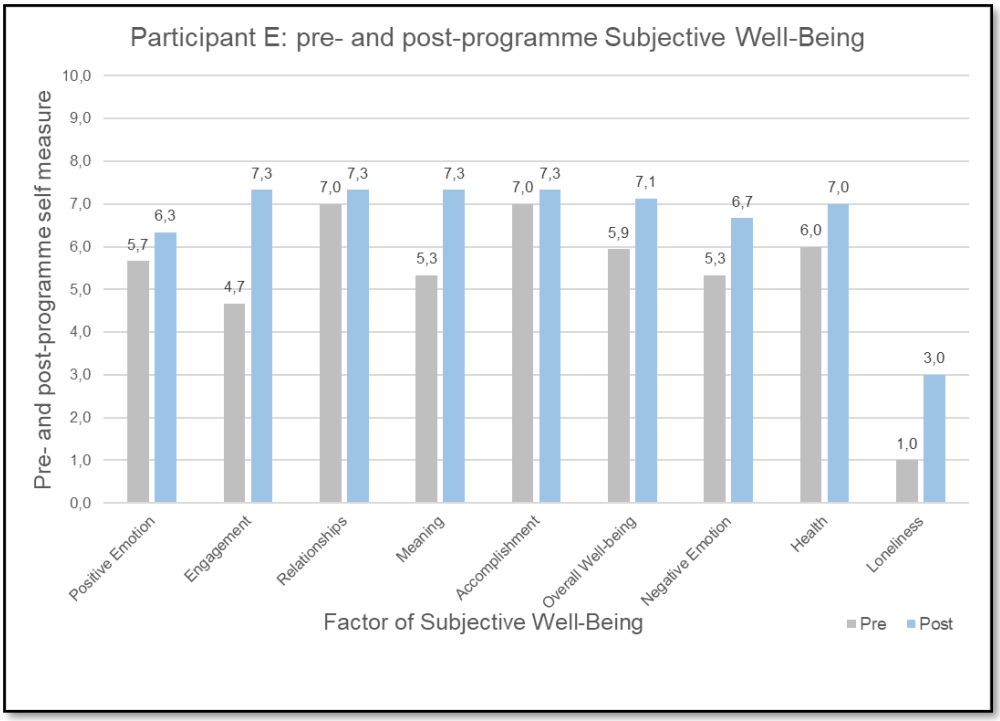


Figure 30: Participant E – pre- and post-programme SWB (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

- Positive emotion: From 5.7 (sub-effective functioning) to 6.3 (sub-effective functioning) = +0.7

- Engagement: From 4.7 (languishing) to 7.3 (normal functioning) = +2.7
- Relationships: From 7 (normal functioning) to 7.3 (normal functioning) = +0.3
- Meaning: From 5.3 (sub-effective functioning) to 7.3 (normal functioning) = +2
- Accomplishment: From 7 (normal functioning) to 7.3 (normal functioning) = +0.3
- Overall well-being: From 5.9 (sub-effective functioning) to 7.1 (normal functioning) = +1.2
- Negative emotion: From 5.3 (sub-effective functioning) to 6.7 (languishing) = +1.3
- Health: From 6 (sub-effective functioning) to 7 (normal functioning) = +1
- Loneliness: From 1 (very high functioning) to 3 (high functioning) = +2

Participant E's experience of positive emotion (+0.7) improved but remained in the sub-effective range. Their engagement (+2.7), meaning (+2), accomplishment (+0.3), and overall well-being (+1.2) were all enhanced within, or entering, the normal functioning range, indicating slight to moderate improvements in involvement, purpose, success, and life satisfaction. Relationships (+0.3) elevated marginally, staying in the normal functioning range, communicating the continuance of strong bonds.

Participant E's experience of negative emotions (+1.3) increased from sub-effective functioning to languishing, denoting persisting dis-ease and possibly more distress and stressors. Health (+1) rose and entered normal functioning. Loneliness increased (+2), moving from the very high functioning to the high functioning range, signalling slightly worsened disconnectedness. As such, Participant E was able to experience enhanced SWB even though negative emotions and loneliness increased.

6.5.1.6 Participant F

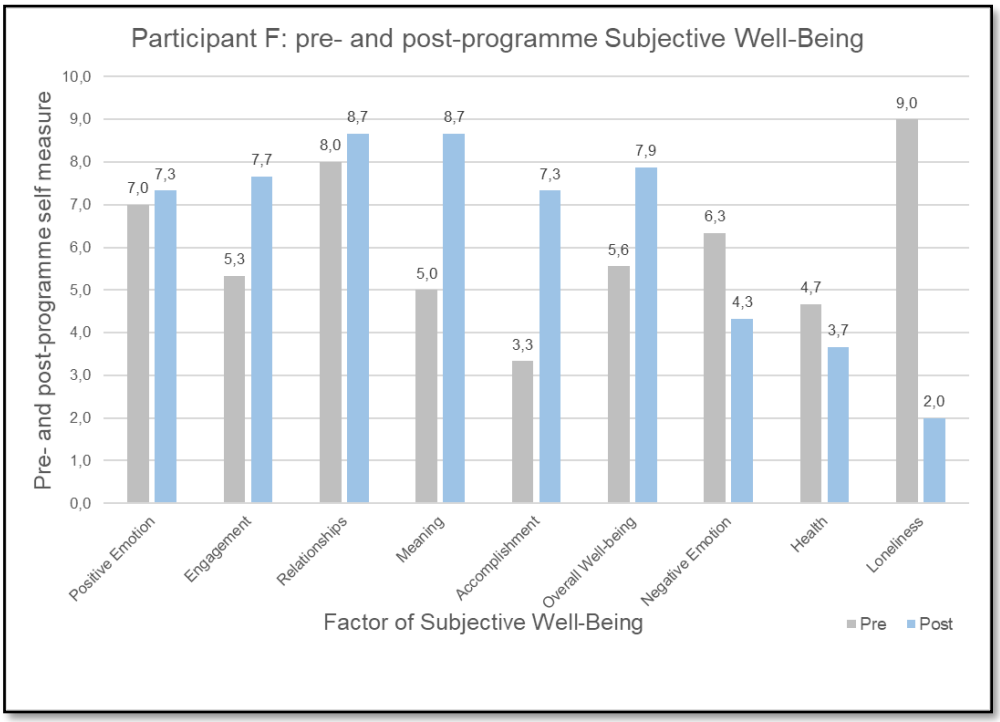


Figure 31: Participant F – pre- and post-programme SWB (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

- Positive emotion: From 7 (normal functioning) to 7.3 (normal functioning) = +0.3
- Engagement: From 5.3 (sub-effective functioning) to 7.7 (normal functioning) = +2.3
- Relationships: From 8 (high functioning) to 8.7 (high functioning) = +0.7
- Meaning: From 5 (normal functioning) to 8.7 (high functioning) = +3.7
- Accomplishment: From 3.3 (languishing) to 7.3 (normal functioning) = +4
- Overall well-being: From 5.6 (sub-effective functioning) to 7.9 (normal functioning) = +2.3
- Negative emotion: From 6.3 (sub-effective functioning) to 4.3 (normal functioning) = -2
- Health: From 4.7 (normal functioning) to 3.7 (sub-effective functioning) = -1
- Loneliness: From 9 (languishing) to 2 (high functioning) = -7

Participant F's experience of positive emotions (+0.3), relationships (+0.7), and their overall well-being (+2.3) improved somewhat within high or normal functioning ranges, pointing to slight improvement of mood, social bonds, and life satisfaction at work. Engagement (+2.3), meaning (+3.7), and accomplishment (+4) increased the most,

entering the high functioning range from lower levels of functioning, communicating considerable boosts in involvement, purpose, and productivity in the workplace following the programme. Participant F's experience of negative emotions (-2) and loneliness (-7) declined from sub-effective and languishing levels, entering normal and high functioning, respectively, which emphasises reduced distress and isolation. However, health declined slightly (-1) staying sub-effective, suggesting limited change in physical condition. In summary, Participant F experienced widespread improvement in SWB (in relation to all PERMA factors) even though there was a slight decrease in the score for health.

6.5.1.7 Participant G

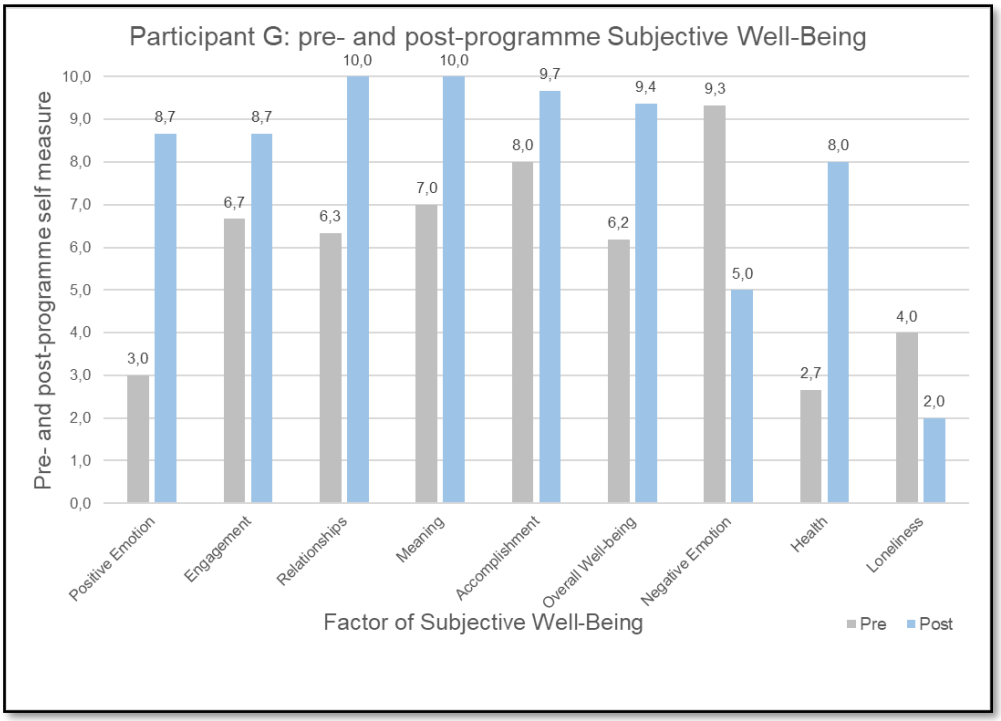


Figure 32: Participant G – pre- and post-programme SWB (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

- Positive emotion: From 3 (languishing) to 8.7 (high functioning) = +5.7
- Engagement: From 6.7 (normal functioning) to 8.7 (high functioning) = +2
- Relationships: From 6.3 (sub-effective functioning) to 10 (very high functioning) = +3.7
- Meaning: From 7 (normal functioning) to 10 (very high functioning) = +3
- Accomplishment: From 8 (high functioning) to 9.7 (very high functioning) = +1.7

- Overall well-being: From 6.2 (sub-effective functioning) to 9.4 (very high functioning) = +3.2
- Negative emotion: From 9.3 (languishing) to 5 (normal functioning) = -4.3
- Health: From 2.7 (languishing) to 8 (high functioning) = +5.3
- Loneliness: From 4 (normal functioning) to 2 (high functioning) = -2

Participant G's experience of positive emotions (+5.7), engagement (+2), relationships (+3.7), meaning (+3), accomplishment (+1.7) and overall well-being (+3.2) improved, entering the high or very high functioning range from languishing/sub-effective functioning ranges. This shows improvements in affect, motivation, bonds, purpose, success, and life satisfaction at work. Participant G's negative emotions were reduced (-4.3), entering normal functioning from languishing, highlighting distress mitigation. Health (+5.3) and loneliness (-2) both improved, pointing to ameliorations physically and socially. Participant G is the individual with some of the biggest responses to the programme across every domain of the profiler, which links directly to the individual's intense engagement with the content matter. Participant G felt that the programme was life-changing, thanks to new prosilient behaviours, which led to enhanced SWB.

6.5.1.8 Participant H

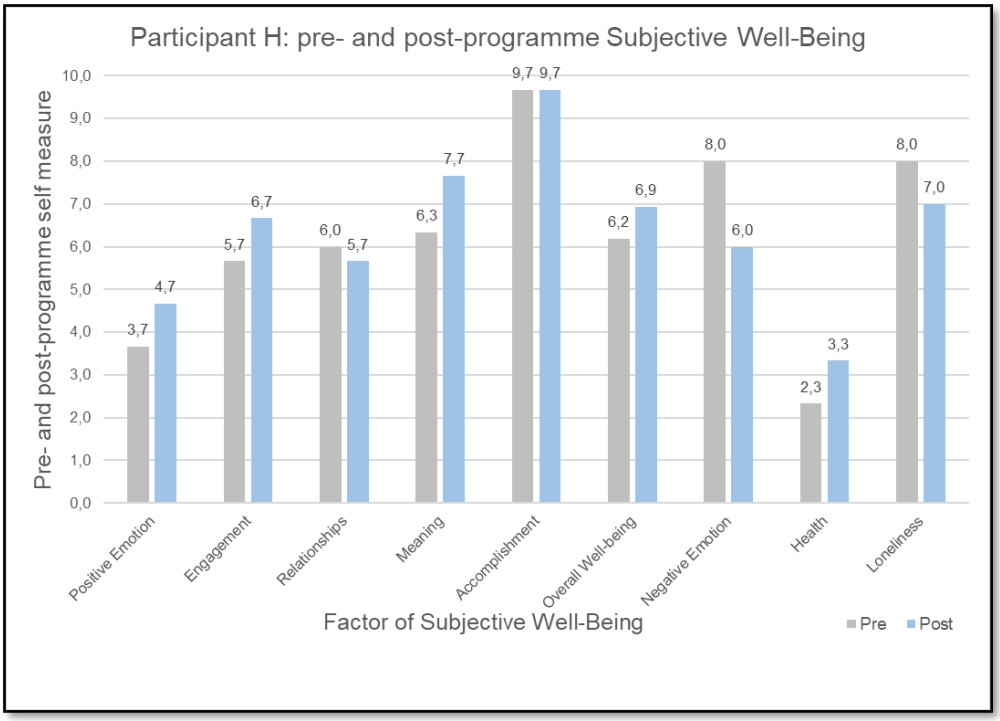


Figure 33: Participant H – pre- and post-programme SWB (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

- Positive emotion: From 3.7 (languishing) to 4.7 (languishing) = +1
- Engagement: From 5.7 (sub-effective functioning) to 6.7 (normal functioning) = +1
- Relationships: From 6 (sub-effective functioning) to 5.7 (sub-effective functioning) = -0.3
- Meaning: From 6.3 (sub-effective functioning) to 7.7 (normal functioning) = +1.3
- Accomplishment: Remained at 9.7 (very high functioning)
- Overall well-being: From 6.2 (sub-effective functioning) to 6.9 (normal functioning) = +0.8
- Negative emotion: From 8 (languishing) to 6 (sub-effective functioning) = -2
- Health: From 2.3 (languishing) to 3.3 (languishing) = +1
- Loneliness: From 8 (languishing) to 7 (languishing) = -1

Participant H's experience of positive emotions (+1), engagement (+1), meaning (+1.3) and overall well-being (+0.8) were enhanced to within the normal functioning range, communicating slight increases in involvement, purpose, and work-life satisfaction. Relationships in the workplace (-0.3) declined, staying sub-effective, denoting continuing challenges with social interactions in the workplace. Accomplishment did not change, remaining very high, showing sustained productivity and achievement.

Negative emotions were reduced (-2), entering the sub-effective range from languishing, emphasising decreased distress. Health (+1) rose, though it remained in the languishing range. Loneliness declined (-1), remaining languishing, demonstrating persisting severe isolation. As such, only modest gains were observed with negative affect significantly persistent. Nonetheless, Participant H was still able to increase their SWB thanks to the prosilience-related behaviours learned during the programme.

6.5.1.9 Overall[137]

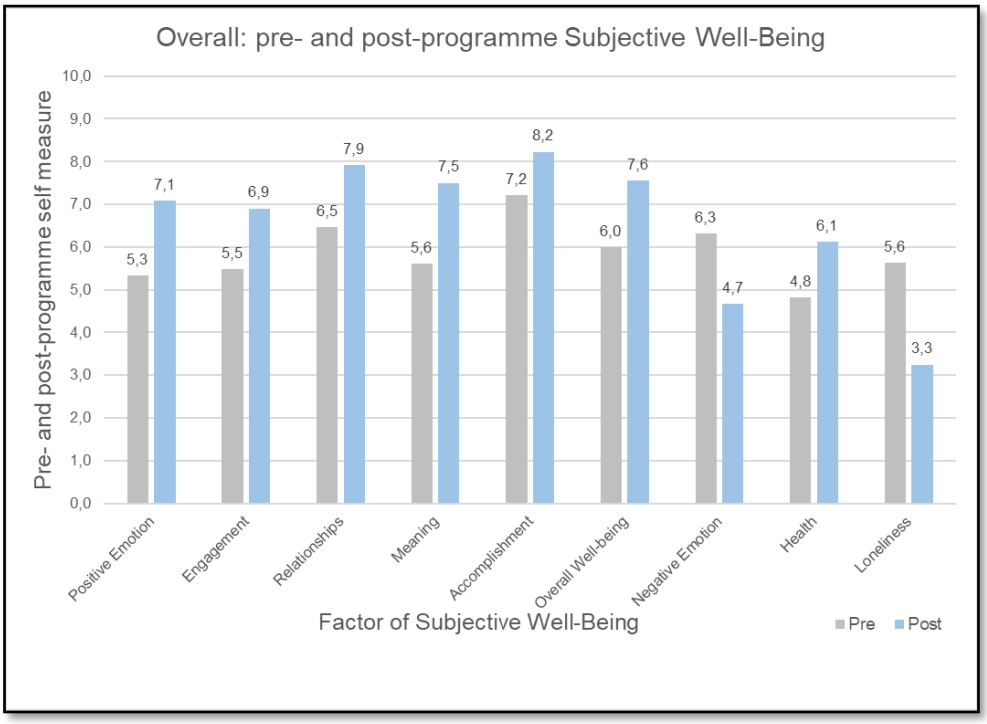


Figure 34: Overall – pre- and post-programme SWB (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

- Positive emotion: From 5.3 (sub-normal functioning) to 7.1 (normal functioning) = +1.8
- Engagement: From 5.5 (sub-normal functioning) to 6.9 (normal functioning) = +1.4
- Relationships: From 6.5 (normal functioning) to 7.9 (normal functioning) = +1.4
- Meaning: From 5.6 (sub-effective functioning) to 7.5 (normal functioning) = +1.9
- Accomplishment: From 7.2 (normal functioning) to 8.2 (high functioning) = +1
- Overall well-being: From 6 (sub-effective functioning) to 7.6 (normal functioning) = +1.6
- Negative emotion: From 6.3 (sub-effective functioning) to 4.7 (normal functioning) = -1.6
- Health: From 4.8 (languishing) to 6.1 (sub-effective functioning) = +1.3

[137] Overall refers to the average score of all the participants for each factor.

- Loneliness: From 5.6 (sub-effective functioning) to 3.3 (normal functioning) = -2.3

Overall, the experience of positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment, and the resultant overall well-being (PERMA), were all enhanced on average, crossing thresholds into superior functioning ranges, which reflects group improvement in subjective experiences. Overall, the experience of negative emotion, health, and loneliness also improved on average, entering healthier functioning, emphasising reduced distress, stronger wellness, and less isolation in the workplace.

When considering the outcomes of all participants collectively, some trends and relationships emerge. First, the degree and domains of improvement varied between individuals. Albeit that all the participants' overall well-being (except participant C) were in a sub-effective range pre-programme, all the participants moved up at least one level of functioning by the end of the programme. Participant C moved from normal functioning to high functioning, and participants A, B, D, E, F and H moved from sub-effective functioning to normal functioning. Whereas all the other participants moved up only one level of functioning in relation to SWB, participant G moved from sub-effective functioning to very high functioning, moving up three levels of functioning. I therefore describe participant G as an outlier.

An outlier (or an exception), in the qualitative research approach, is a fragment of a data point, response, or observation that deviates from the common patterns or themes emerging from the data (Phoenix & Orr 2017:275). While the SWB of other participants increased a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 2.3, Participant G's SWB increased with 3.2, which was not just the most of all the participants, but also placed them alone in the very high functioning range. At first, I was unsure why this participant was an outlier but, through my interpretation of the data (see Chapter 7.2.1.7.1), I could offer my subjective explanation as to why Participant G experienced substantial gains in relation to all the factors.

Along with Participant G, Participants A, C and F also experienced enhancement in all PERMA categories, as well as in overall health, with a decreased experience of negative emotion and loneliness post-programme. Some of the participants who started with an overall well-being in the sub-effective functional range, such as

Participants A, F and G, exhibited the most substantial gains. However, whereas Participant G showed substantial gains in their experience of all the factors, Participant A's most significant gains were in their experience of positive emotion and meaning, and Participant F's most substantial gains were in their experience of engagement and accomplishment. This variation suggests that participants' personalised focus on what they needed most from the EPP, may have influenced their experience. The other participants experienced mixed results:

- Participant B experienced enhancement in all categories except meaning and accomplishment;
- Participant D experienced enhancement in all categories except engagement;
- Participant E experienced enhancement in all categories except loneliness and the experience of negative emotion (which both increased);
- Participant F experienced enhancement in all categories except health; and Participant H experienced enhancement in all categories except relationships, while accomplishment remained the same.

These participants' mixed results indicate that different life facets can respond unevenly depending on individual uniqueness. Participants already in higher functioning ranges before the programme, like Participant C and, with some factors, B, demonstrated more modest enhancements, given that they had less area for growth. Participant B showed the largest improvement in relationships despite a high baseline, suggesting stronger connections may be easier to foster when other factors are in higher ranges too. Participant H made only minor improvements, with their experience of negative emotions proving persistently high, implying that certain individuals may require more intensive or personalised approaches to effect meaningful change when distress is omnipresent.

Comparing the participants' results to the overall averages reveals various insights. While improvements occurred group-wide in most instances, the averages of everyone can mask diverse individual trajectories. Not all the participants synchronised with overall trends. For some, certain factors like relationships, health, or loneliness were resistant to change or improvement.

One could also link changes in SWB to accompanying reductions in distress. Participants realising the most gains in positive emotions, accomplishment, and overall well-being tended to exhibit the largest dampening of negative emotion too. This correlation aligns with the importance of addressing both polarities of experience. In other words, individuals should not focus only on embodying new habits (which could be seen as positive) but also focus on recognising and tuning in to their initial habits (which at times could be seen as negative). This is why the programme addressed both, which in turn links to the experience of what participants perceive as positive or negative emotions.

Analysing the feedback of the participants separately and together reveals the nuanced, multi-dimensional nature of the impact of the EPP. Generalisations must be made cautiously, as SWB is an intricate, individualised, and personally unique phenomenon that depends on baseline status and specific needs. Overall, the programme benefited all eight of the participants by enhancing their SWB, despite some inter-individual variability in relation to certain factors. In the next section, I outline the codes, categories, sub-themes and themes of the workplace PERMA profilers.

6.5.2 Codes

The codes for the workplace PERMA profiler are provided by the PERMA model itself, namely positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. However, by using ATLAS to identify codes from participant responses in the journals and interviews in relation to PERMA, I could outline more codes, namely those presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Workplace PERMA profiler codes (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

Positive emotion	Engagement	Relationships	Meaning	Accomplishment
Overall well-being	Negative emotion	Health	Loneliness	Anxiety
Distress	Involvement	Social connections	Purpose	Productivity
General life satisfaction	Physical health	Isolation	Worry	Stress
Participation	Bonds	Significance	Success	General functioning
Condition	Separation			

6.5.3 Categories

Based on the codes, I used various AI tools and compared them to my own analysis, to divide the codes into the following categories:

Affective experiences

Codes in category:				
Positive emotion	Negative emotion	Anxiety	Distress	Worry
Stress				

Participation factors

Codes in category:		
Engagement	Involvement	Participation

Social aspects

Codes in category:		
Relationships	Social connections	Bonds

Purpose dimensions

Codes in category:		
Meaning	Purpose	Significance

Performance areas

Codes in category:		
Accomplishment	Productivity	Success

Wellness dimensions

Codes in category:				
Overall well-being	General functioning	General life satisfaction	Health	Physical condition

Relational aspects

Codes in category:		
Loneliness	Isolation	Separation

6.5.4 Sub-themes

I identified the following sub-themes into which I divided the categories:

Changes in subjective experiences and states

- Affective experiences

Enhancements in motivation, and social connections

- Participation factors
- Social aspects
- Relational aspects

Increased sense of purpose

- Purpose dimensions

Improvements in functioning and wellness

- Wellness dimensions
- Performance areas

Variability between individuals and factors

- All categories

Impact of initial functioning on degree of change over time

- All categories

6.5.5 Themes

I then divided the sub-themes into the main themes:

Intrapersonal experiences

- Changes in subjective experiences and states
- Increased sense of purpose
- Improvements in functioning and wellness

Interpersonal experiences

- Enhancements in motivation, and social connections

The last two sub-themes are relevant in both themes: variability between individuals and factors, and the impact of initial functioning on the degree of change over time. Figure 35 below outlines the two themes, five sub-themes and seven categories (with multiple codes) extracted from the workplace PERMA profilers.

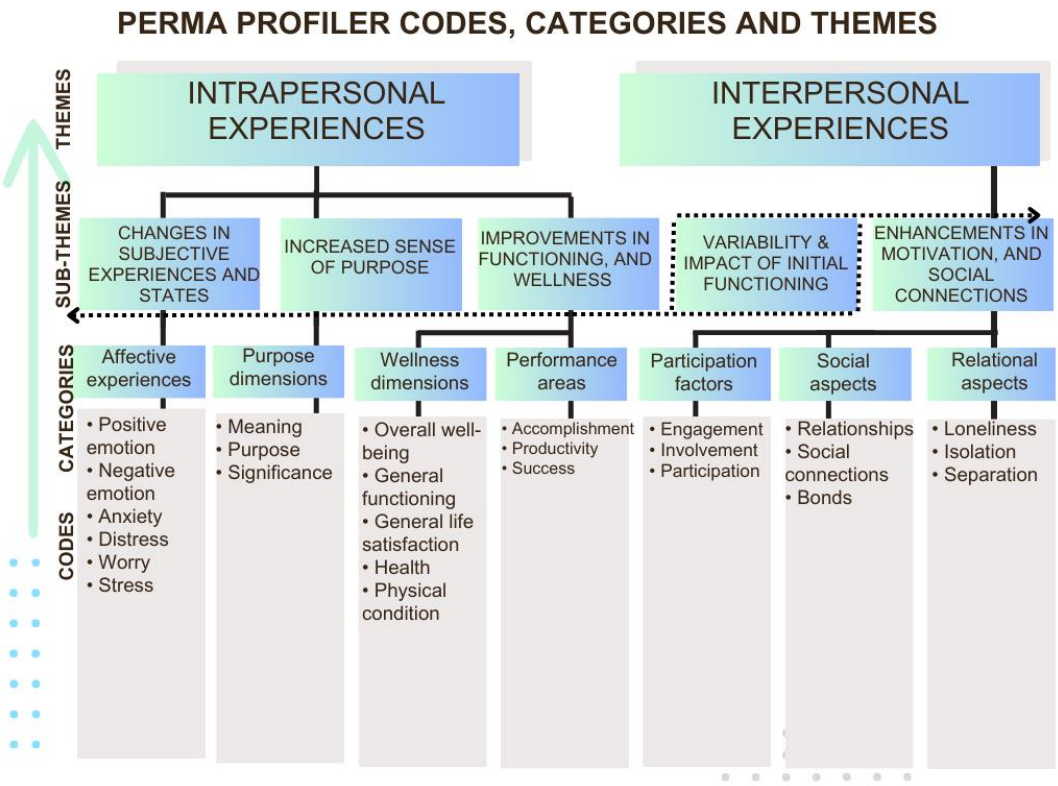


Figure 35: Themes extracted from workplace PERMA profilers (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

In what follows below, I compare the themes extracted from the various forms of data collected in order to identify the overall sub-themes and themes of the EPP. To accomplish this, I present Figure 36[138], where I link the categories that arose from the pre-programme interviews, participant journals, post-programme interviews, and the workplace PERMA profiler to ascertain which categories are dominant and which arose in only certain aspects of the research process.

[138] In Figures 36 and 37 I shorten intrapersonal experiences to intra and interpersonal experiences to inter, for ease of reading.

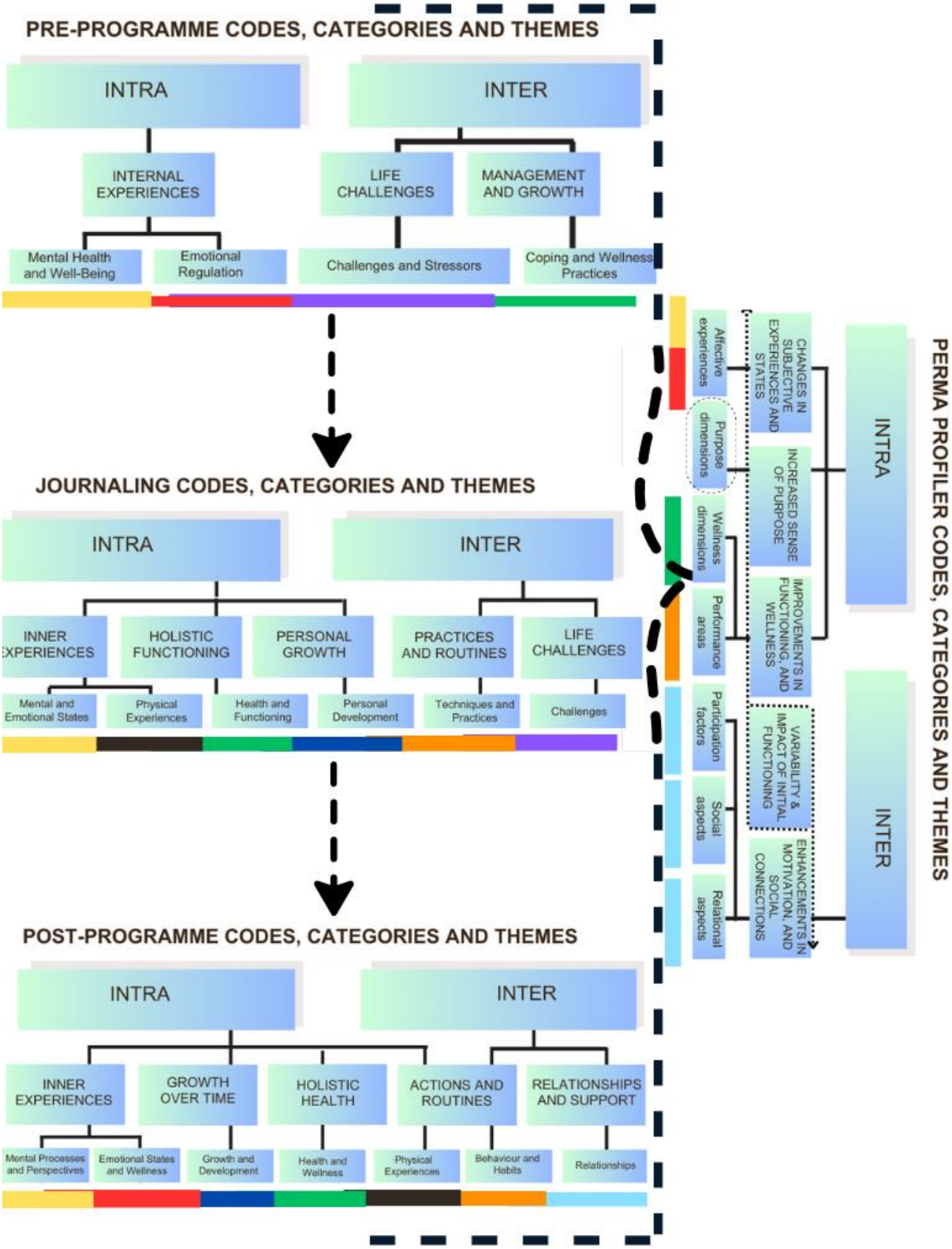


Figure 36: Connecting categories of the EPP (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

The categories listed below occur in all the phases of the research process.

- Mental health and well-being (pre-programme interviews), mental and emotional states (journaling), mental processes and perspectives (post-programme interviews) and affective experiences (PERMA profilers). I combine these to create the sub-theme, *mental and emotional well-being.*
- Coping and wellness practices (pre-programme interviews), health and functioning (journaling), health and wellness (post-programme interviews) and wellness dimensions (PERMA profilers). I combine these to create the sub-theme, *health and wellness functioning*.
- Coping and wellness practices (pre-programme interviews), techniques and practices (journaling), behaviour and habits (post-programme interviews) and performance areas (PERMA profilers). I combine these to create the sub-theme, *patterns and habits*.

The following categories occur in three of the four phases of the research process:

- Emotional regulation (pre-programme interviews), emotional states (post-programme interviews) and affective experiences (PERMA profilers). I combine these under the sub-theme, *emotional experiences and states*.

The following categories linked in two of the four phases of the research process:

- Challenges and stressors (pre-programme interviews) and challenges (journaling). I combine these under the sub-theme, *life stressors and challenges*.
- Physical experiences (journaling) and physical experiences (post-programme interviews). I combine these under the sub-theme, *inner experiences.*
- Personal development (journaling) and growth and development (post-programme interviews). I combine these under the sub-theme, *personal growth.*
- Relationships (post-programme interviews), participation factors, social aspects and relational aspects (PERMA profiler). I group these under the sub-theme, *connections and support*.

The following category was present in only one of the four phases of the research process:

- Purpose dimensions (PERMA profiler). This becomes the sub-theme, *purpose*.

I then grouped the sub-themes under the main themes of intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences, as these were the main themes for all the phases of the research process.

The theme of intrapersonal experiences has the following sub-themes:

- Mental and emotional well-being
- Health and wellness functioning
- Emotional experiences and states
- Inner experiences
- Personal growth
- Purpose

The theme of interpersonal experiences has the following sub-themes:

- Patterns and habits
- Life stressors and challenges
- Connections and support

For the sake of clarity, I graphically illustrate the overall EPP categories, sub-themes, and themes in Figure 37, below.

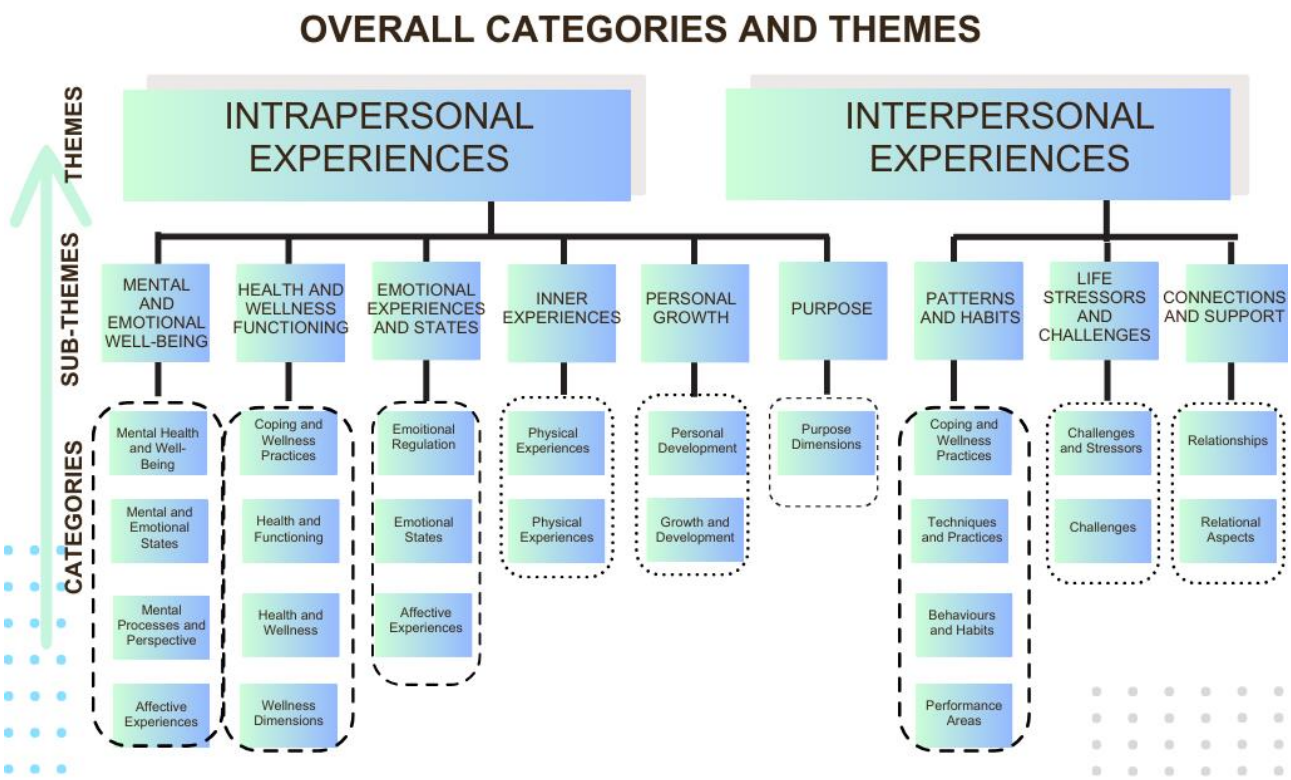


Figure 37: Overall EPP categories, sub-themes and themes (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

I subdivided the two themes of intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences into nine sub-themes, each comprising one to four categories. I present a final theme extraction report in Appendix G, where I outline specific sentences and remarks of the participants that I extracted in relation to each sub-theme. I utilise this final report in my data interpretation (see Chapter 7).

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I extracted themes from the EPP based on the feedback and reflection of the eight participants before and after the programme, as well as during the programme in the form of journaling. I presented the responses to the workplace PERMA profiler of each participant from before and after the programme and outlined and engaged with how the SWB of all of them improved, albeit in different ways. This section demonstrated that the gaining of new prosilient behaviours had the desired effect for each participant.

The chapter has provided insights into how an EPP can differentially influence complex human experiences, such as the factors described by PERMA. Analysing

every participant's pre-to-post programme behavioural changes in depth and linking their changes to increased SWB shows that an EPP contributes to the enhancing of SWB in a call centre environment. I then extracted themes to identify what unifying codes, categories, sub-themes, and themes were present in the profilers.

In the next chapter, I map each participant's SWB journey in relation to the VUCA/BANI world, Maslow's hierarchy and the themes of the programme by using the final theme extraction report (see Appendix G). I start by using the themes of intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences to identify observations from each participant separately before drawing overall conclusions.

CHAPTER 7: DATA INTERPRETATION

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I continue with phase 5 of the research by interpreting the data obtained from each participant through pre- and post-programme interviews, journaling, and the pre- and post-programme PERMA profilers that I discussed in Chapter 6 and present in Appendix G. In this chapter, I outline how the themes of the programme (extracted in Chapter 6) relate to participants' experiences of prosilience and SWB. I do this by outlining how the programme addressed Maslow's hierarchy of needs in the context of the VUCA/BANI world.

The themes of the EPP linked to Maslow's hierarchy as the programme attempted to address the participants' deficiency needs so that they could fulfil their growth needs in the ever-changing VUCA/BANI world. The EPP included principles by means of which to address the ever-changing world (see Chapter 4), which I link to the programme's content in order to identify whether it not only addressed the participants' needs in terms of Maslow's hierarchy but also provided prosilience-related behaviours that are of benefit in the VUCA/BANI world.

In the sections that follow, I first discuss each participant's shifts in relation to the themes of interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences of the EPP. While discussing these shifts, I specifically provide a body map[139] that each participant created during session 7 in week 3, after creating their own personally unique pattern phrase. These body maps serve as visual aids to guide the discussion and provide a thicker description of each participant's experience.

[139] I provide a transcription of each body map next to it (which I also used for theme extraction in Chapter 6, alongside the participant journals). The transcription aims to clarify any ineligible writing and also includes clarifying information in brackets. I gathered the additional information that I provide in brackets by asking clarifying questions for discernment (such as "what does this part of the picture mean?"), meaning (such as "how did you decide to link these concepts?" and behavioural responses (such as "why do you think you experienced the pattern in this way?"). These questions are based on the trilogy of phenomenography in the script (see Chapter 2.6.1.1; Santos & Silva 2019:12). I also fixed any spelling mistakes in the body map on the transcription and indicate the changes with "sic" in brackets.

Subsequently, I explore the participants' shifts through the lens of Maslow's hierarchy and discuss how they responded to the challenges posed by the VUCA and BANI world before, during and after the EPP. This approach allows me to summarise and analyse the changes experienced by each participant in a thorough manner.

7.2 Interpreting data from three phases of the research process

7.2.1 Participant-specific observations[140]

In this section, I map each participant's journey in relation to the overarching themes of the programme, intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences, as explained in Chapter 6 and outlined in Appendix G. Intrapersonal experiences refer to the internal processes within the individual, including self-awareness, emotional regulation, and personal growth. This theme focuses on how participants engaged with their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviours throughout the programme. The theme of intrapersonal experiences includes the sub-themes of mental and emotional well-being, health and wellness functioning, emotional experiences and states, inner experiences, personal growth, and purpose.

On the other hand, the theme of interpersonal experiences involves the participants' interactions with others, highlighting how they navigate relationships, communication, and social connections in various settings. Interpersonal experience encompasses the sub-themes of patterns and habits, life stressors and challenges, and connections and support. The two main themes, intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences, with their sub-themes, are important for understanding how the participants developed both internally and in their relationships with others, thereby providing a thorough view of their progress toward stress prosilience.

The progress towards stress prosilience serves as a reference point to show how each participant aligned with these themes to achieve their own unique outcomes. I also examine the participants' shifts through the framework of Maslow's hierarchy of needs

[140] Quotes from participants are repeated in different sections since they often fit more than one sub-theme.

and the challenges posed by the VUCA and BANI worlds, as these were key aspects the programme aimed to address by fostering stress prosilience. While the intended outcomes varied, the focus remains on how these frameworks contributed to the participants' enhancement of SWB[141].

7.2.1.1 Participant A

7.2.1.1.1 Intrapersonal theme in relation to SWB

The following quote from Participant A links directly linking to intrapersonal theme and describes how they gained awareness from being more in tune with their teacher-within:

> Dear Teacher-Within, I would like to express my gratitude for helping me through this journey and allowing me to realise weaknesses to work on. It has been eye-opening to realise what something as simple as breathe [sic] can do for you, once you are aware of it. Amazing! (journal)

Although I emphasised identifying areas for growth rather than weaknesses, Participant A still exhibited the limiting belief that they have shortcomings they need to work on. In relation to the themes extracted (Appendix F), Participant A experienced changes across various sub-themes. In terms of the sub-theme of mental and emotional well-being, Participant A reported: "My stress is less. I make target easier. The programme has helped me manage my university and personal life" (post-programme interview). This quote also links to the sub-theme of health and wellness functioning.

Participant A also experienced a release of tension during various sessions, such as when stating, "I came in feeling stiff and anxious. After doing the lengthening explorations and the breathing techniques I felt a lot better; more flexible and relaxed" (journal). Participant A also explained that they recuperate "by means of breathing slowly, focusing on my three-point weight distribution, and lengthening my alignment;

[141] I acknowledge that younger, student call-centre agents may typically display greater neuroplasticity than older colleagues, which may partly explain their enthusiastic uptake of the EPP.

before that, I focus on stretches in my neck and making my ball shape" (journal). Referring back to the changes in subjective well-being, the participant's reported health improved with 1.7, indicating that the participant indeed experienced elevated physiological capacities and functioning levels.

Looking at the sub-theme of inner experiences, Participant A exclaimed: "My heartrate goes up, and my heart starts beating fast" (pre-programme Interview). This is highlighted in the pre-programme responses under the sub-theme of emotional experiences and states. Participant A was in a difficult space before the start of the programme. They explained: "I feel stuck and I ask myself: What should I do or sacrifice?" (pre-programme Interview). This relates to the habit loop (see p. 145), as this created a cue and a craving within Participant A to change their patterns. After the programme, Participant A stated: "I am much calmer on calls when prospects [prospective clients] are rude. I am more considerate towards others" (post-programme Interview). Although seemingly contradictory, these responses illustrate the considerable change Participant A experienced during the programme. This related to the phases of response and reward of the habit loop. Referring to their changes in SWB (Figure 26, p. 263), their experience of positive emotions was amplified, increasing with 2.6, with negative emotion decreasing by 3.3.

A further example of change is from the sub-theme of personal growth where they explain: "You can always get grounded and balance. I will keep exploring" (post-programme interview). Their statements link to the sub-theme of purpose when they realise: "You can't control the outcome; you can just focus on yourself. Holistically speaking the outcomes always move in my favour" (post-programme interview). I suggest that this links to the SWB increase of meaning by 2 listed above. This participant shared the programme with their parents and continued exploring links to an enhanced sense of finding purpose through the programme.

These sub-themes were all classified as intrapersonal, reflecting the inner environments of the participant. Next, I consider how Participant A linked to the outer environment in terms of the interpersonal theme.

7.2.1.1.2 Interpersonal theme in relation to SWB

In relation to the sub-theme of life stressors and challenges, Participant A stated that "the white noise (in the outer environment) makes me feel more relaxed; like if I was a little boy with my parents in an observatory or aquarium. Overall, I feel lighter, and I have a clear head" (journal). They further explained that they prepared their inner environment to deal with the outer environment with ease: "To prepare for stress […], I become aware of my breathing, focusing on my pleasure smell and pleasure sigh out with sound. To prepare for stress in relation to my outer environment, I become aware of noises and the environment around me while I stay aware of myself" (journal). Participant A stated that they learnt new habitual responses and a pattern phrase that "results in a state of being in a positive way, to achieve optimisation in all I do" (journal).

In terms of the sub-theme of connections and support, Participant A noted they "can focus on functioning optimally and be fully engaged with the task at hand, so [that they] have the best chances of achieving great results and dealing with stressful situations" (journal). They continued: "To express myself, I usually resorted to bad habits when I experienced stress; but now, I can express myself by using the tools I have learnt" (journal). In terms of changes in SWB, Participant A's loneliness diminished by 3 from sub-effective to high functioning, while their engagement increased by 1, remaining in a sub-effective range of functioning. Overall, Participant A thus experienced positive changes across various sub-themes because of the programme.

In relation to the sub-theme of patterns and habits, Participant A stated: "I am biting my nails less. I stand up when I do my pleasure smell. I wake up earlier. One of the other participants told me that I seem calm. I feel more composed and relaxed. Before I used to feel buzzing. Now I feel patient" (post-programme interview). This relates to creating positive networks in the outer environment by receiving feedback from others.

Before the programme, Participant A's heart would race, ears would ring, their body would shake, and they would play with their hands habitually (see Appendix F). After the programme, their heart still raced at times but not to the same extreme, the ringing in their ears has stopped completely, and the biting of their nails has been reduced. When asked during the post-programme interview whether they still experienced the ringing in their ears, they replied that they had "forgotten that [their] ears used to ring."

This indicates that new responses of the bodymind to stress have replaced some of their initial responses through the embodied learning principle of repatterning. Participant A has, without consciously thinking of it, learnt how to respond with their bodymind in a manner that more easily facilitates homeostasis. An example was when they stated:

> I am aware of how I sit and breathe. Before a call, I stand up and pleasure smell. I remain as calm as possible. I use my three-point weight distribution to get power from earth. I am aware of my inner and my outer environment and I can identify what is causing the stress. I use the consonants. I breathe in and out when I panic. I focus on the task at hand and put myself into the shoes of each prospect. (post-programme interview)

They became aware of their subjective experiences and patterns and how these have become embedded in their bodymind. They achieved more efficient ways of interacting with and being part of their world instead of merely seeing themselves in it. Following the programme, Participant A also woke up earlier and felt more composed and relaxed, which indicated improved energy and stress regulation in preparation for each day. In terms of PERMA, their overall well-being increased by 1.7.

Participant A's voice "used to break, sound silly, and be all over the place" when they were stressed. After the programme (see Appendix F), their voice was more concentrated as a result of their awareness of their forward facial orientation. They stated: "Before I make a call, and while I am waiting for my next one, I massage my face to become aware of my forward facial orientation and play with my consonants" (post-programme interview). They thus proactively massaged their face before calls to tune into consonants and vocal clarity. Participant A also used their pattern phrase and breathing tools to stay grounded. Their improved focus on their vocal NRGs and pattern phrase indicates that they were functioning at a more optimal level after the programme, and so they are able to express themselves better. Participant A used their pattern phrase in the morning to prepare for each day, indicating that they gained prosilience-related behaviours that could become new habitual patterns through repetition.

Participant A gained awareness of their limiting habitual patterns, and they actively worked on cultivating new behaviours during the EPP. Figure 38 below outlines the process of Participant A in recognising their initial limiting habits (left side of figure) and then identifying explorations such as increasing their awareness of the external environment, becoming more integrated (by using the pointers I provided), singing and pleasure smelling which formed part of their personally unique pattern phrase. The right side of Figure 38 shows the shifts that Participant A made by means of cultivating new prosilience-related behaviours, and the results these habits had on their daily life, specifically on their performance in the workplace.[142]

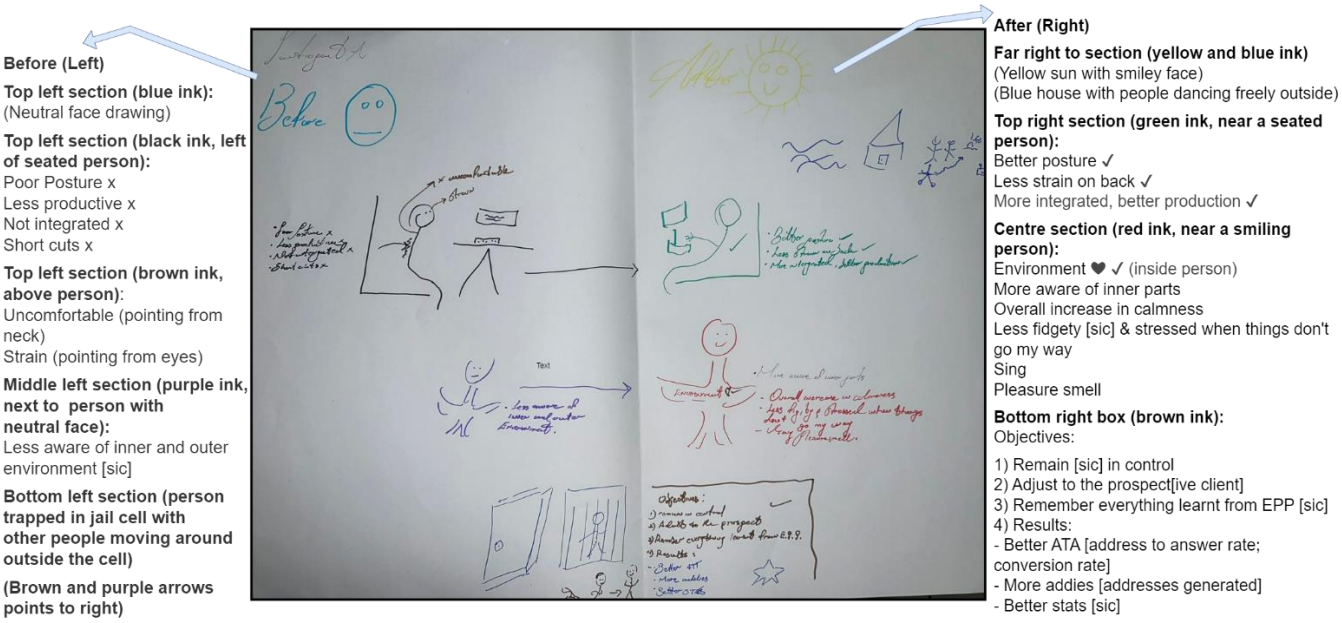


Figure 38: Participant A − body map[143]

The shifts identified by Participant A indicated that they learnt prosilience-related capacities which could improve their well-being. This is supported by their responses to the workplace PERMA profiler. Theme extraction from the workplace PERMA profiler indicated an increase in their overall well-being, by 1.7 to 6.9, from languishing

[142] Measuring participant performance falls outside the scope of this study.
[143] The described colours in the transcription of all the body maps are only there to guide the reader. I did not use the description of colours in the process of theme extraction, and I do not interpret the colours or their meanings. Colour theory falls outside the scope of this study.

to normal levels of functioning (which is from 6.5 to 7.9). This links to the satisfaction of various needs outlined in Maslow's hierarchy.

7.2.1.1.3 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

With regard to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Participant A's journey showed progression across various levels of the hierarchy. Initially, Participant A was struggling with physiological and safety needs as evident from statements like: "My heartrate goes up and my heart starts beating fast. My ears start ringing. I feel stuck and I ask myself: What should I do or sacrifice?" (pre-programme interview). The programme addressed Participant A's physiological deficiency needs through breath regulation and by explorations such as pleasure smelling and sighing. They stated that they feel safer after the programme; this is supported by statements such as: "I am biting my nails less" and "I feel more composed and relaxed. Before I used to feel buzzing. Now I feel more patient." These new responses used the sensing and perceiving of smell to change how they felt.

Participant A's safety needs were possibly addressed through vocal explorations, such as emphasising consonants for the sake of clarity, which improved functioning and, in turn, aided and enhanced expression. They stated that after the "explorations and the breathing techniques (they) felt a lot better; more flexible and relaxed" (journal). This allowed them to experience greater safety when addressing their outer environment; they stated: "My face feels looser, and I feel lighter and ready to make calls" (journal).

As regards their growth needs, Participant A was able to grow by using their awareness that the initial emotions they experienced (such as anger) were ineffective in order to achieve a newfound calmness to prepare for the next call. Before the programme, they had stated that they "definitely do not communicate like [they] want to during stressful situations" (pre-programme Interview). Nevertheless, after the programme, they "stand up and pleasure smell", "remain as calm as possible", and they "breathe in and out when [they] panic" (post-programme interview). This did not always work, as Participant A noted "there is still some stress" after the programme, but they can "identify what is causing stress" (post-programme interview). They used this awareness to explore what aided them in each moment.

In terms of self-actualisation, embodying explorations and new prosilient behaviours allowed them to move towards becoming their most integrated, prosilient self during the programme. Participant A was also dealing with issues of belongingness and love needs as may be seen in the statement, “I lash out at home towards my family” (pre-programme interview). During the programme, Participant A progressed to achieving esteem needs, as is evident from statements like: “I have forgotten that my ears use to ring. They don’t anymore. Things are better. My stress is less. I make target easier” (post-programme interview). By the end of the programme, Participant A showed elements of self-actualisation through statements like “You can’t control the outcome; you can just focus on yourself. Holistically speaking, the outcomes always move in my favour” (post-programme interview).

An example of the participant moving towards their integrated, prosilient self during the programme comes across in Participant A’s reflections:

> I had to go to the bank to speak about my student loan that was declined online, so I decided to use the vocal NRGs while speaking and my pattern phrase to prepare myself for the interaction. It helped me stay calm and present, and the consultant approved my loan. The programme content is not just relevant for work. It prepared me for stress. You can always get grounded and balanced. (post-programme interview)

The VUCA/BANI world constantly dealt challenges to each participant, yet the responses from Participant A indicate that the programme helped them in numerous ways.

7.2.1.1.4 VUCA world

Participant A’s journey demonstrated how the programme helped equip them to navigate a VUCA world. Initially, Participant A struggled with volatility, as may be seen in statements like “My heart starts beating fast. My ears start ringing” (pre-programme interview). Participant A did not deal well with uncertainty, as is evident from “I feel stuck and I ask myself: ‘What should I do or sacrifice?’” (pre-programme interview). Through the programme, Participant A developed abilities that allowed them to the thrive amid volatility and ambiguity. Statements like “My stress is less. I make target easier” (post-programme interview) and “I am aware of how I sit and breathe. Before

a call, I stand up and pleasure smell. I remain as calm as possible" (post-programme interview) show that participant A became better prepared to handle a constantly shifting environment. Participant A could more easily adapt to changes, as is evident in their embracing new explorations, for example: "I will always keep exploring" (post-programme interview). Overall, the programme helped Participant A develop prosilient abilities in order to thrive in a VUCA world.

Aligning with the principles of VUCA prime, Participant A developed the vision to proactively prepare for stressors by consciously using explorations such as those contained in their pattern phrase. Embodying these explorations through sensation and response allowed them an understanding of bodily signals like fidgeting. The clarity of participant A's voice came through emphasising consonants, structure, and tone for function and expression. They gained agility so that, at the time of the study, they could flexibly respond by embodying explorations like shaking and pleasure sighing as part of their daily life.

7.2.1.1.5 BANI world

Initially, Participant A showed a tendency to be brittle, as evident from "My heartrate goes up and my heart starts beating fast", which demonstrates physiological instability (pre-programme interview). Participant A had to deal with a tendency to be anxious, as is evidenced by "I feel stuck and I ask myself: 'What should I do or sacrifice?'" – communicating a lack of control (pre-programme interview). As a result of the programme, Participant A developed abilities that allow thriving amid volatility. Expressions relating to their being "aware of how I sit and breathe" signify enhanced composure as a result of their being more stable (post-programme interview). Participant A embraced exploration, as is portrayed by "I will keep exploring", demonstrating a willingness to move in a non-linear direction (post-programme interview). Overall, Participant A felt that they had strengthened the prosilient attributes suited for operating effectively within a demanding and unpredictable BANI world.

In relation to the BANI world, Participant A's new prosilience-related behaviours enable not just resilience in the moment of stress but preparation, in the form of stress prosilience. They used explorations such as forward facial orientation and shaking, which helped them in various ways – as is evident when they stated that their "face

feels looser", they "feel lighter", and that the explorations helped "with focusing on projecting [their] voice with clarity and focusing on channelling [their] vibrations and voice forward while [they] focus on staying integrated" (journal). In this way, Participant A started embodying various explorations during the programme, as needed, to stay flexible. Participant A observed changes within other participants when they were all sharing phrases with each other. They stated that "it was interesting seeing and doing everyone else's movements and noticing and sensing the way it makes [them] feel" (journal) and that they were "more considerate towards others" (post-programme interview) thanks to the explorations. This shows how they developed empathy thanks to moving with others.

Participant A also become aware of their teacher-within, as is evidenced in statements such as "I am aware of my inner and my outer environment and I can identify what is causing the stress" (post-programme interview). This facilitated greater mindfulness through awareness of habitual stress signals and responses. They also achieved transparency in relation to their habits by journaling, exploring, and talking about their experiences. Participant A also developed better intuition about their inner states by consciously sensing and feeling their inner environment in relation to their outer stressors.

7.2.1.1.6 Summary

Overall, Participant A's responses show that they had a stronger awareness of the stress responses of their bodymind during and after the programme, using tools to regulate their voice proactively, and felt more balanced in managing work, school, and their personal life. During the programme they thus built more prosilient habits in the VUCA/BANI world in order to maintain equilibrium and homeostasis so that not only deficiency needs were met but growth needs too.

7.2.1.2 Participant B

7.2.1.2.1 Intrapersonal theme in relation to SWB

Participant B underwent notable changes in their habits, as is evident from the themes extracted from the documents (see Appendix G):

> I am thankful that I had the courage to participate in this study, I learnt a lot about my ineffective habits when I feel stressed. This programme has taught me techniques to prevent stress or deal with it better when it happens. I'm thankful for everything we could learn and experience together. (journal).

Concerning the sub-themes of mental and emotional well-being and emotional experiences and states, Participant B stated:

> I got to be aware of how my weight is distributed in my feet, and I noticed I was feeling the most force being exerted on the soles of my feet. After the figure of 8 wafting and waving hip movement, my body was significantly more evenly distributed throughout my whole foot. At the start it felt like I needed a sponge to cushion my heels. (journal)

This, along with the opening quote, indicates that Participant B underwent significant mental transformation that aided in enhancing well-being. They followed the cues of the habit loop from their bodymind, identified a craving, and aimed to respond differently. Through their physicality, they were able to tap into embodied experiences and use explorations to regain ease in and as part of their experience.

Regarding health and wellness functioning, as well as inner experiences, Participant B wrote in their journal that their "breathing is better standing up or with [their] head slightly down (feels like I can take deeper breaths)", which demonstrated enhanced awareness of their bodymind's functioning. In terms of the sub-theme of personal growth, Participant B stated that they "are still learning how to make the tools a habit through repetition" (post-programme interview). This indicated that the participant consistently tried to improve themselves and found worth enough in the programme to persist with it. Linking all these sub-themes that are under the umbrella of the intrapersonal theme with subjective well-being shows how Participant B improved in various respects. Health showed only a minor improvement (improved with 0.3), remaining in the sub-effective range of functioning.

Negative emotion decreased with 0.3, which means that the participant was still languishing in this regard. In contrast, their experience of positive emotions increased with 1.7 from sub-effective to normal functioning. This appears to indicate that, for Participant B, unlike was the case for Participant A, the programme did not necessarily

reduce their experience of negative emotions, but rather increased their experience of positive emotions. What is noteworthy is that, for Participant B, engagement increased by 2 to normal functioning, relationships increased by 4 to normal functioning, and loneliness was reduced by 4. The focus of Participant B's personally unique journey was thus less on the theme of intrapersonal and more on the interpersonal.

7.2.1.2.2 Interpersonal theme in relation to SWB

In this section, I outline how Participant B experienced such significant changes in SWB. For the sub-theme of patterns and habits, Participant B noted: "I fidget with my hands. I also doodle when I stress" (journal), which highlighted a new recognition during the programme. They further stated that they don't really navigate or prepare for stress. "I would pause and try breathing. Most of the time I just don't deal with my stress" (pre-programme interview). However, following the programme they answered differently: "Sometimes I become aware that I tense up my body and hold up my breath and that's when I get irritated. But then when I feel stressed, I ask myself: 'What if I try breathing?' – then I feel better" (post-programme interview).

Figure 39 displays a body map created by Participant B. This body map shows the steps the participant took to get rid of their stress, fatigue, tension, fidgeting fingers and held breath. They outlined five steps they took for their personally unique pattern phrase. They indicated that, by gaining these prosilience-related behaviours, they could feel relaxed, better prepared for stress and experience less tension in pain.

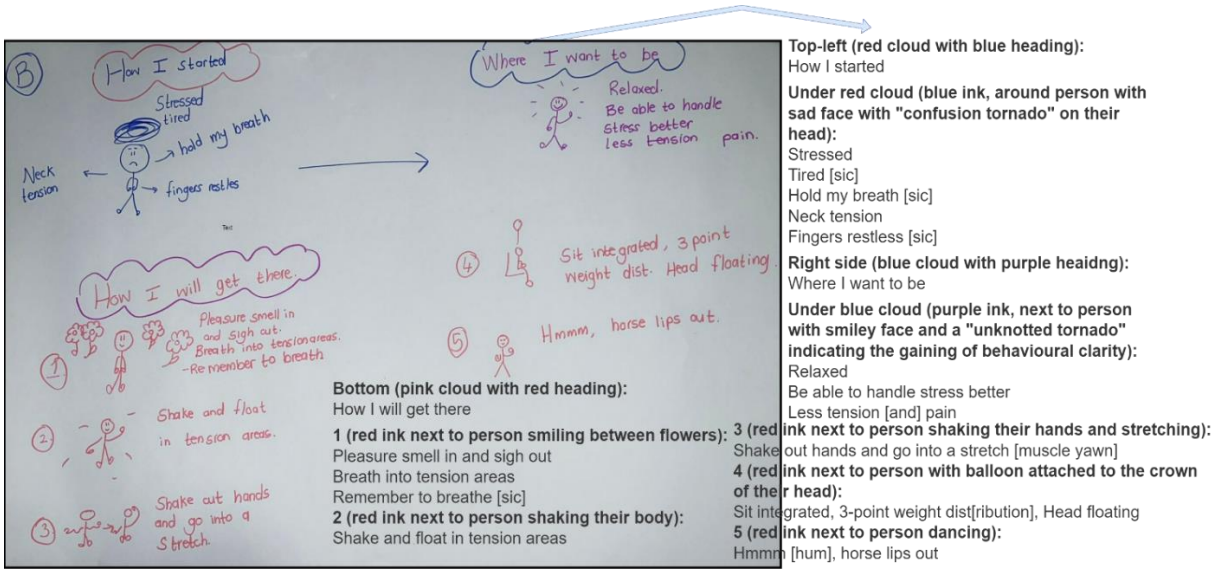


Figure 39: Participant B − body map

Participant B's responses during the semi-structured interviews before and after the EPP indicate that the participant successfully managed to follow the plan they set out in Figure 39. Participant B explained that they were uncomfortable at first with the idea of the programme, but, by taking it slowly, they managed to find the courage to participate and were grateful that they did. Before the programme, Participant B would feel irritated, choke on their breath, experience brain fog, and fidget habitually with their hands when stressed (pre-programme interview). After the programme, they had more awareness to not hold their breath and tense up and were able to focus on consciously breathing and shaking out tension (post-programme interview). Such awareness indicates improved stress-signal perception and responses that, through repetition, resulted in prosilience-related habitual patterns.

Participant B indicated that they were actively repeating their pattern phrase in order to prepare every day in the hope that it becomes habitual. They stated:

> I will continue to use my pattern phrase in the morning; I know it works for me, but now I will repeat it to make it a habit. I will stop just trying to ignore tension and trying to push through; I will rather take a step back and go through my pattern phrase, or use techniques like pleasure smelling/sighing, shaking out tension and try to sit integrated. (journal)

Participant B tuned into their bodymind to identify the ineffective habits that had become part of their identity and focused hard on gaining new embodied cognition by seeing themselves and their bodymind as part of the environment in which they find themselves in order to learn new proactive behaviours that could aid them in staying in a more constant state of homeostasis.

Regarding Participant B's voice, it used to become "slimy, squeaky, and disappear" under stress (pre-programme interview). Following the programme, their voice still "squeaked" at times, but they hummed and used consonants to tune up their voice. They further stated: "The horse lips help my face and voice feel more relaxed. Pronouncing words and letters (sounds) more clearly helps the prospect better hear and understand me, which makes the stress way less" (journal). By consciously focusing on their breathing, their words came out in the intended manner and at a tempo more appropriate for optimal communication and clarity. The vocal

improvements show Participant B could express themselves more clearly after the programme.

This clearer expression links to the sub-theme of connections and support. Participant B stated: “I focus on my functioning by using tone, structure, and consonants to come across clearer, which then helps me express myself better” (journal). This aided Participant B in making connections, which may be why their SWB improved in terms of loneliness, relationships, and engagement.

In terms of the sub-theme of life stressors and challenges, Participant B specifically enjoyed the scenario-based explorations, stating the following: “Acting out different scenarios with the script and prospects made me realise [gain awareness of how] I start holding my breath, tensing my whole body. By [responding through] pleasure smelling, sitting integrated, and shaking out any tension, I can get through hard calls/days better” (journal). They also stated that they benefited from the focus on their breathing to untense and using their pelvic rock to calm down.

This section shows that, for Participant B, interpersonal themes had a greater influence on their SWB than intrapersonal ones, though the latter did still have some effect. In the next section, I outline how Participant B’s journey links to Maslow’s hierarchy.

7.2.1.2.3 Maslow’s hierarchy of needs

Analysis showed Participant B progressing through Maslow’s hierarchy during their journey. Initially, Participant B dealt with physiological needs, as can be seen in statements like “I get very irritated. I struggle to breathe. I start breathing faster” (pre-programme interview), which demonstrates their awareness of stress responses before the programme. Participant B seemed to lack sense of safety in their self as is evident when they said: “I don’t navigate or prepare for stress. I just don’t deal with my stress” (pre-programme interview).

The programme further addressed Participant B's physiological deficiency needs by introducing breathing explorations like pleasure smelling: “By using my pleasure smell, I remember to respond properly by focusing on breathing and shaking out to untense, also using my pelvic rock to calm down” (journal). They used pleasure smelling as well

as their pattern phrase, especially in the form of shaking, to regulate their homeostatic needs so they could address their most pressing physiological stress. Participant B addressed their safety needs through focusing on dynamic alignment to stay alert and mobile while dealing with their outer environment.

Before the programme, Participant B mentioned that they had no tools to deal with stress and that they rather just wait for the next good call to make them feel better. This directly underscores the growth they underwent as, following the programme, they self-reported that they did their pattern phrase every morning, that they were actively aware of their tension and did not ignore it anymore: “After a hard call and before the next calls, it helps to pause (even just for a minute or two). I use my breath (pleasure smell and sigh), I shake out any tension, use humming and horse lips, then I sit integrated and try again” (journal). To achieve even further growth, participant B learnt how to embody and experience various explorations in order to become integrated and respond in a more prosilient manner.

Through the programme, Participant B achieved esteem needs, signified by responses such as: “Learning new habitual ways to relax […] has helped me better navigate stressful situations” (journal). Statements like “In the mornings before work, I prepare myself for stress” indicate budding self-actualisation (post-programme interview). Overall, Participant B showed positive advancement up Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. This movement in the hierarchy addresses the needs of the VUCA/BANI world.

7.2.1.2.4 VUCA world

The programme helped equip Participant B with the abilities needed in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world. Initially, Participant B struggled with volatility: “I get very irritated. I struggle to breathe” (pre-programme interview), which indicates stress responses. Participant B faced uncertainty: “I don’t navigate or prepare for stress. I just don’t deal with my stress” (pre-programme interview). Through the programme, Participant B cultivated the tools required to better handle a constantly shifting landscape. Statements like “Learning new habitual ways to relax [...] has helped me better navigate stressful situations” (participant B journal) signify coping abilities. Participant B embraced change, evident in their consistent application of new breathing techniques and pattern phrases. They stated: “I am still learning how to

make the tools a habit through repetition" (post-programme interview), showing willingness to adapt. This demonstrated that, during the programme, Participant B had gained the ability to navigate a VUCA world.

In relation to VUCA prime, Participant B developed the vision to prepare for stressors by consciously using explorations. Before the programme, they stated that they do not know how to deal with anxiety or stress and that this has become their main personality trait. During the programme, they gained an understanding of not just their habitual stress responses but also the agility to use the shaking out of tension and pleasure smelling and sighing to relieve stress.

7.2.1.2.5 BANI world

Initially, Participant B displayed the tendency to be brittle, as may be seen in the statement, "I get very irritated", and to be anxious, as is evident in "I struggle to breathe" (pre-programme interview). Through the programme, Participant B enhanced their ability to thrive amid volatility. Statements like "I pause and try breathing" signify enhanced composure that is akin to being less brittle (post-programme interview). Participant B embraced exploration, as is evidenced by "I am still learning how to make the tools a habit", which demonstrates a willingness to move in a non-linear direction (post-programme interview). Overall, Participant B strengthened their prosilient attributes tailored for effectively coping within an unpredictable and demanding BANI world.

In relation to the BANI world, the behaviours that Participant B identified and explored every morning indicate newly developed prosilient responses. These responses kept them flexible in response to their outer environment which, following the programme, instead of ignoring, they embraced as part of their bodymind. Participant B gained empathy towards themselves in this way, and, instead of ignoring stress, they consciously took a step back and looked after their bodymind by utilising their pattern phrase.

Participant B wrote in their journal: "I will stop just trying to ignore tension and try to push through; I will rather take a step back and go through my pattern phrase, or use techniques like pleasure smelling/sighing, shaking out tension and try to sit integrated". This addressed their being in the BANI world even further as they were, during the

programme, constantly mindful not just of the stress responses but also of the new tools that they have learnt. Journaling may have aided achieving some transparency in relation to their habits. They were very open about their experience and grateful to themselves and their teacher-within for taking them on this journey, indicating enhanced intuition about their inner environment in relation to outer stressors.

7.2.1.2.6 Summary

In summary, Participant B experienced positive changes across various sub-themes. Participant B progressed through levels of Maslow's hierarchy, showing enhanced well-being. Participant B also gained tools and awareness that equipped them to handle a volatile, ambiguous environment. Participant B used their prosilience capacities to operate effectively in a BANI world. The programme facilitated Participant B's overall journey by providing them with improved stability and stress-management abilities.

Participant B's responses indicate that they gained better awareness of their stress signals. However, in contrast to Participant A, the result for Participant B is more aligned with the umbrella theme of the interpersonal, resulting in, according to their PERMA responses, improved relationships and engagements. For example, they stated: "When people around me in my outer environment are loud when I'm on a call or when prospects are difficult, I focus on calming my inner environment by focusing on deep breathing through my pleasure smell and shaking out my body" (journal). In terms of their PERMA responses, there were smaller improvements in reducing the experience of negative emotions. Participant B stated that when they experienced negative emotions after the programme, "all my muscles tense up. I still fidget with my hands, but I try to be more conscious of this habit and then I shake it out" (post-programme interview).

They proactively prepared every morning for the workday, used breathing and shaking tools to relieve unnecessary tension caused by stress, and regulated their voice more optimally to better communicate while experiencing stress. Their proactive habits indicate better self-regulation to maintain homeostasis, specifically that focused on making connections with other individuals and the world in which they find themselves.

7.2.1.3 Participant C

7.2.1.3.1 Intrapersonal theme in relation to SWB

The following response from Participant C demonstrates how they became aware of their inner environment and their teacher-within to guide them during the programme:

> Thank you, teacher-within! Thank you for noticing the habitual patterns that kept you from sitting dynamically integrated. Thank you for looking out for yourself. Thank you for focusing on your breathing in difficult situations. (journal)

During the programme, they noticed various habitual patterns: “Patterns I notice are a lot of tension in my shoulders and my lower back” (journal). This relates to the cue and craving in the habit loop. During the programme, I did not enforce any strict boundaries, so I allowed them to giggle and laugh and even made jokes to attempt to make them more comfortable. Participant C stated the following after the programme: “I just want to say thank you. The humour, passion, and fun you did the programme with helped. Small things you did made a big difference” (journal). This indicates that, even though they were uncomfortable at first, they managed to use the humour and fun, as well as their teacher-within, to guide themselves to more optimal ways of dealing with their tension. The embodied learning principle of honouring personal uniqueness was key for Participant C.

In relation to the themes extracted (Appendix G), Participant C underwent notable shifts. For the sub-theme of mental and emotional well-being, they began the journey with the following statement: “I become nervous and quiet. I try to control my breathing because my heart starts beating fast” (pre-programme interview). After the programme, they noted: “I am more aware of stressful situations. I prepare myself by mainly focusing on breathing” (post-programme interview), which shows new adaptability. This links to response and reward in the habit loop. In terms of the intrapersonal theme, in relation to SWB (see Figure 28; p. 265), Participant C’s experience of negative emotion decreased with 1.2 to high functioning, and their experience of positive emotion increased with 0.7, remaining in the high functioning range.

Regarding their health and wellness functioning, Participant C emphasised: “I focus on putting my feet down to prepare before I call prospects since my lower back pains

because I have the habit of lifting my feet to the back", highlighting mindful practice (post-programme interview). They had many other examples of using new functioning for their wellness, such as the following: "When I feel that I have exerted myself, I stand up and do wafting and waving while tapping my feet to recuperate and to keep me focused for the next call" (journal). Health, according to the PERMA profilers, increased by 0.5 for Participant C.

In terms of the sub-theme of emotional experiences and states, Participant C referred to how they try to take more intentional breaths. They also noted the following in their journal:

> I felt very tense at the start […] as well as very distracted and unable to regulate my emotions and my thoughts. I really enjoyed making noises because it helps with regulation and bringing my thoughts together. It was great to move my pelvis and just be aware of how our head–tail connection is central to all our bodily movements. After this session, I just feel more in control of and in tune with my bodymind. (journal)

This new awareness helped the participant become more intentional in relation to their bodymind in and as part of the world at the time of the programme. This links to the sub-theme of personal growth, and is demonstrated in all the new awareness they gained throughout the programme. Participant C noted that the humour, passion, and fun that was incorporated into the programme helped them grow. The opening statement of Participant C, where they thank their teacher-within, clearly indicates how they were looking after themselves and have a clearer purpose after the programme. This links to the SWB aspect of meaning, that increased by 1.2 from normal functioning to high functioning. Participant C found more meaning in their work life.

7.2.1.3.2 Interpersonal theme in relation to SWB

Concerning the sub-theme of patterns and habits, Participant C acknowledged their personally unique journey and how it had formed their habits before the programme commenced: "I am very anxious and tense because of how stress has changed my personality. When I was little, they robbed us with guns, and it just made me scared in general [of] other humans, especially the evenings" (pre-programme interview). After the programme, the participant had managed to build new habits: "I focus on channel

my fidgeting into shaking my hands and tapping my feet" (post-programme interview), which indicates constructive transformation. Furthermore:

> I focus on wafting and waving, reaching over my upper body, tapping my feet, using my pleasure smell, shaking my hands, centring myself, and I focus more on my inner self for stress. I focus on putting my feet down to prepare before I call prospects since my lower back pains because I have the habit of lifting my feet to the back. (post-programme interview)

Figure 40 below displays a body map that Participant C created during the EPP. This figure links to the sentences above and solidifies the personally unique pattern phrase that Participant C used to repattern their initial limiting habitual patterns in order to gain new prosilience-related behaviours. They referred to their new habits as "tools" which elicits how the participants had the freedom to explore and express themselves as they deemed the most fit.

Top left (in different colours):
HABIT
Middle left (person sitting on brown chair executing each initial habit):

[Initial] HABITS

1. My feet are tucked behind the chair because my legs are short.
2. My shoulders are usually not right up so it causes tension in my back.

Top right (in green):
TOOLS [new habits] TO FIX THIS
Right (person exploring each new habit with green arrows indicating movement)

1. Shaking hands
2. Wafting [sic] and waving
3. Focus on breathing → this helps heavily during calls
4. Tapping my feet to relieve stress
5. Focus on tonality when in a stressful situation → sound more calm on calls

TO ULTIMATELY SIT INTEGRATED

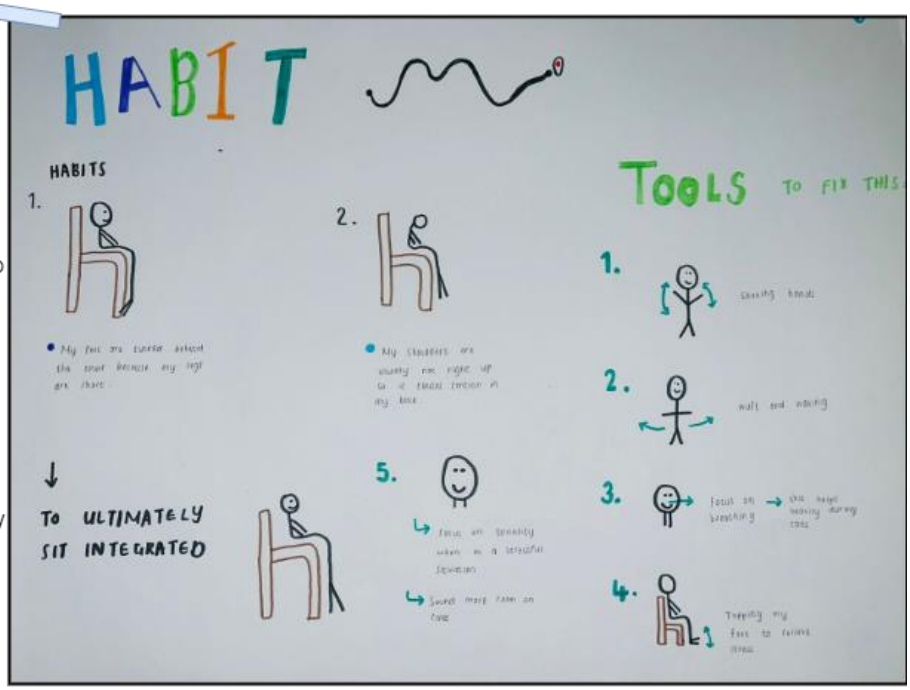


Figure 40: Participant C – body map

The process of repatterning outlined in Figure 40 was reinforced by Participant C's responses during the semi-structured interviews. Initially, when Participant C experienced stress, they would become nervous, quiet, sweaty, and have a racing

heart (pre-programme interview). They still experience some signals, such as sweaty hands and a fast heartbeat, following the programme but prepare by focusing on breathing (post-programme interview). Their awareness of the situations that trigger stress improved. They indicated that they constantly challenged their habitual responses to these triggers by lengthening upwards and using various explorations such as wafting and waving and reaching over their upper body to the opposite back corner of the room (post-programme interviews). This helped Participant C regulate their inner environments in order to maintain homeostasis with greater ease when their outer environment becomes stressful.

Participant C's voice used to become wobbly and unstable when they were stressed, especially with women prospects. They also indicated that they used to speak more when they become stressed. After the programme, their voice still wobbled occasionally, but they gained more awareness of breathing and their tone. They also used humming, playing around with consonants and the 'You' exploration to focus on structure in the form of their forward facial orientation. Their communication was also calmer and more confident post-programme. This shows improved function of their voice, which aided in more effective expression on the phone.

In terms of the sub-theme of life stressors and challenges, Participant C mentioned the following:

> One of my goals this year was to focus on stressing less. I usually have tension in my shoulders. When I drive, my lower back pains. My back also feels tension when I sit forward [slouched] and so on. I notice [sense and perceive] that I sit quite upright and that also causes pain. When I stress, I also tend to overthink, but I try to trump that by focusing on my breathing in stressful situations. (journal)

Participant C also said that people normally notice when they are "not okay", so they try to slow their breathing and calm their inner environment. In relation to the sub-theme of connections and support, Participant C stated that they used "structure and focus on tone to express myself" (journal), and they stabilised their body so they "can move and speak professionally and calmly on a call" (journal). Linking the sub-themes to the changes in SWB, engagement went up by 0.7, relationships went up by 1 into

the normal functioning range, and loneliness remained at the very high functioning level. This indicates that Participant C already had good relationships and support but that there were still improvements that helped them. In the next section, I outline how the programme aided Participant C in addressing their needs.

7.2.1.3.3 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Considering Participant C's responses, I could see them fulfilling their needs in terms of Maslow's hierarchy. Initially, Participant C struggled more with physiological and safety needs, as is evident from "I try to control my breathing because my heart starts beating fast", which indicates stress responses (pre-programme interview).

The programme addressed Participant C's physiological deficiency needs by guiding their teacher-within to focus on breath regulation through pleasure smelling and sighing, with a myriad of explorations that form their pattern phrase. Nonetheless, there were still times when their body indicated physiological stress: "My hands sometimes still sweat" (post-programme interview). However, they explored various ways of dealing with their physiological tension:

> I focus on wafting and waving, reaching over my upper body, tapping my feet, using my pleasure smell, shaking my hands, centring myself, and I focus more on my inner self for stress. I focus on putting my feet down to prepare before I call prospects since my lower back pains because I have the habit of lifting my feet to the back. (post-programme interview)

Their safety needs had been addressed by learning how they can focus on their dynamic alignment and their pattern phrase to address the need they initially had for a larger toolset to manage and prepare for their stress. Participant C indicated that their responses and preparation for stress have improved following the programme.

Participant C seemed lacking in a sense of belongingness, as may be seen in the following response: "Sometimes I stress when I speak to woman on the phone, and then I become hesitant. I start questioning myself" (pre-programme interview). They further indicated that they used to be very tense because of how stress changed their personality. They indicated that the robbery from their past had become part of their identity and made them more prone to intense responses to stress. Through the

programme, Participant C gained embodied cognition, sensing and perceiving how their environment is part of their identity. This means that they learnt to acknowledge this past event and found new ways of responding, not just in the moment but proactively.

Throughout the programme, Participant C moved closer to achieving esteem needs, signified by statements like “I am more aware of myself” (post-programme interview). Emerging signs of self-actualisation surfaced from embracing the process: “I just want to say thank you [for helping me better myself]” (post-programme interview). Overall, Participant C demonstrated positive progression, meeting their higher needs.

Through embodied learning, they learnt new ways to centre themselves and to focus on their inner self so as not to let the outer environment become overwhelming. Their preparation in relation to their outer environment aided them in feeling a greater sense of belonging, indicated by their willingness to share and participate in a group environment. This aided Participant C in addressing their growth needs by allowing them to embody new explorations in order to become a more effectively integrated and prosilient call centre agent.

7.2.1.3.4 VUCA world

Participant C’s journey revealed that they had gained abilities beneficial to navigating a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world. Initially, Participant C grappled with volatility: “I become nervous and quiet. I try to control my breathing because my heart starts beating fast”, which demonstrates bodily stress reactions (pre-programme interview). Lack of certainty emerged from “I start questioning myself” (pre-programme interview). Through the programme, Participant C developed competencies to handle a shifting landscape. Statements like “I prepare myself by mainly focusing on breathing” (post-programme interview), signify improved stress management. Participant C embraced change, which is evident in their statement, “I am more aware of myself” (post-programme interview). This reflects enhancement of the prosilient capacities needed for thriving in a VUCA world.

In terms of VUCA prime, Participant C gained vision in terms of better understanding their initial responses through awareness. They learnt to use their pattern phrase to prepare for each day and to release painful habitual patterns, such as not sitting in a

dynamically aligned manner (which caused them lower back pain). They focused on consciously using their pleasure smell and sigh, three-point weight distribution, and lengthening upwards to be more stable so they could be more agile in response to their outer environment. Participant C exhibited clarity by becoming more stress prosilient, even indicating following the programme that they no longer experienced as much stress at work. I acknowledge the temporal limit of the programme – this statement was made directly after the programme.

7.2.1.3.5 BANI world

Initially, Participant C demonstrated a tendency to be brittle – “I become nervous and quiet” – and anxious, as is evident in “I try to control my breathing because my heart starts beating fast” (pre-programme interview). Through the programme, Participant C enhanced their ability to thrive amid volatility. Statements like “I am more aware of stressful situations” signify enhanced composure that is akin to being less brittle (post-programme interview). Participant C embraced exploration, as evidenced by “I am more aware of myself”, demonstrating a willingness to move in a non-linear direction (post-programme interview). Overall, Participant C strengthened their prosilient attributes tailored for effectively coping within an unpredictable and demanding BANI world.

In terms of addressing the needs of the BANI world, Participant C’s new behaviours enabled not only resilience in the moment of stress but also prosilient behaviours, such as focusing on vocal NRGs, effective and dynamic alignment, and wafting and waving before starting work every day. This was a result of their mindfulness of their initial responses and then, with empathy for themselves and what they need in each moment, adapting to the incomprehensible outer environment by balancing it with their inner environment.

7.2.1.3.6 Summary

In summary, Participant C underwent notable advancement in terms of the various sub-themes. Participant C progressed up Maslow's hierarchy, demonstrating amplified wellness. The tools and awareness they gained equipped Participant C to better handle uncertainty. Participant C strengthened their prosilient attributes adapted for operating effectively in a VUCA world and a stressful BANI environment. Participant

C's journey revealed holistic progression with enhanced stability and stress-prosilience capacities. This links to the improvement of their overall SWB by 1 and with all other aspects of the PERMA profiler that also improved.

In summary, Participant C ended the programme with better stress signal-awareness, prepares themselves with breathing, and their pattern phrase and regulates their voice effectively. Their awareness, preparation, and communication indicate improved and prosilient behaviours to maintain homeostasis with greater ease.

7.2.1.4 Participant D

7.2.1.4.1 Intrapersonal theme in relation to SWB

Participant D was committed to discovering their teacher-within and gained a sense of awareness through this commitment:

> I am becoming more intentional about my habits. It's like putting on your shoes or making coffee. The word that comes to mind the whole time is intentional. I focus on the things I can control. I take baby steps to move forward. I really enjoyed the programme. I felt like my "check engine" light was flickering bright red and now it isn't flickering anymore. The engine light is off. (post-programme interview)

They consistently used the word intentional throughout their journaling, indicating that they were not sure how to be this intentional before the programme commenced. Their "engine light" being off directly links to the sub-themes of mental and emotional well-being, personal growth, and emotional experiences and states. Participant D displayed noteworthy transformations, including observing that "everything that feels suffocating teaches us how to breathe" (journal).

Regarding the sub-theme of health and wellness, Participant D said, "I am becoming more intentional about my habits", echoing mindful lifestyle practices (post-programme interview). During one session, they stated: "I felt very tense [exerted] at the start of the session as well as very distracted and unable to regulate my emotions and my thoughts. I really enjoyed making noises because it helps with regulation [recuperation] and bringing my thoughts together" (journal). This shows an increased

awareness that wellness practices aid their SWB. This also links to the cue and craving of the habit loop, indicating how new responses were rewarding.

In terms of the sub-theme of inner experiences, Participant D said:

> There are certain patterns I have noticed when I am stressed, such as I have noticed I bounce my one leg up and down a lot when I am stressed, and I also pick the skin around my fingernails. I have noticed that making intentional efforts to pay attention to my body has helped me recognise and be aware of what I am doing – this then forces me to stop, take a breath, and realign my focus. (journal)

Linking these observations to the changes in SWB shows how Participant D made large shifts. Their experience of positive emotion went up by 1.3 and health went up by 1.7, from sub-optimal to normal functioning, with their experience of negative emotion decreasing by 1.3 to high functioning. These all indicate that the observations Participant D made during the programme reflect in the changes to their SWB. The changes have to do with the intrapersonal theme, and these also spilled over into changes in relation to the interpersonal theme.

7.2.1.4.2 Interpersonal theme in relation to SWB

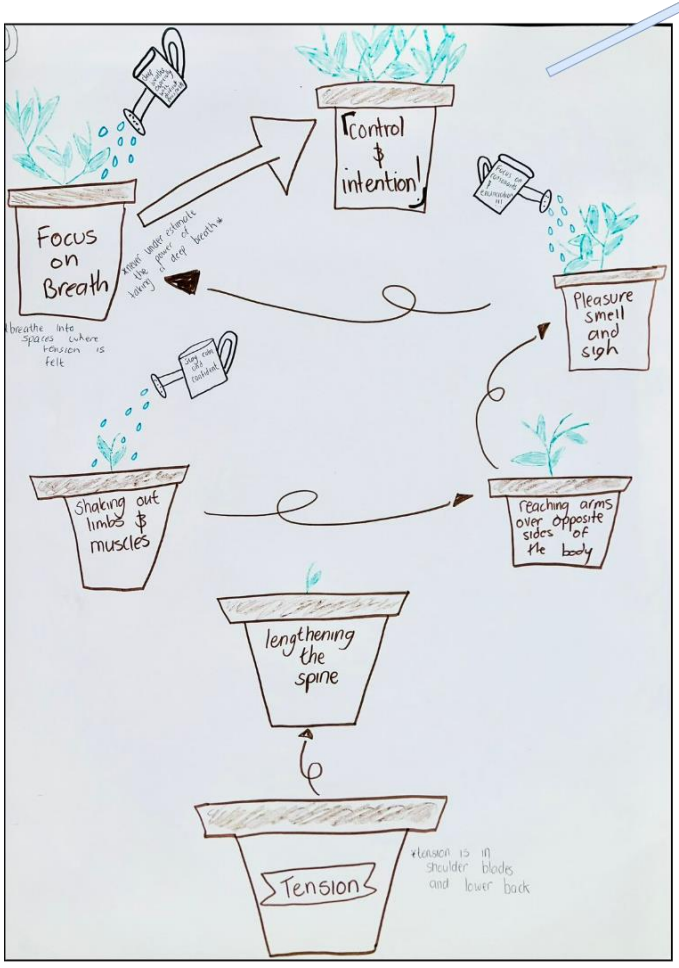
Regarding the sub-theme of patterns and habits, Participant D acknowledged: “I have noticed I bounce my one leg up and down a lot when I am stressed”, indicating enhanced self-awareness (journal). Other initial habits included the following:

> I remove myself from the office, sit outside and I phone my sister and/or friends. It takes my mind and thoughts off the stress, and I feel slightly refreshed. Sometimes these tools are effective. I feel less frustrated when the tools work. I don’t want to go back into the office, because I get frustrated and have ineffective thoughts. (pre-programme interview)

In Appendix G, I outline all Participant D’s initial habits. Some of these include how, before the programme, Participant D used to become impatient, overwhelmed, fidgety, and talk fast and at a high pitch when stressed (pre-programme interview).

Following the programme, they still fidgeted but were much more aware of how and when they fidget, and of other signals, like feeling warm. Their perception of their trigger sensations improved post-programme. They had also, because of this awareness, become more intentional in how they respond in terms of their pattern phrase (post-programme interview). Participant D said: “I am in control of how I feel, what I focus on, and how I grow; and in growth, there are periods of discomfort when creating new habits, but that’s okay” (journal).

Figure 41 visually illustrates one of the body maps that Participant D created. As opposed to the other participants, Participant D visually depicted their journey as a growing plant, that starts as a seed with tension, follows various prosilience-related behaviours while growing and watering themselves, to eventually end the programme as a fully grown plant with control and intention.



Pot 1 (lowest pot, with small seedling):
Tension
*tension is in shoulder blades and lower back

Pot 2 (above pot 1, green growing seedling):
Lengthening the spine

Pot 3 (bottom row, from left to right, growing plant being watered):
Shaking out limbs and [sic] muscles

(On watering can above pot 3):
Stay calm and confident

Pot 4 (to the right of pot 3, growing plant):
Reaching arms over opposite sides of the body

Pot 5 (above pot 4, growing plant being watered):
Pleasure smell and sigh

(On watering can above pot 5):
Focus on consonants and [sic] enunciation

Pot 6 (to the left of pot 5, growing plant being watered):
Focus on breath
*breathe into spaces where tension is felt
*never underestimate [sic] the power of taking a deep breath

(On watering can above pot 6):
Deep breathe especially with different prospects

Pot 7 (at the top, fully grown plant):
Control and [sic] intention!

Figure 41: Participant D – body map

Figure 41 indicates how new habits helped Participant D grow and made them more intentional. Regarding habits dealing with expression, Participant D would stumble over words and speak fast when stressed (pre-programme interview). Following the programme, they used the vocal NRGs to speak clearly and slowed down their pace while also regulating their breath using their pleasure smell (post-programme interview). Post-programme, Participant D felt in control of filtering themself and could express themself as they intend to. Before the programme, Participant D used to remove themself from the office when they experienced stress and make phone calls to relatives or friends. After the programme, because of their intentional focus on new responses, they did not remove themselves but stayed in the office and applied prosilience-related behaviours. These behaviours included focusing on their dynamical alignment, playing with consonants, and shaking their body consciously.

In terms of the sub-theme, life stressors and challenges, Participant D stated: “I will become aware of my outer environment while I become aware of my breath and inner environment. I will make sure my breathing becomes intentional and breathe to the spaces where I feel discomfort and tension” (journal). Participant D clearly showed more intention to release stress and tension post-programme. They went so far to state that “these methods really helped me to feel less stressed, less overwhelmed, and to take more control of the rest of my day”.

Taking control of the rest of their day included speaking on the phone with prospective clients, therefore linking to the sub-theme of connections and support. They noted: “I don’t need to filter myself anymore" (post-programme interview), highlighting their improved self-acceptance and self-support. Nevertheless, it did not seem as if the programme was effective in specifically increasing their engagement, since it decreased by 0.3 and remained languishing. However, the programme did increase their relationships by 1 to very high functioning and decrease loneliness by 4, from languishing to normal functioning.

This indicates that, even though the participant felt that they were more engaged, and even though their relationships improved, they were still not optimally engaged with the task at hand. They were possibly more involved with their stress responses and how to limit them than with the work itself. Their overall well-being went up by 1.1, from

sub-optimal to normal functioning, which indicates that the programme managed to give the participant the necessary skillset to reduce their stress.

As can be seen in the quotes above, the Participant D gained new embodied cognition; instead of removing themselves from the office like they used to, they started seeing the environment of the office as part of their bodymind and used the outer environment to effectively respond in ways that elevates homeostasis in their inner environment. Figure 41 that Participant D drew directly links to the addressing of their needs to maintain equilibrium, which brings me to Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

7.2.1.4.3 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

In Figure 41, Participant D indicates how they first dealt with their deficiency needs by focusing on the physiological stress that unnecessary tension causes. They used various explorations such as lengthening their spine, shaking out their limbs, reaching over their upper body, and pleasure smelling and sighing to consciously focus on their breath. Participant D seemed to lack sense of belongingness, as is portrayed by "I remove myself from the office" – removing their self from challenges (pre-programme interview). The themes extracted show Participant D progressing through Maslow's hierarchy levels during their journey. Initially, Participant D dealt more with safety and security needs, as may be seen from "I don't have control over myself. I become overwhelmed, anxious and tired", which exemplifies a perceived lack of stability (pre-programme interview).

All these deal with their deficiency needs to subsequently address their growth needs, so they could grow like the plant they drew. They learned to take little steps, even during challenging times, to build new habits. In the words of Participant D themselves: "I am in control of how I feel, what I focus on and how I grow; and in growth, there are periods of discomfort when creating new habits, but that's okay" (journal). This also shows self-acceptance and gentleness with their self. Through the programme, Participant D achieved esteem needs, as signified by "I express myself how I would like to', thereby communicating improved self-worth (post-programme interview). Emerging signs of self-actualisation surfaced in statements like "I am becoming more intentional about my habits", in this manner embodying purposeful growth (post-

programme interview). Overall, Participant D demonstrated positive movement in meeting higher needs.

7.2.1.4.4 VUCA world

Participant D's journey indicated enhancement of abilities beneficial to navigating volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. Initially, Participant D battled volatility, as is revealed in their expression of being "impatient and frustrated. I don't have control over myself", depicting a lack of emotional regulation (pre-programme interview). Facing uncertainty emerged in "I remove myself from the office", which indicates avoidant coping mechanisms (pre-programme interview). Through the programme, Participant D enhanced their capabilities for managing constant change in the workplace. Statements like "Before difficult calls, I focus on grounding" (post-programme interview) signify upgraded stress management. Participant D embraced adapting, as may be seen through their being "intentional about habits", thereby demonstrating a willingness to develop themselves (post-programme interview). This reflected nurturing prosilient qualities suitable for a VUCA world.

They stated: "I definitely noticed a positive difference. I still have difficult prospects, but I can see it out of the perspective of others. I don't get as agitated. I express myself how I would like to. I don't need to filter myself anymore" (post-programme interview). In terms of VUCA prime, Participant D gained vision by gaining an understanding of not just their initial habitual responses but also by learning how these can be adapted to become more intentional in every moment.

They further gained vision by seeing their stress from the perspective of others. Participant D used this understanding to be clearer when they communicate. They indicated that they sometimes still rush through calls but when they became aware of this rushing, they used their new awareness to respond in a manner that results in clearer speech and less stress. Participant D also gained greater clarity to allow them to prepare for each day and to remain prosilient in the course of each day. This made them more agile in preparation for the needs of the day.

7.2.1.4.5 BANI world

Initially, Participant D displayed a tendency to be brittle, as indicated by "I don't have control over myself", and a tendency to be anxious, as portrayed through "I become

overwhelmed, anxious, and tired" (pre-programme interview). Through the programme, Participant D enhanced their skills for operating under pressure. Expressions, including "I express myself how I would like to" (post-programme interview), portray stabilisation akin to becoming less brittle. Participant D embraced adaptability, as is evident from their being "intentional about habits" (post-programme interview), signifying a willingness to engage in non-linear change during an unpredictable workday. Overall, Participant D strengthened the attributes they need for handling a demanding and unpredictable BANI environment.

To address their needs in the BANI world, their new habits enabled resilience, seeing as Participant D continued practising their responses even after temporary relapses to old, ineffective habitual patterns. Participant D stated: "I am in control of how I feel, what I focus on and how I grow; and in growth, there are periods of discomfort when creating new habits, but that's okay" (journal). They thus gained flexibility by ensuring that they take baby steps in the forming of new responses.

They remained aware of what they need in each environment and embodied the most effective response for each moment. They stated: "I became more aware and intentional with my breathing in tense spaces while using my pleasure smell; these methods really helped me to feel less stressed, less overwhelmed, and to take more control of the rest of my day" (journal). Participant D did not only learn how to become aware of their own needs but further also gained empathy by learning how to understand what the prospects on the phone need. Participant D noted that their focus has changed to one thing to be pursued daily: to be present and aware. This indicates that they have gained a deeper understanding of their own mindful self in each moment. This new mindfulness aided Participant D in developing more intuition when ambiguous stress responses try to resurface.

7.2.1.4.6 Summary

In summary, Participant D experienced notable progression in terms of the various sub-themes. Participant D progressed up Maslow's hierarchy, signifying amplified well-being and need fulfilment. The tools and awareness gained from the programme equipped Participant D to better handle a changing work landscape. Participant D strengthened prosilient-related behaviours befitting operation in a VUCA world and in

a demanding BANI environment. Participant D's journey showed holistic enhancement of stability and stress-resilience competencies.

Overall, following the programme, Participant D gained better awareness of the signals that cause stress in their bodymind. They prepared by using their breath and pattern phrase proactively and regulated their voice optimally to communicate their intentions clearly. Their self-regulation skills strengthened to maintain homeostasis with greater ease – not just fulfilling their deficiency needs but also allowing them to grow – which links to all the areas of SWB improving, except for the slight decrease in engagement. This is the only area that decreased for Participant D, possibly because of an increased focus on their new habits than on the task at hand. The participant constantly remained aware of their engagement with prospects and possibly did not feel as engaged with work, indicating that the programme might have helped with responses but not necessarily with their actual engagement with the prospective clients.

7.2.1.5 Participant E

7.2.1.5.1 Intrapersonal theme in relation to SWB

In the following quote, Participant E indicates how they used childlike and carefree movement to release tension, thereby improving their wellbeing:

> The word that came to mind […] was *relaxed*. I used the explorations to relieve certain areas of tension in my body. I felt like a child playing and reverting to a childlike sense of carefree movement. (journal)

This links to the sub-theme of mental and emotional well-being. On the basis of the thematic analysis, it is evident that Participant E underwent meaningful transitions. Participant E noted "I deal with stress better" (post-programme interview), thereby demonstrating that more effective coping mechanisms had been learnt. This further links to the sub-theme of health and wellness functioning.

Regarding the latter, Participant E emphasised, "I shake out my body and lengthen myself. I focus on my breathing instead of the habits I used to having", which indicates that their practices transformed (post-programme interview). They further stated that, "after exertion, I use breathing techniques along with vocal exercises, especially my

pattern phrase, to help me relax, re-energise and recuperate" (journal). With reference to the sub-theme of emotional experiences and states, some experiences were difficult to repattern. They stated that, before the programme, they "become very hot and sweaty. I am easily agitated. My energy becomes different. I am not as enthusiastic. I become pessimistic" (pre-programme interview), so demonstrating inner experiences of agitation, lack of energy, and negativity. This links to cue and craving in the habit loop. After the programme, Participant E stated that their "shoulders tense up", and they still "become hot and sweaty". This indicates that not every pattern in and as part of their self was effectively repatterned.

However, as regards the sub-theme of inner experiences, they managed to learn new experiences: "I learned something new about releasing pressure from my vocal folds; how releasing certain sounds allows me to release those folds. The vocal release and relaxation can be used during work, before starting on the phone" (journal) – this demonstrates that they developed somatic awareness of inner tension patterns. After the programme, Participant E stated: "I shake out my body and lengthen myself. I focus on my breathing instead of the habits I used to have" (post-programme interview), which signifies the ability to consciously influence inner experiences through embodied practices. These embodied practices link to new responses and rewards in the habit loop.

In terms of PERMA and SWB, their experience of positive emotion increased by 0.7. In contrast, experiencing negative emotion increased by 1.3, going from sub-optimal functioning to languishing. I posit that the coming to awareness of all their inner turmoil in the course of the programme caused the participant to experience more negative emotions. They stated: "The immediate response sometimes feels habitual towards emotions, but then it is important for me to stay aware of this and use a technique from the programme to stay present in my body" (journal). This indicates that they possible needed more time for their habitual patterns to be properly repatterned, which illustrates the temporal limitations of the programme.

Their health increased by 1, from sub-optimal to normal functioning. This indicates that the increased experience of negative emotions did not stop the participant from improving their health. However, they did not progress linearly through the programme. Participant E stated: "It went so well when we started with the programme

and then suddenly it went terrible. I still doubt myself but after the programme I deal with it better" (journal). They thus consciously alluded to the experience of negative emotions in the course of the programme; nevertheless, they indicated that they had grown as they deal with stress better.

In relation to the sub-theme of personal growth, Participant E stated that "even if the explorations do not change the result, I deal with stress better" (post-programme interview). The sub-theme of purpose was also present, with quotes such as the following: "I will continue exploring" and "Overall, I feel lighter, and I have a clear head" (journal). This links to the SWB aspect of meaning, which improved by 2, from sub-optimal to normal functioning. This indicates growth in terms of the overall intrapersonal them.

7.2.1.5.2 Interpersonal theme in relation to SWB

Relating to the sub-theme of patterns and habits, Participant E acknowledged: "I try to smoke less, so I don't do it with every stressful situation" (post-programme interview), which signifies reduced maladaptive patterns. Participant E stated that their initial habitual patterns stemmed from ineffective body alignment; however, as a result of their childlike curiosity, the programme aided in helping them feel release in their bodymind (post-programme interview). Figure 42, a body map created by Participant E, illustrates how this participant focused on optimally lengthening themselves through

visualisation of both a string at the crown of their head and a string that runs through their spine and connects their crown with their lower body.

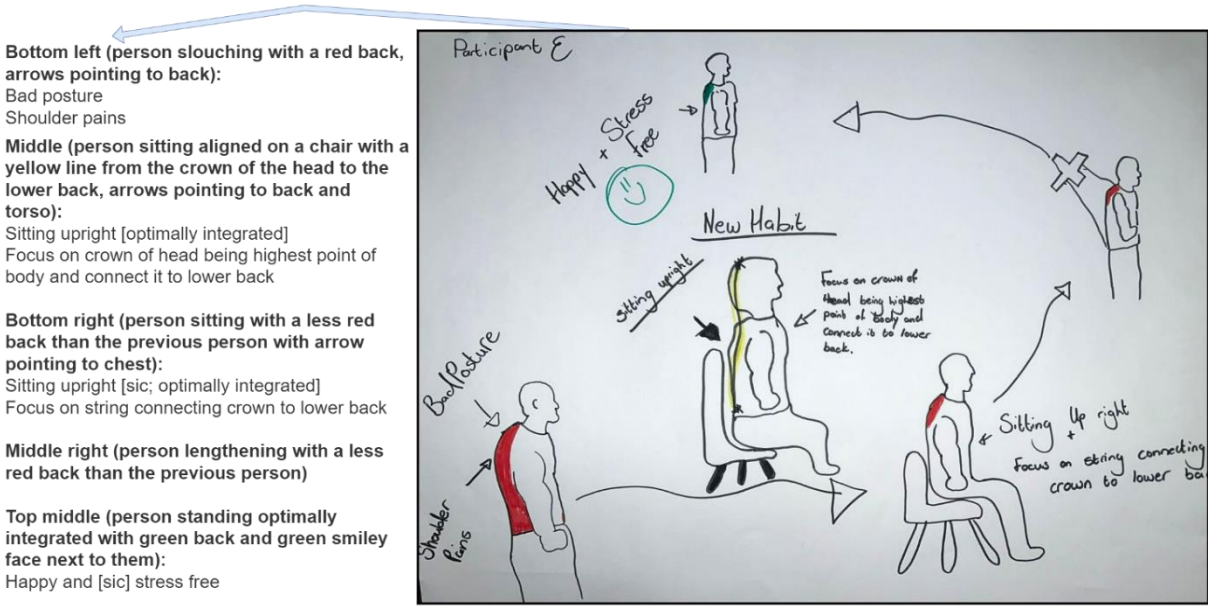


Figure 42: Participant E – body map

Initially, Participant E would become hot, agitated, jittery, and clench their fists when stressed (pre-programme interview). After the programme, they still experienced some physical signals, like shoulder tension and sweating. Nevertheless, Participant E learnt to focus on tools like body shaking, lengthening, and breathing instead of their initial ineffective habits (post-programme interview). Participant E stated: “I use my pattern phrase with pleasure smelling, lengthening, shaking out, three-point weight distribution [grounding my feet], so I am more comfortable in my outer environment” (post-programme interview).

Their awareness and management of their stress signals improved after the programme. In terms of embodied cognition, Participant E gained awareness of how their outer environment forms part of their bodymind by reducing their need for smoke breaks, coffee, and playing games. They found a way to tune into their inner environment by using explorations such as those focused on dynamic alignment and pelvic activation to better deal with any stress they experience; this aids in maintaining homeostasis.

Participant E stated that they used to sound monotonous and without energy when they experienced stress. After the programme they played around with their consonants for vocal clarity but still rushed calls occasionally: “I still rush through calls, but sometimes I become clearer when I take it slower” (post-programme interview). Participant E indicated that they learned how to use the vocal NRGs to remove unnecessary tension from their vocal folds. This has resulted in their communication being more intentional.

Navigating more intentional communication links to the sub-theme of life stressors. Participant E noted that, before the programme, “sometimes I feel like I am having an existential crisis: I am not where I need to be” (pre-programme interview), which indicates that the external stressors were overwhelming them. Participant E, during and after the programme, showed that they had worked on this: “To calm my inner down when the outer feels overwhelming, I use breathing techniques such as my pleasure smell" (journal). They further stated: “When I have a physical sensation that resembles tension or when I am aware of a stressful occurrence (by feet tapping, always), I stop tapping and actively try to remember, at that moment, how we learned to respond in the programme” (journal). This shows that they became aware of their external stressors and could deal with them by focusing on their inner environments.

This aided them in making more connections, which links to the sub-theme of connection and support. Participant E stated: “When I keep my functions aligned, such as by grounding, lengthening, and focusing on using the vocal techniques, I am able to express myself better” (journal). They further stated that they “feel more present and aware when [they] use the techniques in situations that demand high functionality” (journal). In terms of PERMA and SWB, Participant E’s relationships improved by 0.3, and engagement improved by 2.7, from sub-effective to normal functioning. Their loneliness however, increased by 2, from very high functioning to high functioning. This indicates that they might have been able to engage with their outer environment more and make more relationships, but they felt slightly lonelier. Nonetheless, with their new inner and outer knowledge, their overall well-being still increased with 1.2, from sub-optimal to normal functioning. Next, I outline how Participant E addressed Maslow’s needs.

7.2.1.5.3 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Analysis showed that Participant E advanced through Maslow's hierarchy levels during their journey. Initially, Participant E dealt more with physiological and safety needs, as may be seen through statements such as "I become very hot and sweaty" (pre-programme interview), a stress reaction. The programme addressed Participant E's physiological deficiency needs by guiding them to feel more release in their body after the programme. Even though they still became "hot and sweaty" afterwards, they better knew how to deal with it.

They focused more on self-care and safety by ensuring that they tune into their inner environment more, so as to deal effectively with stressors in the outer environment and to focus less on unhelpful coping mechanisms. Participant E stated that even if the explorations did not relieve the stress every time, they helped them overall to better deal with any situation, indicating that they had grown as a result of the process.

Belonging needs initially seemed lacking, possibly as a result of distancing, as evidenced by "I rush through calls" (pre-programme interview). The participant may have rushed calls due to not connecting with clients. As a result of the programme, Participant E achieved esteem needs, as indicated by "I deal with stress better", which communicates better self-worth (post-programme interview), even though loneliness increased slightly. Subtly emerging signs of self-actualisation surfaced through embracing techniques with an open "I will keep exploring" mindset (post-programme interview). On the whole, Participant E's development aligned with progression up Maslow's hierarchy.

7.2.1.5.4 VUCA world

Participant E's experiences indicated the enhancement of competencies useful for navigating a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment. Initially, Participant E grappled with volatility, as may be seen with "I become very hot and sweaty. I am easily agitated", indicating stress responses (pre-programme interview). Ambiguity emerged from expressions such as "I rush through calls" communicating avoidant coping (pre-programme interview). Through the programme, Participant E enhanced abilities for handling constant change. Statements like "I shake out my body and [...] focus on my breathing instead of the habits I used to have", signify upgraded

stress management (post-programme interview). Embracing exploration portrayed through “I will keep exploring” demonstrates flexibility (post-programme interview). Overall, Participant E cultivated attributes of prosilience fitting for a fluid VUCA world.

To further address the VUCA world, Participant E adhered to the principles of VUCA prime during the programme. They gained vision by consciously using new responses, such as sitting dynamically aligned, by first understanding that most of their initial ineffective responses stemmed from ineffective body integration. Participant E stated: “Focusing on pelvic activation is a good exercise to start one’s day. The pelvic explorations centre me and prepare me for movement throughout the day” (journal). They gained greater clarity about how to prepare for each day through prosilient behaviours such as pelvic rocking and shaking out as part of their pattern phrase. This helped Participant E to remain consciously agile in their response to stress, leading them to, in their own words, feel “happy and stress free”.

7.2.1.5.5 BANI world

Initially, Participant E displayed a tendency to be brittle, as may be seen in ”I become very hot and sweaty” and a tendency towards anxiety evident in “I am easily agitated” (pre-programme interview). Through the programme, Participant E enhanced their ability to thrive amid volatility. Statements like “I shake out my body and lengthen myself. I focus on my breathing instead of the habits I used to have” (post-programme interview) signify enhanced composure akin to being less brittle. Participant E embraced exploration as is evidenced by “I will keep exploring” (post-programme interview), thereby demonstrating a willingness to move in a non-linear direction. Overall, Participant E strengthened their prosilience attributes suited for operating effectively within a demanding and unpredictable BANI world.

To address the needs of the BANI world further, Participant E learnt to focus on preparing for each day in a prosilient manner by using their pattern phrase. They stated: “I feel more present and aware when I use the techniques in situations that demand high functionality” (participant E journal). They also learnt to have more empathy for others, not by removing themselves and keeping their responses short, but by actively focusing on connecting with other individuals. Participant E became more mindful not just of their initial responses, but they used their intuition and teacher-

within to proactively prepare themselves and create new responses. They indicated during the programme that they felt more at ease with their childlike curiosity and changing their stress responses by means of the transparency that comes from sharing the process with other participants.

7.2.1.5.6 Summary

In summary, based on my analysis, Participant E exhibited meaningful advancement relating to various sub-themes. Participant E progressed through Maslow's hierarchy to demonstrate amplified wellness. Participant E gained the tools and awareness to support navigating constant fluctuation. Participant E strengthened their attributes of prosilience, which were fittingly tailored for effectively handling a VUCA world and for performing optimally in a demanding BANI environment. Participant E's journey reflected holistic progression involving enhanced composure and stress-resilience abilities.

Participant E developed awareness of their initial ineffective habits and learnt to use explorations proactively to manage their stress signals. Their vocal regulation also improved. In these ways, they managed not just to function effectively but to express themselves while they maintain homeostasis with greater ease. The overall increase in SWB demonstrated by their responses to the PERMA profiler echoes this sentiment.

7.2.1.6 Participant F

7.2.1.6.1 Intrapersonal theme in relation to SWB

The sub-theme of inner experiences jumps out in the following quote in which Participant F clearly shows that they are aware of their inner experiences:

> I hereby pledge allegiance to myself that I will continue being aware of my internal environment, both mentally and physically. I will remember that I have a pleasure smell and indulge in it when my target and stats are looking a bit blank. I will do this so I can focus on how best I can do the next call. (journal)

After the programme, Participant F also said: "My whole body feels lekker" (journal), which roughly translates to my body feels good. Their inner awareness became so prevalent that, when writing a letter to themselves, they went so far as to note the following: "You're about to learn how to effectively become aware of not just your

surroundings […] but to also be aware of your inner environment. Your inner environment includes your emotions, stress levels, and your average mental well-being". This links further to the sub-theme of mental and emotional well-being, with Participant F stating, "My entire mindset changed as well. This programme was so effective for me" (post-programme interview); this shows their transformative shift towards their awareness of their self in and as part of the world. This links to new responses and rewards in the habit loop.

In terms of the sub-theme of health and wellness functioning, Participant F stated during the programme, "My stomach is very sore. My back and my ankles are stiff. My shoulders feel heavy" (journal). However, after the programme, Participant F stated: "I don't feel tension in my body anymore", highlighting embodied changes (post-programme interview). Participant F detailed the following: "[After I have exerted] myself on difficult calls, I have stopped internalising the prospect's response; I try to recuperate by humming it away from me instead of verbally counteracting the call after it's done. I try not to call the prospect names after they hang up" (journal).

Participant F was emotionally invested in the journey, highlighting the sub-theme of emotional experiences and states. They stated:

> I noticed that posture and integration play a significant role in how and what we feel. Sitting dynamically aligned has benefits and the wrong posture can be a contributing factor to poor habits. I started noticing that I automatically feel different depending on my posture, so I always try to ensure that I am sitting lengthened and aligned. (journal)

This awareness aided them in dealing with their emotional states with greater ease. In terms of SWB and PERMA, Participant F increased their experience of positive emotion by 0.3, while decreasing their experience of negative emotion by 2, from sub-optimal to normal functioning.

Participant F's health decreased by 1, which can be explained by the awareness of new pain and stressors that they discovered during the programme. They stated: "The only thing holding me back from being effectively integrated is my habit of always wanting to be seated with poor posture most of time" (journal). Habits such as these may have influenced their health during the programme; this is further illustrated by

quotes such as: “During today’s session I was more jittery and clumsier than other days but the voice series along with the front toes and back heel tapping effectively grounded me and calmed me down” (journal). They were consciously aware of their habits but tried their best to repattern these habits. In a letter to themselves, Participant F further stated: “I have noticed that over the months you have let go of your self-awareness, internally, and this has been detrimental to your work–life–school balance. You’re about to learn how to mentally tune into your body through both conjoined physical and mental explorations” (journal). This new self-awareness indicates that they became more aware of their health concerns.

The quotes in this section link to the sub-theme of personal growth, seeing as the participant actively engaged themselves in the process. Participant F expressed an openness to growth, stating: “I am nervous about the programme because what if it doesn’t fix my stress?” (pre-programme interview) – thereby communicating a willingness to develop. By the end of the programme, Participant F expressed their ongoing evolution: “I am more well-rounded, not just my mental health”, hinting at multi-factorial improvement and continual progress (post-programme interview). In terms of SWB and PERMA, Participant F’s accomplishment went up by 4, from languishing to normal functioning, indicating that they did indeed improve in various aspects of their life.

In terms of the sub-theme of purpose, Participant F expressed a lack of purpose, stating: “I don’t know, and I am not aware when I am experiencing stress; I only figure it out afterwards”, which demonstrates an initial lack of direction (pre-programme interview). However, with their growth, Participant F gained new purpose, emphasising, “Now I am trying. I try to remain calm. I talk with more people, clearer and calmer”, signifying a shift towards presence and connection (post-programme interview). In terms of PERMA, meaning went up by 3.7, from normal to high functioning, indicating a large gain of purpose in the workplace. In terms of the intrapersonal theme, Participant F thus improved significantly. In the next section, I outline Participant F’s journey in relation to the interpersonal theme.

7.2.1.6.2 Interpersonal theme in relation to SWB

When, during their pre-programme interview, I asked participant F how they navigate and prepare for stress at work, they replied with “Do I?” and giggled. They further stated that they were nervous about the programme because they wanted it to fix their stress and mean something to them, and, if it did not, they would feel like a mechanical participant in a study.

When I asked them about this response during the post-programme interview, they said they were glad they voiced their concerns, because reflecting is powerful, and they had realised the following:

> The programme affects every area of my life better. This programme had a huge impact on each one of us. You really got into the deep to pull us all out and you didn’t need to. The programme was so meaningful and purposeful for me. I was not just a mechanical participant. (post-programme interview)

Concerning the sub-theme of patterns and habits, Participant F acknowledged that “foot tapping makes a significant amount of change”, which signifies behavioural progress (journal). Pre-programme, Participant F had been unaware of their stress. They actively stated that they were not aware of their stressors or stress responses. Before the programme, they would twitch, get headaches, and become aggressive on calls. Following the programme, they recognised stress signals earlier, like their foot tapping, and then responded proactively with the tools and explorations they had learned. Their stress awareness and homeostatic regulation strengthened.

Figure 43 outlines the specific explorations Participant F used to repattern their habitual responses to stress, namely focusing on three-point weight distribution, using pointers to remain optimally integrated, shaking their body, and rolling down their spine. When I asked Participant F the clarifying question of “What does ‘I feel pink now’ mean?”, they stated that the colour was a personally unique manner for them to identify a flexible string through their body, in order to stay optimally integrated.

Top left (a person with a large purple glitter F for a head with various red crosses coming from the head):

I Mental clutter
Seated Poorly

To the right and lower than I (two people with purple glitter blocks for heads):

II Physical isolation to get in better head space, stretch, shake

To the right and higher than II (a person with three yellow smiling faces with arrows pointing to their feet):

III Three-point weight distribution crucial in maintaining ideal posture [optimal integration]

To the right and lower than III (two people with yellow smiling faces dancing together):

IV

To the right and higher than IV (two people with yellow smiling faces rolling down their spines):

V

To the opposite corner of V (a yellow smiling face with a string representing the body):

VI I feel PINK now

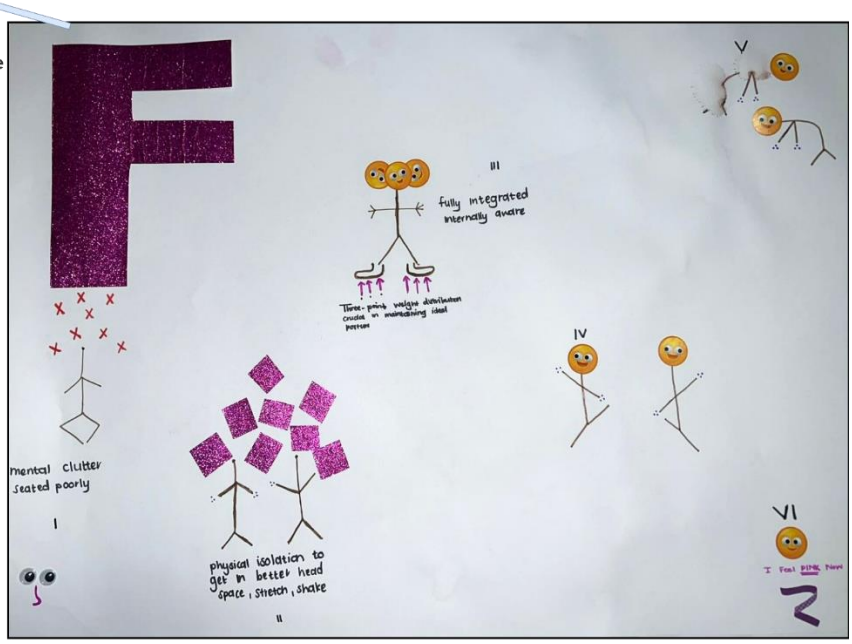


Figure 43: Participant F – body map

Regarding communication, Participant F used to sound angry and firm on calls when they experienced stress. After the programme, their voice adapted to prospects by using the vocal NRGs to exhibit more warmth, and they focused on their forward facial orientation and their dynamic alignment. They further stated: “When I exert myself on difficult calls, I have stopped internalising the prospect’s response; I try to recuperate by humming it away from me instead of verbally counteracting the call after it’s done. I try not to call the prospect names after they hang up” (journal). This indicates that Participant F improved not only the function of their voice but also their expression.

This links to the sub-theme of life stressors and challenges. Participant F stated: “I think even when I just want to regain inner control in a taxing external situation, I will start with the front foot and back heel tapping, especially after a difficult call, to remember and ground my feet and remind me that one bad call cannot determine my entire day and target” (journal). This indicates improved responses to stressors in the outer environment during the programme.

In terms of the sub-theme of connection and support, Participant F said “I made a note for myself which I can look at during calls, to remind me to remove myself from not only a bad call but also from an unpleasant physical stimulus like noise. I also walk around the office to float when the unpleasant stimulus is a cigarette/vape smell”

(journal). They also continued to the effect that the programme could help everyone in the office “individually and collectively to connect” (post-programme interview) and that they have started speaking to individuals they normally did not speak to. This indicates that Participant F gained more support for themselves, and they were more open to connecting with others post-programme.

In terms of SWB and PERMA, Participant F made significant strides. Their loneliness decreased by 7, from languishing to high functioning, their engagement increased by 2.3, from sub-optimal functioning, and their relationships by 0.7, still within the high functioning range. Their overall well-being increased by 2.3 from sub-optimal to normal functioning. In what follows, I outline Participant F’s journey in relation to Maslow’s hierarchy.

7.2.1.6.3 Maslow’s hierarchy of needs

Examination revealed Participant F advancing through Maslow’s hierarchy levels during their journey. Initially, Participant F dealt more with basic physiological needs, as may be seen in “My feet start twitching. I only know because the person next to me tells me”, which indicates the manifestation of stress (pre-programme interview). Safety needs seemed lacking, as implied by “I stay in the same mind space”, which communicates a lack of inner security (pre-programme interview).

The programme addressed Participant F’s physiological deficiency needs by guiding them to use breath regulation and humming, as well as their pattern phrase in order to be more prosilient in response to stress. They stated: “When I have a physical sensation that resembles tension or when I am aware of a stressful occurrence (by feet tapping, always), I stop tapping and actively try to remember, at that moment, how we learned to respond in the programme” (journal).

They have further grown by gaining embodied cognition in the sense that they have seen themselves and their bodyminds as part of their environment instead of removing themselves from their stress. Participant F stated that, instead of isolating themself like they did before the programme, following the programme, they tried to float around from desk to desk and no longer push prospects away on the phone: “I talk with more people, clearer and calmer. I would not have noticed by myself that I am not removing

myself from other people anymore, but I am. I even speak to some of the participants who never used to speak to" (post-programme interview).

Participant F even learnt how to stay calm by applying the explorations to remain in equilibrium. Through the programme, Participant F achieved esteem needs, as may be seen in "I speak with more people", which demonstrates development (post-programme interview). Emerging signs of self-actualisation became evident as they felt so fulfilled that they embraced the notion that everyone could benefit from the experience, as reflected in statements like, "I think everyone in the office should do it." This sentiment reveals a sense of purpose rooted in communal growth and the desire to share transformative experiences with others (post-programme interview). Overall, Participant F exhibited holistic progression in meeting higher order needs.

7.2.1.6.4 VUCA world

Participant F's journey evidenced the cultivation of abilities advantageous for operating within a VUCA world. Initially, Participant F experienced volatility, as portrayed through behaviours like "My feet start twitching", which shows physiological instability (pre-programme interview). Ambiguity manifested via "The tools I use are not entirely effective", indicating lack of clarity (pre-programme interview). Throughout the programme, Participant F enhanced their capabilities for managing constant flux. Statements like "Now I am trying. I try to remain calm" represent enhanced emotional regulation (post-programme interview). Flexibility emerged through adopting new practices, as evidenced by "I no longer sit funny", which communicates willingness to evolve (post-programme interview). Overall, Participant F strengthened prosilience qualities fitting for a fluctuating landscape.

To address the need of the VUCA world further, Participant F's journey through the programme adhered to the principles of VUCA prime. They went so far as stating that they initially had no idea how they respond to stressors and that they only figured this out when they "mess everything up". Participant F gained vision in understanding that they do not mess everything up; they learnt about their initial response to stress and about how to be more conscious of their responses to stress. After the programme, they understood how to prepare for stressors by consciously using various explorations. They stated:

> I use the pattern phrase. I liked doing it with others. My shoulders do not pain anymore. I shake my whole body; it feels good; I had extreme back pain but not anymore. I use three-point weight distribution for stability. I feel grounded and in charge. This enlightens my teacher-within. (post-programme interview)

Participant F stated that they could, following the programme, identify when stress is present and then stay agile in response in order to proactively prepare for any stressful situations. This indicates that they gained an agile way to deal with their outer environment by keeping their inner environment in homeostasis.

7.2.1.6.5 BANI world

Initially, Participant F displayed a tendency to be brittle, as implied by fragile and ineffective bodily reactions to stress such as “My feet start twitching”, and a tendency towards anxiety, as evident in “I am nervous about the programme” (pre-programme interview). Through the programme, Participant F fostered abilities for thriving amid volatility. Statements like “Now I am trying. I try to remain calm” signify stabilisation akin to becoming less brittle (post-programme interview). Participant F embraced exploration, as is apparent in “I don’t feel tension in my body anymore”, demonstrating a willingness to embrace non-linear change (post-programme interview). Overall, Participant F strengthened the attributes suited for a demanding and unpredictable BANI world.

To deal with the BANI world further, Participant F managed to be resilient in terms of continued explorations even when their performance dipped and to be prosilient in terms of using their pattern phrases to prepare for each day. They became more flexible in their response to stress during the programme, talking to various individuals who they never have anything to do with and trying new prosilient responses. This connection with other humans aided them in having more empathy, both on and off calls. They became more mindful of their responses to stress, more transparent and honest with themselves by sensing and perceiving their responses and utilised their intuition to gain a new awareness that leads them to respond in an effective manner.

7.2.1.6.6 Summary

In summary, Participant F experienced notable advancement across various sub-themes. Participant F progressed up Maslow’s hierarchy, demonstrating enhanced

well-being and need fulfilment. Participant F gained abilities navigate constant flux. Participant F developed qualities of prosilience suitably geared towards coping effectively in a shifting VUCA world in addition to excelling within a high-pressure BANI environment. Participant F's journey reflected holistic progression marked by enhanced composure and stress-preparedness.

After the programme, Participant F seemed to understand their own stress response and to anticipate stress signals proactively. Following the programme, they indicated that they understood how to use explorations and tools for the regulation of homeostasis. I posit that this aided them in optimising their voice to communicate effectively with other individuals, including prospects on the phone.

7.2.1.7 Participant G

7.2.1.7.1 Intrapersonal theme in relation to SWB

In the course of the programme, Participant G underwent meaningful changes. They stated:

> This journey has benefited me in so many ways. Not only has my emotional well-being been modified, but so has my physical well-being. Even if I'm long gone from this company, the programme will always be remembered. (journal)

In relation to the sub-theme of mental and emotional well-being, Participant G noted: "I have learned to function optimally to express myself", indicating personal development (post-programme interview). Another quote that links to this theme is when Participant G stated, "I've broken down some days crying", when referring to all the realisations they made during the programme. I explain some of these below.

Personal development ties to the sub-theme of health and wellness functioning. Participant G stated, "I no longer bite my nails. I still laugh and shake my legs but it's more conscious", highlighting embodied progress after the programme (post-programme interview). Participant G missed almost half of the programme at first, because of a realisation they had when they were lying on their back. They stated that they never really spent time on their back, so when we did during our first session of the programme, they felt tension under their ribcage. Participant G went to the doctor and after various scans, they found a medical condition that Participant G had lived

with for two years. Participant G was put on the correct medication, and I gently guided them through the rest of the sessions, using videos and at a pace that was more comfortable for them. In the words of Participant G themselves:

> I have not been feeling well and decided to go to the doctor. The results were not good. After coming home, I completed the session's explorations [to recuperate] and found that I was less angry, calmer, and the most interesting thing is I realised where I carry my stress and anxiety [in my abdomen on the left side]. (journal)

This relates to the sub-theme of inner experiences and aligns with new responses and rewards in the habit loop after having listened to initial cues and following the craving to change. They further stated that their stomach kept them from being effectively integrated, but that, following the programme, they had more ease. In terms of the sub-theme of emotional experiences and states, one can understand that the programme was emotional for this participant. During the programme, Participant G stated, "I have a lack of appetite when I experience stress. I am exhausted because I don't sleep enough. I am irritable and I want to snap. I feel overwhelmed" (journal). Nevertheless, after the programme, they said: "I welcome [the new feeling] and I was happy to feel it" (post-programme interview).

The change in emotional landscape reflects in their SWB. According to PERMA, their experience of positive emotions increased significantly by 5.7, from languishing to high functioning; and their experience of negative emotions decreased by 4.3, from languishing to normal functioning. In terms of health, they increased by 5.3, from languishing to high functioning. This is a large increase which makes them an outlier, as I mentioned in Chapter 6.5.1.9.

To discover why they were an outlier, I revisited the triangulated data and realised that this was the participant who discovered discomfort that a doctor later diagnosed as a medical condition. As explained earlier, they discovered the discomfort through conscious explorations and pleasure smelling on their back. They displayed an intense commitment to the process and continuously journaled while continuing their explorations with the recap videos at home.

In terms of the sub-theme of personal growth, Participant G stated, “I’ve learned to function optimally to express myself. I’ve broken down some days crying from gratefulness” (post-programme interview). They clearly experienced growth in their inner environment. This gave Participant G more purpose after the programme. The purpose sub-theme was acknowledged by Participant G when they said the following: “I really loved it. I share it [the programme explorations] with others. It excites me. This will help me long-term. I’ll never stop growing and learning from this programme. You saved my life” (post-programme interview). They said the programme saved their life, which indicates a renewal of purpose. In terms of SWB, meaning increased by 3, from normal to very high functioning. This indicates that, overall, the intrapersonal theme aided Participant G in increasing many components of SWB. Next, I discuss the interpersonal theme.

7.2.1.7.2 Interpersonal theme in relation to SWB

In relation to the sub-theme of patterns and habits,[144] Participant G acknowledged, “I bite my nails when I am stressed or anxious”, revealing enhanced self-awareness (pre-programme interview). Initially, Participant G would lack appetite, feel exhausted, bite their nails, laugh uncontrollably, and stutter when stressed. Following the programme, their appetite, energy, and pace on their calls improved. Participant G still noticed stress signals, like when they start laughing, but they do so more mindfully. Their awareness and regulation of their homeostasis increased post-programme.

During the programme, they proactively prepared themselves for everyday by using shaking, affirmations to be present and aware, and lengthening upwards. They also used a full body yawn before every call, and they used their pleasure smell for optimal breathing. They explained the following: “I’ve learned to function optimally to express myself. I’ve broken down some days crying. You told us there is nothing wrong with feeling. I welcomed it and I was happy to feel it” (post-programme interview). This links

[144] Since Participant G missed almost half the programme and explored with videos at home when they could, they unfortunately missed the session during which the participants created the body maps related to their pattern phrases. I therefore do not provide a body map in this section. However, since Participant G still created a pattern phrase, this indicates that creating a body map was not vital to create a pattern phrase.

to the sub-theme of addressing life stressors and challenges. Before the programme, they stated that they were worried about their health and about whether some days would be difficult, but they managed to feel better: “Today, I have noticed that my body feels GOOD. Before the programme and in the beginning of the sessions my body felt so tense, so uneasy, and today I felt free and comfortable” (journal). Once they welcomed the experiences, they improved their functioning after the programme so that they could express themselves better, even in terms of their voice.

Participant G’s voice used to become highly pitched with stuttering when they were stressed. Now they focus on structure and forward facial orientation to project and enunciate words clearly. This indicates an improved function for effective communication. What I underlined specifically in Participant G’s reflections is that they learned to love their voice and realised that the prospect on the other side of the phone should love it too: “I try to use structure. I love this voice. The prospect should too. I’m making sure of forward facial orientation” (post-programme interview).

In relation to the sub-theme of connection and support, Participant G mentioned how their expression improved in public: “Thank you to my teacher-within for allowing me to connect with my inner mind and body. Grateful that my teacher-within is giving me the ability to let go of my fears and to do the things that I never would have done on my own, especially in public” (journal). In terms of SWB and PERMA, for Participant G, loneliness decreased by 2, from normal to high functioning, engagement increased by 2, from normal to high functioning, and relationships improved by 3.7, from normal to high functioning. This supports the statements Participant G made about letting go of their fears in order to improve themselves in public. Participant G’s overall well-being increased by 3.2, from sub-optimal to very high functioning. The programme thus helped Participant G gain new prosilience-related habits in order to increase their SWB. Next, I outline how this occurred through the lens of Maslow’s hierarchy.

7.2.1.7.3 Maslow’s hierarchy of needs

In terms of addressing their needs, Participant G offered the following:

> I’ve broken down some days crying. You told us there is nothing wrong with feeling. I welcomed it and I was happy to feel it. For the first time ever, I’m starting the month off with a surplus not a deficit. My performance is so much

> better. I really loved the programme. I share it with others. It excites me. This will help me long-term. I'll never stop growing and learning from this programme. You saved my life. (post-programme interview)

The programme addressed Participant G's physiological deficiency needs by helping them identify not only their ineffective habitual patterns but also the medical condition inside of their body. They gained embodied cognition by understanding that the environment in which they find themselves is part of their bodymind and instead of removing themselves from the environment to try and avoid their pain, they embraced their pain and their outer environment in order to effectively remain in equilibrium in their inner environment. This aided them in growing not just themselves but also their performance at work.

Participant G progressed through Maslow's hierarchy levels during their journey. Initially, Participant G grappled more with basic physiological needs, as is evident in expressions like "I have a lack of appetite when I experience stress" (pre-programme interview), which signals stress responses. Belonging needs appeared lacking, as indicated by "Finances, school, relationships are difficult to maintain" (pre-programme interview), thus indicating challenges meeting this need. During the programme, Participant G achieved esteem needs, as may be seen in statements like "I have learned to function optimally to express myself" (post-programme interview), thereby demonstrating autonomy. Signs of emerging self-actualisation surfaced, as shown by a willingness to "share it with others. It excites me" (post-programme interview), portraying purpose. Overall, Participant G moved higher along Maslow's hierarchy.

7.2.1.7.4 VUCA world

Participant G's experience demonstrated the gaining of abilities useful for navigating a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment. In the beginning, Participant G struggled with volatility, as is shown in stress expressions like "I have a lack of appetite when I experience stress. I am exhausted because I don't sleep enough. I am irritable and I want to snap. I feel overwhelmed" (pre-programme interview). Ambiguity emerged from a sense of vagueness in how to deal with stress. They indicated that they felt "drained physically and emotionally" (pre-programme interview) because of this confusion. Through the programme, Participant G enhanced

their capability to manage constant change. Statements like “I have learned to function optimally to express myself” (post-programme interview) portray enhanced adaptability. This signifies the strengthening of prosilience-related behaviours tailored for an ever-changing VUCA world.

In terms of VUCA prime, Participant G was initially overwhelmed without stress navigation since they felt their existing toolset, before the programme, helped only inconsistently. After the programme, their vision expanded beyond single tools to a more holistic approach that focuses on their bodymind by ensuring they have appropriate tools to become more stress prosilient. An example is when they stated: “Before I start in the morning, I use shaking, affirmations to be present and aware. I lengthen upwards. I do a full body yawn before every call, and I use my pleasure smell” (post-programme interview).

Participant G gained a clearer understanding of their emotions as well as of their initial responses to stress to aid them in embracing a newfound adaptability to stress. They further gained agility, since they stopped and took moments to pause when they needed to recentre themselves.

7.2.1.7.5 BANI world

Initially, Participant G displayed a tendency to be brittle, implied in bodily reactions to stress such as “I have a lack of appetite when I experience stress” and a tendency to anxiety evident in “I am exhausted because I don’t sleep enough” (pre-programme interview). Through the programme, Participant G enhanced their ability to thrive amid volatility. Statements like “I have learned to function optimally to express myself” signify stabilisation akin to becoming less brittle (post-programme interview). That Participant G embraced exploration is apparent in “I share it with others” (post-programme interview), demonstrating a willingness to engage in non-linear change. Overall, Participant G strengthened their attributes suited for a demanding and unpredictable BANI world.

Participant G further managed to become more flexible by adapting their responses from laughter and discomfort to being mindfully aware of their triggers and consciously exploring with new responses. They stated: “The tools help me to be aware of what I am doing. I don’t necessarily know that I am stressed but I know my habits” (post-

programme interview). Their newfound awareness enabled them to have more empathy towards themselves and to feel emotions – and see how this influences the stress affecting their bodymind. By sharing their stressors through journaling and interviews, Participant G managed to become transparent to themselves and reframe their initial negative self-talk, which added to their stress. Overall, Participant G gained new prosilience-related habits by allowing their teacher-within to follow their intuition and to do what is necessary to maintain homeostasis.

7.2.1.7.6 Summary

In summary, Participant G underwent meaningful changes pertaining to various sub-themes. Participant G progressed through Maslow's hierarchy, signifying amplified overall wellness. Participant G gained the tools for preparing to navigate constant transformation. Participant G developed prosilience qualities suitably adapted for handling a VUCA world as well as for performing optimally within a stressful BANI environment. Participant G's journey revealed holistic progression marked by strengthened composure and resilience capacities.

Participant G identified what kept them from optimally regulating homeostasis, improved their awareness of habitual responses to stress signals in their outer environment, and learned prosilient behaviours that aid their bodymind and strengthen their voice, allowing them to communicate effectively despite stressors. In this way, they learnt to effectively and dynamically align their body in order to constantly be able to respond to stressors so that they maintain homeostatic equilibrium in and of the bodymind and improve their SWB as a result.

7.2.1.8 Participant H

7.2.1.8.1 Intrapersonal theme in relation to SWB

The following quote from Participant H links directly to the sub-theme of inner experiences:

> I want to thank my inner teacher for the guidance. Not just throughout this programme, but also in other aspects of my life. The teacher-within leads me to success and through hardships. I am extremely thankful for this journey and will always be grateful to my teacher-within. (journal)

Before Participant H could come to this conclusion, they first had some inner experiences and tension they had to deal with, such as the following: “I hold tensions in my lower back and shoulders when I sit strangely, and I hold my hips. The pelvic movements are helping me a lot with feeling relaxed every time I do it" (journal). This links directly to the sub-theme of personal growth and to the cue and craving to change in the habit loop. Participant H grew in various ways, such as “by focusing on responding with grounding and being aware, which provides a better reaction time in any situation. I would respond to my initial habits by focusing on new small movements” (journal). This shows new responses and rewards in the habit loop.

In relation to the sub-themes of mental and emotional well-being emotional experiences and states, Participant H noted, “Butterflies in my heart. More of them. It is because I listen and observe more”, indicating enhanced awareness (post-programme interview). Regarding the sub-theme of health and wellness functioning, Participant H stated: “The pelvic movements are helping me a lot with feeling relaxed every time I do it”, highlighting embodied benefits (journal). Participant H focused on their functioning in other ways: “I readjust my dynamic alignment to recuperate, because this will make me feel ready and fresh” (journal). This demonstrates how they gained prosilience-related behaviours. In terms of SWB and PERMA, their experience of positive emotion and their health increased by 1, remaining in languishing, while their experience of negative emotion decreased by 2, from languishing to sub-optimal functioning. This indicates that the programme did not improve their perception of their health or their experience of emotions to what the PERMA model refers to as “normal functioning”, although both improved.

In terms of the sub-theme of purpose, Participant H initially struggled with finding purpose, stating, “I become quieter and more reserved. I pull back” (pre-programme interview), indicating a lack of direction. Throughout the programme, Participant H seemed to develop renewed purpose, emphasising that “using horse lips is helping me a lot with pronouncing my words correctly” (journal), which highlights the discovery of intent through practices. Participant H expressed strengthened direction: “Professionally there are more situations of stress, but I communicate properly” (post-programme interview), which signified a shift towards meaningful interaction. Meaning, in terms of PERMA, increased by 1.3, from sub-effective to normal functioning.

The programme thus improved the emotional and health aspects of SWB linking to the intrapersonal theme for Participant H, although not enough to get to normal functioning. However, in terms of meaning, Participant H managed to achieve this. In the next section, I outline how Participant H's journey linked to the interpersonal theme.

7.2.1.8.2 Interpersonal theme in relation to SWB

Concerning the sub-theme of patterns and habits, Participant H acknowledged "I hold tension in my lower back, shoulders, when I sit strangely and hold my hips", thereby signifying newfound self-knowledge (journal). Participant H seemed to undergo overall positive SWB shifts with regard to their habits.

Figure 44 outlines the body map that Participant H created regarding their experience of their pattern phrase. Participant H was the only participant who did not use any words on their body map. In the transcription of the body map, I outline how I navigated this in order to collect data that I could interpret.



Since Participant H did not provide any words on their body map, I had to ask clarifying questions to be able to transcribe the data. I asked the following in accordance to the Trilogy of phenomenography (see pp. 56-57):

. Discernment (what?)

What is the most prevalent explorations on the body map that informed your pattern phrase?
Participant H stated that they specifically outlined the reaching over the upper body in the middle left, pelvic rocking in the upper right, and the shaking of the body in the middle right of their body map.

. Meaning (how?)

How did you feel while creating the body map?
Participant H stated that they felt isolated during the programme, hence the thick green border. However, the various twirling lines linked to celebration seeing as they liked doing the explorations with others, and became more comfortable during the process.

. Behavioural responses (why?)

Why did the body map have little to no structure?
Participant H stated that the pain all over their body, that they drew at the bottom of their body maps, made them feel confused and small. They first had to become aware of their pain, which increased "butterflies" in their stomach, but the pink smiling face with the tick mark shows that, despite the initial confusion, they gained new habits.

Figure 44: Participant H – body map

Figure 44 indicates that, despite initial confusion and pain, Participant H was still able to navigate their stress more effectively by gaining new prosilience-related behaviours. Participant H stated in their pre-programme interviews that work is their biggest stressor and that even though they would seem fine on the outside, they were more frantic on the inside than others might notice. This links directly to the sub-theme of life stressors and challenges, and also aligns with Figure 44 seeing as Participant H felt isolated and could thus not share their experience of stress with others initially.

Prior to the programme, Participant H would “feel butterflies, become reserved, type aggressively” on their computer’s keyboard, and isolate themselves when stressed. After the programme, they noticed more butterflies in their tummy because of an increased awareness; they noticed their foot tapping by listening and observing the signals in and of their bodymind. Their sensing and perception of signals deepened, resulting in awareness that aided them in responding in new ways. Regarding their voice, Participant H did not notice vocal changes when experiencing stress before the programme but gained deeper awareness during the programme. After the programme they stated: “I use consonants and structure to regulate my voice well” (post-programme interview). This indicates that they focused specifically on structure and consonants to regulate their voice for effective communication.

As regards the sub-theme of connections and support, Participant H states: “A little movement can help me feel in control of my bigger outer environment. This in turn will lead to better orientation, grounding, responses, and pronunciation. The more you can control the inner environment, the better the outer environment will be. The small controls and helps the big” (journal). Relating to SWB and PERMA, Participant A’s loneliness went down by 1, although it remained in the languishing range, and engagement went up by 1, from sub-optimal to normal functioning. The only aspect of PERMA that worsened for Participant H was relationships, which went down by 0.3, remaining in the sub-optimal range. They stated that they “sometimes fall into old habits” (post-programme interview), which may have influenced their relationships remaining sub-optimal. The programme thus did not improve their relationships, but it did increase their overall well-being by 0.8, from sub-optimal and normal functioning. In the next section, I outline how Participant H met their needs in relation to Maslow’s hierarchy.

7.2.1.8.3 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

My analysis of the data revealed Participant H advancing through Maslow's hierarchy levels during their journey. Initially, Participant H dealt more with physiological needs, as may be seen in statements such as: "My stomach is even more sore", which indicates distress (journal). The programme addressed Participant H's physiological deficiency needs by aiding their bodymind in identifying new ways to prepare for stress, such as pelvic rocking, humming, muscle shaking, and floating. Participant H stated the following:

> Sometimes I fall into old habits. The tools help in keeping stress away and help prepare me for stress. My performance first went down, but I needed it to in order to use the tools and become more aware. (post-programme interview)

This indicates how Participant H first needed to become more aware of their deficiency needs in order to eventually fulfil them and thereafter only fulfil growth needs. Participant H focused considerably on becoming dynamically aligned, on becoming stable through their three-point weight distribution, and on projecting kindness to other individuals. This enabled them to make connections with other individuals more easily, both on and off the phone.

Belonging needs appeared lacking, which is implied by the statement: "I isolate myself", indicating solitariness (pre-programme interview). This may also link to their relationships remaining sub-optimal. Throughout the programme, Participant H achieved their esteem needs, as symbolised by the capacity to "communicate properly", indicating enhanced worth (post-programme interview). Signs of self-actualisation emerged by embracing others, as evidenced by a desire "to remain calm. I talk with more people" (post-programme interview). Overall, Participant H moved higher along Maslow's hierarchy. This, while dealing with the VUCA and BANI world more easily.

7.2.1.8.4 VUCA world

Participant H's experiences underscored the enhancement of abilities advantageous to navigating a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world. Initially, Participant H grappled with volatility, as indicated in behaviours like their feet "twitching", which communicates inner instability (pre-programme interview). Ambiguity emerged in "I

push stress to a side" (pre-programme interview), implying a lack of clarity internally. Through the programme, Participant H developed capacities for managing constant flux. Statements such as that involving their focusing on "breathing and stretches" (post-programme interview) symbolise upgraded coping with stress. Participant H embraced flexibility, as manifested in a willingness to acknowledge new awareness and to adapt their practices (post-programme interview). This signifies strengthened prosilience qualities suitable to a shifting landscape.

In terms of the principles of VUCA prime, they gained understanding of the tools they initially used to help them with stress. Participant H realised that they isolated themselves and, before the programme, pulled back but, through new vision, expanded their toolset to gain more agility and clarity in their preparing for stressors. They also gained more clarity in terms of how they communicate with prospects and other individuals in the office.

7.2.1.8.5 BANI world

Initially, Participant H displayed the tendency to be brittle, as is shown in "My stomach is even more sore" and tendencies towards anxiety that are evident in "I feel a lot more stressed" (pre-programme interview). Throughout the programme, Participant H enhanced their abilities for thriving amid volatility. Statements like "Butterflies in my heart. More of them" signify stabilisation akin to becoming less brittle (post-programme interview). Participant H embraced exploration, as evident in "I liked doing [the explorations] with others", thereby demonstrating a willingness to engage in non-linear change (post-programme interview). Overall, Participant H strengthened the attributes suited for a demanding and unpredictable BANI world.

To address their needs in the BANI world, Participant H learnt new responses and habits that enabled not only resilience in the moment of stress but also proactive preparation in the form of prosilience. They stated: "My favourite movements so far are the pelvic rocking, the reaching over the upper body, and the shaking of my body. This is my main part of my pattern phrase. This pattern phrase helps me the best with my issues" (journal). They further stated: "To help my inner environment be ready for challenging outer environments, I use my pelvic rock and feet stomps to help cope with outer environment stress. When I focus on a little movement, it feels like I can

control my inner environment" (journal). Flexibility, in terms of being open to new tools to prepare for stress, aided Participant H to make effective decisions by their embodying various explorations as part of their bodymind.

In this way, Participant H gained embodied cognition when they realised that their bodymind is part of their environment and that, even when the stressors in their environment increase, they could still communicate effectively. This occurred through an increase in mindfulness and empathy towards themselves and others in the process by sharing phrases and observing themselves in relation to the other participants.

Participant H gained transparency of their habits by identifying new ways through which they can prepare for stress after they first identified exactly how they had initially handled stress before the programme. Their teacher-within aided Participant H to use their intuition to be fully open to exploration. They stated that, throughout the programme, they learnt to listen to and observe their inner environment in response to their outer environment. This aided Participant H to navigate any ambiguous responses to stress and have an efficient way to facilitate homeostasis in and of their bodymind.

7.2.1.8.6 Summary

In summary, Participant H exhibited meaningful enhancement pertaining to various sub-themes. Participant H progressed through Maslow's hierarchy, indicating amplified well-being and need gratification. Participant H gained competencies equipping them to handle constant modification. Participant H developed prosilience qualities well-suited for coping effectively in a shifting VUCA world as well as excelling in a stressful BANI environment. Participant H's journey indicated holistic progress reflected in strengthened composure and stress-management capabilities. Participant H improved their awareness of their initial tools and stress signals. They used new responses more consciously to be prosilient to stress so that they could remain in a constant state of equilibrium.

7.2.2 Comparing the participants' observations and data

Participant A gained awareness of ineffective habitual patterns and stress signals and improved their preparation for their workday by using breathing tools and their pattern phrase. They also gained stronger communication skills. Participant B was initially uncomfortable when the programme started, but they also gained increased awareness of their stress responses and used their pattern phrase daily. They gained better vocal clarity after tuning into their ineffective patterns and embodying new responses.

Participant C seemed to be the most uncomfortable at the start of the programme (based on observations), but they were grateful that they found new responses to what they referred to as "difficult situations". They improved their functioning and expression through an increased focus on dynamic alignment and their pattern phrase. Participant D became very intentional about new responses by preparing to stay present daily through explorations focusing on dynamic alignment, breathing, and their pattern phrase.

Participant E noticed ineffective habitual patterns that stemmed mainly from ineffective alignment and used explorations to attain release. After the programme, they focused on alignment and new tools to communicate with more energy and care. Participant F had no idea how to deal with stress prior to the programme, but they developed early stress recognition during the programme. Following the programme, they connect to others with ease, and they understand their own needs better.

Participant G gained awareness of physical imbalances such as the medical condition they lived with for two years. The programme was a "rollercoaster of emotions" for them, but they learnt how to prepare daily with more awareness, while appreciating their voice. Participant H deepened their awareness of stress signals and used tools strategically following the programme. They used to isolate themselves but managed to gain more clarity and connectedness with colleagues.

Overall, all the participants demonstrated improved stress awareness, preparation skills using various embodied tools and explorations, and strengthened communication abilities. They displayed enhanced self-regulation and homeostasis maintenance to fulfil their deficiency needs. The participants also learnt to fulfil their

growth needs to become prosilient in stressful environments in the VUCA/BANI world. Although all participants increased their awareness of stress signals, participants B, D, and F seemed to have the lowest initial awareness. Even though all the participants managed to learn new responses through which to be vocally present as bodyminded individuals, following the programme, participants E and H at times still rushed communication or pulled back vocally. After the programme, participants A and C continued periodically defaulting to ineffective habits when under heavy stress.

7.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined how each participant developed new prosilient behaviours in the course of the programme. Although the specific experiences varied, all eight participants gained new prosilience-related behaviours useful in handling stress. These findings build upon the themes presented in the previous chapter, where I identified core patterns that influence stress management. By using their personalised pattern phrases that they delineated on body maps, participants were able to proactively prepare for stress, and, through collaborative explorations, each individual created a unique toolset tailored to their needs. This process of developing personalised strategies underscores the importance of individualised prosilience. The combination of these findings demonstrates how the participants' journey through the programme can inform the overall outcome of the study, offering insights into how prosilience can be cultivated and sustained beyond initial stress responses.

My analysis of the themes extracted revealed that the programme facilitated overall positive journeys for the eight participants in terms of the various sub-themes. The participants demonstrated meaningful progress in relation to their mental and emotional well-being, health and wellness functioning, patterns and habits, emotional experiences and states, inner experiences, connections and support, as well as in relation to personal growth. Specifically, analysis found enhanced self-awareness, upgraded stress-regulation abilities, repatterned habitual patterns, cultivated support systems, and amplified self-actualisation tendencies.

Interpretation of the participants' progress revealed movement up the levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, signifying enhanced need fulfilment and overall well-being. The tools and awareness gained through the programme equipped participants

to better cope with volatility, to navigate uncertainty, incorporate complexity, and embrace ambiguity in a VUCA world. The participants also cultivated essential prosilient qualities tailored for thriving under pressure in a high-demand BANI work reality.

Overall, the EPP facilitated positive changes across various indicators of SWB for the call centre agents. The participants underwent journeys characterised by composure, stress-prosilient behaviours, and the adoption of a more integrated, aligned sense of self. The programme catalysed enhancements that benefit participants' lives professionally and personally.

My interpretation, based on the observed shifts in participants' behaviours and self-reported outcomes, has demonstrated that the EPP seems to have effectively cultivated proactive stress management behaviours, improved performance (even though not a focus of the study), and enhanced quality of life, as reflected in increased SWB. These conclusions are supported by consistent patterns across the data: participants reported greater emotional regulation, the ability to anticipate stressors, and the development of personalised strategies for maintaining homeostasis.

Additionally, the positive changes in their SWB align with established measures of psychological flourishing, indicating that this approach not only addressed immediate stress but also promoted long-term prosilience. These findings suggest that the EPP could be transferable to similar high-stress environments, offering broader applications in both workplace and educational settings. In the following chapter, I synthesise these key insights, reflecting on the overall effectiveness of the programme and discussing its potential implications for future research and practical implementation.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the research undertaken in this study. This chapter makes connections between the initial framing of the study in the introduction and the final conclusions drawn. The concluding chapter aligns with the sixth and final phase of the research process, namely research synthesis and my reflection on the study (Figure 45) and thus encompasses the final step of the phenomenographic research process, reflexive synthesis and reporting.

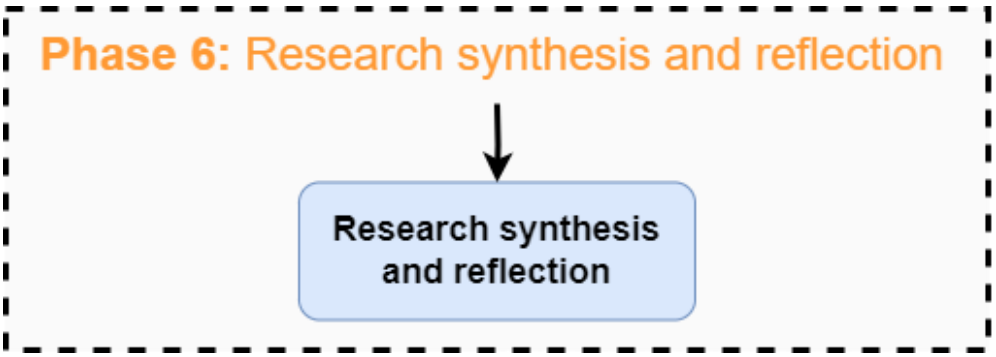


Figure 45: Phase 6 of the research trajectory (Janse van Rensburg 2024) [145]

By synthesising and reflecting on the core insights derived from the preceding chapters, this chapter highlights the positive contributions of somatic movement practice to overcoming stress and improving SWB. The chapter further addresses the theoretical and practical significance of the research outcomes.

The central aim of this study (see p. 1) has been to develop and facilitate an EPP grounded in somatic practices to encourage prosilience-related capacities in call centre agents so they can mitigate stress, increased by the VUCA/BANI world, more effectively. This aim resulted in the research question (see p. 34): “How can an

[145] All figures referring to phases in this chapter are based on and adapted from Figure 5 (see p.70) that outlines the research trajectory by linking the research phases, phenomenographic steps and thesis chapters.

embodied prosilience programme contribute to subjective well-being in a call centre environment?"

To delineate how the study unfolded in relation to its aim and the research question, I provide a summation of the study, commencing with the theoretical and conceptual framework. From there, I revisit and respond to the research question. I further reflect upon the research practice to outline the influence of my worldview and positionality on the research. I also review my chosen research approach, paradigm, design, and methodology, as well as reflect upon the selected methods of data collection and data analysis. After discussing the relevance of each research phase and answering the main research question, my evaluation of the research practice provides a foundation for describing the study's findings, thereby contextualising and synthesising the overall significance of the research. In critically reflecting on every phase and how it contributed to the research findings, I discuss the contributions and limitations of the research, and I make recommendations for future research.

8.2 Overview of the study

As outlined in Chapter 1, call centre agents generally experience stress and have difficulty navigating it. Even though management at the call centre I focus on has an open-door policy and a toll-free helpline, agents continue to self-report high stress levels. The call centre agents are often stationary and develop habitual patterns that do not effectively navigate their inner environment in relation to their outer environment, which leads them to, among other things, handle stress ineffectively.

Chapter 1 (Introduction) identified the VUCA/BANI world as exacerbating these challenges. Chronic stress at work can result in the agents not reaching their deficiency needs, hindering self-actualisation. In not being able to reach their lower deficiency and, consequently, higher growth needs in relation to Maslow's hierarchy, the agents cannot flourish in and as part of their work environment. This results in not navigating stress in the VUCA/BANI world effectively and lowered SWB, which can lead to lower productivity and therefore a less meaningful experience of work (Ladagga 2022:[sp]; see p. 34).

One of the modalities within the field of somatics, embodied movement, may help the agents navigate stress more effectively by focusing on creating awareness through

reflection on an individual's patterns and by developing self-directed and personal movement capacity (Meehan & Carter 2021:2). Embodied movement has developed to embrace the monist perspective of the bodymind, which holds that individuals have the capacity to attain embodied cognition. Embodied cognition is cognition that is formed through the experience of the interconnected bodymind in and as part of the broader context in which action occurs.

I have argued that, by facilitating embodied cognition, the EPP can serve as an employee assistance programme that enables student call centre agents to cultivate prosilience-related behavioural capacities in order to enhance their SWB. The study demonstrated the impact of an embodied, somatic-based programme on agents' SWB. The following sections synthesise insights from each research phase.

8.2.1 Summation of research phases

Across the research trajectory, each phase connected to corresponding chapters and to steps of my phenomenographic design and methodology to produce an articulate enquiry that built conceptually, methodologically, and analytically towards addressing the research aims. In what follows, I summarise the research phases (the review of literature and establishing the research practice, creating the programme, pre-programme data collection, facilitating the programme and data collection, and post-programme data analysis and interpretation) to provide a synthesis of their relevance in answering the research questions and fulfilling the research aims.

8.2.1.1 Phase 1: Review of literature and establishing research practice

Phase 1 is reported on in chapters 1 (Introduction), 2 (Research practice), 3 (Bodymind and embodiment), and 4 (Subjective well-being and stress), through phenomenographic steps 1 (definition of theme), 2 (characterisation of research subjects), and 3 (deciding on data collection methods).

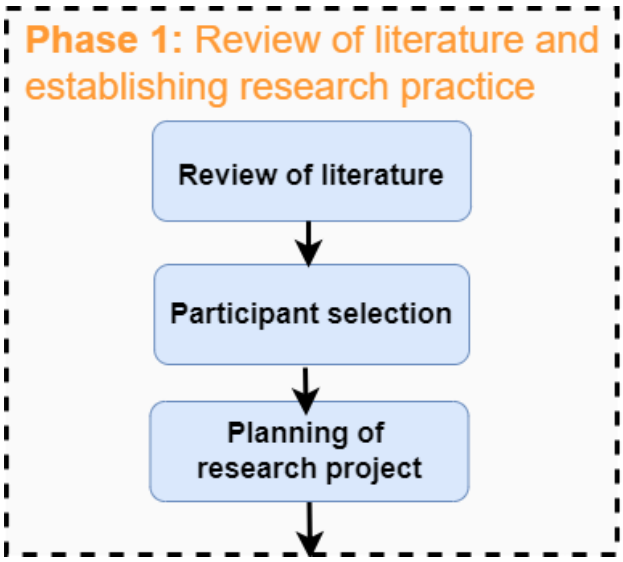


Figure 46: Phase 1 of the research trajectory (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

- Review of literature

In the review of literature, I defined core concepts, established theoretical and methodological parameters, and set the direction for the study's inquiry. The review of the literature, aligning with phenomenographic step 1 (definition of theme), motivated the need to address stress and SWB in the demanding work context of call centres. By clarifying the meaning of concepts such as bodymindedness, embodiment, embodied cognition, embodied learning, prosilience, stress, and SWB in relation to call centre environments, this phase provided the necessary lenses for the creation of the EPP and the collection and analysis of data.

The review of literature answered the sub-questions: "What is stress?" (p. 130); "What is subjective well-being?" (p. 118); "How do stress and subjective well-being relate to call centres?" (p. 27); "What is the bodymind?" (p. 104); "What is embodiment?" (p. 103); "What is embodied learning?" (p. 110); and "What are resilience and prosilience and how do they relate to subjective well-being?" (pp. 136−141). These theoretical and conceptual grounds provided a rationale for developing and applying the EPP.

The review of literature noted that when habitual patterns are no longer required for survival and homeostasis, but continue to be followed out of habit, they lose their usefulness and can become detrimental. When the stress is removed and the patterns still occur, tension can arise that inhibits certain processes in the bodymind's feedback

loop. This disrupts homeostasis and thus has an impact on SWB by preventing the fulfilment of basic needs.

The VUCA/BANI world exacerbates stress in the call centre, while Maslow's hierarchy is a means of considering needs by demonstrating how meeting physiological, safety, and belonging needs is essential for reducing stress and enhancing SWB. Prosilience, the ability to anticipate and manage stress before it becomes overwhelming and detrimental to SWB, is a means of understanding what the call centre agents need to combat stress. I aligned myself with Enriquez (2024:463) who described how researchers can conduct analyses of problems to understand their components (such as stress in call centres and its effect on SWB), and then use prosilience as a lens through which to develop strategies to proactively manage and mitigate the challenges identified.

In creating the EPP for a call centre (discussed in Chapter 1), it was not sufficient to merely include a focus on facilitating and encouraging embodiment, bodymindedness, and stress prosilience. I also needed to find a way to bring these components into the workplace. Therefore, in phase 1, I discussed the Resilience @ Work Sustain 7 model (Figure 11; see p. 143), which encompasses authenticity, purpose, adaptability, self-care, support, energy and networks, as a resilience framework crucial for sustaining well-being and performance in the workplace. This model served as a bridge between resilience strategies and proactive behaviours to illustrate how the EPP can address workplace stress. The model provided a way to link stress prosilience specifically with stress prosilience at work.

The review of the literature concludes in Chapter 4 by linking the concepts of embodiment (encompassing embodied cognition and embodied learning; discussed in Chapter 3) with stress prosilience (encompassing stress prosilience at work; discussed in Chapter 4) in order to lay the foundation for how embodied movement in the EPP may facilitate enhanced stress prosilience. This connection specified how I could create a programme that uses embodied movement to bridge the gap between all these concepts and address the research question and sub-questions. Following the review of the literature, and before I planned the research project, I selected participants for the study.

- Participant selection

In alignment with phenomenographic step 2 (characterisation of research subjects), I delineated how I selected participants (see p. 73) and what salient characteristics they needed to possess (see p. 74) as well as the ethical considerations germane to the research (see pp. 76−81) so as to ensure I put measures in place to keep the participants informed and protected. Following the selection of the participants, I planned the research project in a manner that would guide the call centre agents in exploring the themes of stress and SWB in call centres, as delineated during the review of the literature.

- Planning the research project

The planning of the research project aligned with phenomenographic step 3 (deciding on data collection methods). Phase 1 answered the sub-question, “How can I assess the efficacy of an embodied prosilience programme?” by outlining my research practice in Chapter 2. I outlined my constructivist philosophical worldview, monist ontology, constructivist epistemology, constructivist research paradigm, qualitative research approach, phenomenographic research methodology and design, and the qualitative and quasi-quantitative research methods I used to collect and analyse data.

Aligned with the constructivist paradigm, I positioned myself as co-explorer in the programme that encouraged the participants to question and challenge their habitual patterns, and form their own ideas and conclusions (Ültanır 2012:196) of the EPP, while using my prior knowledge of somatic practice and experience in the call centre to provide opportunities for the participants to construct new meanings and habits that may help them navigate the problems they encounter within their environment. My positioning as the researcher, programme facilitator (or co-explorer), and assistant manager meant that I inevitably embraced not just the subjectivity of the participants but also my own. I navigated confirmation bias by means of reflexivity and data triangulation (see 8.5.1). In addition, that fact that I did not directly line-manage the participants meant that power differentials were minimised.

Phenomenography provided a guide to certain steps to be taken in the research process, which aided me in the design of the research. The planning of the research project in phase 1 thus afforded me the opportunity to outline how I could

operationalise my worldview in practice, what methods I could use to collect and analyse data, as well as how my positionality could guide me in shaping the research trajectory in a coherent manner. In 8.5.1, I revisit the research practice as a whole and offer my subjective interpretation of how effective it was in guiding the research and addressing the research aim.

8.2.1.2 Phase 2: Creating the programme

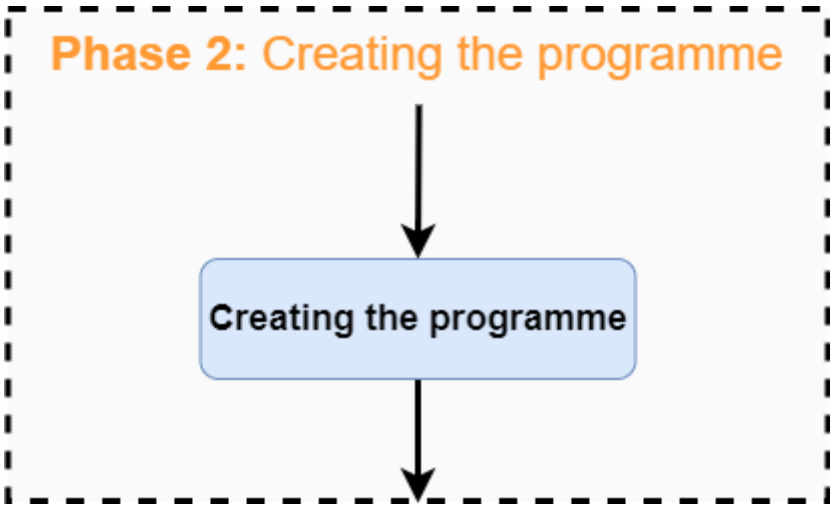


Figure 47: Phase 2 of the research trajectory (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

To create the EPP in a manner that allows for answering the research question, I kept various sub-aims (see p. 151; Table 4; also see 8.3.1) of the EPP in mind in the course of its creation. Chapter 5 reports on the creation of the programme, with appendices C, D, E and F providing more detail. The EPP draws on somatic approaches – Lessac Kinesensics, Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies (LBMS), Skinner Releasing Technique, Horton technique, and tap dancing (see Chapter 5) – and applies somaesthetic principles to align with the study's theoretical aims. I chose these approaches due to my experiential knowledge of each (see Chapter 1.3).

These approaches converge on several foundational elements (see pp. 235−238), namely: a focus on breath and alignment, embodied awareness and sensory learning, integration of the bodymind, holistic learning and expressiveness, kinaesthetic and somatic exploration, as well as adaptability and creative problem-solving. Chapter 5 reported how these approaches could be used to facilitate the repatterning of habitual patterns through embodied movement. I advocated for the inclusion of each approach

as I had identified a theme for each session and could facilitate explorations of all the approaches that could collectively and concurrently enable the attainment of prosilience-related capacities. Each approach was further chosen for its distinct way of engaging with bodyminded exploration:

- Lessac Kinesensics informed EPP explorations that focused attention on both internal and external experience, incorporating voice utilisation through vocal and body NRGS. These NRGS guided the integration of non-traditional somatic approaches (e.g. tap dancing) to ensure their alignment with somaesthetic principles.
- Incorporating LBMS explorations into the EPP cultivated heightened bodymind awareness, offering a congruent set of explorations grounded in somatic principles. Employing Bartenieff Fundamentals provided explorations and descriptive terminology to articulate embodied connections, while the inclusion of Shape forms illustrated how the body can assume various configurations. This approach supported the participants in moving fluidly between LBMS-oriented explorations and those from other methodologies.
- Skinner Releasing Technique involved the use of personalised imagery and music, enabling participants to address habitual tension and patterns of stress. These explorations prompted participants to acknowledge their subjective histories, represented through mediums such as body maps, and to embrace feedback from peers. In doing so, the participants engaged collectively in refining their embodied responses to stress while maintaining a focus on personal insight.
- Incorporating Horton technique heightened awareness of movement initiation from the torso and encouraged participants to isolate specific bodily areas of tension before reintegrating them. These explorations nurtured more efficient connectivity across the body, enabling participants to present themselves holistically as bodyminded individuals.
- Engaging with explorations based on tap dancing as a rhythmic, sensory-rich approach integrated auditory feedback and kinaesthetic awareness. Although the EPP did not involve traditional dancing, participants explored rhythm and

embodied coordination to refine sensorimotor integration and foster enhanced stress prosilience.

I drew exploratory processes from all of these approaches in alignment with the themes of each session and ensured that each session was created with the principles of somaesthetic practice (see pp. 167–169) in mind, namely focusing on change and interest through questions, sustained attention, contrasts of feelings, associative interests, avoiding distracting interests, pre-perception, and disrupting the habitual. Table 5 (see pp. 238–244) provides an overview of how each session adhered to these principles, along with the themes of the EPP, namely Inner/Outer, Exertion/Recuperation, Stability/Mobility, and Function/Expression (see pp. 234−237).

Table 4 summarises the 12 sessions of the EPP, indicating what was utilised from each approach, and how the session aligned with somaesthetic strategies, encouraged embodied cognition through embodied learning, facilitated stress prosilience at work (by considering the principles of the Resilience @ Work Sustain 7 Model) and aligned to the programme themes. The table does not provide a full description of each exploration nor indicate the linear progression of the programme, such as indicating when I used the data collection methods during the programme. Appendix C (see pp. 444–465) describes each exploration I facilitated in the programme in greater detail. Appendix F (see pp. 470–484) outlines each session, its theme, aim, outcomes, explorations, and the purposes and motivation for each exploration, as well as when in each session I used a data collection method.

Phase 2 thus translated theoretical insights from phase 1 into a structured EPP, using somatic movement-based explorations that drew on somaesthetic principles and intentional embodied practice. This phase was important because it operationalised the concepts previously defined into an actionable programme. Phase 2 answered the sub-questions: “What somatic approaches can facilitate prosilience to stress through the bodymind?” (Chapter 5, pp. 175−234); and “How can somatic approaches be used to create an embodied prosilience programme?” (Chapter 5, p. 235−249). Establishing the EPP’s foundational approaches paved the way for implementation, data collection, and later analysis, ensuring that the programme was logically connected to the study’s conceptual framework.

8.2.1.3 Phase 3: Pre-programme data collection

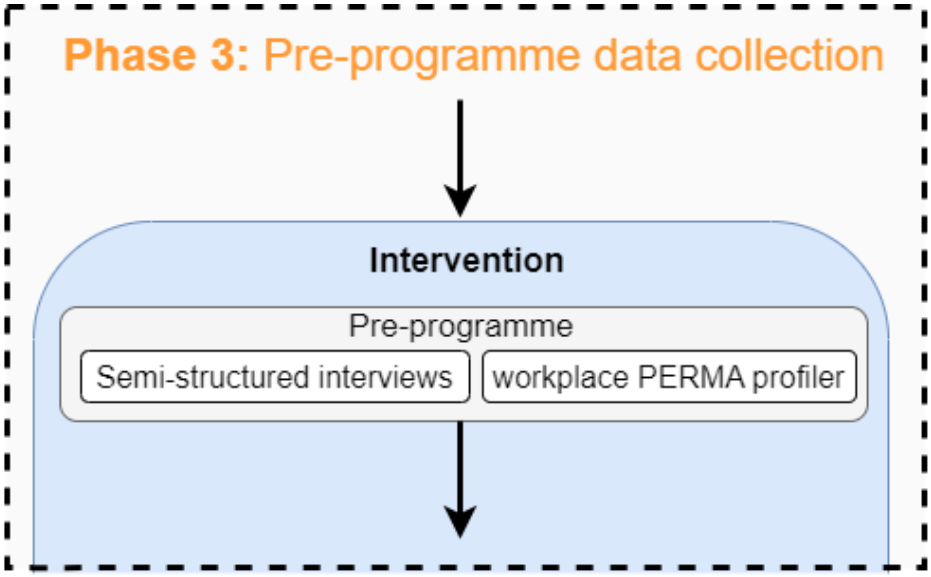


Figure 48: Phase 3 of the research trajectory (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

Phase 3 encompassed the facilitation and completion of the pre-programme workplace PERMA profilers (Appendix A), as well as semi-structured interviews (Appendix B), to initiate phenomenographic step 3, data collection. This phase established initial baselines for participant stress and SWB before the EPP was implemented. This was necessary since pre-programme measures allowed for a thick description that aided an informed comparison of changes following the EPP. Although not tied to a single sub-question, phase 3 set the stage for assessing programme efficacy later. It ensured that understanding the programme's impact had a reference point, supporting the eventual analysis and interpretation of how participants' embodied engagement might alter their prosilience and SWB.

This phase allowed the research to move from theoretical constructs to empirical investigation. The contribution in phase 3 lies in demonstrating that researchers can establish a starting point of embodied awareness in challenging workplace environments. What I discovered during phase 2 was that early measurements of stress, while useful, may be less than accurate if participants lack bodily self-awareness (see 8.7).

8.2.1.4 Phase 4: Facilitating the programme and data collection

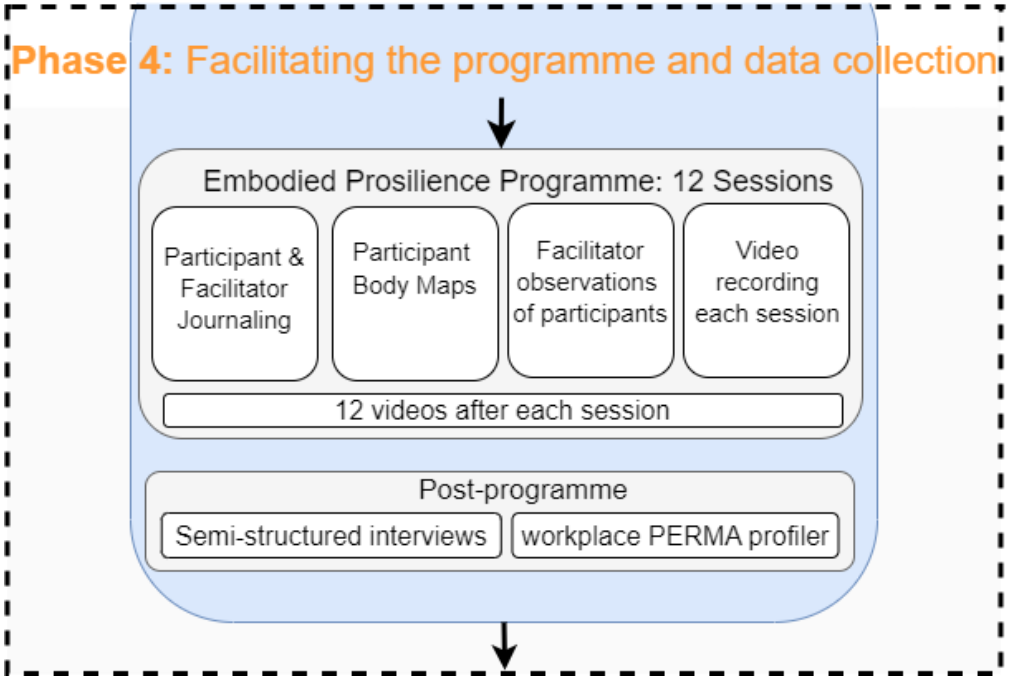


Figure 49: Phase 4 of the research trajectory (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

In phase 4, I facilitated the EPP and collected data during and post- facilitation. The move from theory to practice allowed for data collection. Phase 4 brought the theoretical constructs of prosilience, embodiment, and somatic practice into direct relation with participants' lived experiences. This phase contributed to understanding "How can an embodied prosilience programme build knowledge and skills that can aid call centre agents in being more prosilient in response to stress?" since it provided empirical grounding for how participants engaged with and responded to the EPP.

The data collected from the EPP showed how the embodied sessions guided participants in developing prosilience, even as organisational performance demands persisted. Consequently, future possibilities (see 8.8) include refining such programmes to reduce external pressures, perhaps scheduling sessions during quieter periods or integrating organisational support.

8.2.1.5 Phase 5: Post-programme data analysis and interpretation

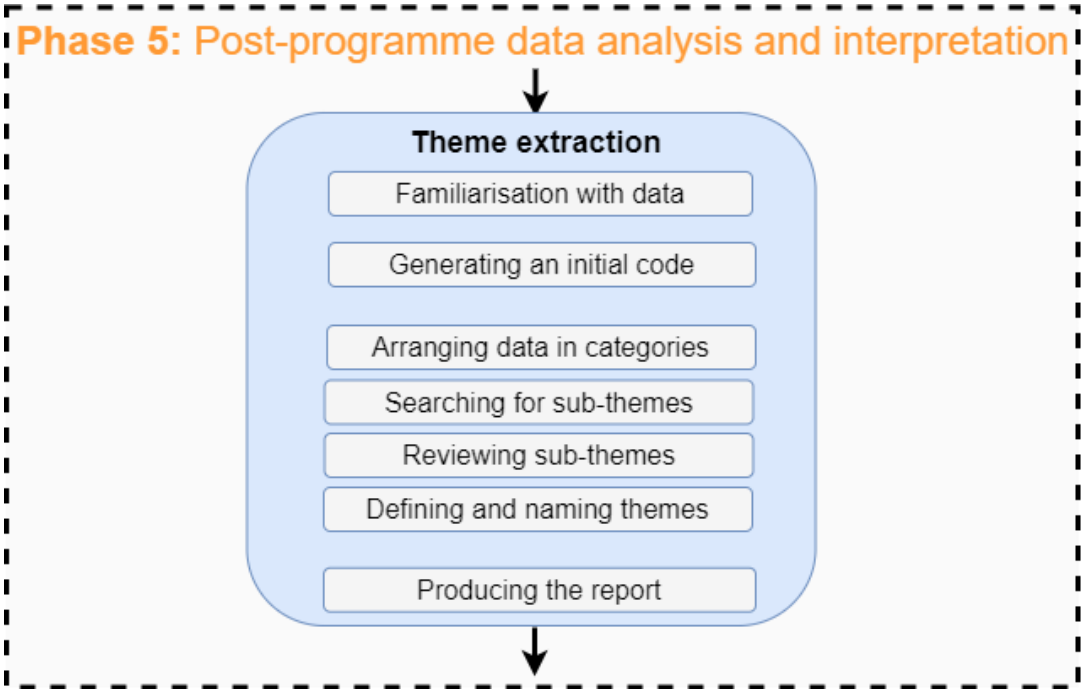


Figure 50: Phase 5 of the research trajectory (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

In phase 5, I used theme extraction to analyse the gathered data and to identify patterns, changes, and areas of impact. The first part of phase 5 thus aligned with data analysis (Chapter 6) through phenomenographic steps 6 (data transcription), 7 (identifying of concepts), and 8 (hierarchy of concepts). Sims (2024:1171) describes how the process of theme extraction enables phenomenographic researchers to produce rigorous findings since it includes and accounts for the various subjective experiences of all the participants.

As stated on p. 67, the steps I took with theme extraction were aligned with those described by Braun and Clarke (2006:6): familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing a report. Due to my active reflexivity during the process, I was led to state that simply searching for and defining themes from codes would not enable me to obtain the most detailed possible analysis of the participants' experiences, due to the

substantial body of data I had collected.[146] In alignment with my constructivist paradigm, which aims to "understand the complex and multiple perspectives of individuals" (Turin, Raihan & Chowdhury 2024:1), I conducted theme extraction in a manner that allows for analyses of the complexity of the participants' subjective experiences as thoroughly as possible.

For this reason, I included the steps of arranging the data into categories after I generated the initial code, as well as searching for and reviewing sub-themes from the categories, before I defined and named the themes. To account for possible confirmation bias that may have resulted from me identifying codes, I used ATLAS, as described in Chapter 5, to generate the initial codes and, on the basis of these initial codes, I used various artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as Chat GPT 3.5, POE, and Claude to arrange the codes into categories. I thus manually identified the sub-themes from the categories and the themes from the sub-themes by rereading and comparing the codes numerous times.

To further mitigate possible confirmation bias, the methods I used for reflection on action (as opposed to those used to reflect in action), namely video recordings and my observations of the participants, were not included in the theme extraction. I utilised these methods to compare my observations with the participants' subjective experiences as captured in the journals (including written reflections, self-checks, and body maps), pre- and post-programme semi-structured interviews, and the pre- and post-programme workplace PERMA profilers. If any of a participant's data was unclear following this comparison, I asked the participant clarifying questions (see p. 60) to ensure that the data gathered by these methods, data from which I extracted the themes, reflected the subjective experiences of the participants and was as detailed as possible.

[146] After I transcribed the data, the methods used resulted in the following number of pages of data: journaling, open-ended written reflections, self-checks and body maps resulted in 46 pages; pre-programme semi-structured interviews resulted in eight pages; the workplace PERMA profilers resulted in 10 pages; and post-programme semi-structured interviews resulted in eight pages.

I performed theme extraction from the data in the following order: pre-programme interviews, post-programme interviews, participant journals, and then the workplace PERMA profilers. I then connected the categories generated from all the data collection methods in order to outline the programme's overall sub-themes, and then split the sub-themes into the two main themes of the programme, namely intrapersonal and interpersonal experience. The theme of intrapersonal experience included the following sub-themes: mental and emotional well-being, health and wellness functioning, emotional experiences and states, inner experiences, and personal growth and purpose. The theme of interpersonal experience included the sub-themes of patterns and habits, life stressors and challenges, and connections and support.

The final step of theme extraction was the creation of a report. To create a report that analyses all the links from which I could interpret the participants' experiences of the EPP, I specified sentences from the data that support the programme's sub-themes and themes. I created Appendix G by identifying and extracting sentences from the participants' pre-, during, and post-programme data that link to each sub-theme and theme of the EPP. From here, I could interpret the data.

The second part of phase 5 thus aligned with data interpretation (Chapter 7) and completing phenomenographic step 9, the analysis of links. By interpreting the data in relation to the identified themes, I could verify whether the conceptual and applied elements of the EPP had yielded observable shifts in prosilience and SWB. This process aligned with my research practice (in phase 1) to further address the sub-question, "How can I assess the efficacy of an embodied prosilience programme?" by examining whether participants' experiences aligned with the intended outcomes. This phase confirmed which aspects of the intervention effectively fostered prosilience-related capacities and which areas needed refinement.

Phase 5's thematic analysis and interpretation provided insights into the complexity and variability of embodied experiences. By identifying themes linked to intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of prosilience, this phase confirmed that embodied cognition can translate into enhanced SWB. However, it also revealed gaps and unanswered questions – such as why certain participants did not improve in relation to specific categories of well-being (8.7). On one hand, phase 5 demonstrated that embodied approaches can shift patterns of stress response; on the other, further

research is needed to explain incomplete details and missing causal links. Limitations (8.7) regarding the lack of a control group and the inability to measure external influences became evident in phase 5. Recommendations for future research (8.8), such as employing control groups or keeping logs of external events, emerged from the interpretive challenges encountered during this phase. In the following section I outline variations and describe the participants' converging experiences of the EPP to show how I answered the study's main research question, leading to the delineation the findings of the study in 8.5.

8.3 Revisiting my research question

I presented the study's main research question on p. 34 as follows:

- How can an embodied prosilience programme contribute to subjective well-being in a call centre environment?

Following the literature review in chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4, I deduced that, for an EPP to contribute to SWB in a call centre, the EPP should be focused on using embodied movement by drawing from various somatic approaches to fulfil five sub-aims, relating to prosilience, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, cultural difference, the VUCA world, and the BANI world (see pp. 151–152). Next, I discuss how I answered the study's main research question, specifically, by outlining how, and in which ways, the participants experienced changes in relation to the EPP's sub-aims.[147]

  - Sub-aim relating to prosilience: Develop a proactive approach to stress management within the programme, equipping participants with strategies to anticipate and address stress before it escalates, rather than merely reacting to stressors.

Although all participants increased their awareness of stress signals and habitual patterns, there were variations. Some participants had a lower initial awareness of

[147] The information I present here is not new; it rather represents summaries of information from other chapters used to respond to each sub-aim in order to demarcate how the study answered the main research question.

their stress signals, declaring in their pre-programme semi-structured interviews that they do not deal with stress at all. Several participants initially described their navigation of stress as involving isolation and removing themselves from the office. The EPP enhanced participants' stress prosilience capabilities by providing the strategies and skills for them to become aware of and manage stress proactively before it occurred.

Journal reflections and interviews showed changes in habitual patterns towards more prosilient behaviours for all the participants. Nonetheless, after the programme, one participant at times still experienced their communication with prospects as being rushed. Several participants also reported periodically defaulting to their initial ineffective habits when under heavy stress. Overall, however, all the participants utilised and reflected on their newly formed habits, indicating how they had developed prosilience-related capacities to manage stress in the workplace.

- Sub-aim relating to Maslow's adapted hierarchy of needs: Address both deficiency needs and growth needs by providing practices that support participants' physiological and safety requirements in relation to stress, while also fostering connections with others to meet higher needs. Encourage participants to grow as individuals who can adapt and thrive under stress.

Interpretation of the data showed a link between participant's pre-programme stress experiences and the inability to meet Maslow's lower deficiency needs and, resultantly, to fulfil higher growth levels. The post-programme data implied that all the participants managed to explore new prosilience-related capacities that helped regulate homeostasis, facilitating need fulfilment and potentially leading to the fulfilling of growth needs and flourishing.

All the participants reported greater ease in fulfilling their deficiency needs, especially the need for belonging, by being able to communicate better. This argument is strengthened by the decrease in loneliness in all participants but one following the programme. This might be indicative of personal relationship difficulties that were not studied as part of the programme. I discuss the subjective effects that I could not control as a limitation of the study (see 8.7).

Overall, enhanced stress prosilience allowed the participants to better satisfy Maslow's hierarchy by equipping them with the tools to handle stressors as bodyminded individuals and to guide their individual development together. This indicated how the EPP facilitated prosilience to encourage homeostasis in order to fulfil both deficiency needs and growth needs.

- Sub-aim relating to cultural difference: Cultivate respect and awareness for the diverse cultural backgrounds that influence individuals and groups. Honour each participant's uniqueness by incorporating culturally sensitive approaches and practices.

For this sub-aim to be fulfilled, I needed to facilitate the EPP in a manner that respected and honoured the individual backgrounds of each participant. I did not teach or instruct the participants to partake in explorations. I rather facilitated each session by inviting participants to explore when they were ready, specifically encouraging them to follow the guidance of their teacher-within.

In creating the programme, I drew from approaches such as Skinner Releasing Technique that encourages the use of personalised imagery and music so that participants could explore in a way that was tailored to what they relate to. I further, throughout the research, acknowledged my own positionality and maintained a reflexive stance during facilitation by means of using video recordings, participants' observations, and clarifying questions to ensure I understood each participant's subjective experience. During data analysis, I also utilised tools such as ATLAS and AI to aid with theme extraction in order to ensure that I did not fall into own confirmation bias and ignore the experiences of some of the participants. I navigated this further by ensuring data triangulation (which I discuss in greater detail in 8.4).

As discussed in 8.2.1.1, during the facilitation of the EPP and during the process of analysing the data, I communicated and behaved in a way that encouraged diversity, equality, inclusivity, and belonging. From the first session, I thus framed the process as a shared exploration and learning experience. I also navigated any possible power relations by means of introducing the operational administrator to ensure fairness across the interviews, ethical conduct, and that interviews took place in a non-coercive environment. I also made it clear from the onset that participation was voluntary,

reflections were confidential, and that their responses would have no impact on their professional standing or evaluation.

During the research process, I was thus committed to creating an environment that acknowledged and honoured various diversities, an environment in which there was a striving for equality so that inclusivity could become a reality for all the participants. This, so that each participant could experience belonging, and share their subjective experience more easily. As such, I attempted to invite the idiosyncratic life worlds and selves of the participants into the facilitation process. Upon reflection, I realised that an in-depth understanding of each participant's cultural heritage may have enhanced not just the facilitation process but also the data collected. I acknowledge that future studies, including Afrocentric perspectives, can enrich the findings (I discuss this as a recommendation for future research in 8.6).

- Sub-aim relating to the VUCA world: Guide participants to develop the skills of VUCA prime, vision, understanding, clarity, and agility, enabling them to effectively navigate and respond to the complexities of a rapidly changing world.

By engaging with embodied somatic movement explorations, the participants gained insight that clearly revealed how stress manifested in their bodies. By specifically engaging in their own created pattern phrase, they gained embodied knowledge of how to repattern their habitual patterns. The programme did not merely aid the participants in gaining insight relating to habitual patterns of their body but also into other ineffective habits; this is exemplified by participants who, following the programme, began to smoke less and rather opted to use their pattern phrase to reduce their stress.

In terms of understanding, the facilitated discussions and journaling fostered a means for participants to share their stress experiences in order to understand them better. Building trust through partner/group work addressed uncertainty in participants who used to isolate themselves. Several participants constantly reported that using especially muscle shaking and pleasure smelling helped them understand how to centre themselves amidst uncertainty, with one specifically exemplifying the use of pelvic rocking as the main part of their pattern phrase to centre themselves.

In relation to improving clarity, the explorations that broke down complex stress responses into observable, defined patterns, aided the participants in gaining clarity not merely into stress responses, but even into some health concerns. Specifically, one participant experienced pain while lying on their back and breathing. They went to the doctor and found they had a medical condition which they had lived with for two years. Several participants also experienced clarity with regard to communication.

The participants further gained agility while engaging in explorations that replicate real-life scenarios, since they learned how to use their pattern phrase to proactively prepare for the call centre environment. Several participants also specifically reflected on how they explored agility by preparing for each day and then centring themselves throughout the day, exemplifying enhanced stress prosilience.

- Sub-aim relating to the BANI world: Foster resilience, flexibility, empathy, mindfulness, context-awareness, transparency, and intuition within the programme, equipping participants to adapt to and thrive in unpredictable and challenging environments.

The participants gained resilience and flexibility by partaking in the varied somatic movement explorations. For example, several participants initially reported that their responses to stress were insufficient. By partaking in these explorations and building a pattern phrase, they were able to build a more flexible and holistic response to stress. One participant indicated that, because of their awareness of their patterns, they are much more flexible and less anxious. However, I acknowledge that the short follow-up period (with final interviews taking place almost directly after the conclusion of the EPP) is a limit of the study, as I could not analyse how long the programme effects lasted. I discuss this as a limitation of the study in 8. 7.

As the programme progressed, the participants also became more comfortable with experiential learning, which cultivated an environment of transparency and non-judgement between the participants. In open discussions, numerous participants indicated that they could notice changes not just in themselves but also in others: how they could connect to others more easily and that they have gained greater empathy for prospective clients while on calls.

The participants became aware of the contexts in which they find themselves and learned to adapt appropriately. The reflections of the participants also indicated enhanced mindfulness by their specifically becoming aware of their teacher-within, which guided them to follow their intuition in varied contexts and in various ways, so they could enhance their presence in situations that required them to be more mindful and aware of stress.

Having reflected on and outlined how I created the EPP to reach each sub-aim of the study and how the participants' experiences relate to each sub-aim, I now formulate an answer to the main research question of how an EPP can contribute to SWB in the call centre environment. The sub-aims guided me in creating and facilitating an EPP that encourages embodied movement, so the participants gained enhanced prosilience-related capacities. I have thus answered the "how" part of the main research question.

Nevertheless, to be able to state conclusively that the study answers the research question, I now discuss how, and to what degree, the EPP I created and facilitated shifted the SWB of the participants. I revisit the results and interpretation based on the workplace PERMA profilers of the participants in Chapter 7 to reflect on the variations and congruencies of the participants' experiences in relation to SWB.

Figure 51, below, revisits the results of the pre- and post- programme workplace PERMA profilers to provide a summary of the changes in the overall well-being of each participant as a result of the programme. The figure also indicates the overall change in SWB (that is, the average of all participant responses). The figure provides an easy reference for the discussion that follows.

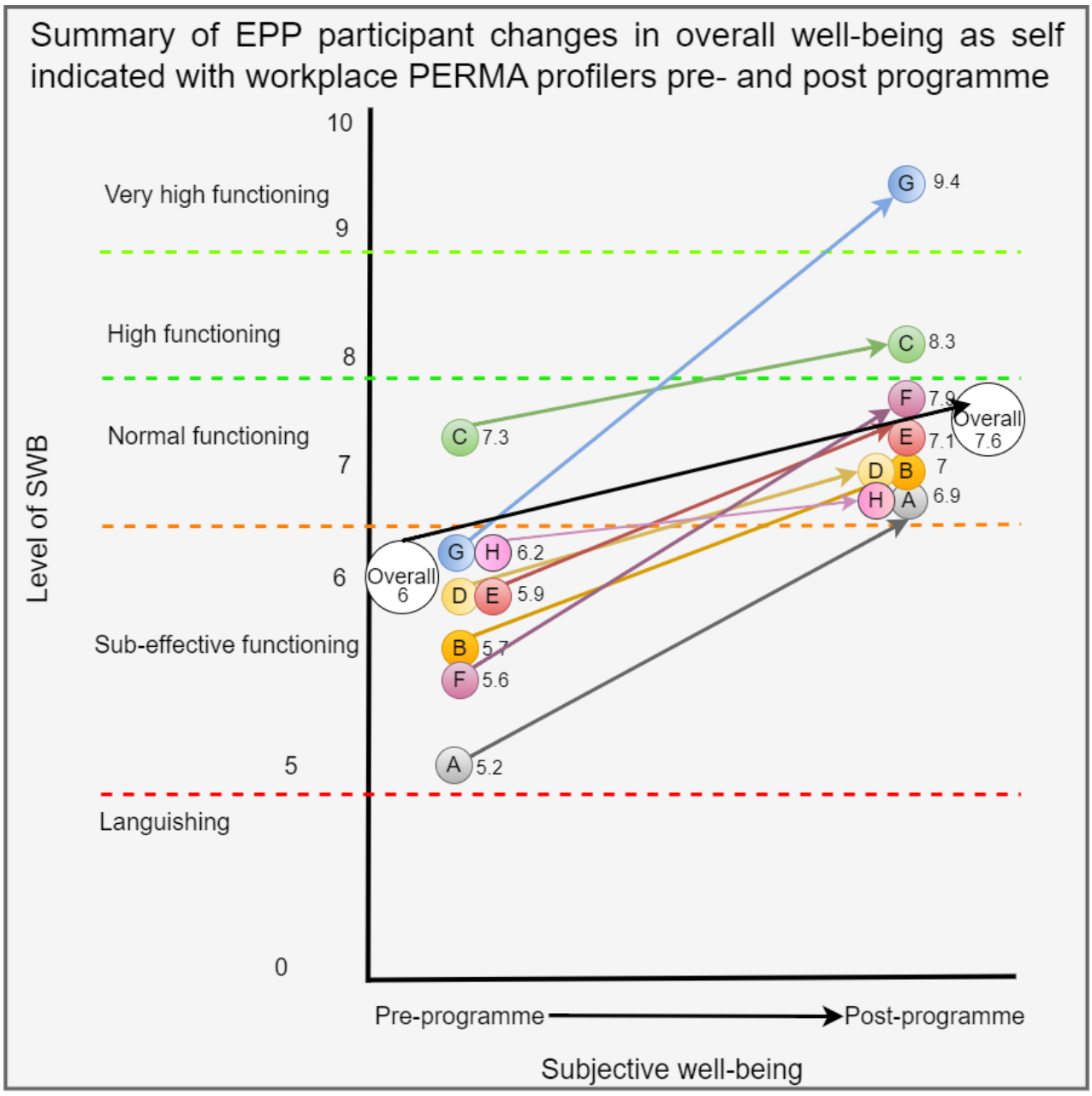


Figure 51: Summary of changes in participants' SWB pre- and post- EPP (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

Based on the data analysis presented in Chapter 6 and the interpretation of the data in Chapter 7, all the participants experienced enhanced SWB based on their workplace PERMA profiler scores, crossing thresholds into healthier functioning ranges following the intervention. This reflects reductions in distress, and enhancements for hedonic, eudaimonic, and evaluative factors.

Most of the participants started the programme with a sub-effective range of functioning; only one displayed a range of normal functioning. This may indicate that,

because the participants self-selected for the programme, they unknowingly introduced bias into the research, as they may have been aware of the programme's focus on SWB and may have volunteered expecting to increase their SWB. I discuss this as a limitation in 8.7. From Figure 51 and aligned with the data interpretation in Chapter 7, I further deduced the following:

- None of the participants remained below the normal functioning range for SWB.

Although all the participants' SWB (except one) were initially in a sub-effective range, all the participants had moved up by at least one level of functioning by the end of the programme. One participant moved from normal functioning to high functioning, and several participants moved from sub-effective functioning to normal functioning. While all the other participants moved up only one level of functioning in relation to SWB, one moved from sub-effective functioning to very high functioning, moving up three levels of functioning. I have described this participant as an outlier (see p. 276).

To demonstrate why one was an outlier, below, I summarise key points from my reflection in Chapter 7. When I triangulated their responses to the pre- and post- EPP workplace PERMA profilers with the other collected data, I realised that the outlier was the participant who discovered discomfort in their body during conscious explorations and pleasure smelling while lying on their back.

The discomfort was later diagnosed as a medical condition by a doctor. At the start of the programme, in their journal, they described themselves as numb, confused, and disorientated as concerns their habitual patterns. After the programme, they stated that the programme had helped them relieve pain and had guided them to feel more grounded, in control of their habits, and grateful for each day.

They displayed a commitment to the process and continuously journaled while continuing their explorations with the recap videos at home. When I was conducting the post-EPP semi-structured interview with them, I wanted to understand why they experienced such an immense shift in SWB. I asked a clarifying question: "Why did the EPP impact on your SWB so much?" They responded with the following quote (which I first presented on p. 336):

> I've broken down some days crying. You told us there is nothing wrong with feeling. I welcomed it and I was happy to feel it. For the first time ever, I'm starting the month off with a surplus not a deficit. My performance is so much better. I really loved the programme. I share it with others. It excites me. This will help me long-term. I'll never stop growing and learning from this programme. You saved my life. (post-programme interview)

I have acknowledged my positionality as a researcher living outside of the norms expected of me and wanting to make a difference in the lives of others through somatic practice (see p. 17). A response like this to the programme illuminated the impact that an EPP can have when someone immerses themselves in the process.

Further considering the data interpretation in Chapter 7, I could identify additional variance in the shifts of SWB between participants. Several participants experienced enhancement in all PERMA categories, as well as in overall health, with a decreased experiences of negative emotion and loneliness following the programme. Some participants experienced mixed results, such as enhancement in all categories but one or two. These mixed results indicated that different facets of life facets can generate uneven responses depending on individual uniqueness.

Triangulating these results with the other data revealed further insights, such as that, for some, certain factors resisted change despite overall positive trends. I observed links between distress reduction as a result of the attaining of prosilient behaviours and improvements in SWB. Overall, the findings verified that the EPP enhanced stress prosilience to increase SWB, which answers the main research question. Next, I revisit my research practice to delineate and assess the methods I chose to assess the efficacy of the EPP.

8.4 Revisiting my research practice

Based on my constructivist worldview, I adopted a monist ontology and constructivist epistemology. My constructivist worldview guided me to use a constructivist research paradigm. To operationalise my worldview in the research, I utilised a qualitative research approach that aims to understand various aspects of life and employs "people-centred" methodologies and methods that generally focus more on subjective experiences and reflections rather than on numerical data for analysis (Patton 2015:2).

My constructivist worldview, along with my qualitative research approach, guided me to use a phenomenographic research design and methodology, which focuses on studying and interpreting “peoples’ qualitatively different experiences of the world in terms of categories of descriptions” (Khan 2014:34).

In Chapter 2.5, I have explained how phenomenography includes a focus on “reference” (the what) and “structure” (the how; Santos & Silva 2022:43). I have outlined how the EPP constitutes the referential aspect of the research by specifically indicating how I employed an eclectic pedagogical approach that draws from various somatic approaches. I further discussed how I provided the participants with videos after each session in which I offered a recap of the explorations of the session in order to expand the learning opportunity by employing a different modality.

I delineated how this approach may facilitate embodied learning to guide participants to construct knowledge through their subjective lived physical experiences (Cochrane-Smith & Lyle 2009:129). I then described the structural aspect of experience in the study as the subjective responses of the agents to the EPP in terms of stress prosilience and SWB.

For the purpose of gathering, analysing, and interpreting data based on the subjective experiences of the participants, I outlined how I adhered to the following steps of the phenomenographic research process (see pp. 54–55): definition of the theme based on engagement with relevant scholarship and prior experiential knowledge of somatic approaches; characterisation of the research subjects; deciding on data collection methods; data collection; data transcription; the identifying of concepts; the hierarchy of concepts; analysis of links; and the preparation of research report.

Table 10, below, summarises the data collection methods I employed, when I employed them, and what data each method offered. The content of the table, the discussion that follows it, and my method of data analysis, namely theme extraction (discussed in Chapter 2.6.2; see p. 67), answers the sub-question relating to how an EPP’s efficacy can be measured.

Table 10: Data collected using each method (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

Method	**Data collected**
Participant journaling	Provided first-person reflective perspectives on participant experiences in the sessions, including their responses to open-ended questions and think-aloud discussions. The participants also journaled about the recap videos after each session, which indicates a more thorough understanding of the EPP's content.
Body maps	Assisted the participants in visualising their embodied experiences by drawing and writing about their experiences on the outline of a human body. These reflections offered a different modality for engaging with their experiences of stress and habitual patterns.
Video recordings	Allowed me to reflect on action in order to observe and note non-verbal behaviours that I could read in relation to the other data collection tools.
Semi-structured interviews	Pre- and post- programme interviews ascertained whether, and, if so, in what ways, participation in the EPP facilitated shifts in the participants' experiences of stress. I specifically focused on asking questions that align with the trilogy of phenomenography in the script (see p. 59); these questions were concerning the "what" (linking to perception), "how" (linking to thought), and "why" of experience (linking to action). These questions guided the participants in developing a more detailed explanation of the phenomenon (Soysal & Saruhan 2023:281), namely the experience of stress and SWB during the EPP.
Workplace PERMA profiler	The workplace PERMA profiler provided self-reported levels of well-being for the participants before and after the programme, specifically that relating to the experience of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment, overall well-being, negative emotion, health, and loneliness. I countered the limitation of the profiler's bounded scales (see p. 66) by triangulating the data derived from it with the other methods.

Since I was the facilitator of the EPP and thus present in the EPP with the participants, I needed to ensure that I proactively mediated possible confirmation bias on my part so as not to influence the data collected in a way that retained or abandoned a favoured explanation (McSweeney 2021:1064). I achieved this by focusing on outlining my positionality (p. 17), employing data triangulation (p. 50), creating a thick description (p. 56), and remaining reflexive (p. 50).

Table 11, below, links to Figure 5 (see p. 70) and shows the connection between the phenomenographic steps of the study and the research phases, as well as indicating the chapters of the thesis in which the steps and phases are discussed. Whereas Figure 5 outlined the research trajectory starting from the research process, Table 11 summarises the research trajectory from the phenomenographic point of view. The table serves as a reference for my subjective interpretation of the effectiveness of my research practice.

Table 11: Linking the study's phenomenographic steps, chapters, and phases (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

Phenomenographic step	**Chapter(s)**	**Phase(s)**
Definition of theme based on engagement with relevant scholarships and prior autoethnographic knowledge of somatic approaches	1, 2, 3, and 4	1
Characterisation of research subjects	2	1
Deciding on data collection methods	2, and appendices A and B	1
Pilot study to evaluate the data collection instrument or tools	No pilot study: I discuss this as a limitation in 8.5	NA
Data collection	Appendices A & B	3 and 4
Data transcription	Appendix G	5
Identifying of concepts	6	5
Hierarchy of concepts	6	5
Analysis of links	7	5
Preparation of research report	8	6

Phenomenography was suited to this study as it allowed me to understand the qualitatively different ways that individuals experienced participation in the EPP. By drawing from the participants' lived experiences using the various methods of data collection, the phenomenographic design and methodology linked to my constructivist epistemology, allowing me to collaboratively make meaning of my own subjective experiences and the experiences of the participants. This resonates with the constructivist worldview framing this study. Participants were encouraged to interpret their own experiences in relation to the EPP.

Overall, the chosen research practice facilitated the achievement of my research aims by enabling a rich, thick description using various methods while respecting the phenomenographic focus on experiential variety. The research practice thus accomplished its intended purpose. Next, I present the findings of the study, which offer empirical contributions of explanatory significance in answering the main research question.

8.5 Findings of study

The findings of this study provided evidence that the EPP can, in various ways for different individuals, enhance the SWB of call centre agents. The study's focus on how embodied somatic movement and prosilience could be applied in high-stress work environments is reflected in the findings.

The results indicate significant shifts in participants' habitual patterns, stress management, and ability to meet both lower and higher needs, consistent with Maslow's hierarchy. The connection between theoretical models (VUCA, BANI, and Maslow's hierarchy) and practical outcomes demonstrated the effectiveness of using somatic-based explorations to manage stress in call centres.

Overall, there are various indicators of shifts induced by the EPP, specifically those relating to the enhancement of SWB. The first six findings are those I discussed in detail in responding to the various sub-aims in 8.3.1 (where I also specifically provided details of nuances regarding participant differences and convergences). These findings are as follows:

- The EPP guided the participants to develop a proactive approach to stress management within the programme, equipping them with strategies to anticipate and address stress before it escalated, rather than their merely reacting to stressors.
- In alignment with the first sub-question, the EPP also enhanced SWB, with the workplace PERMA profiler scores improving overall and crossing thresholds into healthier functioning ranges following the intervention. This reflected reductions in distress and enhancements for hedonic, eudaimonic, and evaluative factors.
- The EPP addressed both deficiency and growth needs, as outlined by Maslow's hierarchy, by providing practices that support participants' physiological and safety requirements in relation to stress, while also fostering connections with others in order to meet participants' higher needs. This encouraged participants to grow as individuals who can adapt and thrive under stress.
- The EPP cultivated respect and awareness for the diverse cultural backgrounds of the participants by drawing explorations from approaches such as Skinner Releasing Technique, which encourages the use of personalised music and imagery, as well as through researcher reflexivity, and my commitment to communicating in a way that encourages diversity, equality, inclusivity, and belonging. However, further research employing an Afrocentric approach may benefit the findings (see 8.7).
- The EPP guided participants to develop the skills of VUCA prime: vision, understanding, clarity, and agility, which enabled them to effectively navigate and respond to the complexities of a rapidly changing world.
- The EPP guided the participants to navigate the BANI world by fostering resilience, flexibility, empathy, mindfulness, context-awareness, transparency, and intuition within the programme in order to equip participants with the means to adapt and thrive in unpredictable and challenging environments.

Upon further reflection, I also identified the following findings:

- Participant experiences in relation to the EPP indicated a shift from focusing on life stressors before the programme to focusing on inner experiences and personal growth following the programme.

As I discussed on p. 283, the sub-theme of life stressors and challenges was present in pre-programme interviews and journals but not in post-programme interviews, whereas the sub-theme of inner experiences and personal growth was present only in journaling and post-programme interviews. This indicates how, before and during the programme, the participants experienced stress, though, during and after the programme, this experience of stress shifted to an awareness of inner experiences and personal growth. This does not mean that stressors were no longer present, but rather that, by reflecting on their inner experiences during the EPP, the participants could prioritise their personal growth. This possibly occurred as a result of their gaining prosilience-related capacities.

- In one exploration, I encouraged the participants to create a personally unique pattern phrase, which then served as an anchoring element for facilitating the attaining of prosilience-related capacities.

During session 7 in week 3 (see Appendix F), I invited the participants to apply everything they had explored in the programme up until that point to create a phrase consisting of embodied movement that would aid them in releasing areas of their body in which they had identified habitual holding patterns or tension while letting go of habitual cognitive limiting beliefs. Initially, my intention had been to use this exploration for the participants to revisit the content of the previous sessions and start using it in their daily lives. This proved to be very useful to the participants – so much so that I would call it the anchoring element of the programme, one which guided the participants to embody new patterns that honour their own unique journey.

The interpretation of the data revealed how, through creating a personally unique pattern phrase and then creating a body map in relation to it, all of the participants were able to gain prosilience-related capacities. The participants reflected on the ways in which they use their pattern phrase to help them deal with stress at work. I had also wanted to analyse why certain participants had not reflected on their pattern phrase after creating their body map. However, when I revisited the data, I saw that they did in fact speak about various explorations that they strung together to help them deal with stress, though without mentioning the term “pattern phrase”. For example, one participant called it their “personal movement phrase” and another referred to it as their “daily, multiple explorations”. This finding confirms the necessity of honouring

varied experiences in creating knowledge, aligning with my constructivist worldview. In the next section, I discuss the contributions of the study to the discourses of somatic practice, stress management and SWB in the workplace.

8.6 Contributions of the study

This section distils the EPP's scholarly and practical contributions. The study offers insights into the fields of SWB, stress management, embodiment, prosilience, applied somatic approaches, and employee wellness in call centres. Previous research highlights that call centre employees report lower levels of SWB than those in other occupational sectors (Sprigg, Smith & Jackson 2003:49). By conceptualising stress resilience and prosilience as protective capacities, this study shows how embodied somatic movement within the EPP enhances SWB and improves functioning in environments marked by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA), as well as brittleness, anxiety, non-linearity, and incomprehensibility (BANI).

Theoretically, the study advances discourse on stress by moving beyond cognitive coping frameworks and linking prosilience to somatic practice. This connection enriches existing literature by demonstrating how embodied explorations can satisfy both deficiency and growth needs in Maslow's hierarchy through the repatterning of habitual stress responses. Furthermore, the study aligns somatic practice with the PERMA model, illustrating how embodied movement fosters the experience of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment in a structured workplace setting.

Contextually, the study addresses a notable omission in call centre literature: the kinaesthetic and embodied dimensions of stress. Although bodily tension intensifies under constant monitoring and performance surveillance (Kaniaru 2020:ii), few interventions acknowledge or address this. By applying an embodied protocol in a South African call centre, the study introduces a critical yet underexplored aspect of workplace wellness, offering a transferable model for similarly high-stress service sectors.

Practically, the research delivers a detailed, step-by-step programme for somatic practitioners and organisational wellness teams, supported by assessment criteria and consolidation protocols (see Appendix F). These resources enable the integration of

embodied explorations into existing wellness strategies, broadening the intervention repertoire available for stress-related challenges in organisational contexts.

Methodologically, the study demonstrates how subjective and embodied experiences can be rigorously accessed through triangulated qualitative methods, complemented by a quasi-quantitative tool — the PERMA profiler. This methodological configuration facilitates the development of thick descriptions of lived experience. While participant accounts remain context-specific, the recurrence of key themes suggests transferable insights into cultivating prosilience across diverse work settings. The EPP's structure and implementation thus serve as a starting point for replication and adaptation in other organisational contexts.

In summary, the research advances empirical and theoretical understandings of workplace well-being by illustrating how embodied approaches can enhance stress prosilience. The EPP exemplifies how movement-based explorations from diverse somatic traditions can be consolidated into a coherent organisational programme that supports individual flourishing and collective resilience. By presenting a framework rooted in embodiment, this study responds to the pressing need for holistic, preventative strategies to address occupational stress and contributes towards the cultivation of more prosilient organisational cultures.

The next section reflects on the limitations of the research.

8.7 Limitations of the research

The limitations of the study include the following:

- Guidance through descriptions instead of fully embodied experiences

At various times in the course of the programme, the participants had many questions about the explorations. In my view, instead of fully embodying experiences, the participants had moments in which they overanalysed the descriptions of the explorations. The opportunity arises to gently guide the participants through fewer, longer explorations, so they can grow comfortable with embodying the experience.

- Increased vulnerability through introspection requires safety

Through participants' observations and their journaling, I became aware of the discomfort they felt when openly sharing their experiences in initial sessions. This suggests that initial activities should prioritise personal, non-verbal modes of reflection (e.g., journaling). By first cultivating a foundation of trust and allowing individuals to engage with their embodied experiences privately, the programme can gradually foster a secure environment. Over time, this approach may encourage participants to feel more at ease, ultimately leading to more meaningful, authentic engagement and the generation of richer data.

- Potential miscomprehension of changes in stress levels

The participants' initial uncertainty regarding their stress levels before the programme commenced highlights the limitations of relying solely on self-reported measures and bounded scales. To address this, preliminary sessions focused on understanding and exploring habitual patterns and stress responses could help participants develop more accurate self-awareness. Such preparatory activities enhance the quality of pre-programme assessments and produce more reliable baseline data.

Although I navigated the constraint of the bounded scales by triangulating the data with other methods, I contend that, should they have a session before the programme starts that allows them to simply experience their habitual patterns and where they hold their stress, participants might be able to complete the workplace PERMA profiler and pre-programme interview with a better understanding of their own pre-programme stress levels. This limitation connects directly to the need for preparatory sessions as offered by a pilot study.

- Lack of a pilot study

As discussed on p. 55, I omitted the phenomenographic step of creating a pilot study to measure the effectiveness of the data collection methods. Although all the methods have been validated in previous studies (see p. 58), a pilot study could have helped me better understand how to ensure that the EPP made the participants as comfortable as possible before they were asked to self-report their SWB.

- Organisational structures demand performance over well-being

Despite the programme running, company management continued constant performance monitoring of the participants. This was a significant contributor to their stress, since they still had to meet their targets when they were finished with a session. This may have kept them from being engaged and present during the programme. I suggest that the participants would have been able to enhance their experience of the programme had they not had to continue working after the programme daily.

- Generalisability is limited and threats to internal validity, such as subject effects, could not be controlled

Participant behaviours and influences outside the programme cannot be accounted for and may have influenced the validity of the programme and its relationship with SWB. As detailed on p. 372, certain participants experienced enhanced SWB in all categories but one or two. Even with data triangulation, I was not able to unquestionably identify why these participants did not experience enhancement in these other categories; it may have been as a result of outside influence.

Were the programme to be repeated with a different population of students, I would suggest doing it during the university vacations when they have a less demanding schedule. Alternatively, researchers and participants could keep logs of external events such as organisational changes or societal stressors and include data from the log in theme extraction in order to triangulate the collected data with the other methods. This might provide a way for the researcher to correlate certain changes or stressors with participant responses and presence during sessions. Researchers could also consider using a control group (I discuss this in 8.8).

- Sample size

The sample included only eight participants from the one organisation who volunteered for the programme. The sample that I used, though 10% of the population, may not be representative of the entire population. This also means that small variations in individual cases may have a disproportionate effect on the overall well-being of the group as calculated by means of the workplace PERMA profiler. However,

this sample size allowed me to give each participant the requisite guidance during sessions and allowed me to gather in-depth data from each participant.

- The participants self-selected, which could result in bias

The participants may have traits or motivations that differ systematically from those of those who opted not to participate. For example, participants who know they do not effectively manage their stress or know that their SWB is low may have opted in since they were seeking such an opportunity. This may have resulted in responses to the workplace PERMA profiler showing disproportionately large elevations in SWB relative to participants who might have been randomly selected. The positive side of self-selection that all the participants are open to the programme and willing to participate voluntarily.

- Short follow-up period

Outcomes were measured only immediately following the programme. Some participants indicated that they experienced almost no stress following the programme. However, I do not know if these participants were able to effectively navigate stress after the conclusion of the EPP. The long-term impacts of the programme are thus unknown. Gains in SWB may not be sustained, and delayed effects of the programme may possibly only later have an impact on the participants.

8.8 Recommendations for future research

In what follows, I list and discuss recommendations for future research:

- Exploring deeper cultural nuances in embodiment

The programme included participants from various cultural backgrounds. Although I aimed to honour and respect each participant's unique background, I acknowledge that future studies, including Afrocentric perspectives, can enrich the findings.

Engaging with somatic practices rooted in the backgrounds of the participants, and finding approaches that resonate with those backgrounds before creating a programme, may allow for greater resonance between participants and the EPP. Practitioners could further aim to extract somatic practices that participants have possibly been exposed to and individualise each participant's journey in relation to

their cultural background and unique histories. This links to my following recommendation.

- Tailor-made programmes

Since some of the participants individually had outlying responses to the workplace PERMA profiler, an approach whereby researchers tailor programmes specifically to the needs of an individual could result in improved findings.

- Identify and compare data of a control group with that of participants in the EPP

Researchers could identify a control group that is similar in terms of its demographic characteristics, year and direction of study, and work conditions. They could then compare the control group to the participants in the study to analyse the difference between the two groups in terms of stress prosilience and SWB.

- Measure retention rates

Call centres generally have high turnover rates (see, for example, Zito, Emanuel, Molino, Cortese, Ghislieri & Colombo 2018). Future studies could include a measure that involves identifying whether and, if so, how an EPP can increase the staff retention rate. In other words, researchers could facilitate an EPP to encourage embodied prosilience and enhance the SWB of participants to identify whether these components influence and improve staff retention.

- Comparison by gender, race, age, or sexual orientation

Further research can use the EPP with students and specifically consider comparing individuals of the same gender, race, age, or sexual orientation. In this way, the effect of demographic factors on stress and SWB could be delineated. However, for this to be effective, the researcher would likely need a larger sample.

- Employing a larger sample

By employing a larger sample, future research could include a broader range of perspectives and capture complexity that might not be as apparent in a small sample. A larger sample would also be able to uncover sub-group differences, as per my

previous recommendation, to give insight into how the EPP needs to be adapted for different groups.

- Longitudinal, comparative studies

Future research could use longitudinal, comparative studies across call centres in South Africa, applying the EPP to diverse industries and populations for the sake of comparison. Taking the EPP into different call centres and measuring the long-term effects of the programme may identify the ways in which different environments influence the SWB of employees. If focused on specifically student call centre agents, this could provide insight into how location, and perhaps different universities, influence students working in call centres.

- Applying the EPP in different contexts

The programme could also be attempted with participants who are not studying but working full-time to assess whether it is transferable to individuals who are not students or individuals who are older. Researchers could further adapt the programme for individuals who are working from home. This could study the ways in which a similar programme could be implemented in an online environment in order to enhance the SWB of those who are not constantly surrounded by other individuals. Adapting the EPP model for non-workplace contexts such as at universities or schools could reveal new avenues for embodied prosilience facilitation.

- Neuroscientific investigations of neural changes resulting from the EPP

Researchers in science could employ brain imaging techniques such as Magnetic Resonance Imaging scans or Electroencephalograms to observe neural activity related to stress and SWB before and after an EPP. Such investigations might correlate changes in neural patterns with improvements in prosilience measures and job performance.

- Include psychological evaluations

Researchers in psychology could include clinical assessments, psychometric testing, cognitive function evaluations, and physiological measurements such as sleep quality assessments before, during, and after an EPP. Such measures could indicate specific

variables that need to be considered when facilitating stress prosilience and SWB, whether in a call centre or in other organisational settings. With continued research to address its current limitations, EPPs show potential as employee assistance programmes that can be applied and improved in various ways to optimise well-being in perpetually stressful contemporary work contexts. Finally, below, I provide my concluding remarks of the study.

- Using arts-based methods as methodological tools

While the thesis utilises somatic practices as pedagogical and developmental tools within the EPP, it acknowledges that these practices also have the potential to function as methodological tools within an arts-based research paradigm. Following Snowber (2016:35), who articulates that “the body writes, questions, and critiques”, future iterations of this work could seek to frame selected somatic engagements — such as guided movement improvisations — not only as sites of transformation, but as forms of embodied inquiry capable of generating data in their own right.

Integrating somatic modalities as research methods aligns with arts-based methodologies that value kinaesthetic, intuitive, and affective forms of knowing. While this was implicit in the current study — particularly in participants' movement-based reflections and post-session journaling — the suggestion to formally frame somatic practice as methodologically constitutive could be pursued in future research designs and publications to further contribute to the evolving field of embodied arts-based inquiry.

8.9 Concluding remarks

This research journey has come to an end, yet the lessons learned and the insights gleaned continue to linger and evolve within me. Undertaking this study has shaped my understanding of SWB, stress, embodiment, prosilience, and how researchers and management can proactively support individuals through challenging times. While certain limitations remain, the process yielded contributions with implications for cultivating prosilience-related capacities in call centre agents in order to enhance SWB, so that agents can flourish in and as part of their work environment.

My initial motivation for conducting the study stemmed from witnessing student call centre agents' palpable fatigue, disengagement, and struggles to cope amid pressing academic, financial, and workplace stressors and demands. Yet throughout our exploration together, what struck me most was each participant's quiet courage, curiosity, and commitment to growth – qualities that suggested inner prosilience awaiting cultivation. By facilitating bodyminded awareness of stress responses and repatterning habitual reactions through embodied movement, the EPP aimed to discover these innate resources so as to enhance SWB.

The findings uphold this notion, showing heightened intrapersonal understanding and interpersonal flourishing in the participants following the programme. Participants reported reclaimed energy, focus, and positivity in balancing obligations. Qualitative accounts resonated with quasi-quantitative trends towards optimised functioning and expression across PERMA domains. These shifts signify the relevance of embodied capacities for proactive stress navigation.

As a researcher, I have been heartened – yet also humbled – in witnessing personal transformations. Each journey holds unique promise, ripe for unfolding. May the possibility of cultivating prosilience-related capacities continue edifying lives and livelihoods amid life's turbulence. Though challenges persist, together may we walk amid flux with grounded grace and care for one another along the way, in order to enhance SWB.

This study has not aimed to provide definitive conclusions but rather to open up pathways towards enhanced human potential and shared SWB that enable the meeting of the needs of Maslow's hierarchy. With continued refinement and broader application, embodied learning can progressively encourage thriving through disruption in the VUCA/BANI world. More research exploring the complexity of embodiment could uncover richer explorations enhancing prosilience, creativity, and community. For now, may these findings offer stepping stones towards enhanced SWB for call centre agents – for individuals, for workplaces, for human flourishing. The journey continues.

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APPENDIX A: Workplace PERMA profiler

This appendix contains the workplace PERMA profiler, which the participants complete both pre- and post-programme, specifically during phases 3 and 5 of the research process. I provide a detailed explanation of the questionnaire on page 62.

Participant reflection sheet

Pre-and post-embodied prosilience programme

Dear Participant,

Please complete the questionnaire below as honestly as possible. Please tick the appropriate number at each question. At the top of each page the scale is explained.

Page 1: 0 = never, 10 = always

How often do you feel you are making progress towards accomplishing your work-related goals?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

At work, how often do you become absorbed in what you are doing?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

At work, how often do you feel joyful?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

At work, how often do you feel anxious?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

How often do you achieve the important work goals you have set for yourself?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Page 2: 0 = terrible, 10 = excellent

In general, how would you say your health is?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Page 3: 0 = not at all, 10 = completely

To what extent is your work purposeful and meaningful?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

To what extent do you receive help and support from coworkers when you need it?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

In general, to what extent do you feel that what you do at work is valuable and worthwhile?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

To what extent do you feel excited and interested in your work?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

How lonely do you feel at work?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Page 4: 0 = not at all, 10 = completely

How satisfied are you with your current physical health?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Page 5: 0 = never, 10 = always

At work, how often do you feel positive?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

At work, how often do you feel angry?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

How often are you able to handle your work-related responsibilities?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

At work, how often do you feel sad?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

At work, how often do you lose track of time while doing something you enjoy?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Page 6: 0 = terrible, 10 = excellent

Compared to others of your same age and sex, how is your health?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Page 7: 0 = not at all, 10 = completely

To what extent do you feel appreciated by your coworkers?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

To what extent do you generally feel that you have a sense of direction in your work?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

How satisfied are you with your professional relationships?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

At work, to what extent do you feel contented?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Page 8: 0 = not at all, 10 = completely

Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are with your work?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

APPENDIX B: Semi-structured interview script

This appendix presents the pre- and post-programme interview questions that the participants answer during Phases 3 and 5 of the research approach. I discuss the interview process in detail on page 58.

Pre-programme interview questions

1) How do you know, within yourself, when you experience stress at work?

2) What specific sensations do you notice in your body when stress is present?

3) What do you observe in your voice when you experience stress?

4) When you communicate during stressful situations, do you communicate how you want to? Why, or why not?

5) How do you currently navigate stress at work?

6) Are the tools you use effective to navigate stress? Why, or why not?

7) What else influences your experience of stress?

Post-programme interview questions

1) How do you know, within yourself, when you experience stress at work?

2) What specific sensations do you notice in your body when stress is present?

3) What do you observe in your voice when you experience stress?

4) When you communicate during stressful situations, do you communicate how you want to? Why, or why not?

5) How do you, after the programme, navigate stress at work?

6) Are the tools you use effective to navigate stress? Why, or why not?

7) What else influences your experience of stress?

APPENDIX C: EPP exploration descriptions[148]

In this appendix, I outline the explorations of the EPP conducted during phase 4 of the research process. I also adapt these explorations using somaesthetic principles to enhance their effectiveness within the EPP. These adaptations draw from my personal experience and are aligned with somaesthetic principles, rather than replicating each approach precisely. Each exploration was offered in a manner that builds on the creation of a safe space for repatterning habitual patterns.

Establishing a psychologically and physically safe space was central to the design and facilitation of the EPP, given the inherently vulnerable nature of embodied learning through somatic practice. Within the context of embodied pedagogy, safety is not merely the absence of threat but the presence of attuned, responsive structures that allow participants to be vulnerable (Eddy 2017:34). To support this, the EPP was explicitly framed as a non-judgmental, invitational space, where all practices were offered rather than imposed, and where participant autonomy was continually affirmed. Consent, adaptability to different movement capacities, and emotional pacing were all embedded into the programme design.

Each session began with grounding and centring explorations to stabilise the nervous system and increase interoceptive awareness — an essential condition for bodymind integration (Payne, Levine and Crane-Godreau 2015:2). Reflective journaling, silent observation, and post-session debriefs created additional layers of containment that allowed participants to metabolise their experiences cognitively and somatically (Snowber 2016:51).

[148] I provide each exploration in the present tense in order to delineate precisely how they occurred during the EPP.

Lessac Kinesensics

Below, I outline explorations from LK that I used in the EPP:

- Pleasure smelling and sighing

Through organic instruction, participants can perceive their breath as a "pleasure smell"[149], drawing on the familiar experience of a pleasurable aroma from their lived experiences (Lončarić 2017:58). Participants are encouraged to “smell the fragrance and enjoy the sensations” (Munro *et al.* 2017:98), which facilitates ease within the bodymind and releases tension. This practice fosters full, three-dimensional breathing, turning breath into an "esthetic that contributes to health and well-being" (Lončarić 2017:58). The exploration continues by engaging with the sense of smell as a manner of tuning into the bodymind. As participants experience relief from stress or discomfort, they become more aware of how breath and sensory experiences contribute to overall well-being (Lessac 1997:45; Hurt 2014:36).

- Lip radiance (horse lips[150]), incipient yawning and forward facial orientation

Participants use lip radiance, lip trills or “horse lips”, a technique involving blowing air through the lips while a bi-labial contact point/constriction is maintained while the exhalation breath is released through the lips, to release tension in the facial muscles. This is followed by an incipient yawning to expand the oral cavity, promoting relaxation in the face, neck, and shoulders. Participants become more aware of the structure of their oral cavity, which supports greater vocal resonance and power. This allows for efficient space and shape of the oral cavity to allow for moveability (specifically but not only of the tongue). By releasing the facial muscles through yawning, participants amplify their vocal resonance, allowing for clearer and more resonant vocal production (Hurt 2017:37). The forward facial orientation further enhances vocal efficiency by

[149] Walsh (2020:[sp]) posits that smells “are handled by the olfactory bulb, the structure in the front of the brain that sends information to the other areas of the body’s central command for further processing. Odors take a direct route to the limbic system, including the amygdala and the hippocampus, the regions related to emotion and memory”.
[150] Lip trills is a term from Ingo Titze which Lessac practitioners colloquially use as “horse lips”.

sensing bone conducted tone in the bony landmarks of the head[151]. This takes sound pressure off the vocal folds, by elongating the resonating tube, especially if combined with inverted megaphone (Grama *et al.* 2021:2). This exploration prepares participants for more effective vocal expression by loosening facial tension and focusing on resonance (Lessac 1997:82).

- Humming for bone-conducted vibrations

Humming on a sustained "m" sound allows participants to feel the vibrations of sound resonating through their bones, especially in the hard palate. This exploration helps relieve vocal tension by focusing on bone-conducted vibrations, which supports efficient vocal production and reduces strain on the vocal folds[152]. By feeling the sound resonate through their bones, participants can enhance their awareness of vocal tone and resonance (Lessac 1997:99).

- Consonant exploration

This exploration encourages participants to explore the physical energy generated by humming and tapping various contact points, voiced and unvoiced (consonant NRG). Voiced and unvoiced consonants such as "b," "p," "t," and "d" are paired with movement to integrate breath, sound production, and body awareness. By tapping into the percussive and sustained consonants, participants develop rhythm and musicality through their speech, discovering how their bodyvoice functions as a dynamic musical and physical instrument (Lessac 1969:120, 1997:101).

- Tune-in (various orientations)

Participants "tune-in" to their sensory and physical sensations while lying in supine, seated, or standing. This practice helps identify habitual areas of tension and encourages participants to release this tension by focusing on their inner environment, their breath and the dynamic alignment of their body. The exploration enhances bodily

[151] Elongating the resonator allows for a stronger overtone pattern. A deeper discussion of this falls outside the scope of this study.
[152] Reducing sound pressure in supra-glottal area (Munro *et al.* 2017:100).

awareness and alignment, promoting relaxation and mindful attention to habitual movement patterns (Lessac 1997:47).

- Pain Relievers (Lessac & Kinghorn 2014:17−29)

I begin by asking the participants to imagine a situation: "You are walking along when suddenly you are pulled up short by a muscle cramp. What do you do?" I prompt them to think through their body's natural responses. First, I guide them to explore the sensation of freezing—"Do you freeze?" I explain that this is not like being encased in ice, but more of a suspension, where the body tries to avoid any weight on the cramped area or sudden movements. I encourage the participants to feel this suspension and call it "float", highlighting how the body instinctively reacts to protect itself from further strain. Next, I invite the participants to gently stretch the cramped area, just as the body naturally does during a yawn, which extends and reaches without breaking or causing strain. I refer to this as "muscle yawn" and guide them through this sensation, helping them experience how the body finds ease through gentle extension.

Finally, I introduce the action of shaking, a vigorous and intentional movement that mimics vibration. As we replicate this, I explain that the body often engages this shake to release tension or discomfort. these three natural responses—float, muscle yawn, and shake—are called "body esthetics", actions the body naturally employs to relieve stress, discomfort, and lack of creative awareness. I help participants notice how their body intuitively uses these responses to restore sensation and ease, moving from heaviness or discomfort into a state of lightness, nimbleness, and balance. These movements transition into floating, yawning, and sighing, creating a released and stress-free state. This practice promotes ease throughout the body, allowing participants to cultivate a deeper sense of relaxation and well-being (Lessac 1997:47).

- Pleasure smelling and sighing in supine orientation

Participants lie down and continue to explore deep breathing by using imagery of a pleasurable smell. In the supported, position of lying supine and giving over to gravity, the breath deepens, reducing bodily tension and facilitating greater ease. This position

enhances release[153] while allowing participants to focus on breath awareness and its impact on bodily sensations (Lessac 1997:47).

- Consonant exploration (expanded)

Expanding on the basic consonant exploration offered above, participants experiment with consonant sounds while moving their bodies in space mirroring the quality of the specific consonant through a total body action. This integrated practice of vocal and physical awareness highlights the relationship between vocal production and body tension. By focusing on how consonants are shaped and released, participants learn to connect sound with bodily movement, promoting deeper vocal and physical expression (Lessac 1997:101).

- Bend-over series[154]

When engaging with the series the participants can start in vertical upright orientation with a parenthesis cure. This refers to a vertical body with a flexible and elongated spine, a deep crease in the groin and femur joints, soft, released knees and ankles while sensing the contact points of the feet on the floor. There should thus be a sense of freedom in the joints. Initially the feet are approximately hip width apart, or slightly wider. The goal here is to develop an acute awareness of the bodymind's dynamic relationship with gravity, both when aligned with and resisting gravitational forces (Steyn 2020:[sp]). The bend-over series has various phases. Focusing on pleasure smelling and sighing, I encourage the participants to stay aware of their breath. Lead the bend-over with the crown of the head. I guide them to notice and observe the current presence of breath. They can focus on an easy softness in their ankles, knees and femur joints throughout, while the tail floats downwards and the small of the back elongates. The bend-over series begins with a gentle, forward, and downward floating of the head, initiated on an exhalation or pleasure sigh. In the first phase, the crown of the head reaches downward, with the movement shaping the spine and chest. When

[153] of antigravitational muscles.
[154] Adapted from Steyn (2020:[sp]) on the Lessac Research and Training Institute website and *Body Wisdom: The Use and Training of The Human Voice* (Lessac 2019)

the reach pauses, the body maintains its shape while specific body parts release tension. During this moment, the participant takes a pleasure smell, allowing them to sense and release any residual tension in the neck and back.

The second phase floats the head down towards and including the shoulders. The third phase involves floating the head down until the arms are in front of the knees. The fourth phase involves the crown of the head downwards until the hands are approximately in line with the chins. The fifth phase involves the shaping the crown of the head and upper body around the core until the fingertips are touching or close to the floor. If possible, the hands can release to the floor. In each position, the participants pause and take a deep pleasure smell, to encourage the release of residual tension. If the participants cannot touch the floor, participants are invited to gently bend their knees. The six phase is to actively reach the tail downwards so that the participant can gently move downwards, resulting in a deep squat. If not possible, participants are encouraged to float onto the balls of their feet or go as far as comfortable.

The participants are then invited to return to the vertical orientation by rolling through the spine initiating from the tail floating upwards with the head being the last to float up or floating directly to the vertical orientation, with the crown of the head leading the movement, while the shoulders remain open. I remind the participants to remain aware of their breathing throughout, encouraging them to explore their pleasure smell and sigh throughout. The series rolls the spine forward and downward, vertebra by vertebra, allowing participants to bend over with a released upper body. As participants focus on expanding the body while breathing during this movement, they release tension in the back, neck, and shoulders thus lengthening antigravitational muscles. This series improves spinal mobility and enhances breath support, teaching participants to let go of unnecessary tension and fostering greater freedom in movement and vocal expression (Lessac 1997:75; Nichols 2024:246).

- Bend-over series, wafting and waving[155], and habitual awareness

Building on the bend-over series, participants introduce wafting and waving movements, fluid, rhythmic motions that engage breath and body in continuous flow. These movements help participants heighten awareness of their habitual movement patterns, revealing how these patterns can either restrict or liberate their expression. The exploration encourages freedom in both movement and voice by challenging habitual constraints and inviting more embodied expression (Lessac 1969:119).

- Shaking (as a pain reliever) to amplify consonant awareness and tapping feet

Participants engage in shaking movements to release tension from their bodies, while simultaneously tapping their feet to channel and ground their energy through their feet into the floor. The tapping can be likened to shaking as a pain reliever without unnecessary force. This process amplifies their awareness of consonants and their body's relaxation-energisation state, allowing participants to explore how physical movements affect their voice. This dynamic interplay between relaxation and energisation prepares participants for more embodied vocal expression (Munro & Lemmer 2019:175).

- Bone-conducted tone awareness

In this exploration, participants hum or use voiced horse lips to feel the vibrations of their voice through their bones, particularly in the skull. This bone-conducted tone refers to the sound that is felt in the bony landmarks of the face rather than heard,

[155] Lessac Kinesensics, "wafting" and "waving" describe fluid, gentle movements closely tied to breath, energy dynamics, and the body's natural rhythms. Wafting involves floating gently from side to side, fostering a light, effortless motion that encourages relaxation and self-soothing (Steyn 2020:[sp]). This movement aids in promoting balance and homeostasis by activating vestibular processes, which help regulate the body's sense of orientation and equilibrium. Waving, on the other hand, refers to continuous, undulating motions that flow smoothly through the body, enhancing coordination and integration. Together, these movements support the bodymind's balance, encouraging a state of physical and emotional well-being through kinaesthetic awareness.

helping participants understand how their voice naturally resonates and vibrates. This awareness deepens their connection to vocal tone and enhances the power and quality of their voice (Nichols 2024:247).

- Exploring structural, consonant, and tonal NRGs

Participants explore how structural, consonant, and tonal NRGs interact when speaking words or phrases. I also ensure that they remain aware of the space and shape in the oral cavity by exploring Structural NRG through using the inverted megaphone metaphor. Structural NRG involves the energy generated by the vocal tract and facial muscles. This structure underscores tone and is necessary for Consonant NRG. Consonant NRG taps and hums into the percussive energy and melody of consonants by playing with the musical metaphor of the previous explorations, and Tonal NRG focuses on the vibratory energy of vocal tones. This exploration helps participants discover the full range of their vocal potential by connecting these energies to bodily movement and expression (Lessac 1969:119).

- Carrying over structural, consonant, and tonal NRGs (Trinity) to scripts and professional documents

Participants apply their understanding of structural, consonant, and tonal NRGs to real-world documents such as scripts or objection-handling protocols. This practical application enhances participants' ability to communicate with clarity, energy, and presence in professional settings. By embodying vocal energy in their communication, participants improve their effectiveness in everyday interactions (Hurt 2017:54).

- Improvisation to explore vocal NRGs

Participants use improvisation of movements drawing from body NRGs to explore and amplify their experience of vocal NRGs. This spontaneous movement helps participants experiment with how their physical movements can influence the quality of their vocal expression. Improvisation fosters a deeper connection between body and voice, encouraging participants to discover new ways to support and enhance their vocal production through movement (Munro & Lemmer 2019:177).

Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies

Below, I outline explorations from LBMS that I used in the EPP:

- Becoming aware of the inner-outer connectivity through breathing

In the LBMS framework, inner-outer connectivity refers to the relationship between internal sensations and the external environment. Breathing is foundational to this concept, as it connects internal processes with external space. Laban emphasised the role of breath in grounding movement and creating an awareness of space around the body (Hackney 2002:50).

By focusing on breathing, individuals can become more attuned to the flow of movement, shifting between bound and free flow to explore how breath shapes their internal experience and external interactions (Hackney 2002:60). This exploration helps participants sense how their breath influences their movement, creating a dynamic connection between their inner state and outer spatial presence (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:32).

- Explore core-distal connectivity. Using shapes such as pin, wall and ball in movement to encourage the visualisation of expanding and decreasing volume[156]

Core-distal connectivity in the LBMS framework involves the relationship between the centre of the body (core) and its extremities (distal parts). Participants explore shapes such as the pin for spinal movement, the ball for spinal movement and passive weight sensing (counter to the active use of weight Effort), and the wall to explore core-distal connectivity. This may help visualise the connection from the core to the distals, encouraging an awareness of dynamic movement patterns.

The pin shape (elongated and vertical) allows participants to feel a sense of expansion upward and downward, engaging the vertical dimension with spinal flow. The wall

[156] Although the shape forms are not typically connected to core-distal connectivity, this is an adaption based on my own interpretation of the explorations.

shape (flat and two-dimensional) highlights the vertical and horizontal plane, helping participants sense width and the core-distal relationship, while the ball shape (round and contracted) encourages contraction and expansion, engaging spinal flow and passive weight sensing (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:45). This exploration enhances participants' ability to modulate their movement by visualising how their body occupies space and connects to their environment (Hackney 2002:64).

- Playing with the head and tail as partners to increase awareness of head-tail connectivity

Head-tail connectivity refers to the relationship between the head and the tailbone/ coccyx (spine) and is a key element in LBMS's Body component, particularly in maintaining alignment and fluidity in movement. Engaging the head and tail as movement partners encourages participants to explore the head-tail connection along the vertical dimension, promoting awareness of how movement initiates at the head and travels through the spine to the tailbone, and vice versa.

This exploration deepens the understanding of the dynamic relationship between the head and tail, enhancing the sense of alignment and integration in movement (Hackney 2002:90). By shifting and moving the head in relation to the tail, participants can enhance their sense of alignment and improve their ability to move fluidly through space, exploring how the head-tail relationship supports both stability and mobility (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:35).

- Pelvic forward and lateral shifts to explore stability and mobility and the upper-lower connection

The upper-lower connection refers to the coordination between the upper and lower halves of the body, which in Laban's framework emphasises balance between stability and mobility. The participants are first orientated in semi-supine for this exploration, after which they explore the explorations in a seated orientation. Pelvic shifts, both forward and lateral, encourage participants to explore the dynamic relationship

between stability and mobility[157]. Forward pelvic shifts help participants sense the sagittal dimension (forward-backward), while lateral shifts[158] highlight movement in the horizontal plane (side-to-side). By integrating these pelvic shifts, participants can explore the balance between stabilising the upper body while allowing the lower body to move freely, enhancing their overall stability-mobility (Hackney 2002:100; Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:38).

- Using the body half exploration to specifically explore habitual patterns that impede this connection

Body half connectivity involves the coordination of one side of the body while the other side remains stable. I adapt the exploration, normally done in supine position to a seated position in chairs. This exploration encourages participants to engage one half of the body, either left or right, while the other half remains stable or grounded. By doing so, participants can identify habitual patterns that limit their ability to move fluidly and efficiently. This exploration also helps reveal asymmetries in movement, allowing participants to repattern habitual ways of moving by becoming more aware of the difference between the two halves of the body (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:50). Body half exploration focuses on improving the balance between mobility on one side of the body and stability on the other (Hackney 2002:116).

- Exploring the pre-thigh lift to develop to knee drops to enhance the contralateral connection in the body[159]

For this exploration, the participants are also seated in chairs. The contralateral connection involves movements that cross the midline of the body, coordinating opposite sides, such as moving the right arm in tandem with the left leg. Pre-thigh lifts and knee drops are fundamental explorations from the Bartenieff Fundamentals that encourage contralateral movement, while pre-thigh lifts also promote upper-lower connectivity. These explorations can help participants engage their kinesphere, the

[157] Lateral pelvic shifts honour the bi-pedal human body.
[158] The pelvic rock, forward and lateral shifts are explorations from LBMS, adapted from *The Moving Researcher* by Fernandes (2015:120).
[159] Adapted from Fernandes (2015:11).

space around their body, by exploring how the limbs move through different spatial dimensions (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:48). As the participants move, I must make them aware of which points in space the knees or thighs move. Contralateral connections enhance cross-lateral coordination, promoting full-body integration that supports more efficient and fluid movement across the sagittal, horizontal, and vertical planes (Hackney 2002:125).

- Staying aware of the body connections during explorations by ensuring the repetition of the pattern phrase

Repetition of movement phrases, particularly those involving core connections such as core-distal, head-tail, upper-lower, and contralateral patterns, is critical for deepening body awareness and reinforcing new movement patterns. By continuously repeating[160] these movement phrases, participants become more aware of their body's connections and the habitual patterns that may impede free movement (Hackney 2002:142). Through mindful repetition of effective patterns, participants can refine their movement efficiency, ensuring that new body patterns are internalised and habitual responses are repatterned to support stability, mobility, and expression (Bartenieff & Lewis 1980:52). Mindful repetition of effective patterns also aids in cultivating somatic awareness, allowing for greater sensitivity to the internal and external forces acting on the body during movement.

- Open monitoring[161]

The open monitoring exploration is in a vertical orientation reflects the LBMS focus on spatial awareness, body connectivity, and the relationship between internal bodily sensations and external dynamics in space, promoting a holistic sense of balance and presence (Hackney 2002:94). This exploration emphasises awareness of the head-

[160] Applying SPAR (sensation, perception, awareness and response).
[161] The term open monitoring originates from contemporary meditation research and practices in the context of mindfulness and meditation traditions, primarily linked to Buddhist meditation. It contrasts with focused attention meditation, which centres on directing and sustaining attention on a specific object (such as the breath) (Lutz, Slagter, Dunne & Davidson 2008). In contrast, open monitoring involves maintaining a non-reactive, open awareness of all sensory, cognitive, and emotional experiences without focusing on any specific object.

tail connection while walking around in the general space. Participants stay aware to their own movements as well as the movements of others around them, fostering an interaction between internal bodily awareness and external social dynamics. This promotes a sense of dynamic balance and presence in relation to others (Hackney 2002:94).

- Body scan[162]

The body scan exploration takes place in a vertical orientation and aligns with the LBMS emphasis on somatic awareness and the release of habitual tension patterns, improving alignment, grounding, and efficiency in movement (Hackney 2002:89). The body scan involves guiding participants through an internal check of various body parts, including the feet, knees, pelvis, spine, and head. This practice increases awareness of habitual tension patterns, alignment, and grounding. By focusing on specific markers in the body, participants learn to release unnecessary tension and improve their posture (Hackney 2002:89). The markers include the following:

  - Encourage the participants to close their eyes and begin by observing any discomfort, pain, or heaviness in their body. As the white noise plays, guide them first to observe their outer environment, allowing them to become aware of the sounds, light, and space around them. Then, prompt them to gently shift their focus inward, tuning into their inner environment and bodily sensations.
  - Guide the participants to start by becoming aware of the contact points between their feet and the ground. Direct their attention to a three-point weight distribution: one point in the heel and two at the ball of each foot, promoting balance and grounding. Invite them to maintain softness in the ankles, behind the knees, and the femur joints. Instead of thinking about 'bending,' encourage the participants to “breathe into the knees for softness”, allowing the body to release tension without strain.

[162] The body scan is a concept and practice closely associated with Jon Kabat-Zinn, the founder of the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme (Kabat-Zinn 1990).

- Next, guide the participants to become aware of their sit bones and gently reach downwards with them, fostering a sense of grounding. Simultaneously, invite them to become aware of the natural, dynamic flow of the spine, encouraging continuous, subtle movement. Remind them to keep softness in the shoulders while lengthening the back of the neck.
- Prompt the participants to keep the crown of the head as the highest part of the body, staying aware of how easily the head can swivel. Encourage them to maintain a level chin, neither raised, pulled down, nor protruding forward, allowing for ease and alignment in the head and neck.

This exploration helps foster awareness of balance and softness throughout the body while maintaining a sense of lightness and grounding.

- Lengthening upwards and settling downwards

This exploration combines the head-tail connectivity explorations of LBMS with the muscle floating releaxer-energizer explorations of LK. In this exploration, participants use imagery to visualise themselves lengthening upwards and then settling or floating downwards. The upward movement encourages extension through the spine, while the downward movement promotes grounding and release. This fosters an interplay between exertion and recuperation, easing tension through gentle elongation (Hackney 2002:102). In this exploration, prompt the participants to visualise a flexible string or create their own metaphor that helps them sense the flexibility and movability of their spines, connecting the head to the tail. Encourage them to stay aware of their pleasure smell throughout the exploration, while the crown of the head lengthens upwards, and the sit bones reach downwards. This balance between lengthening and grounding supports both expansion and stability. This exploration links directly to dancing with the head and tail and partners but explores the connections more subtly.

These explorations within the LBMS framework facilitate a deep understanding of movement patterns, fostering body awareness and connectivity. Through the mindful repetition of these explorations, participants can increase their sensitivity to habitual patterns, improve their movement efficiency, and cultivate new, more functional movement responses.

Skinner Releasing Technique

Below, I outline explorations from SRT that I used in the EPP:

- Imagery-based release

Guided imagery[163] is central to SRT. In this exploration, participants focus on specific areas of tension in their bodies and visualise images such as colours, textures, or sensations associated with ease and fluidity. This exploration promotes deep relaxation and helps participants release unnecessary tension, allowing for more freedom in movement. Imagery-based release encourages participants to engage their imagination, facilitating an embodied experience of letting go (Skinner *et al.* 2008:[sp]).

- Partner graphics

In this exploration, participants work in pairs, mirroring each other's movements. The focus is on fostering intersubjective connection and shared experiences of tension and release. As participants respond to their partner's movements, they deepen their own awareness of tension patterns while promoting a sense of mutual support. Partner graphics allow participants to cultivate a deeper understanding of their bodies in relation to others, enhancing the releasing process (Le Quesne 2018:88).

- Writing and drawing as reflection

Skinner Releasing Technique incorporates drawing and writing as part of the reflective process after movement explorations[164]. Participants are invited to express their experiences visually, creating body maps or free-form drawings that represent areas

[163] Guided imagery in the context of the SRT refers to the use of vivid, poetic imagery to facilitate somatic awareness and release habitual physical tensions. This approach encourages participants to explore movement through evocative, often metaphorical language, which serves to bypass habitual cognitive processes and engage deeper layers of the physical and imaginative self (Hudson 2017:187).
[164] This approach employs writing and drawing as embodied forms of expression, recognising that certain emotional states, memories, or experiences can be challenging to articulate verbally (Young 2013:58). By engaging the bodymind in creative practices, this method allows individuals to explore and communicate complex inner experiences that might be inaccessible or constrained by language alone. Through this process, writing and drawing serve not only as expressive tools but also as a means to deepen self-awareness and unlock non-verbalised aspects of experience.

of tension, release, or sensation. This form of creative reflection deepens participants' awareness of their movement patterns and facilitates further release. By translating movement into visual form, participants gain insight into their bodily experiences and expand their capacity for self-awareness (Le Quesne 2018:82).

- Participants using their own music

A unique aspect of SRT is the option for participants to bring and use their own music during the explorations (Le Quesne 2021:17). This personal choice honours each participants idiosyncratic music taste possibly influenced by the cultures.

The integration of self-selected music enhances the emotional and sensory engagement of the practice, providing an additional layer of personalisation to the releasing process. By moving to music that resonates with them, participants often experience a more profound release and embodiment of their explorations.

- Partner graphics (expanded)

Building on the partner graphics exploration, participants engage in more complex movement sequences with their partners, further developing their awareness of shared movement and tension-release responses. This expanded exploration encourages participants to deepen their movement dialogue with their partners, fostering a greater sense of interconnectedness and enhancing the releasing process.

Horton technique

Below, I outline explorations from Horton technique that I used in the EPP:

- Flat back series (somaesthetic awareness of alignment)

In this exploration, participants engage with an adapted flat back series[165] while cultivating a heightened awareness of their alignment, posture, and bodily sensations. I encourage the participants to not artificially force their backs flat, but rather lengthen their spine while keeping the natural curvature of the spine. Somaesthetic principles emphasise the importance of self-perception and bodily awareness.

As participants maintain the lengthened back position, they are encouraged to explore the sensory feedback from their muscles and joints, noting how small adjustments in posture affect their balance and ease of movement. The focus shifts from merely achieving the flat back shape to becoming attuned to the sensations of lengthening, stability, and breath as they hold the position. This promotes a deeper connection to their embodied experience.

- Lateral fortifications (exploring the bodymind's internal and external space)

Lateral fortifications[166] are adapted to focus on the participant's awareness of both internal sensations and the external space around them. While performing lateral reaches and arm reaches participants are guided to notice the lengthening's impact on their body from the inside out, including any tension, release, or elongation they feel along the lateral plane. At the same time, they are asked to become aware of their spatial orientation, exploring how their body moves within and relates to the surrounding space. This dual awareness promotes a holistic embodiment of

[165] The original flat back series refers to a variety of movements that are the first exercise in a traditional Horton class. Flat backs require "isolated hip flexion while maintaining a straight trunk", while keeping "the hips and lower extremities stationary and perpendicular to the floor, minimising any shift posteriorly" (Bronner *et al.* 2004:2).
[166] Lateral fortifications in Horton technique refer to explorations that "involve lateral bending and stretching of the torso and arms (in different positions), combined with plies (bending of the knees)" (Enache 2020:20)

movement, connecting the individual's internal bodily sensations with their interaction with the external world.

- Body half isolations[167] (differentiation and integration through somaesthetic awareness)

This exploration focuses on isolating movements in one half of the body while maintaining stability in the other. Through somaesthetic awareness, participants are encouraged to sense the differences between the two body halves, one side mobilising while the other remains stable.

Participants are invited to explore the subtle sensory shifts and how isolating one side affects their overall posture, balance, and breath. By paying attention to their bodily sensations during these movements, they learn to integrate differentiation and coordination between body halves, fostering a deeper sense of embodied balance and control.

- Pelvic and spine awareness[168] (integration of upper and lower body through somaesthetic practice)

In this adapted exploration, participants focus on the integration of their pelvic and spinal alignment, paying close attention to the way the pelvis serves as a foundational point of movement for the upper and lower body. Somaesthetic principles guide participants to sense how small movements in the pelvis can create ripple effects through the spine, affecting alignment, balance, and movement coordination. As participants explore pelvic rocking and hip isolations, they are encouraged to cultivate a deep awareness of their pelvic and spinal connectivity, recognising how this central axis supports dynamic movement.

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[167] Horton does not specifically refer to body half isolations, but rather just isolations of parts the body to strengthen the body as a whole (Enache 2020:23). I specifically refer to body half isolations, as this is an adaption specifically focused on the body halves.

[168] This adapted exploration builds on Horton's actions of the body, such as the pelvic press (engages the torso and the pelvis; has a powerful dramatic effect through the action of the arms), swings (movements of the torso from right to left and circular) as well as hinges (exercise that engages both the pelvis and the knees, and doubles with a very powerful dramatic expression) (Enache 2020:18).

- Breath integration in Horton movements[169] (breathing as a somaesthetic practice)

Breath plays a crucial role in connecting the bodymind, and in this adapted exploration, participants are encouraged to integrate their breath with their movements consciously. Whether lengthening the back or moving through lateral reaches, participants are guided to notice the flow of their breath, observing how inhalation and exhalation impact their alignment and movement quality. Breath awareness is used as a tool for facilitating ease and reducing tension, promoting a sense of internal rhythm and flow that aligns with somaesthetic principles of embodied well-being.

[169] This adapted exploration takes all the explorations of Horton that have already been explored and includes the concept of breath in it, as this as a somaesthetic principles that helps adapt the non-somatic Horton technique into the field of somatics.

Tap dancing

Below, I outline explorations from tap dancing that I used in the EPP:

- Foot tapping and weight shifts[170] (sensing groundedness and balance through somaesthetic awareness)

In this exploration, participants are seated and engage in rhythmic foot tapping while paying close attention to the sensations in their feet, legs, and the connection to the ground. Somaesthetic awareness encourages participants to feel the weight shifts as they tap, noting how each beat affects their overall balance and sense of grounding. They are guided to explore the subtle movements within the foot, including the placement of the heel and ball, and how this connects with their body's alignment. By focusing on the sensory experience of grounding, participants cultivate a deeper awareness of how their bodymind responds to rhythmic movement and gravity.

- Heel and ball beats[171] with brushes (dynamic awareness of flow and release)

In this adapted exploration, participants explore heel and ball beats combined with brushes, focusing on the dynamic flow of energy between grounded and lifted movements. Somaesthetic principles encourage participants to pay attention to the tactile sensations in their feet and legs as they execute each beat and brush, exploring the contrast between weight-bearing movements and lighter, sweeping motions. This exploration becomes an opportunity to sense the release of tension in the legs and feet, as participants experience the rhythmic oscillation between grounding and freeing

[170] Foot tapping relates to the tap movements called a *Step* (transference of weight onto the ball of the foot or through the foot onto the whole foot with a relaxed knee) and a *Beat* (strike the floor sharply with the ball of the foot. The foot remains down, and no change of weight takes place) (Isaacs 2013:3). I explain the counting of these steps in Appendix D.

[171] This exploration includes *heel beats* (raising the heel of the working foot and striking the floor sharply with the flat of the heel. Heel remains down. This movement occurs with or without change of weight.) and *ball beats* (raising the ball of the working foot while leaving the heel on the floor. Strike the floor with the ball of the foot, leaving it down. This movement ensues with or without a change of height.) (Isaacs 2013:5). These two movements build on the step and beat of the previous exploration. This exploration then further includes brushes (commence with the working foot raised at the back. Strike the ball of the foot sharply down and forward, finishing up. The movement is from the knee and ankle), which build on the heel beats and ball beats (Isaacs 2013:3).

movements. The brushes provide a chance to explore how fluidity in the movement affects the body's overall sense of ease and rhythm.

- Tapping to three-point weight distribution[172] (exploring spatial and bodily awareness through somaesthetics)

This exploration focuses on the three-point weight distribution across the heel and both balls of the feet. Participants are guided to become aware of how their weight is distributed during each tap, sensing the subtle shifts between these three contact points. Somaesthetic principles encourage participants to tune into their body's internal feedback during the movement, noticing how each point of contact affects their balance, alignment, and connection to the floor. As participants tap rhythmically, they are also invited to explore their spatial awareness, sensing how their body occupies space and how the rhythm of their taps interacts with that space. This awareness promotes a deeper embodiment of movement and balance.

- Rhythmic exploration[173] with personal expression (enhancing body awareness through self-directed rhythm)

In this exploration, participants are encouraged to improvise rhythmic patterns that reflect their own sense of expression and bodily awareness. I guide them to first explore tap movements that they already know in a minim tempo, and then a crotchet tempo (see Appendix F). Finally, I play a metronome and allow them to decide their own personal tempo.

Somaesthetic principles support participants in becoming attuned to the sensations of their body while they create rhythmic sequences, focusing on the relationship between internal sensations and external rhythm. By allowing the body to guide the rhythm, participants explore how personal expression emerges from their internal awareness of movement. This exploration fosters a sense of embodied rhythm, where participants

[172] This exploration explores the tap movements already explored but introduces the concepts of three-point weight distribution.
[173] This exploration uses the tap movements the participants have already explored and introduces various timings as outlined in Appendix D.

not only follow external beats but also discover their own internal rhythms, enhancing their connection to their body and creative expression.

- Breath integration in tap dance[174] (synchronising breath with rhythm and movement)

Tap dancing can be physically demanding, and this exploration integrates breath awareness into the rhythmic movements. Participants are guided to synchronise their breathing with the rhythm of their taps, using breath as a tool to reduce tension and promote ease in movement. Somaesthetic awareness of breath helps participants notice how their breath patterns affect the quality of their tapping and overall movement. By focusing on the flow of breath in relation to the rhythmic beats, participants can cultivate a deeper sense of internal rhythm, physical relaxation, their stability and mobility, enhancing their overall well-being and embodiment during the dance.

[174] I focus on release and relaxation to ready participants. I use breath to relax the body and use the tap movements to release energy into the floor, encouraging release and relaxation to ready the participants for their day. This aligns with the release, relax and ready approach of Goldberg (2018:18) to tap dance.

APPENDIX D: AIDT tap dancing musical notation

This appendix outlines the basic musical notation of the Association of International Dance Teachers (AIDT), that I used during the programme to clap rhythms for participants. This specifically relates to the inclusion of tap dancing in the EPP during phase 4 of the research process.

Table 12: AIDT musical notation (Bennett 2014:5)

Musical notation	Explanation
Semibreve (1 2 3 4)	Open note without a stem. Counts for 4. Holds for 4. Value is 4. 1 in a bar.
Minim (1 2 3 4)	Open note with a stem. Count for 2. Holds for 2. Value is 2. 2 in a bar.
Crotchet (1 2 3 4)	Closed note with a stem. Counts for 1. Holds for 1. Value is 1. 4 in a bar.
Quaver (1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +)	Closed note with stem and tail. Counts for ½ a crotchet. Holds for ½ a crotchet. Value is ½ a crotchet. 8 in a bar.
Semi- quaver (1 + + a 2 + + a 3 + + a 4 + + a)	Closed note with a stem and two tails. Counts for ¼ of a crotchet. Hold for ¼ of a crotchet. Value is ¼ of a crotchet. 16 in a bar.

APPENDIX E: AIDT technique glossary

This appendix discusses the basic tap dance steps of the AIDT, as steps that I use to explore rhythm and grounding in the programme during phase 4 of the research process. I explain the technique as they are in AIDT syllabus work with more advanced steps having their building blocks analysed before them.

Step (Isaacs 2013:3): Transference of weight onto the ball of the foot or through the foot onto the whole foot with a relaxed knee. One sound. One count.

Beat (Isaacs 2013:3): Strike the floor sharply with the ball of the foot. The foot remains down, and no change of weight takes place. One sound. One count.

Heel beat (Isaacs 2013:3): Raise the heel of the working foot and strike the floor sharply with the flat of the heel. Heel remains down. This movement occurs with or without change of weight. One sound. One count.

Heel dig (Isaacs 2013:4): Dig the edge of the heel sharply into the floor with or without change of weight with a hard bent knee (thigh is tensed for a hard sound). One sound. One count.

Riffle (Isaacs 2013:21): A light relaxed beat (R), a light heel dig (R) and a light released beat (R). A riffle requires a relaxed foot with knee and ankle action and a relaxed supporting knee. The movement ends with the working leg raised and bent. The working foot moves down and up and NOT forward. Three sounds. Counted: Two in a bar= '***1*** & 2' OR '4 & ***1***'. Four in a bar= '& a **1**'.

Ball beat (Isaacs 2013:5): `Raise the ball of the working foot while leaving the heel on the floor. Strike the floor with the ball of the foot, leaving it down. This movement ensues with or without a change of height. One sound. One count.

Forward tap (Isaacs 2013:6): Strike the floor sharply with the ball of the foot, forward and up. This is an ankle movement.

Back tap (Isaacs 2013:6): Strike the floor sharply with the ball of the foot, back and up. This movement initiates from the ankle.

Pick up (Isaacs 2013:6): Raise the ball of the working foot leaving the heel on the floor. Snatch the foot back, sounding the ball of the foot and removing the heel. In combination work this movement may be done starting with the foot raised executing a back tap movement. One sound. One count.

Pick up change (Isaacs 2013:19): Stand on one foot, execute a pick up and land on the ball of the other foot with a hard bent knee. Flexes (soft knees) in a series. In a series, the heel may remain up to repeat or lower silently. Two sounds. Counted: 'a ***1***'. Accent on 1.

Ripple (Isaacs 2013:21): A forward tap, pick up change, heel beat. Finish on a hard bent knee on one. The landing knee flexes in a series. Four sounds. Counted: Two in a bar= '4 & a ***1***'. Four in a bar= '& & a ***1***'. Accent on 1.

Ball change (Isaacs 2013:4): A change of weight from ball to ball or ball to flat. The movement is executed with flexed knees and can go forward, sideways or turning. Two sounds. Counted: 'a ***1***'. Accent on 1.

Forward brush (Isaacs 2013:3): Commence with the working foot raised at the back. Strike the ball of the foot sharply down and forward, finishing up. The movement is from the knee and ankle. One sound. One count.

Spring (Isaacs 2013:6): Stand on one foot, spring into the air and land on the ball of the other foot with a flexed knee. One sound. One count.

Shuffle (Isaacs 2013:5): A forward and back tap. A shuffle is an ankle movement and knee movement on the back tap as well. Two sounds. Counted: 'a ***1***'. Accent on 1.

Toe tap (Isaacs 2013:4): Strike the floor sharply with the top of the toe finishing up. May be taken to the back, front or side of supporting foot. Use a taut foot while executing this knee movement. One sound. One count.

Hop (Isaacs 2013:6): Stand on one foot, hop and land on the ball of the same foot, with a flexed knee (soft knee for soft sound). One sound. One count.

Single tip tap (Isaacs 2013:18): Raise the working leg from the knee. Lowering the foot towards the floor, tap the edge of the front of the tap, with a taut foot (almost under toes), and then down onto the ball with a relaxed foot, next to supporting foot.

4 Beat cramp roll (Isaacs 2013:12): Spring R, step L, heel beat R, heel beat L. This movement has a rolling sound. Four sounds. Counted: '& & a ***1***'. Accent on ***1***.

Double tip tap (Isaacs 2013:19): Same as Single tip tap, but use both feet alternately, R.L.R.L. Rolling sound of a Cramp roll. Body well lifted and no weight on the feet. Four sounds. Counted: '& & a ***1***'. Accent on ***1***.

Toe stand (Isaacs 2013:22): Using a taut foot, step up onto tip of R then tip of L. Recover with two steps. Counted: Two in a bar= '***1*** & a 2 OR '4 & a ***1***'. Four in a bar= '& & a ***1***'.

Stamp (Isaacs 2013:3): A heavy downward beat on the whole foot with or without a change of weight and with a soft knee. One sound. One count.

APPENDIX F: EPP session outline

This appendix outlines the structure of each session of the EPP, based on Table 5 outlined in Chapter 4.

Week 1

Session 1

Theme	Awareness of inner-outer & breath
Aim	Awareness of inner environment in relation to outer environment alongside an increased awareness of breath.
Outcomes	By the end of the session the participants should have: • Gained an awareness of their inner environments in relation to their outer environments by sensing and perceiving any discomfort in the body and indicating any tension or pain on printed body maps pasted in their journals. • The ability to utilise their personal body maps to develop an awareness of how their pleasure smell and metaphors change how and what they experience as part of their inner environments.
Exploration	**Purpose and motivation**
Introduction (10 mins)	Since the participants are in the same department, they have an awareness of each other, but do not necessarily know each other. This introduction focuses on getting the participants to get to know each other so they are more comfortable in the exploration space.
Outside to inside (10 mins)	This exploration aims to guide the participants to find a balance between the outer environment and their inner environments by first becoming completely aware of the environment in which the session will take place, so they can explore their inner environment with more ease.
Tune-in while in supine orientation (5 mins)	This exploration aims to build on the awareness of physical and sensory sensations within the bodies of the participants that the started in the previous exploration but moving the exploration to the supine orientation. This encourages an awareness of any tension within the bodies of the participants in a different orientation that requires less muscular engagement since the participants do not have to stay upright in relation to gravity. This lays the foundation for repatterning, since the participants can use an awareness of unnecessary tension within their bodies as a cue that they sense and feel the need to change their habitual way of doing and/ or being in the present moment.
Pleasure smell and sigh in	This exploration encourages the usage of imagery to facilitate three-dimensional breathing that is the basis for all the other explorations in the programme. This type of breathing aims to reduce discomfort and increase awareness of the self in the moment by using deep release and passive weight sensing in a supine orientation.

supine orientation (5 mins)	
Breathing to various parts in supine orientation (10 mins)	This exploration aids the participants to use a metaphor to increase awareness within certain areas of their bodies. The metaphor of using colour could aid the participants in focusing their attention to specific areas of the body. The colours the participants become aware of are colours that can become anchors for concentration and awareness of habitual holding patterns, tension or pain.
Pain relievers (10 mins)	This exploration intends to provide the participants with tools they can immediately start using in their daily lives to relieve any pain they feel. These pain relievers can also be used to relax and energise their bodies. The exploration further aims to create an awareness of how discomfort in the participants' bodies can be released through these pain relievers.
Reflection (10 mins)	The reflection in this session focuses on noting what discomfort was experienced within the body − by using body maps − to create a baseline and cue for the participants to explore habitual patterns in the sessions that follow.

Session 2

Theme	Breath & core-distal connectivity
Aim	Identify how to navigate habitual patterns by using core-distal connectivity and a focus on breath through visualisation.
Outcomes	By the end of the session the participants should have: • The ability to identify some of their habitual holding patterns and then see how they can release or navigate these habits by using core-distal connectivity through exploring Shape on a chair. • A further awareness of their inner environments by deepening the focus on breath through pleasure smelling and the bend-over series and revisiting the pain relievers while adding the awareness of core-distal connectivity to release unnecessary holding patterns.
Exploration	**Purpose and motivation**
Introduction and recap (10 mins)	The introduction is to ensure that the participants feel welcome and are ready and open to explore what the new session has to offer.
Pleasure smell and sigh in an upright orientation	This exploration takes the pleasure smell exploration of the previous session to an upright orientation to reduce discomfort and increase awareness of the self in the moment.

(5 mins)	
Bend-over series while standing (10 mins)	This exploration aims to deepen the participants' awareness of breathing by floating the upper body over the lower body. This further encourages the participants to become aware of any holding patterns in the body and to breathe to these areas, to encourage ease in the body.
Seated tune-in (10 mins)	The aim of this exploration is to move the explorations that the participants explored while standing to a seated orientation. This, so that they can possibly gain awareness of how various orientations affect discomfort within their bodies. This further gives the participants the opportunity to repeat explorations so they can become more comfortable with what works for release in their bodies.
Core-distal in a seated orientation (10 mins)	This exploration aims to create an awareness of any habitual patterns that hampers the core-distal connection, while using the awareness of Shape to guide the participants in creating their own perception of what aids the connection of their distals through their core.
Folding around the core with shaping while seated (5 mins)	The aim of this exploration is to keep the awareness of the core-distal connection while using collapse of the upper body around the core over the lower body and then to return. This is, to further engage the connection of the distals through core by extending from the core to the distals.
Reflection (10 mins)	The reflection in this session focuses on noting what patterns have been experienced within specifically the participants' breath and core-distal connectivity, to create an awareness of any patterns that hamper ideal function.

Session 3

Theme	Core-distal & head-tail connectivity
Aim	Identify habitual patterns that hamper the dynamic and effective integration of the spine by gaining an awareness of head-tail connectivity.
Outcomes	By using the previous sessions as a baseline, the participants should, by the end of this session, have: • The ability to identify habitual patterns, by deliberately highlighting them through a movement phrase and through journaling, drawing, writing or any other form of written reflection. • The ability to indicate and demonstrate how explorations focusing on effective integration and gaining an awareness of pain or tension in the body may contribute to a shift in habitual patterns.

Exploration	Purpose and motivation
Introduction and recap (5 mins)	The introduction aims to recap some concepts from the previous sessions since the session serves as a continuation, while also ensuring that the participants playfully get ready for new explorations.
Body Scan with key markers in a vertical orientation (5 mins)	This body scan aims to encourage an awareness of dynamic alignment and grounding, while also encouraging shape flow within the body so that the participants can use the key markers as familiar events to aid them in releasing discomfort and habitual holding patterns in their bodies.
Wafting and waving in vertical orientation (5 mins)	This exploration aims to encourage the floating of the body from side to side as a pain reliever to then find three-point weight distribution (two points on the ball of each foot and one on the heel) and explore grounding when the bodies of the participants stop swaying. In this way, the exploration stimulates the vestibular processes for balance. The wafting and waving of their bodies from side to side encourages an awareness of the dynamic alignment of the spine through the head and tail.
Lengthening upwards and settling downwards (5 mins)	The aim of this exploration is to use the pain reliever of floating to promote ease in the participants' bodies while also being able to aid in the effective lengthening of their bodies.
Sitting integrated (5 mins)	This exploration combines lengthening upwards and settling downwards with the key markers to move effective integration to a seated orientation.
Moving with head and tail as partners (Hackney 2002:94) (10 mins)	This exploration focuses on understanding how the head-tail connection can aid in releasing tension or repatterning habitual patterns by exploring new possibilities.
Moving with a partner while focusing on the head-tail relationship (10 mins)	This exploration focuses on understanding how the head-tail connection can aid in releasing tension or repatterning habitual patterns by exploring new possibilities.

Open monitoring with a focus on head-tail connectivity (5 mins)	This exploration focuses on taking the new possibilities explored in the previous explorations and encouraging an awareness of the head-tail connectivity while walking.
Reflection (10 mins)	This reflection encourages the participants to share by means of embodied movement, noticing how the self and the connections within the body, especially the head-tail connection can elevate tension or the release of tension. The reflection aids in encouraging the habitual awareness of the inner environment and patterns that have been formed over time, while allowing the individuals to home in specifically on head-tail connectivity to aid in repatterning these habitual patterns.

WEEK 2

Session 4

Theme	Head-tail & upper-lower connectivity and Consonant NRG
Aim	Gain an awareness of the connection between the upper and lower body and become aware of using the voice as part of the bodymind, specifically starting with Consonant NRG.
Outcomes	At the end of this session, the participants should be able to: • Articulate an understanding of how head-tail connectivity can be explored with a metaphor in the spine to encourage release for effective dynamic alignment. • Demonstrate how a difference in stability in the upper or lower body can aid in the mobility of the other, while retaining an awareness of the dynamic head-tail connection. • Identify habitual patterns or tension by exploring that which disconnects the upper and lower body and sharing these patterns through embodied poetry (movement based on self-identified words).
Exploration	**Purpose and motivation**
Introduction and recap (5 mins)	The introduction aims to recap most of the concepts from the previous sessions, especially focusing on head-tail connectivity to ensure the participants tune into their inner environment.
Pelvic rock, forward and	This exploration focuses on building on the awareness of the head-tail connectivity, while creating an awareness of the mobility in the lower body while the upper body

lateral shifts while in supine orientation (10 mins)	provides stability, so the participants start becoming aware of upper-lower connectivity.
Pelvic rock, forward and lateral shift while in a seated orientation (5 mins)	This exploration builds on the supine awareness of the mobility in the lower body while the upper body provides stability and aims to prepare for change of level and weight as the participants stand up and sit from their chairs.
Tapping the feet in upright orientation (10 min)	This exploration aims to identify any habitual holding patterns in the upper body while the lower body is moving, while keeping an awareness of the head-tail relationship, both through the tapping of feet and walking around. The exploration further focuses on how the activation of the pelvic area by means of the rocks and shift, can aid in stability and mobility in an upright orientation. The exploration uses various counting of a 120bmp metronome to encourage a similar tempo to the human heartbeat, so the participants can learn to slow down or speed up in response to what they are hearing or feeling.
Playing with consonants in upright orientation (10 min)	This exploration aims to build on the shaking of the body by including the voice. This encourages the participants to become aware of how vibrations can move through the body both by shaking but also through percussive sounds.
Playing with consonants in upright orientation (10 min)	This exploration aims to build on the shaking of the body by including the voice. This encourages the participants to become aware of how vibrations can move through the body both by shaking but also through percussive sounds.
Tapping the feet and playing with consonants in seated orientation (10 min)	This exploration aims to identify any habitual holding patterns while seated by becoming aware of any tension in the upper body while the lower body is mobile, and the sit bones provide stability. The exploration further aims to create a deep release of the femur joints.
Reflection (10 min)	This reflection encourages the participants to first embody and then to voice what happens in their bodies throughout the day, to encourage a reflection that focuses on

	what the participants have discovered during the first week and lay the foundation for what is to come.

Session 5

Theme	Upper-lower & homolateral connectivity[175] and Structural NRG
Aim	Gain an awareness of the connection and differentiation between the two halves of the body while also exploring the structure of the oral cavity (Structural NRG) as a baseline for effective communication.
Outcomes	At the end of this session, the participants should be able to: • Demonstrate forward facial orientation by focusing on becoming aware of an incipient yawn and identify how this yawn can aid in communication. • Articulate the relationship between the two sides of the body by gaining an awareness of arm lengthening and isolations of various body parts.
Exploration	**Purpose and Motivation**
Introduction and recap (10 min)	This introduction focuses on recapping the explorations of the previous session whiling encouraging the participants to tune-up their voices and tune-in to their bodies.
Facial yawn and massage in a seated orientation (10 min)	The purpose of this exploration is to become aware of any tension in the facial muscles, specifically the one joint on each side of the jaw (TMJ). The exploration further aims to move the pain-reliever of the yawn into the facial muscles so that the participants can explore the three-dimensional space of the oral cavity for effective voicing. This encourages the participants to have more structure, before starting on the phone every time they dial so they have less tension in their face.
Body half in seated orientation (10 min)	This exploration focuses lengthening the one side of the body and contracting the other side so the participants can increase their awareness of the connection between the body halves.
Lateral fortification adapted with arm reaches while in seated	To further explore the relationship between the two body halves, the arm reaches specifically uses Horton technique to encourage the lengthening of the various body halves to encourage release in the body.

[175] The upper-lower and homolateral explorations are all based on the LBMS concept of upper-lower connectivity and homolateral connectivity which I delineate in Chapter 4.

orientation (10 min)	
Lateral fortification adapted while in upright orientation (5 min)	The purpose of the exploration is to move from a seated orientation to an upright orientation to include the legs in the experience of body-half connectivity in a more conscious manner.
Fortification adapted with focus on body half isolation (5 min)	This exploration further explores the connection between the body halves but focuses on isolating certain body parts for an even deeper awareness of the connection between the body halves.
Reflection (10 min)	The reflection aims to solidify tools that the participants can use while also finding creative ways for the purpose of the explorations of the day to be discovered by each participant.

Session 6

Theme	Homolateral and contralateral connectivity with Consonant, Structural and Tonal NRG
Aim	Gain an awareness of the contralateral connection within the body while also expanding structural and consonant NRG and introducing tonal NRG by using the words “you” and “me”.
Outcomes	At the end of this session, the participants should be able to: • Demonstrate how humming as part of consonant NRG can become a familiar event that encourages bone conducted vibrations. • demonstrate how horse lips can prepare for effective breath and voice usage by releasing tension of the facial muscles, through encouraging forward facial orientation. • identify any habitual tension or pain by reaching to various points in Space in their kinesphere (as defined by Laban) and articulating how using contralateral explorations can ease this tension.
Exploration	**Purpose and motivation**
Introduction and recap (5 mins)	The purpose for this introduction is to ensure the participants sense and feel their inner environments by repeating the explorations from previous sessions.

Guided deep focus and release while in seated orientation (5 mins)	The purpose of this exploration is to encourage a focus on more than just movement but also facilitates organic awareness of their inner environments.
Humming and horse lips in seated orientation (5 mins)	This exploration aims to build on the awareness of conscious voice usage by further exploring consonant and structural NRG, through including voiced sustained consonants. The focus is on sensing and feeling bone conducted tone and the entire range of the voice by playing with various pitches and gaining awareness of vibrations. The participants start in their lower speaking voice range to first properly gain an awareness of the contact points, vibrations and to not force or push anything.
Me/ you in a seated orientation (5 mins)	Based on the y-buzz and low call, this exploration encourages an awareness of tonal and structural NRGs specifically in the speaking voice range of the participants.
Pre-thigh lift in a seated orientation (5 mins)	To become aware of stabilising the upper body and keeping the lower body mobile, but also becoming aware of stabilising one side of the lower part of the body so the other can be mobile. This allows the participants to become more aware of any holding patterns in the legs and give an exploration that can be used to ease some of the tension or pain.
Knee reach in seated orientation (5 mins)	This exploration aims to release held parts or patterns by facilitating an awareness of contralateral connectivity.
Explore the kinesphere in seated orientation with tapping feet, arm movement and tapping consonants (10 mins)	The purpose of this exploration is to ensure the participants start becoming aware of the kinesphere around their body and to use previous explorations and build on it to encourage an awareness of contralateral connectivity.
Open monitoring in upright orientation to	The purpose of this exploration is to, in an upright orientation, guide the participants to explore tonal NRG and their contralateral connectivity not only in a seated orientation, but upright to identify any other possible holding or habitual patterns in these orientations.

explore contralateral connectivity, the kinesphere and tonal NRG (10 mins)	
Reflection (10 mins)	This reflection aims to be a playful way to connect the participants in their shared experience and to expand their repertoire of explorations that can help by repeating the movements of the other participants. This reflection also highlights how the journey is perceived in a personally unique way by each participant.

WEEK 3

Session 7

Theme	Recap body connections, consonant, structural and tonal NRG
Aim	To solidify what the participants have sense and felt in the previous sessions and encourage the start of what could aid in repatterning of habitual patterns through repetition and awareness.
Outcomes	By the end of this session, the participants should be able to: • Identify and share the various ineffective habitual patterns they have noticed in their body during the sessions thus far by revisiting their previous reflections and checking how their experience has changed. • Demonstrate, physically and visually (with reflective drawings), what explorations they can use in their daily lives to repattern their habitual patterns.
Exploration	**Purpose and motivation**
Introduction and tune-up (10 mins)	The purpose for this introduction is to allow the participants to guide themselves to sense and feel their inner environments by repeating the explorations from previous sessions.
Guided recap in vertical orientation (10 mins)	The purpose of this section is to recap all the connections made during the programme so the participants can, through repetition start to repattern their initial habitual patterns.
Guided recap in seated	The purpose of this section is to recap all the connections made during the programme while in a seated orientation so the participants can, through repetition start to repattern their initial habitual patterns.

orientation (10 mins)	
Personally unique pattern phrase (20 mins)	This exploration encourages the participants to keep applying that which they have explored to their own experience but to solidify it in a routine that they can use daily.
Reflection (10 mins)	The purpose for this reflection is to visually illustrate that which the participants have included in their pattern phrase by using body maps and creative drawing so they can return to this reflection should they need to.

Session 8

Theme	Language and phrases
Aim	To encourage the participants to move their awareness of vibrations as well as consonant, structural and tonal NRG into spoken words and phrases.
Outcomes	By the end of this session, the participants should be able to: • Identify playable percussive consonants, sustained consonants and possibilities for a focus on consonants, structure and tone in specific words and phrases. • Demonstrate how playing with those vocal opportunities manifests and can be sense and felt in the body. • Carry-over an awareness of the vocal NRGs while exploring and playing with various words and phrases.
Exploration	**Purpose and motivation**
Introduction and tune-up (10 min)	The purpose for this introduction is for the participants to repeat and build on their pattern phrase of the previous session to sense and feel how the phrase allows for new responses in and as part of the bodymind so it can become habitual awareness and organic instruction of preparing the body and voice before further explorations, for the day or after a difficult customer.
Exploring the NATO word list in a standing orientation (20 min)	This exploration encourages the participants to use the NATO word list that they received during their training week to identify carry-over opportunities for structural, consonant and tonal NRG to the words they use on their phone calls.
Exploring various phrases (10 min)	This exploration encourages the participants to stay aware of structural, consonant and tonal NRG and to explore carry-over opportunities in various phrases from their daily script they use at work. These phrases are in English and Afrikaans as these are the two languages the participants should use on the phone.

Reflection (20 min)	The reflection encourages the participants to solidify what they have learnt during the session, by sharing it with others and observing each other.

Session 9

Theme	Exploring the script
Aim	To encourage the participants to move their awareness of consonant, structural and tonal NRG into their script they use every day by means of embodied explorations.
Outcomes	By the end of this session, the participants should be able to: • Identify playable percussive consonants and sustained consonants in their script through tasting, music making and communicating. • Explore possibilities for effective structure by focusing on the space in and shape of the oral cavity while playfully engaging with their script. • Identify possibilities for tone in their entire script and their objection handling documents by sensing and feeling bone conduction in the bony structures of the face. • Demonstrate the carry-over of the vocal NRGs while exploring and playing with the script along with a partner.
Exploration	**Purpose and motivation**
Introduction and tune-up (10 mins)	The purpose for this introduction is for the participants to keep using their pattern phrase as organic instruction, so it can become a familiar event that the participants use daily.
Exploring the script and objection handling in a standing orientation (20 mins)	This exploration encourages the participants to move beyond their habitual way of reading the script or objection handling documents, by playfully engaging with Consonant, Structure and Tonal NRG and carrying these NRGs, along with body explorations, to an engagement with the script.
Exploring the script and objection handling in a seated orientation (20 mins)	This exploration encourages the participants to use their organic awareness of structural, tonal and consonant NRG and use it to carry it over to the script and objection handling documents while in a seated orientation.
Reflection (10 mins)	The reflection encourages the participants to build on previous reflections so they can walk out of the session with agency of what habits they still need to focus on repatterning.

WEEK 4

Session 10

Theme	Role-playing in call centre context: 'on calls'
Aim	To encourage the participants to carry over their awareness of consonant, structural and tonal NRGs (bodyvoice) as well as physical dynamic alignment and breath of the physical body into roleplaying during various types of customers on calls.
Outcomes	By the end of this session, the participants should be able to: • Identify, through sensing and feeling, what changes occur within the body when interacting with various types of customers while roleplaying various scenarios. • Applying tasting, music-making and communicating with consonant NRG, forward facial orientation of structural NRG and awareness of bone conduction of tonal NRG to aid in limiting disruption of their inner environments from their outer environments, in this case the responses from various types of customers. • Demonstrating dynamic alignment in a roleplaying context by engaging with various possibilities of and within the body through an awareness of the explorations of breath, core-distal connectivity, head-tail connectivity, upper-lower connectivity and homolateral connectivity that they have engaged with throughout the programme.
Exploration	**Purpose and motivation**
Introduction and tune-up (10 mins)	The purpose for this introduction is for the participants to like in the previous session, playfully and with purpose engage with their pattern phrase as organic instruction, so it can become a familiar event that their teacher-within can use to counter any ineffective patterns. In this way, the introduction focuses on creating a habitual awareness of and within the bodymind to stay dynamically aligned and effectively integrated.
Small ways of releasing (10 mins)	To aid the participants in taking the sensing and feeling of dynamic alignment while exploring the script from the previous session into a familiar event through repetition. In this way, this can become a habitual awareness of movement in the bodymind of the participants.
Role-playing with the script (30 mins)	Guiding the participants to role-play with several types of customers so they can maintain the effective application of their vocal NRGs and dynamic alignment in any circumstance. In this way, the participants can effectively balance their inner environment with the demands of the outer environment.
Reflection (10 min)	The reflection encourages the participants to reflect on the interweave of all the modalities of the bodyminded self through the physical modality, specifically dynamic alignment, breath and the physical bodyvoice sensation through the vocal NRGs.

	This will then influence that which they perceive, so these can serve as impulses for the participants (so they gain awareness) to invite potential shifts (responses) in the other modalities (which may be affected due to stress).

Session 11

Theme	Role-playing in call centre context: 'off calls'
Aim	To encourage the participants to carry over their awareness of consonant, structural and tonal NRG (bodyvoice) as well as physical dynamic alignment and breath of the physical body into roleplaying during various situations in the office.
Outcomes	By the end of this session, the participants should be able to: • Identify, through sensing and feeling, what changes occur within the bodyvoice, breath and dynamic alignment before and after various situations in the office when they are not on calls. • Create a new pattern phrase to demonstrate how an awareness of various explorations as familiar events aids their teacher-within in maintaining effective integration when their outer environment places demand on their inner environments.
Exploration	**Purpose and motivation**
Introduction and tune-up (10 mins)	The purpose for this introduction is for the participants to repeat their pattern phrase to establish a habitual awareness of and within the physical bodymind, breath and the bodyvoice to stay dynamically aligned and to communicate effectively.
Role-playing various situations in the office (30 mins)	To role-play with various situations where the participant is not on a call so the participants can maintain the effective application of their vocal NRGs, breath, and dynamic alignment in any circumstance. In this way, the participants can effectively balance their inner environment with the demands of the outer environment, so they can function effectively and, as a result, express themselves in the appropriate manner.
Reflection (20 mins)	This reflection allows the participants to reflect on the themes of the programme and to adapt their pattern phrase in response. The participants use their teacher-within as organic instruction to stay dynamically aligned and use their breath and bodyvoice effectively during the day.

Session 12

Theme	Role-playing in call centre context: typical key moments in work life
Aim	To encourage the participants to carry over their awareness of consonant, structural and tonal NRG (bodyvoice) as well as physical dynamic alignment and breath of the physical body into roleplaying typical key moments in their work life.
Outcomes	By the end of this session, the participants should be able to:

	• Use tableau to demonstrate how an awareness of the bodyvoice, dynamic alignment and breath can aid them to prepare themselves for stressful situations during their everyday lives. • Identify, through deep focus, how they have shifted during the programme in relation to the themes of the programme. • Write a note of gratitude and written contract between themselves and their teacher-within so they can keep focusing on building new, more effective habits in relation to stress.
Exploration	**Purpose and motivation**
Introduction, deep focus, and tune-up (10 min)	The purpose for this introduction is for the participants to deeply relax and visualise the sessions up until where they are currently. The introduction further focuses on tuning into the bodies to prepare the participants for the next few sessions.
Role-playing key moments in the work life (30 min)	This exploration focuses on role-playing the daily life of the participants in a creative manner so they can use their vocal NRGs and body explorations as organic instruction.
Reflection and written contract (20 min)	The reflection encourages the participants to make a promise to themselves to keep exploring their newly found awareness so they can repattern their habitual patterns.

APPENDIX G: Theme extraction report of the EPP

This appendix includes the final theme extraction report of the EPP, specifically relating to certain participant quotations that fall under the main themes and sub-themes of the programmes. This relates to phase 5 of the research process and is referred to in chapters 6 and 7. Table 13 indicates the theme of intrapersonal experiences in light blue, and interpersonal experiences in light green.

Table 13: Sentences extracted in relation to themes and sub-themes off the EPP (Janse van Rensburg 2024)

Themes	Sub-themes	Sentences extracted from participant responses that link to each sub-theme and theme
Intrapersonal experiences	**Mental and emotional well-being**	Participant A: "My heartrate goes up and my heart starts beating fast" (pre-programme interview). Participant A: "My stress is less. I make target easier. The programme has helped me manage my university and personal life" (post-programme interview). Participant B: "I got to be aware of how my weight is distributed in my feet and I noticed I was feeling the most force being exerted on the soles of my feet. After the figure of 8 wafting and waving hip movement, my body was significantly more evenly distributed throughout my whole foot. At the start it felt like I needed a sponge to cushion my heels" (journal). Participant C: "I become nervous and quiet I try to control my breathing because my heart starts beating fast" (pre-programme interview). Participant C: "I am more aware of stressful situations. I prepare myself by mainly focusing on breathing" (post-programme interview),

		Participant D: "Everything that feels like suffocating teaches us how to breathe" (journal). Participant E: "Even if the explorations do not change the result, I deal with stress better" (post-programme interview). Participant E: "I deal with stress better" (post-programme interview) Participant F: "I have learnt a lot about my ineffective habits when I feel stressed" (journal) Participant F: "I don't feel tension in my body anymore. My entire mindset changed as well. This programme was so effective for me. I think everyone in the office should do it. It could help us all individually and collectively to connect" (post-programme interview). Participant G: "This journey has benefited me in so many ways. Not only has my emotional well-being been modified, but so has my physical well-being. Even if I'm long gone from this company, the programme will always be remembered" (journal). Participant G: "I have learned to function optimally to express myself. I've broken down some days crying" (post-programme interview). Participant H: "Professionally there are more situations of stress, but I communicate properly. Personally, I still avoid to talk about stress" (post-programme interview). Participant H: "Butterflies in my heart. More of them. It is because I listen and observe more" (post-programme interview).

	Health and wellness functioning	Participant A: "Things are better. My stress is less. I make target easier" (post-programme interview). Participant A: "When I feel exerted, I recuperate by means of breathing slowly, focusing on my 3-point weight distribution, lengthen my alignment and before that, I focus on stretches in my neck and making my ball shape" (journal). Participant A: "For stability, I focus on my 3-point weight distribution, feel my sit bones on my chair and breath so I can be mobile in space. By focusing on stability, the rest of my body can be mobile when I stretch and lengthen, do pelvic movements and get softness in my lower body." (journal) Participant A: “I came in feeling stiff and anxious. After doing the lengthening explorations and the breathing techniques I felt a lot better; more flexible and relaxed” (journal). Participant A: “I had pain in my neck and in my back, and discomfort in my groin area. I am trying to be better aligned, by being more flexible (and mobile) to remove pain from those areas.” (journal) Participant B: "My breathing is better standing up or with head slightly down (feels like I can take deeper breaths)" (journal). Participant B: "After a long and difficult call where I feel exerted, I pause, breathe, and shake it out and use horse lips to recuperate" (journal).

		Participant B: "After a hard call and before the next calls, it helps to pause (even just for a minute or two). I use my breath (pleasure smell and sigh), I shake out any tension, humming and horse lips then I sit integrated and try again" (journal). Participant B: “Pelvic rocking back and forth makes me feel relaxed (recuperation), like rocking back and forth (soothing)” (journal). Participant B: “Felt very tense and stressed before the session; at the end I feel a bit lighter and more relaxed. Laughing and making noises might be a big reason for feeling more relaxed” (journal). Participant B: "I am still learning how to make the tools a habit through repetition" (post-programme interview). Participant C: "I try to control my breathing because my heart starts beating fast" (pre-programme interview). Participant C: "When I feel that I have exerted myself, I stand up and do wafting and waving while tapping my feet to recuperate and to keep me focused for the next call" (journal). Participant C: “Small ways to relieve stress (exertion) on a call include shaking hands, tapping feet, standing up and doing wafting and waving and focusing on sitting integrated” (journal). Participant C: “I focus on putting my feet down to prepare before I call prospects since my lower back pains because I have the habit of lifting my feet to the back” (post-programme interview).

		Participant D: "My head feels heavy I have pain and tension in my shoulders my right arm and my mid back" (journal). Participant D: "My fingers feel tingly I have to fidget when I stress so I tap my legs with my hands I also doodle when I stress" (journal). Participant D: “I felt very tense (exerted) at the start of the session as well as very distracted and unable to regulate my emotions and my thoughts. I really enjoyed making noises because it helps with regulation (recuperation) and bringing my thoughts together” (journal). Participant D: “I am becoming more intentional about my habits" (post-programme interview) Participant E: "After exertion, I use breathing techniques along with vocal exercises, especially my pattern phrase, to help me relax, re-energize and recuperate" (journal). Participant E: “The word that came to mind (…) was ‘relaxed’. I used the explorations to relieve certain areas of tension in my body” (journal). Participant E: "By focusing on breathing instead of the habits I used to do" (post-programme interview). Participant E: "I clench my fists I become jumpy and jittery I bounce my feet. When I stand I always pace" (journal). Participant E: “I shake out my body and lengthen myself. I focus on my breathing instead of the habits I used to do" (post-programme interview).

		Participant F: "My whole body feels lekker" (journal). Participant F: "My stomach is very sore. My back and my ankles are stiff My shoulders feel heavy" (journal). Participant F: "(After I have exerted) myself on difficult calls, I have stopped internalising the prospect's response; I try to recuperate by humming it away from me instead of verbally counteracting the call after it's done. I try not to call the prospect names after they hang up" (journal). Participant G: "When I feel exerted, I recuperate by yawning and stretching my whole body" (journal). Participant G: "I have not been feeling well and decided to go to the doctor. The results were not good. After coming home, I completed the session's explorations (to recuperate) and found that I was less angry, calmer and the most interesting thing is I realised where I carry my stress and anxiety (in my abdomen on the left side)" (journal). Participant G: "I have sensed that I have a habit of tapping or touching my arms, legs, hands when I feel stress; if I do this consciously to respond it soothes me" (journal). Participant G: "I no longer bite my nails. I still laugh and shake my legs but it's more conscious" (post-programme interview) Participant H: "My stomach is even more sore. Tension in my back neck and feet are gone" (journal).

		Participant H: "I readjust my dynamic alignment to recuperate, because this will make me feel ready and fresh." (journal) Participant H: "I hold tensions in my lower back shoulders when I sit strange and holding my hips The pelvic movements are helping me a lot with feeling relaxed every time I do it" (journal). Participant H: "I make my body stable through grounding, so I have mobility in my hands and fingers to type" (journal). Participant H: “The pelvic movements are helping me a lot with feeling relaxed every time I do it” (journal).
	Emotional experiences and states	Participant A: "I feel stuck and I ask myself: “What should I do or sacrifice?”" (pre-programme interview). Participant B: "At the start it felt like I needed a sponge to cushion my heels" (journal). Participant C: "I try to control my breathing because my heart starts beating fast" (pre-programme interview). Participant C: "Sometimes I speak more when I am stressed. I procrastinate. My hands sweat I try to chill sometimes and then I become mellow" (journal). Participant D: "Everything that feels like suffocating teaches us how to breathe" (journal). Participant D: “I felt very tense at the start (…) as well as very distracted and unable to regulate my emotions and my thoughts. I really enjoyed making noises because it helps with regulation and bringing my thoughts together. It was great to move my pelvis and just be aware of how our head-tail connection

		is central to all our bodily movements. After this session I just feel more in control of and in tune with my bodymind" (journal). Participant E: "I become very hot and sweaty. I am easily agitated. My energy becomes different. I am not as enthusiastic. I become pessimistic" (pre-programme interview). Participant F: "I have learnt a lot about my ineffective habits when I feel stressed" (journal). Participant F: "For stability, I focus on my foot-tapping movements and then intentionally decide to effectively tap my foot with rhythm and not in a panicky way, I also tap the heel of my feet as well, alternating one foot at a time, so I can become aware of my grounding for stability" (journal). Participant F: "I got to be aware of how my weight is distributed on my feet and I noticed that I was feeling the most force being exerted on the soles of my feet. After the figure of 8 wafting and waving hip movement, my body weight was significantly more evenly distributed throughout my whole foot. At the start it felt like I needed a sponge to cushion my heels" (journal). Participant F: "The floating with a string at the top of my head pulling me up has a grounding factor when I release it; it almost feels as if I have exited a bad call, like I get pulled out of a bad call by the string at the top of my head and released in new energy" (journal). Participant F: "I noticed that posture and integration play a significant role in how and what we feel. Sitting dynamically aligned has benefits and the wrong posture can be a contributing factor to poor habits. I

		started noticing that I automatically feel different depending on my posture, so I always try to ensure that I am sitting lengthened and aligned” (journal). Participant G: "I have a lack of appetite when I experience stress. I am exhausted because I don’t sleep enough. I am irritable and I want to snap. I feel overwhelmed" (journal). Participant G: "I welcome (the new feelings) and I was happy to feel it" (post-programme interview). Participant G: "I press my feet onto the floor for stability, making contact with the floor so I remind myself that I am mobile and in control of every situation" (journal). Participant H: "Butterflies in my heart. More of them It is because I listen and observe more" (post-programme interview).
	Inner experiences	Participant A: "My heartrate goes up and my heart starts beating fast" (pre-programme interview). Participant B: "My breathing is better standing up or with head slightly down (feels like I can take deeper breaths)" (journal). Participant C: "I try to control my breathing because my hart [sic] starts beating fast" (pre-programme interview). Participant D: "My head feels heavy I have pain and tension in my shoulders my right arm and my mid back" (journal).

		Participant D: "(My) immediate response sometimes feels habitual towards emotions, but then it is important for me to stay aware of this and use a technique from the programme to stay present in my body" (journal). Participant D: “There are certain patterns I have noticed when I am stressed such as I have noticed I bounce my one leg up and down a lot when I am stressed, and I also pick the skin around my fingernails. I have noticed that making intentional efforts to pay attention to my body has helped me recognise and be aware of what I am doing- this then forces me to stop, take a breath and realign my focus” (journal). Participant E: "I clench my fists. I become jumpy and jittery. I bounce my feet. When I stand, I always pace" portraying Inner experiences characterized by tension, jitteriness and inability to settle (pre-programme interview). Participant E: “I learned something new about releasing pressure from my vocal folds; how releasing certain sounds allows me to release those folds. The vocal release and relaxation can be used during work, before starting on the phone” demonstrated developing somatic awareness of inner tension patterns” (journal). Participant E: "I shake out my body and lengthen myself. I focus on my breathing instead of the habits I used to do" (post-programme interview).

		Participant F: “You’re about to learn how to effectively become aware of not just your surroundings, because we are always so aware of that, but to also be aware of your inner environment. Your inner environment includes your emotions, stress levels and your average mental well-being” (journal). Participant F: “I hereby pledge allegiance to myself that I will continue being aware of my internal environment, both mentally and physically. I will remember that I have a pleasure smell and indulge in it when my target and stats are looking a bit blank. I will do this so I can focus on how best I can do the next call” (journal). Participant F: "My whole body feels lekker" (journal). Participant G: "I no longer bite my nails. I still laugh and shake my legs but it’s more conscious" (post-programme interview). Participant G: "Lengthening up my outer body alignment to help me relax my mind and shaking my leg to help calm my inner environment" (journal). Participant G: “(I have gained awareness that) my stomach is keeping me from being effectively integrated because a lot of the time I feel pain” (journal). Participant G: “I will work on continuing to do my daily, multiple explorations and yawn while focusing on my pleasure smell. I remember my sit bones and acknowledge them for stability, as well as keeping my feet grounded” (journal).

		Participant G: “I have not been feeling well and decided to go to the doctor. The results were not good. After coming home, I completed the session’s explorations (to recuperate) and found that I was less angry, calmer and the most interesting thing is I realised where I carry my stress and anxiety (in my abdomen on the left side)” (journal). Participant H: “I want to thank my inner teacher for the guidance. Not just throughout this programme, but also in other aspects of my life. The teacher-within leads me to success and through hardships. I am extremely thankful for this journey and will always be grateful to my teacher-within” (journal). Participant H: "I hold tensions in my lower back shoulders when I sit strange and holding my hips The pelvic movements are helping me a lot with feeling relaxed every time I do it" (journal).
	Personal growth	Participant A: "You can always get grounded and balance I will keep exploring" (post-programme interview). Participant B: "I am still learning how to make the tools a habit through repetition" (post-programme interview). Participant C: "I just want to say thank you. The humour, passion and fun you (the facilitator) did the programme with helped" (post-programme interview). Participant D: "I am becoming more intentional about my habits It’s like putting on your shoes or making coffee The word that comes to mind the whole time is “Intentional”" (post-programme interview).

		Participant E: "Even if the explorations do not change the result, I deal with stress better" (post-programme interview). Participant E: “I am nervous about the programme because what if it doesn’t fix my stress” (pre-programme interview). Participant E: “I am more well-rounded, not just my mental health” (post-programme interview). Participant F: "I don’t feel tension in my body anymore. My entire mindset changed as well. This programme was so effective for me. I think everyone in the office should do it" (post-programme interview). Participant G: "I’ve learned to function optimally to express myself. I’ve broken down some days crying from gratefulness" (post-programme interview). Participant H: "The pelvic movements and rocking help me identify my habits more" (journal). Participant H: “By focusing on responding with grounding and being aware will provide a better reaction time in any situation. I would respond to my initial habits by focusing on new small movements" (journal).
	Purpose	Participant A: "You can't control the outcome; you can just focus on yourself. Holistically speaking the outcomes always move in my favour" (post-programme interview). Participant B: "Everything will work out; keep exploring with what you have learnt and share it with others" (post-programme interview).

		Participant C: "Thank you teacher-within! Thank you for noticing the habitual patterns that kept you from sitting dynamically integrated Thank you for looking out for yourself Thank you for focusing on your breathing in difficult situations" (post-programme interview). Participant D: "I really enjoyed the programme I felt like my check engine light was flickering bright red and now it isn't flickering anymore. The engine light is off" (post-programme interview). Participant E: "Overall, I feel lighter, and I have a clear head" (journal). Participant F: "I don't feel tension in my body anymore. My entire mindset changed as well. This programme was so effective for me. I think everyone in the office should do it It could help us all individually and collectively to connect" (post-programme interview). Participant F: "I don't know, and I am not aware when I am experiencing stress; I only figure it out afterwards" (pre-programme interview). Participant F: "Now I am trying. I try to remain calm. I talk with more people, clearer and calmer" (post-programme interview). Participant G: "I really loved it. I share it with others. It excites me. This will help me long-term. I'll never stop growing and learning from this programme. You saved my life" (post-programme interview).

		Participant H: "The initial habits I want to adapt: Sitting dynamically aligned three-point weight distribution and projecting kindness. I can work on all of this with my pattern phrase because it can do a lot to change my habits" (post-programme interview). Participant H: “I become quieter and more reserved. I pull back” (pre-programme interview). Participant H: “Using horse lips is helping me a lot with pronouncing my words correctly" (journal). Participant H: “Professionally there are more situations of stress, but I communicate properly” (post-programme interview).
Interpersonal experiences	**Patterns and habits**	**Participant A** **Before:** "My heartrate goes up and my heart starts beating fast. My ears start ringing. I feel stuck and I ask myself: What should I do or sacrifice” (pre-programme interview)? "I’m not sure what to do. I become hot. When I underperform or drop the ball, I take shortcuts" (pre-programme interview). "My body starts shaking. I have the ineffective habit of playing with my hands. I wake up later because I am tired” (pre-programme interview).

		"I do push ups. I go walk outside and stand in the sun. I bite my nails. I fidget a lot with my hands and arms. I lash out at home towards my family" (pre-programme interview). “My voice breaks when I experience stress. I say silly things. I don’t think as quickly and then I say the wrong things. My voice is all over the place. My voice becomes tired, I use the wrong script, my Executive becomes angry, I become frustrated and start missing classes. It spirals” (pre-programme interview). “I tend to lean forward as the day goes, for eagerness to finish and go home. This never helps me. Focusing on my breathing and my inner and outer environment calms me down. The biting of my nails seems to distract me, leading to not being fully engaged on calls with each prospect. Tapping my feet and disengaging from the task at hand has a negative impact on performance” (journal). “These tools are not effective because I am just putting my stress somewhere else. Push ups makes me feel more anger. I end up speaking rudely to people at work and at home" (pre-programme interview). **After:** "My fast heartbeat and fidgeting are still there but they are better. I have forgotten that my ears use to ring. They don’t anymore. Things are better. My stress is less. I make target easier. The programme has (also) helped me manage my university and personal life" (post-programme interview).

		"I am biting my nails less. I stand up when I do my pleasure smell. I wake up earlier. One of the other participants told me that I seem calm. I feel more composed and relaxed. Before I used to feel buzzing. Now I feel patient" (post-programme interview). “My voice used to be all over the place. My voice is more concentrated. Before I make a call, and while I am waiting for my next one, I massage my face to become aware of my Forward Facial Orientation and play with my consonants” (post-programme interview). “I am much calmer on calls when prospects are rude. I am more considerate towards others. I have been using the explorations from the programme at home before work. I have also shared it with my parents. My parents have been noticing that I am more relaxed/ not as tense. I play around with the explorations. My pattern phrase is never the same. There is still some stress but I just shake my body” (post-programme interview). "I am aware of how I sit and breathe. Before a call, I stand up and pleasure smell. I remain as calm as possible. I use my 3-point weight distribution to get power from earth. I am aware of my inner and my outer environment and I can identify what is causing the stress. I use the consonants. I breathe in and out when I panic. I focus on the task at hand and put myself into the shoes of each prospect" (post-programme interview). “I am using my pleasure smell more when I’m stressing but I definitely also explore using pelvic movements while I’m waiting for a call to come through” (journal).

		"I will keep exploring. Generally, everything I've used has had a positive effect. You can't control the outcome; you can just focus on yourself. Holistically speaking, the outcomes always move in my favour. Thank you. The programme changed my life for sure. " (post-programme interview). "I used the explorations of "me" and "you" words, guided deep focus, explorations of body half stretches, face vibrations, horse lips, forward facial orientation, emphasising NATO words, emphasising the objection handling and the normal script with consonants, structure and both to be more formal and speak more clearly. I have used all of these explorations throughout my daily work and personal life, to full effect, during various challenges where I deemed appropriate to use each as a solution accordingly" (journal). "I have identified weakness, uncomfortable and held parts in my body causing continuous pain. Doing the various breathing, stretching and lengthening and integrated techniques, I've been able to be aware of the flaws and counteract against them so (I) can benefit from it" (journal). **Participant B** **Before:** "I get very irritated. I struggle to breathe. I start breathing faster. I get brain fog. Physically I feel like I am choking" (pre-programme interview).

		"I notice my breathing. My throat becomes tight, and I cough a lot. My breathing sometimes starts shaking. I fidget with my hands" (pre-programme interview). “Habits that I have sense and felt up are my fingers twitching, holding my breath and tension in my neck” (journal). “I am experiencing tension in my back, chest, and I fidget, or strain hands, and tap my feet” (journal). “I hold a lot of tension in my shoulders, back and in my voice. If I get stressed or anxious my shoulders tense up, and my voice goes away or weird. When my voice goes away or I am stressed, I usually start slouching, (lying back in my chair with my feet up). I think I do this to try and convince myself that I'm calm, trick my body into relaxing. Sometimes I sit cross-legged” (journal). "I don’t really navigate or prepare for stress. I would pause and try breathing. Most of the time I just don’t deal with my stress" (pre-programme interview). "My voice becomes slimy. My voice starts to go away. I sound like a squeaky toy; the more anxiety or irritation, the higher my voice goes higher" (pre-programme interview). "I speak much faster and like a squeaky toy. I say the right words but not at the right tempo" (pre-programme interview). “I don’t have any tools to help me navigate or prepare for stress. I wait for good calls to cheer me up” (pre-programme interview).

		“I am an anxious human being. I don’t know how to deal with stress. It’s my main personality trait” (pre-programme interview). **After:** "Sometimes I become aware that I tense up my body and hold up my breath and that’s when I get irritated. But then when I feel stressed, I ask myself: ‘What if I try breathing?’ then I feel better" (post-programme interview). “During stressful calls, difficult prospects I still fidget with hands, tense up my body (especially shoulders and neck) and I basically, hold my breath. I prepare for this by pausing, taking a moment to breathe (pleasure smell) and shake it out. Then I focus on tone and consonants to speak better and come across clearer” (journal). " I use breathing and my pleasure smell. I shake out my body. I become aware of my head-tail connection. I focus on my sit bones and three-point weight distribution for stability. I lengthen upward” (post-programme interview). “I have habits and patterns like unconsciously tapping my feet and always sitting crossed leg. I make it a conscious decision to do my phrase and breathing for two minutes to calm down and recentre myself” (journal). “I am still learning how to make the tools a habit through repetition” (post-programme interview).

		"Learning new habitual ways to relax like breathing tools and discovering pleasure smelling have helped me better navigate stressful situations. With repetition, these new stress management techniques are becoming more of a natural response for me" (journal). "The pleasure smelling in sigh out helps, even if it's just to guide myself to take deep breaths. Shaking out tension areas helps when I tense up my whole body" (journal). “Explorations I use for my pattern phrase are shaking, stretching, pleasure smelling and sit with the head floating while I sway and shake” (journal). “I will continue to use my pattern phrase in the morning, I know it works for me but now I will repeat it to make it a habit. I will stop just trying to ignore tension and try to push through I will rather take a step back and go through my pattern phrase, or use techniques like pleasure smelling /sighing, shaking out tension and try to sit integrated” (journal). “In the mornings before work, I prepare myself for stress. It’s easier before than in the moment of stress” (post-programme interview). **Participant C** **Before:** "I become nervous and quiet. I try to control my breathing because my heart starts beating fast. People notice and ask me what’s wrong" (pre-programme interview).

		"Sometimes I speak more when I am stressed. I procrastinate. My hands sweat" (pre-programme interview). "(My tools) can be better. I want to learn from you how to use more than just breathing and redirecting my thoughts" (pre-programme interview). "Sometimes I communicate in a wobbly, unstable manner" (pre-programme interview). "Sometimes I stress when I speak to woman on the phone and then I become hesitant. I start questioning myself" (pre-programme interview). "I am very anxious and tense because of how stress has changed my personality. When I was little, they robbed us with guns, and it just made me scared in general for other humans and especially the evenings" (pre-programme interview). "The habitual patterns I have noticed include sitting with my feet tucked under my chair, which cause my back to hurt so then I use shaking to be stress free" (journal). **After:** "My heart beats fast. I still become quiet. I am more aware of stressful situations. I prepare myself by mainly focusing on breathing" (post-programme interview). "I focus on wafting and waving, reaching over my upper body, tapping my feet, using my pleasure smell, shaking my hands, centering myself and I focus more on my inner self for stress. I focus on putting my

		feet down to prepare before I call prospects since my lower back pains because I have the habit of lifting my feet to the back" (post-programme interview). "I focus on challenging my fidgeting into the shaking of my hands and tapping of my feet" (post-programme interview). "I am using wafting and waving to relieve stress" (Journals). "The bend-over series helps me relax my body and to let go of any tension" (journal). "I use the following tools to improve my voice: horse lips for forward facial orientation, saying ME for tone and humming, saying YOU for structure, playing around with consonants and sound" (journal). "(My responses are) better than (they were). I try to keep myself calm" (journal). "To stress less is to focus on minor habits one could change to improve on this. E.g., focus on sitting while lengthening upwards and shake your hands when you experience stress. You could tap your feet, focus on your breathing patterns, rotate your hips or do wafting and waving. You could stretch out your body in a big yawn" (journal). **Participant D** **Before:**

		"I start to get impatient and frustrated. I don't have control over myself. I become overwhelmed, anxious and tired" (pre-programme interview). "My fingers feel tingly. I have to fidget when I stress so I tap my legs with my hands. I also doodle when I stress" (pre-programme interview). "I speak faster. I speak in a higher pitch. I stumble over my words when I experience stress" (pre-programme interview). "I remove myself from the office, sit outside and I phone my sister and/ or friends. It takes my mind and thoughts of the stress and I feel slightly refreshed. Sometimes these tools are effective. I feel less frustrated when the tools work. I don't want to go back into the office, because I get frustrated and have ineffective thoughts" (pre-programme interview). "I have noticed some habits in my daily life that I think are contributing to my physical fatigue as well as mental cloudiness. I very often hold a lot of tension in my shoulder and shoulder blades. I am often bouncing my one leg up and down as an unintentional response to anxiety, and at the end of the day, my lower back feels sore and tense" (journal). "It is a vicious stress cycle. I am a very emotional person that expresses my emotions easily but I am nervous for all my emotions" (Pre-programme Interview).

		After: "I definitely noticed a positive difference. I still have difficult prospects, but I can see it out of the perspective of others. I don't get as agitated. I express myself how I would like to. I don't need to filter myself anymore" (post-programme interview). "I am in control of how I feel, what I focus on and how I grow and in growth, there are periods of discomfort when creating new habits, but that's okay" (journal). "Before difficult calls, I focus on grounding (it's huge for me), dynamic alignment and communication. On calls I focus on consonants for example on stuff like What is and ID so it has more power" (post-programme interview) "When calling difficult prospects back, I change the way I talk instead of giving up. If I am on the phone now I try to speak clearly and use the vocal NRGs by slowing down. I also focus on lengthening and aligning. My focus is mainly on one thing; to be present and aware." (post-programme interview). "I also use my pattern phrase every morning before work. I use deep breaths and my pleasure smell before work. I constantly tell myself never underestimate the power of taking a breath" (post-programme interview). "I am becoming more intentional about my habits. It's like putting on your shoes or making coffee. The word that comes to mind the whole time is intentional. I focus on the things I can control. I take baby

		steps to move forward. I really enjoyed the programme. I felt like my check engine light was flickering bright red and now it isn't flickering anymore. The engine light is off." (post-programme interview). "My phrase and journey focus on control and intention to help with tension. It starts with tension, then lengthening the spine, shaking out my limbs and muscles, pleasure smelling and sighing and reaching and yawning with my arms over my upper body and focusing on my breath which eventually leads to intention and control" (journal). "I still rush through calls, but sometimes I become clearer when I take it slower" (post-programme interview). **Participant E** **Before:** "I become very hot and sweaty. I am easily agitated. My energy becomes different. I am not as enthusiastic. I become pessimistic" (pre-programme interview). "I clench my fists. I become jumpy and jittery. I bounce my feet. When I stand, I always pace" (pre-programme interview). "I drink coffee. I take a lot of smoke breaks even though I have been trying to quit. I play games on my phones. The games help with my stress. Smoking helps but it is unhealthy and then I just stress more" (pre-programme interview).

		"With my colleagues, I communicate very short and to the point because I try to rush things. On calls with prospects, I rush through stressful parts of the script such as when asking for someone's ID number" (pre-programme interview). "I do sometimes have less energy in my voice and then it becomes monotonous" (pre-programme interview). "My (ineffective) habits stem from bad posture or integration" (journal). **After:** "I shake out my body and lengthen myself. I focus on my breathing instead of the habits I used to do" (post-programme interview). "I try to use consonants to make sure the prospect can hear me" (post-programme interview). "I learned something new about releasing pressure from my vocal folds; how releasing certain sounds allows me to release those folds. The vocal release and relaxation can be used during work, before starting on the phone" (journal). "My pattern phrase includes sitting and breathing in and out, focusing on my pleasure smell while lengthening the back of my head and lengthening my back" (journal). "I use my pattern phrase with pleasure smelling, lengthening, shaking out, 3-point weight distribution (grounding my feet) so I am more comfortable in my outer environment" (post-programme interview).

		“Focusing on pelvic activation is a good exercise to start one’s day. The pelvic explorations centres me and prepares me for movement throughout the day” (journal). "I use my pattern phrase with pleasure smelling, lengthening, shaking out, 3-point weight distribution (grounding my feet) so I am more comfortable in my outer environment” (journal). “The tension in my neck and back felt more released after the bend-over series. I can use the bend-over series during my day to relax and energise my body” (journal). "Even if the explorations do not change the result, I deal with stress better. I also try to smoke less, so I don’t do it with every stressful situation" (post-programme interview) **Participant F** **Before:** "I don’t know, and I am not aware when I am experiencing stress; I only figure it out afterwards. Only once I have messed everything up. If I knew I was experiencing stress, I would do better" (pre-programme interview). "My feet start twitching. I only know because the person next to me tells me. When I stop twitching my feet my hands start to twitch. I sometimes check my blood pressure and it is always high. I have headaches often" (pre-programme interview).

		“The only thing holding me back from being effectively integrated is my habit of always wanting to be seated with poor posture most of time” (journal). "The tools I use are not entirely effective to navigate and prepare for stress. I stay in the same mind space, even if I physically remove myself from my table" (pre-programme interview) " I certainly do not communicate like I want to during stressful situations. I am aggressive on the phone. I am not friendly and very firm to the point where it negatively effects my target performance" (pre-programme interview) “I am nervous about the programme because what if it doesn’t fix my stress” (pre-programme interview)? **After:** "I still tap my feet but not as much. I can almost see the stress coming but I am equipped to deal with the stress proactively" (post-programme interview) "When I can’t smell my pleasure smell, I try to ensure I focus on sitting dynamically integrated, lengthening upwards and focusing on my three-point weight distribution. The way we sat in each session" (post-programme interview). "I use the pattern phrase. I liked doing it with others, my shoulders do not pain anymore. I shake my whole body; it feels good; I had extreme back pain but not anymore. I use three-point weight distribution for stability. I feel grounded and in charge, this enlightens my teacher-within" (post-programme interview).

		“I enjoy the sitting down series x-shaped star stretches and folding over because it also takes mental strength first to think I can do it before I do it physically” (journal). "Now I am trying. I try to remain calm. I talk with more people, clearer and calmer. I would not have noticed by myself that I am not removing myself from other people anymore, but I am. I even speak to some of the participants who never used to speak" (post-programme interview). “I don’t feel tension in my body anymore. My entire mindset changed as well. This programme was so effective for me I think everyone in the office should do it. It could help us all individually and collectively to connect” (post-programme interview). “I am more well-rounded, not just my mental health. I hum and shake stress way. All I needed to do was feel now I can. I float around from desk to desk. I used to push prospects away when I am anxious, so now I focus on staying calm. I apply some of the explorations without thinking about it” (post-programme interview). **Participant G** **Before:** "I have a lack of appetite when I experience stress. I am exhausted because I don’t sleep enough. I am irritable and I want to snap. I feel overwhelmed" (pre-programme interview)

		"I bite my nails. My legs shake. My back gets hot. I laugh a lot and I can become hyperactive and then I can't focus" (pre-programme interview). "My voice becomes very high pitched when I am stressed and sometimes, I stutter" (pre-programme interview). "I remove myself from the office by going outside and taking a few steps. I use a notebook when I am anxious and stressed to write down why and what I can do. I tell myself it's not me. I try to become more self-aware. I laugh" (pre-programme interview). "Most days the tools are effective. Some days they help. Some days nothing helps for stress except sleeping" (Pre- programme interview). "During stressful situations, I do not communicate how I want to communicate. What I want to say is not what is coming out of my mouth. Always when I am stressed, I'll ramble about anything" (pre-programme interview). "Finances, school, relationships are difficult to maintain while I work, I don't take phone calls. I am nervous about becoming emotional because I avoid dealing with emotions. I don't express myself. Once we start with the programme, I don't know how I'll take it. I am excited about what I have bottled up" (pre-programme interview).

		After: “I am no longer exhausted, irritable and overwhelmed. I have started eating” (post-programme interview). "I don’t bite my nails anymore. I still laugh and shake my legs but it’s more conscious" (post-programme interview). "Before I start in the morning, I use shaking, affirmations to be present and aware, I lengthen upwards. I do a full body yawn before every call, and I use my pleasure smell" (post-programme interview). “I try to use structure. I love this voice. The prospect should too. I’m making sure of Forward Facial Orientation” (post-programme interview). “The tools that I will use: breathing exercises whenever my body tenses up, get in touch with my inner environment and listen to what my body needs, pleasure smelling to comfort myself in stressful environments and situations and floating before coming into the office to help relieve stress that may be weighing on me before I start the day” (journal). "The tools help me to be aware of what I am doing. I don’t necessarily know that I am stressed but I know my habits" (post-programme interview) "After starting our sessions, when I stutter, I stop, take a breath and start over" (post-programme interview).

		“I’ve learned to function optimally to express myself. I’ve broken down some days crying. You told us there is nothing wrong with feeling. I welcomed it and I was happy to feel it” (post-programme interview). “Even though the day may start out slow. Things can pick up, until they do… Remember your sit bones. Don’t break your back on top of having a slow day. When you’re older you’ll realise being effectively integrated is everything” (journal). **Participant H** **Before:** "I become quieter and more reserved. I pull back. I feel butterflies" (pre-programme interview). "I become much harder. I type harder. My movements become more potent. I move stronger" (pre-programme interview). “(My voice is) probably a bit more frantic but not that much” (pre-programme interview). “I don’t communicate like I want to during stressful situations because I prefer to not communicate. People get irritated with me because I take on their stress or keep my stress to myself and push it to a side” (pre-programme interview). "If (the tools do) not work, I feel dejected and defeated for the rest of the day. I can become very sad and then I use aggressive music to hype myself up for the next day" (pre-programme interview).

		"I isolate myself. I try to just do my work. I feel a lot more stressed and frantic than I might seem" (pre-programme interview). “The initial habits I want to adapt are sitting dynamically aligned, three-point weight distribution and projecting kindness. I can work on all of this with my pattern phrase because it can do a lot to change my habits” (journal). **After:** "Butterflies in my heart. More of them. It is because I listen and observe more" (post-programme interview). "I use consonants and structure to regulate my voice well" (post-programme interview). “Using horse lips is helping me a lot with pronouncing my words correctly. The humming is helping a lot with stress relief. Using the lengthening and flexing of my legs brings a lot of relief” (journal). “My favourite movements (…) are the pelvic rocking, the reaching over the upper body and the shaking of my body. This is my main part of my pattern phrase. This pattern phrase helps me the best with my issues” (journal). "I like using the floating and the pleasure smelling. I have even used a diffuser to help me. I also use the pelvic rock a lot" (post-programme interview).

		"Sometimes I fall into old habits. The tools do help in keeping stress away and it helps prepare me for stress. My performance first went down but I needed it to use the tools and become more aware" (post-programme interview). "Professionally there are more situations of stress, but I communicate properly" (post-programme interview).
	Life stressors and challenges	Participant A: "My ears start ringing" (pre-programme interview). Participant A: "I use everything that I have learnt to achieve new habitual responses that results in a state of being in a positive way, to achieve optimisation in all I do" (journal). Participant A: "(My) pattern phrase allowed me to get in tune with my body and to sense and feel what needs to be improved on" (journal). Participant A: "The white noise (in the outer environment) makes me feel more relaxed; like if I was a little boy with my parents in an observatory or aquarium. Overall, I feel lighter, and I have a clear head" (journal). Participant A: "To prepare for stress with regards to my inner environment, I become aware of my breathing, focusing on my pleasure smell and pleasure sigh out with sound. To prepare for stress in relation to my outer environment, I become aware of noises and the environment around me while I stay aware of myself" (journal).

		Participant B: "I still feel a little stiff though. At the start it felt like I needed a sponge to cushion my heels" (journal). Participant B: "By using my pleasure smell, I remember to respond properly by focusing on breathing and shaking out to untense, also using my pelvic rock to calm down" (journal). Participant B: “By acting out different scenarios with the script and prospects made me realise (gain awareness of how) I start holding my breath, tensing my whole body. By (responding through) pleasure smelling, sitting integrated and shaking out any tension I can get through hard calls/days better” (journal). Participant C: “One of my goals this year was to focus on stressing less. I usually have tension in my shoulders. When I drive, my lower back pains. My back also feels tension when I sit forward (slouched) and so on. I notice (sense and perceive) that I sit quite upright and that also causes pain. When I stress, I also tend to overthink, but I try to trump that with focusing on breathing in stressful situations” (journal). Participant C: "People notice (when I am not okay) and ask me what’s wrong" (pre-programme interview). Participant C: "When I sound flustered, I respond by first taking a deep breath and then I answer. When I feel stress or know that I will feel stressed, I rather shake it out instead of doing nothing and building up the stress" (journal). Participant C: “To calm my inner environment when the outer environment is overwhelming, I slow my breathing and pleasure sigh while I focus on calming my voice through humming" (journal).

		Participant D: "Everything that feels like suffocating teaches us how to breathe" (journal). Participant D: “I will become aware of my outer environment while I become aware of my breath and inner environment. I will make sure my breathing becomes intentional and breathe to the spaces where I feel discomfort and tension” (journal). Participant D: "I became more aware and intentional with my breathing to tense spaces (inner environment) while using my pleasure smell; These methods really helped me to feel less stressed, less overwhelmed, and to take more control of the rest of my day” (journal). Participant E: "Spending money and sometimes I feel like I am having an existential crisis: I am not where I need to be" (pre-programme interview). Participant E: “When I have a physical sensation that resembles tension or when I am aware of a stressful occurrence (by feet tapping, always), I stop tapping and actively try to remember what I can remember at that moment of what we learned to respond in the programme" (journal). Participant E: “To calm my inner down when the outer feels overwhelming, I calm myself using breathing techniques such as my pleasure smell" (journal). Participant E: “The breathing technique of pleasure smelling and sighing is useful to release stress (and) helps to be more (prepared for) my surroundings (outer environment)” (journal). Participant F: "I have learnt a lot about my ineffective habits when I feel stressed" (journal).

		Participant F: “I think even when I just want to regain inner control in a taxing external situation, I will start with the front foot and back heel tapping, especially after a difficult call, to remember and ground my feet and remind me that one bad call cannot determine my entire day and target” (journal). Participant G: "My health. I also worry that people will be difficult today and this stresses me out because I am already drained physically and emotionally" (post-programme interview). Participant H: "My stomach is even more sore. Tension in my back neck and feet are gone" (journal). Participant H: “The pelvic movements are helping a lot to help my awareness and relaxing into my work situation” (journal).
	Connections and support	Participant A: "I have also shared it with my parents" (post-programme interview). Participant A: "I can focus on functioning optimally and be fully engaged with the task at hand, so I have the best chances of achieving great results and deal with stressful situations. To express myself, I usually resorted to bad habits when I experience stress but now, I can express myself by using the tools I have learnt" (journal). Participant A: “My face feels looser, and I feel lighter and ready to make calls. The humming, stretching and vibrations from my mouth helped me feel lighter and looser. I felt more open to conversations as well, allowing myself to express myself instead of being closed off” (journal). Participant B: "In the mornings before work I prepare myself for stress" (post-programme interview).

		Participant B: "When people around me in my outer environment are loud when I'm on a call or when prospects are difficult, I focus on calming my inner environment by focusing on deep breathing through my pleasure smell and shaking out my body" (journal). Participant B: "I focus on my functioning by using tone, structure and consonants to come across clearer, which then helps me express myself better" (journal). Participant B: "I focus on stability, by sitting optimally with 3-point weight distribution to add mobility to my voice" (journal). Participant C: "Small things you (the facilitator) did make a big difference" (post-programme interview). Participant C: ""When I focus on my forward facial orientation and horse lips to function ideally, I can keep the structure and focus on tone to express myself" (journal). Participant C: "I focus on my 3-point weight distribution and the placement of my arms to stabilise my entire body so I can move and speak professionally and calmly on a call" (journal). Participant D: "The word that comes to mind the whole time is "Intentional" I focus on the things I can control" (post-programme interview). Participant D: "This has definitely been my favourite (…); making noises and sounds. Words I felt at the start were stop!, how?, focus, think and you have a lot to do. Words I felt at the end of the session were relax, express yourself, intent, explore, slow down, it's okay, trust, order, breathe and move" (journal).

		Participant E: "Even if the explorations do not change the result I deal with stress better" (post-programme interview). Participant E: “"When I keep everything of my functions aligned such as grounding, lengthening, and focusing on using the vocal techniques, I am able to express myself better" (journal). Participant E: “I feel more present and aware when I use the techniques in situations that demand high functionality” (journal). Participant E: “Today’s session really helped me with focusing on clearer speech, focusing on sounds that stand out in text to speak clearer (function). This is definitely beneficial on the phone when speaking to prospects (expression)” (journal). Participant E: "I focus on stability by means of my 3-point weight distribution to ensure that my upper body is more mobile and in the best position for vocal projection" (journal). Participant F: "This programme was so effective for me I think everyone in the office should do it It could help us all individually and collectively to connect" (post-programme interview). Participant F: "I made a note for myself which I can look at during calls, to remind me to remove myself from not only a bad call but also from an unpleasant physical stimulus like noise. I also walk around the office to float when the unpleasant stimulus is a cigarette/ vape smell" (journal).

		Participant F: "I literally do a little figure of 8 wafting and waving hip movement to let go of physical tension, then I function optimally to express myself and ask for help" (journal). Participant F: “The part where we all repeated a sound and movement put together by all the participants was very fun and it highlighted how we can all be creative in incorporating everything we have learned into our daily lives. It doesn’t even have to be big or anything dramatic like that, but we can even take a quick two-minute break and just gain some awareness to ground ourselves more” (journal). Participant F: “Being aware of consonants and vowels make you sound like you know what you’re talking about and you are intentional about it” (journal). Participant G: "I share it with others. It excites me This will help me long-term I’ll never stop growing and learning from this programme. You saved my life" (post-programme interview). Participant G: “Thank you to my teacher-within for allowing me to connect with my inner mind and body. Grateful that my teacher-within is giving me the ability to let go of my fears and to do the things that I never would have done on my own, especially in public” (journal). Participant G: “Today I will do the breathing exercises while being seated. I will tell myself that I am in control of the call (while) speaking to prospects (outer environment) who have had cancer or have been for cancer tests” (journal).

		Participant G: "By gently yawning my face forward to improve my speech (I feel fancy) after doing that exploration, I can express myself and speak to anyone" (journal). Participant H: "The session felt very realistic because it was focused on what we feel and experience daily" (post-programme interview). Participant H: "When I focus on better facial orientation I can pronounce and function better to lead to better expression" (journal). Participant H: "To help my inner environment be ready for challenging outer environments, I use my pelvic rock and feet stomps to help cope with outer environment stress. When I focus on a little movement it feels like I can control my inner environment" (journal). Participant H: “A little movement can help me feel in control of my bigger outer environment. This in turn will lead to better orientation, grounding, responses, and pronunciation. The more you can control the inner environment the better the outer environment will be. The small controls and helps the big” (journal).