

## **Capacitar training**

At both BHH and Malimbe Family, capacitar is used, to empower and encourage the children.

In this article we would like to explain to you why we use capacitar, for detailed information please click on the link. (insert link)

Capacitar is used to help the children cope with their problems, to help heal trauma's and to create wholeness. An important part of capacitar is a set of exercises which they can do by themselves, with guidance from the staff. Every day they do a number of exercises, it is not necessary to do all of them.

By using capacitar at Upendo Daima the children get to address some of the issues they face, without really having to go into these issues (this we do in group counselling and one-on-one counselling). As a result of these exercises we have witnessed that the behaviour of the children changes. Their behaviour improves, they become more relaxed, become aware of themselves, get empowered by the training and they open up, which is helpful in the counselling sessions. Also the children like doing the training.

The exercises that are done by the children themselves consist of a combination of Tai Chi, Pal Dan Gum, Sun Salutation, Tapping and Balance (for further details see link)

The good thing about these exercises is that the children can do them by themselves; they create healing without having to talk about the problems they face. They are done in addition to other elements of capacitar which are used in counselling, such as visualisation, mediation and polarity. And this is combined with psycho-analysis, such as group sessions and one-on-one counselling.

At the moment we are the only organization in Tanzania who are using Capacitar training, we believe it is beneficial in our working with the children, as we have seen many positive results over the last years.

## Capacitar training

Zowel in BHH als Malimbe Family gebruiken we capacitar, om de kinderen kracht te geven en te bemoedigen.

In dit artikel willen we een korte uitleg geven over waarom we capacitar gebruiken, voor meer gedetailleerde informatie verwijzen we naar de bijgesloten link (alleen in het Engels). (link invoegen)

Capacitar wordt gebruikt om de kinderen te helpen met hun problemen om te gaan, om te helpen trauma's te verwerken en om een eenheid te creëren. Een belangrijk onderdeel van capacitar is een set van oefeningen die door de kinderen zelf gedaan kunnen worden, onder begeleiding van de staf. Iedere dag doen zee en aantal oefeningen, niet alle.

Door het gebruik van capacitar bij Upendo Daima kunnen de kinderen een aantal van de uitdagingen die ze hebben tegemoet treden, zonder er diep op in te hoeven gaan (dit doen we tijdens groepsessies en individuele counseling). We hebben gemerkt dat het gedrag van de kinderen veranderd als gevolg van deze oefeningen. Hun gedrag verbeterd, ze zijn meer ontspannen, ze ontwikkelen een zelfbewustzijn, ze krijgen kracht en ze worden opener, wat behulpzaam is zijn de counseling sessies. Ook vinden de kinderen het prettig de training te doen.

De oefeningen die gedaan worden bestaan uit een combinatie van Tai Chi, Pal Dan Gum, Zonnegroet, Tapping en Balans (voor meer informatie zie de link).

Het mooie van deze oefeningen is dat de kinderen ze zelf kunnen doen; er wordt een heling bewerkstelligd zonder dat ze over hun problemen hoeven te praten. Naast deze oefeningen worden andere delen van capacitar gedaan in counseling, zoals visualisatie, medicatie en polariteit. En dit alles wordt gecombineerd met psychoanalyse, zoals groepsessies en een-op-een counseling.

Op dit moment zijn wij de enige organisatie in Tanzania die Capacitar training gebruiken, wij vinden dat het nuttig is in het werken met de kinderen, daar we al veel positieve resultaten hebben gezien gedurende de jaren dat we het gebruiken.

Capacitar

Capacitar means “empowerment”

Our vision is to heal ourselves and to heal our world. Using a hands-on popular education approach, we teach simple wellness practices that lead to healing, wholeness and peace in the individual and in the world.

Capacitar is an international network working in over 35 countries in the Americas, Africa, Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

We are especially committed to communities affected by violence, poverty and trauma, uniting people across borders in solidarity, understanding and reconciliation.

Capacitar began in Nicaragua in 1988 in response to violence and war trauma. While collaborating on a solidarity art project at a popular education center in Managua, the community invited founder Pat Cane to teach them what she practiced herself to heal the stress of daily life. The first workshops shared simple skills in body movement and acupressure to alleviate pain and stress. The people enthusiastically multiplied what they learned with family and community in the spirit of *capacitar*, a Spanish word meaning to empower, to bring to life. This became the name of the organization. As news of Capacitar reached other places, union leaders in Guatemala, popular education centers in Chile, and base communities in Peru requested workshops. The first Capacitar manuals were developed in English and in Spanish to make materials available for grassroots leaders. In 1995 a Capacitar team from twelve countries coordinated the Healing Tent in China for the NGO World Forum on Women.

Capacitar teaches wellness practices, team building and self-development to awaken people to their own wisdom, strength and resources. Our methods are based on a holistic model of healing and a popular education methodology.

### **A Holistic Model**

Capacitar recognizes the energy field interconnecting all beings and the unity of body, mind and spirit within the person. Health and wellbeing result from the harmonious flow and balance of energy in the system. With stress and the trauma of life, the natural flow of energy is blocked resulting in pain, illness and emotional problems in the person, as well as in the family and society. Each person has within themselves an inherent wisdom and power to heal and return to balance and wholeness. Ancient practices, such as Tai Chi and acupressure, can promote health and wellbeing in the individual and the community.

### **Popular Education**

Capacitar uses a popular education approach in its programs. Popular education is a dynamic educational method developed by Brazilian Paulo Freire, empowering people to awaken to own their wisdom and power. It is used extensively with grassroots people in Latin America and Africa. Popular education forms the basis of Capacitar's learner-centered approach. Using wellness practices, such as Tai Chi and acupressure, Capacitar teaches "body literacy" to reconnect people to their own wisdom and capacity. An important aspect of popular education is the cascading or spill-over effect.

Whatever a person learns they are encouraged to pass on to their families and communities, empowering the learner, contributing to the community and multiplying the work.

**Capacitar body-mind-spirit practices include:**

- Tai Chi meditation, Pal Dan Gum and body movement
- Visualization and breathwork
- Active Listening and simple psychotherapeutic skills
- Acupressure for alleviating pain and stress
- Fingerholds for managing emotions
- Energy Tapping modalities
- Hand massage, seated massage and Polarity
- Work with the energy system and chakras
- And other wellness modalities

***Capacitar Energy Exercises***

There are many books now available on body-mind-spirit modalities that can serve as resources. The following are several simple and basic exercises that can be used individually or together as a family.

**Deep Abdominal Breathing to Balance and Renew the Body**

Place your hands gently on your abdomen to direct your attention and focus. Exhale fully, releasing all of the air from the lungs, imagining that with the exhalation you are able to release all of the tension, pain, frustration and negativity stored in the body.

Slowly breathe in deeply, as if to fill your entire abdomen with air. Hold the breath for several moments and imagine the air filling all the cells of your body with light cleansing, nourishing and renewing your body.

Then breathe out slowly and completely, hold the exhalation for several moments before taking the next deep inhalation.

Continue this deep abdominal breathing for several minutes. If your mind starts to chatter, gently bring your attention back to focus on your breathing, following the air in and out of your body. With your healing breath stay peacefully present in the moment, appreciating the partnership you have with your body.

**Acupressure to Balance Left and Right Sides of the Brain**

Breathe deeply for several moments. Then place the fingers of both hands on points at the base of the skull on either side of your head. These points are located behind and below the ears in the grooves where the skull connects to the neck. Hold these points for several minutes while breathing deeply. You can imagine energy flowing fully and freely through these points bringing peace and relaxation to your mind. Press into the points with your fingers and then lighten the touch until the level of pressure feels comfortable. These points are usually very sensitive. Often you will feel a pulsing sensation as the flow of energy becomes strong and balanced. Usually a minute of contact is enough time for children, while adults will need two or three minutes. When your body feels ready, breathe out and release the points feeling the balance and well-being of your body-mind-spirit.

These are powerful acupressure points which balance left and right sides, the creative and the rational capacities of the brain. They also help you to focus . These are excellent points to teach children to be used before starting to study or before taking an examination. These points can also be used to alleviate headaches or neck tension, since pain often is the result of blocked energy. These points can be held on another person to help heal headaches, nervousness, worry or anxiety.

### **Visualization - To Develop Awareness and Partnership with the Body**

In the hectic pace of our lives we often feel disconnected and unrelated to our bodies. We are not even aware of the pain and tension that we carry, when we live only in our heads cut off from feelings and intuition. This visualization and body scan is a good way to check in regularly on what is happening in the body-mind-spirit, and to develop an intuitive awareness and partnership with the body. This exercise can be done while lying in bed before starting the day, or before going to sleep at night. It can also be done in a few moments during the day to get in touch with what is happening and with what you are feeling in your body.

Start breathing abdominally for a few moments, letting go and bringing your attention to the present moment. Now imagine that you are able to go on a journey visiting all parts of your body, checking in on what is happening in each part and on how you feel.

Bring your attention first to your toes, move them a bit, and just get acquainted with them, appreciating what they do for you. Without judgment, observe any feelings, pain, discomfort you may have with your toes or feet and then let that go. Move your awareness up your ankles and legs, checking in on feelings, pain, pleasure, discomfort, observing without judgment.

Continue the same process with the rest of your body, moving into your pelvis, through your abdomen and chest, checking in on your heart and emotions, then down your shoulders and arms and out your fingers, up your neck, into your face, head and brain, and finally to the top of your head, and out and above your head.

You can also continue your journey through the energy field around you, noting your energy level and how you feel in your environment. As you continue this body scan, images or feelings may come to you. Observe these images and feelings without judgment.

The purpose of this exercise is for increasing awareness and for developing your capacity for intuiting what is happening within you and around you. Continue breathing deeply for a few minutes, fully aware and present in the moment.

### **The Daily hug - Appreciating and being grateful for your body-mind-spirit**

We all hunger for love and appreciation and look for affirmation from parents, friends or those around us. Often children have negative self-images because they are frequently told what is wrong with them in school or at home, and are rarely affirmed or supported. We literally embody the images and messages that we get consciously or unconsciously from significant people or authority figures in our lives. Part of the process of individuation and growth involves coming into partnership with ourselves by developing a healthy sense of self love and self acceptance. We also must learn how to realistically recognize and work with the projections of others, listening to what is helpful and fits, and letting go of what does not ring true with our deepest nature.

The daily hug is a good way to develop a healthy sense of our own being recognizing the gift of our life, our history, our potential and forgiving our shortcomings. It is a wonderful way just to give thanks for being who we are!

At first there may be some discomfort in doing this exercise, because we rarely think about loving and giving affection to ourselves. Often we have been raised with a strong message that we are being selfish if we take care of ourselves or admire ourselves. So if negative messages arise, just recognize them, let them go and enjoy the exercise.

Cross your arms and place your hands on your shoulders or upper arms. Give yourself a big loving squeeze, as if you were holding a child with great love and joyful appreciation. If tears or deep emotion come up for you, let the tears flow, just observing any images and letting them go. Continue hugging yourself, thanking yourself for all you do and for all you are. Do this for several moments and when you feel ready breathe deeply and let go.

You can do this as often as you want during the day. This exercise can also be done standing in front of a mirror, looking into your eyes, seeing deeply into your heart and spirit.

### **Releasing Emotions through Your Fingers**

One of the favorite practices I have taught parents is how to work with emotions by holding the fingers. Often problems develop at home or in school when children or family members are unable to handle or release emotions in a healthy way. Tantrums, blow ups and even domestic violence result when emotions are discharged without respect for those around us. Emotions are like waves of energy moving through the body. If the energy builds up without a gradual release, like a volcano there can be a great explosion. Or if the emotion is denied or the person is cut off from their feelings, the emotions are stored in the body. Over times this can lead to pain, ulcers, and other chronic disorders, as our body absorbs and holds the negativity, frustration and memories of strong emotions which have never been addressed. It is important to recognize emotions when they arise, and then to choose the appropriate way to work with and release the wave of energy, rather than storing it in the body.

This exercise is based on modalities related to Polarity Therapy. Finger exercises are also found in the Indonesian culture. The theory is that through each finger flows a meridian or channel of energy which is connected with different organs and also associated with a corresponding emotion.

Gently wrap your fingers around the finger related to the emotion you wish to release. Often after several moments you can feel the energy moving through the finger, like a pulse balancing itself. Hold the finger until you feel relaxed and peaceful. You can hold the fingers of either hand, or hold several fingers at one time.

- The Thumb - to release grief and tears.
- Index Finger - to release fear.
- Middle Finger - to release anger.
- Ring Finger - to release worry, nervousness and anxiety.
- Small Finger - to release low self-esteem and feelings of victimhood.

Children love to hold their fingers and find the practice very effective for managing their emotions.