

*Workshop for the 9<sup>th</sup> European Congress on Violence in Clinical Psychiatry  
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## **Using the Rock & Water method in the treatment of forensic psychiatric patients and in educating staff**

### ***Workshop***

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### **Facilitators:**

Erik Timmerman is sports teacher, staff trainer and coordinator of the Sports department in the Van der Hoevenkliniek. As advanced Rock & Water trainer he provides individual workshops and group workshop for patients, as well as for staff members. He is owner of *Eight – Opleidingen, Trainingen & Coaching* in which he also predominantly works with the Rock & Water method.

Ernst Janzen is sports teacher and Rock&Water trainer in the Van der Hoevenkliniek. He provides individual workshops and group workshop for patients, as well as for staff members.

### **Introduction:**

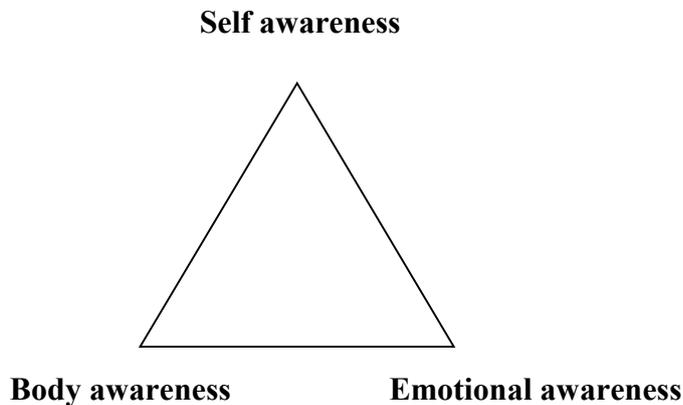
This workshop will be provided by Erik Timmerman and Ernst Janzen, both sport teachers and staff trainers at the Van der Hoeven Kliniek, a forensic psychiatric hospital in Utrecht the Netherlands. The Rock & Water method has been implemented within this hospital in 2008. Several workshops are provided for both patients and staff members. The workshops for patients focus on aggression regulation, learning how to set boundaries, and how to improve social skills. The workshops for staff members are provided within a professional education program that aims to learn how to intervene and de-escalate situations, conflict management and self defence. For both patients and staff members, the focus is on becoming aware of their own behaviour and the impact of their behaviour on others in daily life.

### ***The Rock & Water method***

The Rock & Water method provides participants with skills for physical-social teaching with a focus on body awareness, emotional awareness and self awareness. The concepts 'rock' and 'water' are being used as a metaphor to explicit different forms of communication. By experiencing practice-focused physical exercises, it is easier to transfer these skills to situations in daily work or life. By creating moments of choice, the participants can learn to consciously make decisions and regain control over their behaviour in complicated situations, for instance, when it is needed to set boundaries without getting in an escalating conflict. Participants will learn to become aware of personal possibilities, qualities and responsibilities. The workshop focuses on social competence and inner strength. In daily life, individuals will have to be able to function as a rock (strong, immovable and with self-confidence) and as

water (remaining in contact, flexible and connecting). The basics of the program include grounding and centering exercises, standing strong and rock and water attitude in physical and verbal communication. The power of this method is that by practicing and experiencing the different physical exercises, one can learn to regain control in their daily life at work, school or society.

*Golden triangle:*



*Applicability in daily clinical forensic psychiatric practice:*

Since 2008, the Rock & Water program is used with the Sports department. Just like the other sport activities, the program is part of the treatment program of the patient. When the method was implemented, it was immediately successful. All patients easily recognized the terms Rock and Water and the active part was appealing to them. These lessons are provided for individual patients or to small groups of maximum 6 patients.

For the TBS (disposal to be treated on behalf of the state implying mandatory treatment) patients with severe and complex psychopathology, we offer individualized trajects in close collaboration with their psychotherapists or their supervisors. For patients with other judicial titles who usually are more short-term patients, we provide series of 10 lessons supervised by a sports teacher together with a therapist. The workshop has multiple aims. Generally, the workshops focus on reduction of tension and emotion regulation, learning how to set boundaries and improve social skills.

*Applicability in daily practice educating staff:*

When we introduced the Rock & Water method for the patients to the sports department, all sport teachers were very enthusiastic. Various staff members recognized that this method could also be valuable for staff members. We started providing workshops upon request of treatment teams and later, the method became the basic course in the existing trainings Physical intervention, self-defence and de-escalation techniques and conflict management. The central focus is the body, emotions, own actions and creating own choices in the treatment of patients. The aim is improve skills in acting more effectively and professional towards patients. Furthermore, the method turned out to be helpful in looking back and evaluating situations.



## **Workshop**

During this practically focused workshop, we aim to explain the Rock & Water method and the way it is integrated within the treatment of our patients and in a professional educational program for staff. First, we will provide some basic physical exercises. Subsequently we will demonstrate practice oriented exercises and analyse them from the Rock & Water method. Furthermore, video material will be showed from the workshops provided at the Van der Hoeven Kliniek.

## **Educational goals**

- To explain and experience the Rock & Water method and how it can be used within forensic psychiatric treatment
- To explain and experience how the Rock & Water method can be valuable in the professional education of staff in a forensic psychiatric hospital

## **Research & results**

The Rock & Water method started as a method for high school children. After the implementation the method was extended to several target groups and adjusted for these different groups. A number of studies have been conducted. Overall, it has been shown that:

- The Rock & Water program contributes to the development of positive social skills, more effective strategies in coping with bullying behaviour, as well as more self-control and confidence, improved skills for introspection, decrease in social problems.
- Use of the Rock & Water program results in reduced harmful behaviour.
- The Rock & Water program results in improvement of relationships between participants and relation with sociotherapists, improved group climate better coping strategies in case of bullying.
- The Rock & Water program is a well-substantiated program aiming for improving behavioral problems, bullying and sexuality.
- The Rock & Water program improves self-regulation and general self-efficacy.

Within our hospital, it has not yet been possible to examine the multidisciplinary approach for the specific target group. After the implementation in 2008, the use of the method has expanded enormously. For the TBS patients the method is oftentimes mentioned as one of the indicated treatment activities and there is constructive deliberation between the trainers and psychotherapists in improving treatment of patients. For the patients with other judicial titles, the Rock & Water program is standardly adopted in the treatment plan. Both patients and staff members are very enthusiastic about the method. Patients indicate that “not just talking” works well for them and that they like to be able to put in their own perspective.

## **References**

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