

# Definition of psychomotricity

*Translated by Amélie Jayet*

## First Definitions (Marion Bory)

A psychomotrician is a person who has completed 3 years of theoretical and practical (workshops and internships) studies in a Ministry of Education certified school, and passed **the Psychomotrician State Diploma** (diplôme d'état de psychomotricien) exam.

Psychomotricity is, first of all, a **concept**: part of Social Sciences. It is a **psychotherapy focused on body mediation**. It is based on the interrelationship between motor functions and the psychic life of the individual; the body is considered as the anchor of sensorimotor, emotional, cognitive and social experiences. It offers a **global view** of the subject by placing the physical expressions of the human being at the center of its emotional and psychic life. Thus, the **psychomotor therapy** contributes to the rediscovery of the balance between its motor skills and psychic life, permitting the subject to adapt better. The better one knows himself globally, the better he will be able to connect with his environment and interact with it in an appropriate manner, according to his ability, to his potential and to his intrinsic way of existing in the world, not in relation to what is considered normal.

The proposed treatments offered are validated by **the 1988 Psychomotrician Area of Competences Decree**: early childhood education, stimulation and psychomotor awakening, reeducation and treatment of psychomotor disorders.

## PSYCHOMOTRICITY FOR WHOM?

A psychomotrician may work with people of any age:

**-Premature newborns:** Because of a brutal and early separation, and because of the traumatism of a premature birth, mother/child and parent/child relationship are modified and disturbed. In order to encourage the parental involvement, the psychomotrician may offer an evaluation of the newborn's capabilities, introduce stimulations adapted to encouraging exchange, communication and exploration of the surrounding world through the relationship. The main purpose is to rebuild the bond which has been damaged and weakened.

**-young children:** the psychomotrician is licensed to treat delay or gaps in psychomotor acquisitions, and deficits in one or several motor skills (movement, walking, laterality, balance,...).

Cases of Cerebral palsy [IMC (l'Infirmes moteur cérébral)], genetic diseases, precociousness, late development....

A psychomotrician can also treat patients which have communication disorders, writingskills disorders [graphomotricité], hyperactivity, inhibition, concentration issues.

Cases of autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) [des THADA (trouble hyperactivité avec déficit de l'attention)], Pervasive developmental disorder (PDD) [TED Troubles Envahissants du développement], dyspraxias, dysgraphias, stutters...

-**Adolescents:** The psychomotrician is able to treat relationship problems which many teenagers encounter with themselves, their family and their social environment, such as aggressiveness, anorexia, crime, emotional problems, psychiatric disorders....

-**Adults and the elderly:** the psychomotrician also has skill in areas such as: memory (Alzheimer), balance (fall prevention), stress (relaxation), body image (psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia), space and time (temporal-spatial disorientation of patients with dementia)...The treatment of polyhandicap patients or under palliative care are areas under development.

## THE PROCESS OF PSYCHOMOTRICIAN THERAPY?

The first meeting with the patient (and his family) consists of creating a **psychomotor profile** (interview, tests and exercises) in order to define a **therapeutic project**. This **psychomotor profile** is usually prescribed by a general practitioner but sometimes families come on the advice of a teacher, of a friend or their employer. Then, if it is necessary, according to the profile conclusions, and after exchanging with a pluridisciplinary professional team (not the case in a medical clinic), a specific therapeutic project is elaborated using one or several physical activities which are adapted to each situation, pathology and individual. There are as many therapeutic projects as there are patients.

The **treatments** can include: relaxation, sensorimotor therapy, music, drawing, games, water, equestrian activities...

They depend on the patient, the psychomotrician, and the goals of the project.

The psychomotrician usually works in a pluridisciplinary team which can be composed of : a doctor (general practitioner), a speech and language therapist, a special educational needs (SEN) teacher [éducateur spécialisé] , a psychologist, a psychiatrist, an occupational therapist [ergothérapeute]...All these careers are complementary and each of them brings a specific view from their area of expertise. Therefore, the person is treated in its globality.

The psychomotrician can self employed (specific French status= liberal) or work for an institution such as a day-care facility, kindergarten and primary schools, pediatric services, neonatology, youth centers, mother/child centers, in medical and non medical geriatric centers, home care... Few medical insurance policies reimburse the psychomotor session at this time, unless the disorder qualifies as a covered disability by the resource center [MDPH (maison départemental des personnes handicapées)] of the country or if it is included in the therapeutic project of an institution. These situations are evolving.

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