
Abstract

A case of mastering decentering and acceptance through mind–body unity therapy that applies Aikido

TATAI, Masahiko

Shirakaba Psychological Counseling Room

While various forms of therapy in the West incorporate traditional Eastern philosophies and practices, this study focuses on a case study in which therapeutic interventions based on the traditional Eastern martial art of Aikido led to improvements in depressive symptoms. Furthermore, it explores the potential of Aikido as an effective therapy technique, with detailed descriptions of how clients engaged with Aikido in their therapeutic process, the specific methods involved, changes in the clients' psychological state, and their reflections on the therapeutic process. Aikido embodies philosophies and techniques centered on harmonizing with the opponent without engaging in direct confrontation or becoming preoccupied with their attacks. These principles share similar characteristics with the concept of "decentering," the ability to distance oneself from one's emotions and awareness, and "acceptance," which involves embracing experiences as they are. Both have been shown to be effective in the treatment of depression. Furthermore, key elements of Eastern philosophy that emphasize "mind–body unity" and "mastery through practice" were found to exert a positive influence, beginning with the body and extending to the mind. During therapy, the client and therapist visualized these characteristics through their bodies by practicing Aikido together. Visualization through the use of one's body in the form of Aikido is considered effective for "mastering" these characteristics.

Keywords: Aikido, mind–body unity, decentering, acceptance, mastery
