



Photo: Dr. Claudia Glöckner, MD

Occupational Health Management with Sound

"Supportive measures for body, mind, and soul with singing bowls"

Dr. Claudia Glöckner, MD

As a Senior Physician at the AWO Specialist Hospital Jerichow, Dr. Claudia Glöckner offers sound courses within the framework of occupational health management for both hospital employees as well as the management team - with consistently positive feedback.

Occupational Health Management

Our work environment is changing, and with it, the demands on employees. More than ever, we all must be competent, innovative, flexible, healthy, and productive.

At the same time, the degree of mental stress is increasing: time pressures, decision deadlines, high expectations and workload can overwhelm and exhaust individual employees.

Due to a shortage of qualified professionals and the effects of the demographic shift, employers increasingly must consider supplementary services for their employees, working conditions, and the operational climate. They must not only protect, but also foster the health and wellbeing of their employees.

The instrument for this is called occupational health management. In the BGW (Association for Health and Social Services) information booklet (2011), the win-win situation for employers and employees is described as follows:

Occupational health management bundles various measures that are tailored and supplementary to one another within the context of health promotion and occupational and health protection into a holistic concept that is integrated into operational processes and continually implemented. This can have many positive effects:

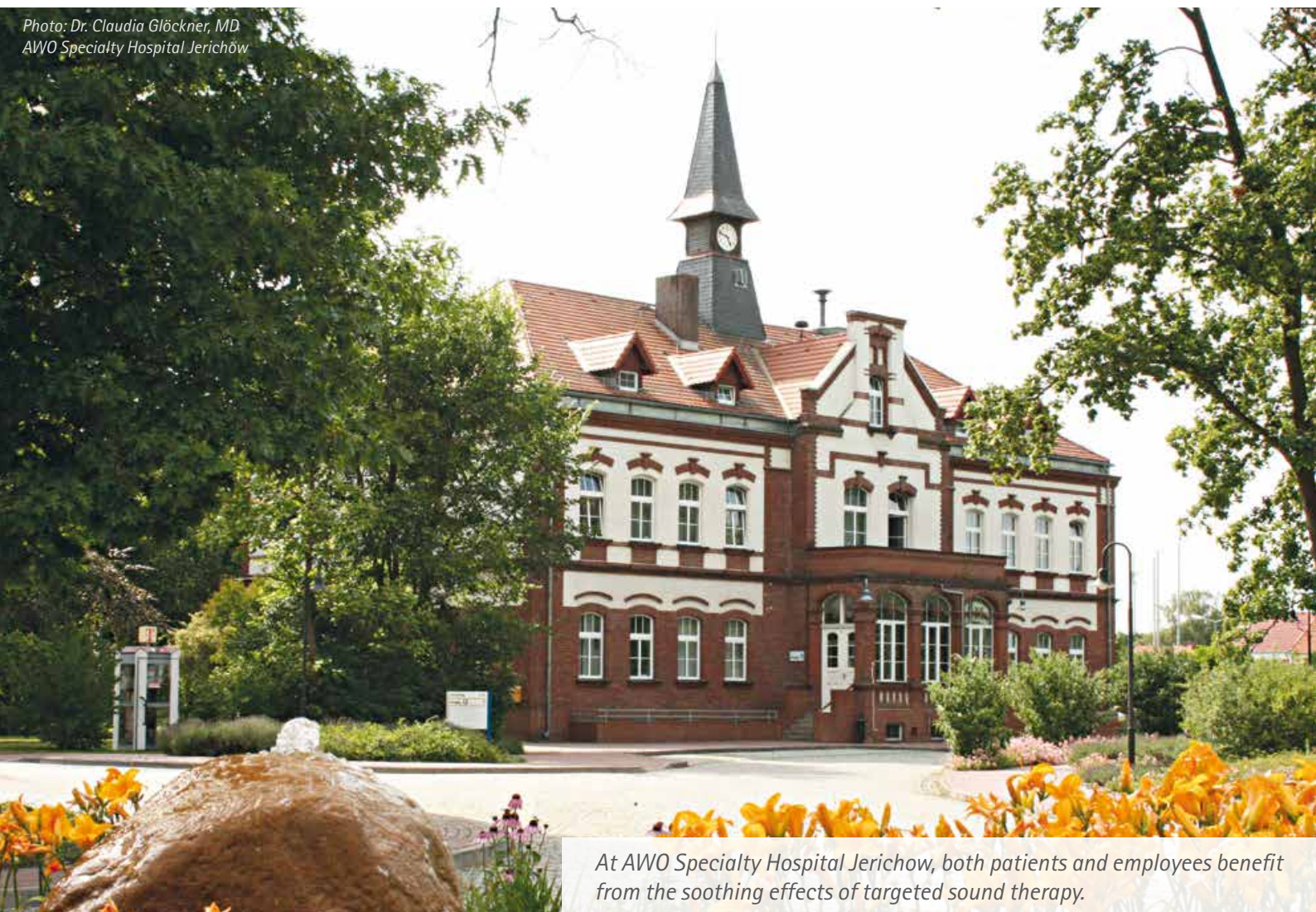
- *Reduction in healthcare costs*
- *Optimization of health-supporting work environment and organizational structures*
- *Fostering of employee engagement and independent work*
- *Extension of employee productivity to retirement age*
- *Reduction in personnel costs*
- *Decrease in fluctuations*

Occupational health management goes beyond health protection and includes additional behavior-oriented measures to improve the health situation. The objective is to support the health competency of the employees as well as their physical and psychological wellbeing – so the theory.

My vision: "You take care of others – why not yourself as well?"

I have worked as a senior physician at the AWO Specialty Hospital Jerichow since 2002. Since the last few years, sound therapy and work with singing bowls are permanent components of the therapy plan at AWO Specialty Hospital for Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Psychosomatic Therapy, Neurology, and Specialized Pain Therapy. A total of 12 coworkers in the areas of nursing and social services, as well as from the ranks of therapists, psychologists, and physicians are trained in Peter Hess®-Sound Massage. That means that employees here are familiar with singing bowls. The positive feedback from the patients had piqued their curiosity.

*Photo: Dr. Claudia Glöckner, MD
AWO Specialty Hospital Jerichow*



At AWO Specialty Hospital Jerichow, both patients and employees benefit from the soothing effects of targeted sound therapy.

It was thus a logical progression to use the sounds for the wellbeing of clinic personnel as well. I had thought about this idea for some time, but now I wanted to act, to take the initiative. With my understanding of the processes in a clinical setting and their associated mental and physical stressors, it was important to me to pass the relaxing effects of sound to my coworkers – in the form of courses for relaxation within the framework of occupational health management.

Source of strength: sound as therapy measure in occupational health management

I attended the PHI-course instructor training "Health-supportive measures for body, mind and soul with singing bowls" and developed a course consisting of 6 units of 60 minutes each that would cover a timeframe of 6 weeks. For this period, the clinic provides a singing bowl to every participant. It is intended that all participants carry out sound exercises daily and record them in a journal. My goal was to disseminate information, provide instruction and, in particular, demonstrate practical exercises and provide opportunity for self-discovery and self-perception.

I invited my coworkers to an informational presentation where they could learn more about how to do something positive for themselves with a singing bowl in just a few minutes, and thereby strengthen their health and joy of life in a sustainable manner. They responded with great enthusiasm – the first course with 8 openings was filled within an hour!

The course concept envisioned a different topic for each course unit:

1. Making your first experiences with sound
2. Experiencing the flow of sound through the body
3. Resonance
4. Using sound as a daily psychological refresher
5. Recognizing limiting and obstructive thought patterns and preempting them
6. Anchoring new, helpful thought patterns with sound

The individual sessions followed a repeated progression:

- Sharing of experiences
- Practical component with sound practices for self-experience
- Feedback – concluding discussion
- Final sound

"The sound of the singing bowl touches our innermost core, it makes the soul vibrate. The sound loosens tensions, mobilizes the powers of self-healing, and unleashes creative energies."

This quote by Peter Hess was my starting point to explain the goals of the course to my coworkers.

Looking back on first experiences

In the meantime, I have already completed 5 courses for my coworkers. By means of a feedback form, I asked participants to explain their main reason for participating in the course. Here is an excerpt from the answers they provided:

- Relaxation
- To Attain harmony with myself
- Curiosity
- To Reduce stress
- To Reduce psychological problems or symptoms (tinnitus)
- To see if singing bowl therapy is a fit for me
- To do something for myself
- For relief
- To search for a different opportunity for relaxation
- Self-discovery / self-experience

For course participants, many of these expectations were met. Feedback was consistently positive. Here are a few quotes:

"Through practice with the singing bowl on a regular basis, soothing relaxation is attained; moments of peace and a feeling of comfort and safety were created."

"Sound is meditation and healing"

"I can easily incorporate the singing bowl into my everyday schedule and thus consciously take a little time to focus on myself."



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"I felt very comfortable in this course . . . I was able to relax, to let go. Everything felt a lot lighter and nicer. Negative thoughts and problems receded into the background."

Participants often reported that the sound exercises help them unwind and shut out stressors. Given that the course sessions were conducted during working hours, i.e., in the middle of the workday, I find this comment surprising.

In the previously mentioned feedback form, all participants indicated that they would recommend the course to others and welcome the chance to attend it again. I therefore plan to offer the course continually, in order to establish a consistent and thereby sustainable measure for my coworkers. The next courses are already scheduled – and also already filled.

Offering such a course to clinic management (clinical director, manager of administration, director of nursing, chief physicians of all departments) was important to me. It was also conceived as a thank you from the coworkers who, during sessions, often talked about how grateful they were to have such an opportunity in the clinic. And: supportive health measures are as important to clinic management as they are to the employees. After an introductory presentation, all decided to participate in such a course and here, too, feedback was very positive. Experiencing the relaxing effects of sound for themselves was important to the members of clinic management. And they will continue to support my activities in occupational health management.

I, too, benefitted from offering sound sessions every week and experiencing them for myself. And thus, we are off to a good start with these course offerings!



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