

Dr. Philip Bull - Hypermobility and the Alexander Technique

50-minute Keynote presentation with Q&A,

30-minute panel discussion with Carol Boggs, Ann Rodiger and Julie Barber

Hypermobility is a term that neither FM nor the 1st generation teachers would have known. It's only in this century that Ehlers-Danlos Syndromes and Hypermobility Spectrum Disorders (EDS/HSD) have become better understood and recognized in the medical field as genetic conditions for which there is no cure. Many people living with these conditions spend their entire lives managing their symptoms and are increasingly seeking AT for relief. We can potentially make a big difference in their experience by providing strategies for better postural support, calming the nervous system, and improving proprioception and balance, all contributing to their quality of life.

The AT can be of immense help to this community but unfortunately, we have heard stories from those with EDS/HSD who've had negative experiences with AT practitioners who were unaware how hypermobility can affect a person and so made no allowances for it. These teachers inadvertently over-released the hypermobile students' already lax joints and left them with a loss of both tone and internal integrated support. They felt disconnected and their painful symptoms worsened.

With the emergence of a greater population with hypermobility issues, we, Julie Barber M.STAT (UK), Carol Boggs M.AmSAT (US), and Ann Rodiger M.AmSAT (US), are suggesting a plenary talk by British rheumatologist, Dr. Philip Bull, followed by an AT teacher panel discussion addressing these issues and looking at how AT can best help pupils and students with connective tissue disorders.

Dr. Philip Bull is a highly respected rheumatologist, Chief Medical Adviser to the HMSA (Hypermobility Syndromes Association, one of the two main UK charities in this field) and a great advocate of the AT. He is personable, connects well with his audience and regularly presents at EDS/HSD events. (See below for more biographical information.)

Dr. Bull speaks for 50 minutes outlining how hypermobility may affect not only a person's joints but also their internal organs, their proprioceptive sensitivity and their nervous system. He would then take Q and A for 10 minutes. Following the Q & A we suggest having a 4-5 person panel discussion for 30 minutes, including the 3 of us and one or two other participants made up of AT teachers who have been working with pupils/students with connective tissue disorders for many years, and who may be hypermobile themselves. This way the audience hears first-hand experiences from AT teachers working (and living) with these conditions.