

Dance/Movement Therapy & Trauma



“Trauma leaves its imprint on both mind and body and research demonstrates effective treatment requires involvement of both.”

Grounded in the mind-body connection and in the power of movement as communication, dance/movement therapy (DMT) is a uniquely efficacious mode of psychotherapy for the treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other effects of abuse and trauma.

Trauma leaves its imprint on both mind and body and research demonstrates that effective treatment requires involvement of both. Because DMT uses movement as the primary means of assessment and communication, the body is not merely addressed in therapy but actually given a voice. Memories that may be too difficult to express verbally can be shared through movement and dissociated feelings, previously unknown, can be identified as they arise in the body. Survivors can eventually regain a sense of control over confusing thoughts and feelings as they navigate their own bodily felt experience. Relaxation and stress reduction techniques can also be incorporated to help survivors modulate emotional reactions, decrease muscular tension, lessen symptoms of hyperarousal and better adjust to daily routines. Because of its active intervention methods, DMT is often the treatment of choice for traumatized children whose brain development, nervous systems and externalized behavior are altered by traumatic experiences.

DMT is conducted with survivors of abuse, trauma, and torture in veterans' hospitals, clinics, psychiatric hospitals, rehabilitation centers and private practices all around the world.

Dance/Movement Therapy & Trauma Resources

Gray, A. E. L. (2001). The Body Remembers: Dance/Movement Therapy with an Adult Survivor of Torture. *American Journal of Dance Therapy*, 23(1), 29-43.

Gray, A. E. L. (2002). The Body as Voice: Somatic Psychology and Dance/Movement Therapy with Survivors of War and Torture. *Connections*, 3(2), 2-4.

Harris, D. A. (2007). Dance/movement therapy approaches to fostering resilience and recovery among African adolescent torture survivors. *Journal on Rehabilitation of Torture Victims and Prevention of Torture*, 17(2): 134-155.

Harris, D. A. (2007). Pathways to embodied empathy and reconciliation: Former boy soldiers in a dance/movement therapy group in Sierra Leone. *Intervention: International Journal of Mental Health, Psychosocial Work and Counseling in Areas of Armed Conflict*, 5(3), 203-231.

Kornblum, R. & Halsten, R. L. (2006). In-school dance/movement therapy for traumatized children. In S. Brooks (Ed.), *Creative Arts Therapies Manual*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

MacDonald, J. (2006). Dance with demons: Dance movement therapy and complex post traumatic stress disorder. In H. Payne (ed.) *Dance movement therapy: Theory, research and practice*. (49-70). New York: Routledge.

Mills, L., & Daniluk, J. (2002). Her body speaks: The experience of dance therapy for women survivors of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 80(1), 77-85.

O'Donnell, D. A. (2006). Meditation and movement therapy for children with traumatic stress reaction. In S. Brooks (Ed.), *Creative Arts Therapies Manual*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Singer, A. J. (2006). Hidden treasures, hidden voices: An ethnographic study into the use of movement and creativity in psychosocial work with war-affected refugee children in Serbia. In H. Payne (ed.) *Dance movement therapy: Theory, research and practice*. (101-111). New York: Routledge.

Valentine, G. E. (2007). Dance/movement therapy with woman survivors of sexual abuse. In S. Brooks (Ed.), *The Use of Creative Therapies with Sexual Abuse Survivors*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

“Dance/movement therapy is the psychotherapeutic use of movement which furthers the emotional, cognitive, physical and social integration of the individual.”

-American Dance Therapy Association

**For additional DMT & Trauma resources please visit www.adta.org