



# INTRODUCING MINDFUL MOVEMENT INTO YOUR CLINICAL PRACTICE

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# OVERVIEW

- Introduction to Mind-body connection
  - Exercise 1: Mindful Movement
- Expressive arts and Defining Dance
- History of Dance/Movement Therapy
- Trauma and the Body
- Trauma Sensitive Yoga
  - Exercise 2: TSY movements (chair yoga)
- Building a Movement Framework
  - Laban/Bartenieff Movement Language
  - Exercise 3: Words to Movement
- Exercise 4: The Coping Dance
- Closing



# OUTCOMES

1. Gain an introductory knowledge of mind-body connection for use in clinical practice.
2. Identify and practice three different movement therapy techniques to help clients cope with trauma.



# WHO IS SHE? (A LITTLE ABOUT ME)

- Grew up dancing
  - Ballet, tap, jazz, contemporary, & hip-hop
- BS & MS degrees in Microbiology & Biology
- MA is in Clinical Mental Health Counseling
  - Danced in the Contemporary & Flamenco Companies
- 200 hour Certified Yoga Teacher
- Currently split my time with ANHTC, adjunct professor in Dance at NMSU, & teach/perform locally with all different populations



# THINGS TO NOTE

Expressive movement aka dance may be weird or a new space for you...and that's OK!

I encourage you to respect your body and appreciate where it leads.

Please respect your own boundaries in this training. Connecting to our bodies may not always be a safe space or you may have a realization or recognize a trigger.

I ask that you participate in the exercises so you have a tangible connection to the work but please know you have absolute autonomy to take or leave what you wish and regulate as needed.

# INTRO TO MIND-BODY CONNECTION

*Watch any man as he walks down the avenue, and you can determine his status in life...We judge our fellow man much more by the arrangement of his skeletal parts than is evident at once.*

–Mabel E. Todd (The Thinking Body-originally published in 1937)

- The human experience involves the whole of its parts: body & mind further influenced by outside stimuli
- An essential understanding is that each piece is integrated and informing the other
- Our bodies share in the narrative of our lives

# EXERCISE 1: MINDFUL MOVEMENT

Mindfulness as defined by Bob Stahl & Elisha Goldstein “...cultivating awareness of the mind and body and living in the here and now”

Awareness is the initial building block to assist in integrating and creating connection between mind and body

**Mindful movement (script available with handout)**

**Discussion: What did you notice? Maybe a feeling in the body (stiffness/soreness), an area that was difficult to connect to, thoughts that came up.**



# EXPRESSIVE ARTS IN CLINICAL WORK

- Now that you have awareness of your individual body/movement experience today, time to delve into the relevance of this work
- Dance Movement Therapy is part of a larger movement happening within clinical work that has involved various forms of expressive art (music, visual, etc.)
- Such work is continuing to expand gaining recognition as to its efficacy for treatment of both physical and mental/emotional issues



# DEFINING DANCE

- There is no singular definition of dance. Most common themes include natural expression of the human condition with some structured use of time, space, and the body.

*“Movement is the essence of life, dance its ultimate expression...The artist creates out of the world that has made him in order to remake it according to the image of his inner world” –Walter Sorell*

- For use in our work today, I encourage you to consider letting go of what your expectation of what “dance” should be or look like. Instead, experiencing movement through a sense of non-judgement.

# DMT HISTORY

- Dance in terms of healing ritual or “medicine dances” can be seen historically and presently throughout the world dependent on cultural and spiritual practice.
- Dance within the realm of western psychology is relatively new in comparison and happened in tandem with the modern dance movement.
  - The philosophy of Modern dance focuses on authentic expression leading to its consideration of use with healing
  - Early pioneers of DMT were initially professional modern dancers/teachers who began to specialize in working with children with behavioral issues, people with movement problems, and those with psychiatric illnesses
- Exact date of DMT establishment as a clinical treatment began in the 1940s and the ADTA was founded in 1966

# DMT THEORY

- Early theoretical conceptualizations were based in psychodynamics attempting to bridge the body and psyche.
  - Jung wrote a paper in 1916, published in 1957, suggesting use of expressive body movement as one way to "give form" to the unconscious
- In the 1960s, research on non-verbal behavior and the role of the body in mental health issues influenced therapeutic ideology
- Today, dance therapy is eclectic based off of several theoretical frameworks including: psychodynamic, Gestalt, and humanistic

# DANCE/MOVEMENT THERAPY

Defined by the American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA) “the psychotherapeutic use of movement to promote emotional, social, cognitive, and physical integration of the individual, for the purpose of improving health and well-being.”

## 4 tenets of DMT

1. Movement is our first language, beginning with nonverbal communication in the womb and evolves throughout our lifetime
2. Mind, Body, Spirit are interconnected
3. Movement is functional, communicative, developmental, and expressive
4. Movement is used for assessment and intervention

# TRAUMA & THE BODY

- Further relevance of incorporating the body into treatment has been established through increased understanding of the relationship of trauma and the body
  - Essentially, the brain continuously defends against a threat that is ongoing creates toxicity for the body often cycling between hyperarousal and dissociation
- Bessel van der Kolk discussed three methods to address trauma:
  1. Top down-talk therapy
  2. Medication/Technology
  3. Bottom-up-"allowing the body to have experiences that deeply and viscerally contradict the helplessness, rage, or collapse that result from trauma."

# TRAUMA SENSITIVE YOGA THERAPY

- Research with TSY has had significant empirical evidence to support use in treatment
- TSY is a hatha (from the Sanskrit means “force”) style yoga class. Meaning simply that there is a physical exercise element incorporating various asanas (yoga forms)
  - Yoga the practice is a combination of multiple elements, not just body movement alone
- Emphasis in TSY is that forms are not about external appearance but rather the internal experience (interoception: perception of sensations from inside the body)

# EXERCISE 2: TRAUMA SENSITIVE YOGA

Notes on cueing:

1. Invitational language, not commands
  2. Connect choices to what can be done with the body in the present moment
    - Offering a “framework” choice A or B
  3. Connect choices to interoception
    - Offer the prompt of awareness further leading to assist in making the choice within the framework
- **TSY exercises (script available with handout). Discussion: how realistic/comfortable would you be trying this with a client?**

# BUILDING A MOVEMENT FRAMEWORK

- We have connected with our bodies to feel how they naturally move
- Also, recognizing that dance has no singular definition
  - Remember “natural expression of the human condition with some structured use of time, space, and the body”
- We explored some yogic movement that connects creating “forms” (a specific body orientation in space) with **interoception** (recognition of the body’s experience in those orientations)
- Now, we come to expanding the movement framework even further to assist in expression through the body



# CONCEPTS/LANGUAGE OF MOVEMENT

- Remember modern dance is closely connected to movement therapy as it has a focus in self-expression & natural movement style
- Codifying or giving language to movement forms was done by several theorists but I will highlight two specific ones for use in today's work
- Rudolf von Laban (1879-1958)
  - Austro-Hungarian dance theorist and modern dance innovator who created Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) and Labanotation. Essentially, codifying modern dance to assist in teaching, creation, evolution of the dance style
- Irmgard Bartenieff (1900-1981)
  - Student of Laban, took Laban concepts and expanded them developing a set of exercises and movement methods. Through these methods, she became a pioneer in use of dance in physical therapy with the idea that, "There is no such thing as pure 'physical therapy' or pure 'mental' therapy. They are continuously interrelated."

# PTBOS

## PATTERNS OF TOTAL BODY ORGANIZATION

- 6 fundamental movement patterns
  - Conceptually beginning from earliest stages of life (cellular respiration)
- Total body movement is coordinated and organized with each stage creating patterns, overlapping with one another
- Gives language to understand how the body integrates to create movement patterns

1) Breath



2) Core-Distal  
Connectivity



3) Head-Tail  
Connectivity



4) Upper-Lower  
Connectivity



5) Body-Half  
Connectivity



6) Cross-Lateral  
Connectivity



# MOTION FACTORS & EFFORTS

## 4 Motion Factors

- **Weight:** Light, Strong (active weight), or limp/heavy (passive weight)
- **Space:** Indirect vs. Direct
- **Time:** Sustained vs. Sudden
- **Flow:** Free vs. Bound

## 8 Basic Effort Actions

- Each combine 3 motion factors
- 1. Float-sustained, light, indirect
- 2. Punch-sudden, strong, direct
- 3. Glide-sustained, light, direct
- 4. Slash-sudden, light, direct
- 5. Dab-sudden, light, direct
- 6. Wring-sustained, strong, indirect
- 7. Flick-sudden, light, indirect
- 8. Press-sustained, strong, direct

# EXERCISE 3: WORDS TO MOVEMENT

- Certain physical positions (PTBOs) and/or physical efforts connect to specific feelings or experiences because of what naturally happens in our bodies
  - Example: Head-tail connection might relate to a fetal position and a sense of hiding or safety. Moving quickly with strength might relate to anger whereas moving quickly with lightness might relate to joy.

## **In small groups: (word list available with handout)**

- 1. Work as a group choosing 3 words and creating a single movement/gesture to represent each**
- 2. Discussion: Groups will then share their movements and explanations behind their thought process**



# MOVEMENT & NARRATIVE FOR TREATMENT

- By now, you have a framework of movement forms and efforts that can connect to feelings and words
- You know that connecting to the body, having awareness, and movement has clinical relevance
- Our last exercise is going to utilize each of these pieces to create a movement narrative

# EXERCISE 4: THE COPING DANCE

## **Self-discovery of coping with stressors**

1. The Challenge: Think about something that is a stressor, something difficult to get through. Develop a movement phrase that embodies and expresses this.
2. The Coping: Identify something in your life or in yourself that helps you with difficult problems. Create a movement phrase that embodies that.
3. The Transition: Go back and forth between the challenge movement and the coping movement. Notice the transition between them. Find ways to connect each piece (Challenge-Transition-Coping)
4. Think of a title for it.

*From "An Introduction to Medical  
Dance/Movement Therapy" by Sharon W. Goodill*

# CLOSING

## Outcomes

Gain an introductory knowledge of mind-body connection for use in clinical practice

Identify and practice three different movement therapy techniques to help clients cope with trauma.

**I want to thank you for taking time to move with me!**

**I'm happy to support further discussion or be a resource if you're interested in this work!**

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