Abstract

The Research and Practice Committee of the American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA) presents the research and thesis poster session at each annual conference. The abstracts reported in this paper were selected by the authors for the 2021 Virtual Research and Thesis Poster Session at the 56th Annual ADTA Conference. This year, the 56th Annual ADTA conference took place online, on a virtual platform, and Research and Thesis Poster Session featured two themes: (1) DMT Towards building Resiliency; and (2) DMT Insights from Practice. The following six abstracts have been selected for their quality and contributions to dance/movement therapy literature and feature a wide range of scholarly works in current research.

Keywords Dance/movement therapy research · Research and thesis posters · Abstracts · Conference proceedings

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Abstracts from the 2021 Research and Thesis Poster Session of the 56th Annual American Dance Therapy Association Conference, Dance/Movement Therapy: Ancient Healing, Modern Practice, Virtual Conference, October 14–17, 2021

Karolina Bryl1,2 · Cecilia Fontanesi2 · Chevon Stewart2,3

With Contributions From: Iyit Benusia, Xavia Hawkins, Eesha Mehta, Tripura Kashyap, Reetu Jain, Preethi Rajagopalan, Aparna Ramkrishnan, Sukriti Dua, Chyong-Mei Chang, Caitlyn Holly Gilmore, Siyao “Violet” Li

Karolina Bryl
postersession@adta.org

1 College of Nursing and Health Professions Department of Creative Arts Therapies, Drexel University, 1601 Cherry St (3 Parkway), 19102 Philadelphia, PA, USA
2 Research and Practice Committee, American Dance Therapy Association, 230 Washington Avenue Extension, Suite 103, 11203-3539 Albany, NY, USA
3 Applied Psychology Department, Antioch University New England, 40 Avon Street, 03431 Keene, NH, USA
Theme 1. DMT Towards Building Resiliency

Exploring Post-Genocide Chinese-Indonesian Identity From the Perspective of the Secondary Witness: Dance/Movement Therapy Approach

Iyit Benusia

The Chinese-Indonesian population is a bicultural and biethnic population with an extensive history of racism and discrimination in Indonesia since the colonial era. This situation has caused confusion on this population’s ethnic-racial identity. Ethnic-racial identity is a social construct that defines one’s sense of self within society. The lack of sense of self may negatively impact one’s perception towards self and others. This project addresses this issue by identifying the current Chinese-Indonesian ethnic-racial identity from the perspective of the secondary witness to the genocide event happening in 1998. This paper will evaluate how the 1998 genocide event has impacted the Chinese-Indonesians’ perception of their ethnic-racial identity. Using a dance/movement therapy approach, a community engagement project was held to understand this phenomenon through six Chinese-Indonesian participants’ responses during the session. The session offered a 2.5-hour therapeutic experience to the participants through an online platform. This study employs an interpretive phenomenological analysis framework and art-based movement response to examine the result. The result suggests that the participants have embraced their hybrid identity with the presence of unresolved trauma, resilience, and hope within this community. Participants’ responses suggest that this community is suitable for body-based practice. This paper recommends that dance/movement therapy could be an effective tool to promote social justice within this community. An emphasis on fighting forgetfulness is present in the study. Considering the heterogeneity of Chinese-Indonesians as a community, this paper presents the standpoint on the ethnic-racial identity from six male-dominated participants who have lived abroad at some point in their life. This paper suggests that further research could be done with participants of a more diverse demographical background.

Keywords Chinese-Indonesian, ethnic identity, racial identity, ethnic-racial identity, genocide, secondary witness, dance/movement therapy, trauma, resilience, community engagement project.

Iyit Benusia grew up moving from place to place before settling down in Indonesia, where she calls home. Iyit recently received her master’s degree in DMT from Lesley University. She is currently working as a Juvenile Justice Residential Clinician at a boys’ detention unit. She is also serving as MDC Liaison for NEADTA.
The Weight of Trauma: Exploring a New Method in Dance/Movement Therapy for Trauma Processing With Adolescents

Xavia Hawkins

This author developed a movement-based trauma informed method that implemented symbolic play with sandbag weights and light and dark colored scarves, for adolescents at the Boys and Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster, MA (BGCFL). This study was developed to observe how adolescents prioritize the magnitude of their trauma experiences to provide additional insight towards treatment planning. Over a four-week process, participants created artistic responses to the trauma they identified as most prevalent and engaged in symbolic play with different mediums including sandbag weights, and light and dark colored scarves, to ultimately choose which prop felt most representative of how they viewed their trauma. This study was conducted with seven students at BGCFL, aged 8–11, in a group dance/movement therapy session once a week for 45 min over four weeks. Author collected data based on verbal and nonverbal feedback from participants, journaled observations, and audio recordings throughout each session. The interventions were comprised of four stages: (1) Identifying trauma and/or stressor; (2) Moving through trauma (pt. 1); (3) Moving through trauma (pt. 2); and (4) Choosing to define trauma. Themes that arose during the study include: (1) Resiliency; (2) Equating dark colors and heavy weights to trauma; (3) Equating light colored scarves to acceptance; (4) Color associations with objects present during their trauma; (5) The reemergence of additional trauma when working with weights; and (6) Wanting to ground the body with weights. This movement-based study supports the need to expand the props used in the field of dance/movement therapy, and provides a new form of therapeutic assessment for treatment planning that actively encourages the autonomy of adolescents without violating any ethical codes.

Xavia Hawkins, MA, R-DMT from Hyattsville, MD recently graduated from Lesley University with her master’s in clinical mental health counseling specializing in dance/movement therapy. She has 15 years of performance dance experience in ballet, modern, jazz, and hip-hop including two years of studio instruction. Xavia currently works as a sexual and domestic trauma therapist in Arlington, VA. She is a member of Black MAGIC (Moving Affinity Group and Community) DMT group.

Effect of Dance Therapy Among Covid-19 Survivors, Frontline Workers, and Individuals Who Lost Family During Covid-19 Pandemic

Eesha Mehta, Tripura Kashyap, Reetu Jain, Preethi Rajagopalan, Aparna Ramkrishnan, and Sukriti Dua

The trauma that accompanied COVID-19 is both physiological and psychological; dance/movement therapists have made adaptations in order to continue providing therapeutic support to participants. Maintaining psychological well-being became
even more important in the pandemic. People experienced fear of contagion and loneliness leading to increased psychosocial burden including stress and depression.

In this study, we assessed whether levels of depression in tele-health dance/movement therapy sessions, varied across age and income, amongst participants with differing degrees of COVID-19 exposure (survivors, frontline workers, and individuals who lost family). Additionally, the study explored whether psychosocial factors improved after the sessions. Forty-two participants were recruited from the community through an on-going study which utilized dance facilitators from the Creative Movement Therapy Association of India (CMTAI) and used social and print media platforms. Each participant received ten virtual, 1.5-hour group dance/movement therapy sessions over a three-week period with data collected at baseline and on the last day of the intervention. Baseline questionnaires consisted of demographic variables and psychosocial assessments including Beck’s Depression Inventory and the Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory. Beck’s Depression Inventory and the Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory were analyzed using SPSS 28.0 (Armonk, NY). Independent T-tests were used to examine associations between psychosocial factors by COVID-19 exposure ($p<.05$). Paired T-test analysis was administered to examine pre- and post depression levels among participants ($p<.001$).

Participants ranged in age from 19 to 80. Participants were mostly women (98%) with a mean age of 35. Age and income did not vary across levels of depression ($p>.05$) although COVID-19 survivors had a higher depression score at the start of the intervention ($p<.05$). Findings also showed a significant decrease in depression in all participants in the study regardless of level of COVID-19 exposure (survivors, frontline workers, and individuals who lost family) at the end of the three-week dance/movement therapy intervention ($p<.001$). Dance/movement therapy sessions led to a decrease in levels of depression across all participants in our dance/movement therapy sessions suggesting the positive benefit of tele-health to deliver dance/movement therapy.

**Eesha Mehta** is a dance company member at the Head-Royce School in California with years of competitive dance experience in ballet, tap, modern, and jazz companies. Following an injury, she became connected to the world of dance/movement therapy and its positive impact on improving psychosocial outcomes. She has worked with the CMTAI to develop the tele-health Covid-19 project.

**Tripura Kashyap** pioneered dance/movement therapy in India in 1990. She studied dance/movement therapy at the Hancock Centre and received an M.A. in Psychology. Tripura received fellowships from the Ashoka International Foundation and Indian Ministry of Culture for her innovations in dance/movement therapy and contemporary dance. She authored *My Body, My Wisdom* and *Contemporary Dance: Practices, Paradigms and Practitioners*. Tripura is the co-founder of Creative Movement Therapy Association of India (CMTAI).

**Reetu Jain** is Co-Founder of CMTAI, a creative movement therapy (CMT, aka DMT) facilitator, a dancer/choreographer, and visiting faculty at Ashoka University in Delhi. Reetu is pursuing her PhD in Expressive Therapies at Lesley University,
exploring the potential of arts-based methods in gender-based violence prevention programs working with youth in India.

**Preethi Rajagopalan** completed her training in Creative Movement Therapy from CMTAI in 2015 and is completing the ADTA approved alternate route training at the National Centre for Dance Therapy (NCDT), Montreal. She has been working with various populations including neurodiverse children, teachers, and women’s groups.

**Aparna Ramkrishnan** is a R-DMT with a MA in dance movement psychotherapy from Goldsmiths, University of London and a MS in Medical Sociology from The University of Madras and a Post Diploma in Bharatanatyam from Kalakshetra Foundation, Chennai. She primarily works with adolescent and adult mental health within various community settings.

**Sukriti Dua** is a psychologist, dance/movement therapy practitioner and a choreographer. She has done her bachelors in Psychology and masters in Clinical Psychology and has also completed a certification in dance/movement therapy from CMTAI. She actively conducts workshops with students, universities, schools, corporates etc. and is a faculty on CMTAI’s certification courses.

### Theme 2. DMT Insights from Practice

**Exploring the Respective Relationships Between Applied Dance Movement Therapy and Aerobic Dance for Development of Bodily-kinesthetic and Emotional Intelligence Amongst Elementary Students**

**Chyong-Mei Chang**

This experimental study explored the relationships of dance/movement therapy (DMT) and Aerobic Dance (AD) interventions and differences in Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence (BKI) on Emotional Intelligence (EQ) amongst a group of 28 fifth and sixth grade elementary school students in Taiwan. Participants in respective groups (DMT \(n=13\); AD \(n=15\)) participated in eight weekly, 40-minute sessions and completed the Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence Assessment Scale (Chinese version) and the Inventory of Adolescent Emotional Intelligence (Chinese version) before and after interventions. Descriptive statistics and Chi-squared and t-test outcomes were performed to analyze the data. This data was supplemented with qualitative data obtained from students’ written feedback, classroom teachers’ feedback, and the researcher as instructors’ written reflections.

Analysis revealed no significant gender differences between groups, \(X^2 (1, N=28)=0.74, p=.39, \Phi=0.16\). Fisher’s Exact test revealed the higher level of identified emotional difficulties between groups (DMT=92.3%, AD=40%) as significant \((p=.006)\). Participants in the DMT group showed improvement in the self-motivation dimension of EQ, \(t(12)=2.24, p=.045\), and in overall EQ, \(t(12)=2.71, p=.019\). Par-
participants in the AD group demonstrated increases in self-understanding, $t(14)=2.45$, $p=.028$, self-motivation, $t(14)=2.16$, $p=.048$, and empathy, $t(14)=5.49$, $p=.000$, dimensions of EQ, as well as overall increases in EQ, $t(14)=3.51$, $p=.003$. The two groups demonstrated a marginally significant difference, $t(26)=-1.93$, $p=.065$, in the ability to manage emotions, with the DMT group reflecting higher ratings. Further, when considering differences in BKI, students with higher BKI had significantly higher ability to recognize the emotions of others than those with lower BKI, $t(26)=-2.22$, $p=.035$.

This study provides empirical evidence for the potential of the designed interventions to foster learning in a range of the emotional, physical, and interpersonal aspects emphasized by emotional intelligence theory. Results of this study emphasize the benefit of embodied learning methods for school children in general, while also providing empirical support for application of DMT interventions in a novel socio-cultural context: Taiwan. The study concludes with suggestions for future research and practice.

**Keywords** Dance Movement Therapy; Dance Therapy; Aerobic Dance; Emotional Intelligence; Affect Education; Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence.

Chyong-Mei Chang holds an M.A. in psychology, B.A. in nursing, and a registered China-Germany dance/movement therapist. She is co-founder of the award-winning Taiwan Creative Body-Mind Development Association and has years of experience working with diverse at-risk groups, children and parents, as well as in organizational and team development.

The Care and Keeping of Therapeutic Connection in Telehealth: An Embodied Inquiry

Caitlyn Holly Gilmore

This qualitative embodied artistic inquiry self-study explored the effects of using telehealth for therapy due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The available literature discussed throughout this paper suggests that the adaptations made to therapy as a result of the pandemic affected the practices associated with dance/movement therapy’s theoretical principles of embodiment, attunement, and somatic countertransference. Because of the unknowns of COVID-19, research on mitigating the negative aspects of telehealth is still emerging, thus increasing the anxiety of the subject as an emerging professional. In order to address the anxiety and mitigate telehealth’s effects on embodiment, attunement, and somatic countertransference, a personal Authentic Movement practice was developed and followed. This practice was followed each day prior to all telehealth therapy sessions, for a total of eighteen Authentic Movement sessions. Analysis, which took the form of a writing synthesis in a journal immediately following each practice session, was a built-in part of the practice. Results included an increased ability to attune to my body, which correlated with feeling a stronger therapeutic relationship in sessions with participants and taking
more therapeutic risks with them. Topics for further discussion and future research include how therapists can engage in regular self-care that incorporates their whole selves and the importance of future research on finding embodiment and relationship in telehealth.

Caitlyn Holly Gilmore (MA, LMHCA, R-DMT) is a recent graduate of Lesley University’s graduate program in clinical mental health counseling and dance/movement therapy. She has recently launched her dance/movement therapy private practice, Generations Dance Psychotherapy, in Seattle, WA, where she lives with her husband and family.

Co-leadership in Dance/Movement Therapy: A Mixed-Method Literature Review

Siyao “Violet” Li

The co-leadership model is an under-examined subject in the current picture of the field of dance/movement therapy (DMT). Although deeply rooted in the development of the field, its significance for the current context of culturally-informed and evidence-based practice is still under-investigated (Hudson, 1995). This thesis sheds light on the importance of co-leadership in DMT through a historical review of the development of the field, the rationale of using co-leadership in DMT from neuroscientific, psychological, and practical perspectives, and a synthesis of empirical studies on the effectiveness of co-leadership in DMT. Co-leadership is a tradition in the field of DMT which prospered when apprentice therapists inherited the work from founders of the field. However, the tradition is vanishing as a single narrative unconsciously dominated the field. Historically the use of co-leadership is a method to honor the tradition and embrace multiculturalism in the field. Studies in neuroscience and psychology provide theoretical frameworks for how co-leadership strengthens the healing factors in DMT. The literature search process follows the protocol of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA; Moher et al., 2009; Moher et al., 2015). A qualitative data synthesis was then performed on the studies to generate the therapeutic themes on effectiveness based on the three-step model suggested by Thomas & Harden (2008), with the art-based initial coding to generate narratives that bridge tacit knowledge of the researcher to inform explicit expression (Linde, 2001; Nonaka & Konno, 1998). The mixed-method synthesis of empirical studies showed that the co-leadership model enhances the effectiveness of DMT in terms of providing a holding environment, developing meaningful interventions, and facilitating shared insights. This paper serves to advocate for more studies on the usage of co-leadership in the field of DMT.

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Siyao “Violet” Li is a registered dance/movement therapist. She received her M.A. in clinical mental health counseling from Lesley University. She received her B.A in psychology and PhD in cognitive neuroscience from Beijing Normal University. She currently works with BIPOC and immigrant families in greater Boston Area as an in-home therapist.

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