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# From Tradition to Diversity Innovation and Breakthrough Key Conversations on Dance Therapy Around the World

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# From Tradition to Diversity, Innovation, and Breakthrough: Key Conversations on Dance Therapy Around the World

## 从传统到多元化，创新与突破-全球舞蹈治疗的关键对话

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## Abstract

In the World Arts & Embodiment Forum 2023, a key conversation was held with an international panel. This panel convened 16 international experts in dance and movement therapy to discuss their personal contributions to the field's development in their respective countries. The aim was to create a space for sharing experiences and knowledge paradigms, embracing the diversity of emerging forms. Encouraging a creative environment, the panel fosters open dialogue to support the uniqueness of approaches and experiences. These presentation summaries have, in some instances, been edited for publication. These discussions provide insight into the profession's evolution in a diverse world, fostering a collective understanding of key developments. The panel reflects a spirit of global collaboration and consolidation.

**Keywords:** dance therapy, dance movement therapy (DMT), global development, arts & embodiment

## 摘要

2023 年世界艺术身心学论坛 (WAEF2023) 的舞蹈治疗峰会上组织了一场重要的对话。这场分享会召集了 16 位舞蹈治疗和动作治疗领域的国际专家，他们讨论了对各自国家地区该领域发展的个人贡献。此次对话的目的是创造一个分享经验和知识范式的空间，并容纳新兴形式的多样性。 该分享会通过鼓励创造性的氛围，促进开放的对话交流，以支持不同途径和经验的独特性。他们的发言经过编辑整理成为此文。 这些讨论让我们深入了解该行业在多元化世界中的演变，以促进对关键发展的统一化理解。该研讨会体现了全球合作与整合的精神。

**关键词:** 舞蹈治疗, 舞蹈/动作治疗, 全球发展, 艺术与具身化

## Introduction

The World Arts and Embodiment Forum (WAEF; www.waef2023.org), organized by Inspirees Institute and global partners from February to April 2023, served as a platform for creative arts and somatics development in various educational and therapeutic fields. Within the Summit of Dance Therapy & Movement Therapy, a global panel assembled 16 leading experts who shared personal insights and contributions to the evolution


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of dance and movement therapy in their respective countries. This inclusive space encourages the sharing of experiences and knowledge paradigms while embracing the evolving diversity of the field. Prof. Vivien Marcow Speiser and Dr. Tony Yu Zhou curated this global panel in the spirit of advancing global collaboration and knowledge consolidation. Preceding this event, discussions on the global development of dance therapy had already taken place (Dunphy et al., 2021). This article is the summary based on the conference proceedings of WAEF2023 edition (Chaiklin et al., 2023). It provides further reflection of the personal journey of the presenters as well as the professional development of dance therapy in their regions.

## Sharon Chaiklin (USA)

In the USA, the inception of DMT as a profession can be traced back to visionary individuals who pioneered the therapeutic use of dance. In the 1950s, figures such as Marian Chace, Blanche Evan, and Lilyan Espenak on the East Coast as well as Mary Whitehouse and Trudy Shoop on the West Coast independently explored dance in therapeutic settings. Because of their geographic separation, there was minimal communication between them.

In the 1950s, a small group, including the author, who had studied with Marian Chace on the East Coast, recognized the need for communication to advance dance therapy as a profession. A pivotal moment occurred during a meeting in a Chinese restaurant in Washington, DC, with Beth Kalish, Claire Schmais, Cathy Pasternak, and Marian Chace. Chace's approval was crucial, although she initially hesitated, fearing the work might be perceived as simplistic. Eventually, overcoming these concerns, the American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA) was established through persistent efforts, with Marian Chace becoming its first president, and the inaugural conference held in 1966.

The West Coast followed suit a few years later, acknowledging the need for organization but allowing the East Coast to take the lead. This geographical divide initially slowed down collaboration, but when it happened, it bridged theoretical perspectives and techniques. Communication was facilitated through newsletters, conferences, and workshops. Over time, standards were set, a registry was established, and a sense of community developed.

Establishing the profession was challenging. The process involved advocating for dance therapy's efficacy and distinctiveness in the mental health field. Creating jobs and educating professionals about the value of dance therapy posed ongoing challenges.

The first graduate program emerged at Hunter College in 1973, serving as a catalyst for similar programs to follow. The exchange of knowledge extended globally, with American dance therapists offering workshops in other countries. Today, DMT evolves uniquely in various countries worldwide.

Sharon Chaiklin had the privilege of apprenticing under Marian Chace in 1964, experiencing the intensity and satisfaction of witnessing her work. Understanding the depth of dance therapy is a gradual process, often learned through careful observation and learning from those we work with, who become our greatest teachers in this transformative journey.

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## Helen Payne (UK)

The landscape of dance movement psychotherapy (DMP) in the UK is marked by the visionary contributions of Prof. Helen Payne, whose journey began in 1975 and continues to shape the field today. Her transformative impact encompasses pioneering practices, job creation in special education and the NHS, the establishment of the professional association, the launch of UK government postgraduate training, initiation of research at doctoral levels, and a profound presence in academic publications and journals.

### Foundations of Practice (1975–1977)

Helen's journey commenced in 1975 with a full-time role as a movement/physical education specialist in a special school, introducing movement therapy to a diverse group of emotionally disturbed, autistic, and moderately learning-disabled children and adolescents. In 1977, she attended a "dance therapy" course at the Dance Centre in Covent Garden, London, where ballet exercises and exploration of Marian Chace's practice ignited her passion. This period also marked the initiation of peer support sessions with Lyn Crane, a US dance graduate practicing DMP in a psychiatric hospital.

### Educational Pursuits (1977–1978)

Helen's commitment to learning led her to a one-year full-time course on 'drama and movement in therapy' at Kingsway Princeton, London, in 1977. The course, led by notable instructors Audrey Wethered and Chloe Gardner, laid the groundwork for a multidisciplinary approach. In 1978, she furthered her education with a one-year full-time course at the Laban Centre, emphasizing "dance therapy."

### Professional Association and Groundwork (1978–1982)

During the years 1978–1982, Helen, along with Lyn Crane and Catalina Garvie, engaged in frequent meetings, laying the foundation for the professional association. This collaborative effort culminated in the establishment of the Association for Dance Movement Therapy (ADMT) in 1982.

### Government-validated Training and Academic Endeavors (1985–1996)

A significant milestone was reached in 1985 with the validation of the first government CNAA postgraduate training in DMP at the Hertfordshire College of Art and Design (HCAD), where Helen played an active role. In 1987, she completed the first UK research on DMP, titled "DMT with Young Offenders." Subsequent years witnessed the establishment of EcArTE at HCAD in 1988, including DMP presentations.

In 1990, Helen published the first UK book on DMP, titled *Creative Movement and Dance in Groupwork*, initiating a prolific series of publications. The culmination of her academic journey occurred in 1996 with the completion of the first PhD in DMP, titled "Personal Development Groups in Postgraduate Training and its Impact on Subsequent DMP Practice."

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## Global Collaborations and Continuing Impact (2002–2023)

Helen's contributions extended globally, with books such as *Dance Movement Therapy* in 2002 and the second edited book on UK DMP in 2006. In 2017, an edited book showcased international practitioners, and in 2019, *The Routledge International Handbook of Embodied Perspective in Psychotherapy* featured global contributions.

In 2022, ADMP UK celebrated its 40th anniversary at a conference held at the University of Birmingham, showcasing the enduring legacy of Helen Payne and the evolving nature of DMP in the UK. Helen's journey continues to inspire generations of DMP practitioners, solidifying her pivotal role in the development and expansion of this transformative therapeutic discipline.

## Yael Barkai (Israel)

Embarking on Yael Barkai's journey as a dance therapist in Israel in the 1950s, two influential teachers, Yardena Cohen and the founders of Seminar Hakibbutzim in Tel Aviv, significantly shaped both her personal path and the trajectory of dance therapy in the country. Yardena Cohen, renowned for her unique understanding of the therapeutic potential of dance, became a crucial influence in Yael Barkai's formative years. Simultaneously, the founders of Seminar Hakibbutzim, German immigrants, provided insights into the mind–body relationship during a teachers' training program in physical education.

The landscape of dance therapy in Israel saw a transformative moment in 1964 when Marian Chace visited. Two years later, Yael Barkai, along with four other Israeli women, traveled to the USA to apprentice with Chace, marking a pivotal event that would influence the subsequent growth of dance therapy in Israel.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, the field continued to evolve with the arrival of US-trained dance therapists and the return of Israeli therapists who had pursued studies abroad. Dr. Vivien Marcow Speiser's establishment of the expressive therapies program in 1979, initially a local chapter of Lesley College, became Israel's inaugural training program. Subsequent programs at Haifa University, David Yelin College in Jerusalem, and Seminar Hakibbutzim integrated psychodynamic and innovative somatic approaches.

A significant turning point occurred when the Israeli Council for Higher Education recognized these training programs, granting them the authority to confer master's degrees. Currently, approximately 75 students graduate annually, contributing to a pool of 1,400 practicing dance therapists in Israel. The Ministry of Education stands out as a major employer, offering positions in both regular and special-needs schools, with expressive arts therapies being the exclusive form of psychotherapy provided by the ministry.

The professional strides made in the field align with robust academic research and theoretical advancements, with pioneers such as Yona Shahar Levi and Dr. Nava Lotan contributing significant paradigms. The second and third generations of Israeli dance therapists are making noteworthy contributions, particularly in trauma treatment. Figures such as Merav Tal Margalit, Maya Vulcan, Maitri Shacham, and Einat Shuper-Engelhard are integrating dance therapy with somatic experiencing to address prevalent trauma in the country.

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Furthermore, there is a growing interest in the intersection of dance therapy and neuroscience, with Dr. Sharon Vaisvaser, a choreographer and brain scientist trained as a dance therapist, leading the charge. Her role as the coordinator of master's training programs underscores the integration of cutting-edge developments in neuroscience into dance therapy practices. These collective efforts reflect the dynamic evolution and impact of dance therapy in Israel, fostering a rich tapestry of healing and growth.

## Rosa Maria Govoni (Italy)

Rosa Maria Govoni's journey in dance began during childhood, where she instinctively expressed emotions through improvised dances, fostering a love for movement as a natural and aesthetic means of communication. At the age of 6 years, she enrolled in ballet school, initiating community dance activities in her backyard, forming the early roots of her passion for bringing people together through dance. Early aspirations to help suffering children laid the foundation for her eventual immersion in DMT.

After earning a degree in education and psychology in Italy, Rosa Maria pursued further studies in dance, leading her to the USA in 1977. There, she discovered and fell in love with DMT, particularly inspired by Janet Adler. Her years in the USA involved extensive professional studies, internships, supervision, and personal growth, contributing to her profound connection with the field.

Returning to Italy in 1983, Rosa Maria reflected on the transformative journey within the Italian context. Amidst a formal and indirect communication style, she navigated the integration of DMT and creative arts therapy (CAT) into a culture deeply influenced by strong psychoanalytic principles. The sociopolitical landscape, marked by the innovative "Basaglia law" of 1978, facilitated the closure of mental institutions, emphasizing a more open and humane approach to mental healthcare.

Collaborating with Art Therapy Italiana (ATI), Rosa Maria worked alongside influential figures such as Maria Belfiore and Mimma Della Cagnoletta. Together, they developed DMT international training programs, combining art and dance, integrating depth psychology, psychodynamic theories, Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), and authentic movement (AM). Their collaboration extended to affiliations with Goldsmith College of London and the Psychology Department of Bologna University.

In the 1990s, DMT flourished in Italy, prompting Rosa Maria's collaboration with other DMT school directors, leading to the founding of the Italian professional association APID (National Association for Professional DMT in Italy) in 1997. This association aimed to support students and professionals, addressing issues of professional recognition, training standards, and regulations. Rosa Maria actively participated in the European network, which later evolved into the European Association for Dance Movement Therapy (EADMT).

In 2004, ATI, under Rosa Maria's leadership, established the Institute Psychotherapy integrated to AT and DMT, aligning with new regulations for psychotherapy in Italy. Unlike many countries, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, and arts therapies schools in Italy are primarily private, a unique characteristic of the Italian educational landscape.

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Rosa Maria's impactful clinical work in various settings, coupled with her leadership in shaping professional standards and regulations, has significantly contributed to the growth and recognition of DMT in Italy. Her dedication to the profession reflects a deep belief in the transformative power of dance and movement as a universal language connecting humanity with nature.

### France Schott-Billmann (France) and Eleni Chatzigeorgiou (Greece)

This exploration of dance rhythm therapy (DRT) within the context of Western interest in traditional healing practices, particularly shamanism, reveals an intriguing interplay between tradition and modernity. As Western societies increasingly turn their attention to age-old practices rooted in diverse cultures, a transformative journey emerges, challenging established norms within dance therapy.

#### Study of Traditional Practices by Human Sciences

The roots of this journey trace back to the early 19th century when anthropology embarked on a quest to dissect and understand traditional healing practices (Bateson, 1977; Lévi-Strauss, 2003). Figures such as Bateson and Lévi-Strauss laid the groundwork, recognizing the undeniable effectiveness of these practices. Embraced by animistic and polytheistic cultures, these traditions unveil a supernatural realm inhabited by spirits (Campbell, 1991). Traditional healers, often shamans or priests, access this ethereal space through trance, employing collective rituals and an artistic language of music, songs, drawings, and poetry. The therapeutic mechanism lies in symbolic efficacy, where symbols directly impact the patient's subconscious, resonating with the principles echoed by psychologists such as Jung (1970), Freud and J. Lacan (Lacan, 1975).

#### Search for a Modern Collective and Symbolic Therapy

Anthropological studies in Western cultures, despite centuries of social repression, unearth shamanic echoes in rural settings. A current of animist thought persists, challenging the dominance of "scientistic" rationality (Loux, 1990). This alternative logic, rooted in the unconscious, associations of ideas, analogy, metaphors, poetry, and art, poses a compelling question: Can an egalitarian relationship with traditional therapies help revive ancestral knowledge without imposing Western dominance? The therapeutic potential inherent in artistic forms becomes a catalyst for Western arts therapy to reconnect with its lost heritage.

#### Dance Rhythm Therapy (DRT)

DRT emerges as a powerful expression of this reconnection (Schott-Billmann, 2015). In its comprehensive scope, art therapy transcends the conventional therapist–patient dynamic, forming a triangular connection. The "primitive expression" technique, a mediation dance form within DRT, draws inspiration from Katherine Dunham's ethno-choreographic research on Caribbean Voodoo dances. This technique, rooted in vital rhythms like the heartbeat and breath, becomes a universal language in dance music

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worldwide. The rhythmic and vocalized gestures invoke a deep connection between mythical primitive humans and their environment, symbolizing fundamental emotions. DRT revalues ancestral tools, emphasizing group dynamics, joy, games, ritual, rhythm, imitation, repetition, and celebration. It demands self-limitation, rule acceptance, and artistic effort, guiding individuals toward a union with symbols during trance.

This presentation not only advocates for the continued exploration of DRT but envisions a broader tapestry of intercultural co-creations. By respecting and integrating diverse perspectives, DRT becomes a bridge between tradition and modernity, offering a unique contribution to the evolving landscape of therapeutic practices. As a plural and universal dance, it holds the potential to address pressing global challenges, embodying the transformative power of collective and symbolic healing.

## Diana Fischman (Argentina)

Diana Fischman, from Argentina, presents an embodied enactive relational DMT/psychotherapy perspective, emphasizing the emergence of cognition from dynamic interactions among self, others, and the environment (Koch & Fischman, 2011; Thompson, 2007; Varela, 2002). The Argentinean DMT journey began by navigating real possibilities, creating the first Spanish-speaking DMT training program globally, despite a lack of literature in their language. The movement spread across Spanish-speaking countries, fostering DMT associations and training programs, including the Brecha program and a master's program at the Universidad Nacional del Arte.

Fischman sheds light on the socio-cultural backdrop in Argentina, where psychoanalysis and psychotherapy hold significant sway, particularly in the middle and upper classes. Tango, deeply ingrained in Argentine culture, takes center stage in DMT settings. DMT practitioners, enamored with tango, have integrated it into therapeutic practices, creating innovative approaches like NeutoTango, Conect-Tango, and tango therapy for diverse populations, including the elderly, those with Parkinson's or Alzheimer's, and individuals with neurological challenges.

Tango, originating in the late 19th century in the Río de la Plata basin, carries a multiethnic and multicultural legacy. Initially a dance of the popular classes, tango united people of diverse backgrounds through shared rhythms. Fischman highlights the genre's transformation, from the boom in the forties to Astor Piazzolla's avant-garde influence in the fifties, ultimately earning UNESCO recognition as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009 (Machado, 2020).

Incorporating tango into DMT practices, therapists deconstruct its elements for their therapeutic benefits. These include the dance's clear rhythm, accents, pauses, social interaction, dialogue, synchronization, embracing, and walking steps. Dance therapists, such as Clarissa Machado, recognize the myriad physical and cognitive benefits of tango. These range from improved posture, balance, gait, and motor rehabilitation to enhancements in attention, memory, concentration, spatiality, kinesthetic awareness, self-knowledge, expressiveness, self-esteem, identity, and a sense of belonging.

Importantly, DMT practitioners embedded in DMT principles do not teach tango; they engage in DMT using tango. This approach ensures that tango becomes a medium

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for therapeutic exploration, promoting holistic well-being and fostering an integral connection within the dance community.

## Marcia Plevin (Italy/USA)

Marcia Plevin, with a background in contemporary dance, discovered DMT during her dance career in the USA. She began experimenting with creative movement for adults without a dance background, which evolved into a training program for Creative Movement in Italy. Realizing the need for a psychological grounding in using dance for healing, she pursued dance therapy training through the school of Expressive Arts Therapy, ATI.

In the 1990s, Plevin developed the creative movement method Garcia-Plevin, teaching both AM and creative movement in Finland. Her students in these groups went on to formally study DMT and became therapists in their countries. She became a member of the first educational curriculum for APID in 1997 and represented APID to EADMT from 2015 to 2018.

Maria is presently a DMT teacher and supervisor for ATI Expressive Arts program, Inspirees Institute DMT, AM program in China, DMT program in Bilgi University in Turkey, and the DMT program in Romania. She is involved in DMT clinical work in Italy, including substance abuse recovery, psychiatric patient groups, oncology/hematology units, and private practice dealing with depression, trauma, and personality disorders. Marcia is also an AM guide and teacher, collaborating with Rosa Maria Govoni to develop a master's program in AM through ATI.

She is a member of the faculty of Circles of Four, an AM training program initiated by Janet Adler in 2013. In Italy, the professional landscape for DMT is evolving, with practitioners increasingly involved in specific projects in education, psychological and social distress, workshops for adolescents, refugee support, and elderly care. There is a growing demand for collaboration across various sectors, reflecting a shift in national and European funds toward interdisciplinary approaches. These challenges, alongside the World Health Organization's study on art therapies, present important opportunities for the field of DMT in Italy. During Covid-19, Marcia has been actively developing online teaching methods (Plevin & Zhou, 2020).

## Irina Biryukova (Russia)

Irina Biryukova, a key figure in the development of DMT in Russia, recounts the early stages of DMT in the mid-1990s. Initially, it began with self-exploration groups and weekend personal growth training rather than therapeutic work in clinical settings. The Russian Association for DMT was established in December 1995 with a focus on creating systematic training for DMT. Irina Biryukova started a 3-year postgraduate DMT international training in Moscow in January 1996, under the guidance of Joan Chodorow, her first DMT teacher.

The intention was to bring American and European DMT knowledge and experience to Russia, and Miriam Berger, the president of the ADTA at the time, supported this initiative by sending books published by the ADTA. The collaboration of Russian and international experts from the field of DMT, expressive arts therapy, and psychology was

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emphasized to create an educational environment of professional exchange, growth, and support. The DMT training, leading to a state-recognized post-graduate diploma, was established within the Institute of Practical Psychology and Psychoanalysis (IPP&P) from 1999.

The DMT Association in Russia held national DMT conferences every two years, with several featuring international participation. In 2021, the jubilee conference "Dance of Generations: 25 Years of DMT in Russia" took place, with key speakers including R.M. Govoni, P. Pallaro, and T. Stromsted. The Russian DMT Association actively participated in European working groups for professional development from 1997 to 2010, becoming one of the founding members of the European DMT Association in 2010.

The development of DMT in Russia started from scratch, with DMT self-exploration trainings and personal growth groups serving as the foundation for DMT practice. Adapting DMT methods to the Russian social and cultural context proved challenging in the first 15 years, but the establishment of training and practice standards within the EADMT has guided the development of DMT within the Russian psychology services, healthcare, and educational systems.

Despite challenges, the DMT training grew into the Dance-Movement Psychotherapy Department at IPP&P, offering various programs. Slowly, DMT applications were developed in clinical settings, addressing mental disorders, oncology, psychosomatics, child developmental disorders and autism, alcoholism, and the elderly. Irina Biryukova concludes by summarizing the stages of DMT development in Russia: accumulation of existing knowledge in the international DMT field, adaptation of DMT applications to the Russian social and cultural context, and the development of original methods and clinical programs of DMT application, collaborating with multidisciplinary teams in different settings.

## Connor Kelly (New Zealand/USA)

Connor Kelly provides an overview of the development of DMT in Australia and New Zealand. The roots of DMT in Australia trace back to the mid-1960s when dance educators and choreographers in Melbourne, such as Johanna Exiner, Margaret Lasica, and Phyllis Lloyd, began applying dance as therapy in institutions such as orphanages and psychiatric hospitals (Loughlin, 2003). In the 1970s, dancers and dance teachers with dual degrees in professions such as social work, psychology, and physiotherapy started incorporating dance into therapy in various settings, a trend that continues to this day.

Andrew Moorish, in a keynote from 1989, details the development of DMT in the Victoria region (Morrish, 1989). In the 1980s, there was a graduate diploma at the University of Melbourne in the School of Early Childhood Education that included basic concepts of movement analysis. Naomi Atchison initiated the Dance Therapy Working Party through AUS Dance in 1983, and Dr. Marica Leventhal played a significant role, offering workshops and founding the International Dance Therapy Institute of Australia (IDTIA) in the 1980s. The Dance Movement Therapy Association of Australia was formed in 1994 in Victoria and expanded to become the Dance Movement Therapy Association of Australasia (DTAA) around 2015 to include New Zealand.

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Connor Kelly became the first professional member from New Zealand in 2004, and the organization has members from other Asian communities, including Taiwan and the Philippines. In recent years, the DTAA has strengthened its foundation by creating a new constitution in 2018, followed by Competencies Standards (2019) and the Code of Ethics (2020). Two master's programs in DMT were established at the University of Auckland in 2019 and the University of Melbourne in 2020.

The DTAA's strategic plan emphasizes Viability, Visibility, and Vision, aiming to uphold quality standards as a professional organization. The establishment of foundational structures, including these documents, positions the DTAA to pursue employment opportunities through insurance schemes in the region, contributing to the professionalization and growth of DMT in Australia and New Zealand (Dunphy, 2021).

## Kyung Soon Ko (South Korea)

Kyung Soon Ko provides an overview of the current state of DMT in Korea, emphasizing DMT-related degree programs, certification, and academic associations. Despite the potential benefits of DMT, the field has faced slow growth and encountered barriers in Korea.

### Degree Programs

Several universities in Korea offer degree programs in DMT. Notable examples include Kyunghee University and Soonchunhyang University, which offer master's degree programs; Pusan National University, which offers both master's and doctoral degree programs with a focus on somatic therapy; Seoul Women's University, which offers DMT classes as a related major or second major; Jeonju University, which offers BA, master's, and PhD programs in DMT. Jeonju University's program requires students to complete at least 500 to 1,040 hours of clinical training before graduation.

### Certification and Licensure

There is currently no government-approved DMT license in Korea. Various certifications are issued by organizations with differing levels of training and requirements. Compared with international standards like R-DMT and BC-DMT, these certifications have lower requirements in terms of clinical hours, coursework, and supervision hours. Ko emphasizes the need for recognition of DMT as an independent professional field within the government's standardized system to support dance therapists financially.

### Academic Associations

Two prominent organizations in Korea specializing in DMT are the Korean Society of Dance/Movement Psychotherapy (KSDMP) and the Korean Dance Movement Psychotherapy Association (KDMPA). Both associations publish journals recognized by the Korea Citation Index. Additionally, KSDMP and the Korean Dance Therapy Association (KDTA) issue DMT certifications.

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### Expressive Arts Therapy Trend

An interesting trend in expressive arts therapy in Korea is the increasing number of Chinese international students pursuing doctoral degrees in expressive arts therapy. Students specializing in music therapy, art therapy, or DMT are studying in Korea. The impact of these students on the expressive arts therapy field in China and Korea will become more apparent when they return to their home countries.

Overall, Ko highlights the challenges and opportunities for DMT in Korea, underscoring the need for official recognition and continued development within the academic and professional landscape.

## Sabine C. Koch (Germany)

Sabine C. Koch provides a rich and detailed overview of the historical roots and contemporary landscape of DMT in Germany, offering valuable insights into its evolution over time.

In Germany, the foundations of DMT can be traced back to the avant-garde expressive dance movement of the 1920s, led by influential figures such as Mary Wigman. The legacy of these pioneers, including Fe Reichelt, Anna Marakas, and Wally Kaechele, played a crucial role in breaking away from classical dance norms, paving the way for the emergence of DMT as a distinct therapeutic approach.

The 1970s and 1980s saw a significant influx of German practitioners traveling to the USA to study DMT. Upon their return, these individuals, including Marianne Eberhard-Kaechele, established the first training programs in Germany. The pivotal moment came with the founding of the Dance Movement Therapy Association (BTD) in 1999, signaling a commitment to setting standards and fostering professional relationships within the field.

The academic roots of DMT in Germany started to expand in the 1990s, marked by the completion of DMT-related PhD projects. Sabine C. Koch's Fulbright scholarship to Hahnemann University (1995–1997) laid the groundwork for the establishment of academic training in Germany. The launch of the first DMT master-level training at SRH University Heidelberg in 2012 was a significant milestone.

Sabine C. Koch has been a driving force in DMT research, particularly in the exploration of embodiment—the effects of self-initiated movement on attitudes, affect, and cognition. In 2015, she received a professorship for empirical research in CAT at Alanus University, Bonn. This marked the inception of the Research Institute for Creative Arts Therapies (RIArT), focusing on a myriad of projects and studies.

Within the German DMT community, there is a growing awareness of diversity issues, acknowledging the need to learn from other countries' experiences, especially Australia and the USA. Efforts are ongoing to address diversity in terms of race, gender, and ability within the DMT landscape.

Sabine expresses her dedication to advancing DMT and CAT research. The ongoing projects at RIArT cover diverse areas such as DMT for autism, DMT for refugees, digital tools for DMT, therapeutic factors of DMT/CATs, and more. Simultaneously, there is

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a continuous commitment to establishing robust structures for academic training and enhancing access to research funding.

In conclusion, Sabine C. Koch highlights the global breakthrough of arts in health and acknowledges the ongoing journey toward achieving unity in diversity within the field of DMT in Germany.

## Rainbow Ho (Hong Kong, SAR, China)

Rainbow Ho provides a compelling narrative of the development of DMT in Hong Kong, offering insights into the challenges and opportunities that have shaped its trajectory.

In 2002, Rainbow Ho pioneered the introduction of DMT to Hong Kong by working with cancer patients at CancerLink. Despite initial misconceptions, media coverage helped raise awareness, though it required continuous explanation to distinguish DMT from dance classes or therapy for dancers.

Over the years, Rainbow Ho expanded her practice to diverse populations, including children with special needs, individuals with mental health conditions, couples with marital issues, and families with relationship problems. Completing her PhD in 2005, she began teaching DMT at the University of Hong Kong and conducted workshops in mainland China, Macau, and Taiwan, aiming to integrate DMT into Chinese society.

Facing challenges in securing research grants due to the novelty of DMT in Hong Kong, Rainbow Ho persisted. A pilot study on the effects of DMT on breast cancer patients, supported by the Hong Kong Cancer Fund, marked a turning point. Subsequent success in a large-scale randomized controlled trial on DMT in breast cancer patients, funded by the government grant council, garnered international recognition and awards from ADTA.

Driven by a passion to establish professional networks in Hong Kong, Rainbow Ho played a pivotal role in the formal establishment of the Hong Kong Dance Movement Therapy Association in 2014. With 15 registered dance movement therapists, many trained in the USA and UK, the association serves as a crucial anchor for those interested in DMT, contributing to the growth of job opportunities and increased workshop participation.

Rainbow Ho acknowledges challenges in traditional cultural barriers, particularly the reluctance to dance and move in public. The global COVID-19 pandemic added hurdles due to restrictions on in-person meetings and limited household space. Despite these challenges, the increased awareness of mental health and holistic wellness post-pandemic, coupled with improved international connections through technology, presents opportunities for the continued development of DMT.

In a positive turn, Rainbow Ho highlights collaboration with international researchers and scholars during the pandemic, emphasizing the potential for online platforms to facilitate global connections. As she envisions a future with improved training, practices, and advanced research, Rainbow Ho aims to elevate the status of DMT and foster stronger connections within the local and international communities.

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## Devika Mehta (India)

Devika Mehta provides a rich narrative of the development of DMT in India, highlighting the profound connection between dance, movement, and healing deeply embedded in the country's ancient traditions.

In the context of India's cultural and linguistic diversity, Mehta emphasizes the importance of understanding power dynamics and privilege within the social landscape. She acknowledges the pioneering contributions of figures like Tripura Kashyap and Sohini Chakraborty, whose work has played a transformative role in shaping the trajectory of DMT in the country.

Mehta reflects on the journey of DMT in India, from a lack of training in the late 1900s to the current landscape with multiple diploma and certificate programs and a master's program in expressive movement therapy. She notes the legislative progress with the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professionals Act, 2021, recognizing DMT as a profession. The Indian Association of Dance Movement Therapy has played a crucial role in advocating for the profession.

Breaking barriers to position DMT as mainstream therapy involves integrating movement practices to address caregiving challenges and incorporating indigenous Indian movement forms and rituals. However, Mehta points out the challenge of sustaining the growth of DMT in India, given the limited infrastructure and the need for financial viability.

Innovations in DMT in India include efforts to coalesce neuroscience, indigenous movement forms, rituals, and established DMT frameworks. Mehta discusses the Sampoornata model by Kolkata Sanved, creatively using dance and movement to empower survivors, and the importance of research, such as the study of movement for people with Parkinson's disease.

Mehta's passion for understanding the therapeutic elements of Indian folk forms and classical dances is evident in her current PhD work, integrating the Tarapa Nritya of the Warli Tribe for identity exploration. She emphasizes the importance of respecting and not appropriating sacred dances while leveraging archetypal and mythical imagery for therapeutic purposes.

As DMT practitioners in India continue to decolonize their practices, Mehta encourages drawing on centuries of indigenous knowledge. The rich tapestry of Indian movement forms contributes significantly to the global field of DMT, providing unique insights and therapeutic approaches.

## Wolfgang Mastnak (Germany/China)

Prof. Wolfgang Mastnak presents a thoughtful critique of the global dynamics within dance therapy, emphasizing the need for a nuanced, culturally sensitive approach. In his analysis, he draws attention to the rich history of health-promoting and therapeutic dances across various cultures over hundreds or thousands of years. He positions DMT as just one facet within the multifaceted realm of dance therapy, advocating for an acknowledgment of its importance without undue elevation.

A central concern in Mastnak's perspective is the potential for dance therapy, particularly DMT and American dance therapy, to inadvertently mirror missionary

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efforts, seeking to dominate the global dance therapeutic market. He expresses apprehension about a form of dance therapeutic colonialization and hegemony, cautioning against the imposition of specific models on diverse cultural landscapes. The use of phrases like the "development of dance therapy in the USA and its spread around the world" raises concerns about the power dynamics at play.

Highlighting the culturally sensitive nature of dance therapy, Mastnak underscores the importance of respecting diverse cultural traditions and socio-cultural conditions. He argues that the mere implementation of Western-based DMT courses in other cultures could have counterproductive effects, emphasizing the need for advanced dance therapeutic research to navigate the complex dynamics involved and to address ethical considerations.

Mastnak expands the conceptualization of dance therapy beyond the "psychotherapeutic use of movement," a definition often associated with ADTA. He points to the broader impact of dance therapy, including its significance in neuroplasticity for neuro-rehabilitation and its ability to modulate specific central nervous processes, offering relief for conditions such as Parkinson's disease. Additionally, he emphasizes the role of aesthetic factors in dance therapy, challenging a reductionist perspective.

The critique extends to the use of the term "therapy," as Mastnak calls for a consideration of diagnosis-specific interventions and dance therapeutic interactions within the context of cultural conditions. He underscores the necessity for culturally sensitive approaches, given the influence of diagnostic and pathological views on cross-cultural medicine and ethno-medicine.

In the realm of public health and clinical contexts, Mastnak advocates for research into the underlying mechanisms of therapies, involving disciplines such as neurosciences, psychoanalysis, and symbolic interactionism. He envisions that this research will lead to the development of science-based models, rendering dance therapeutic ideologies obsolete, and shaping the future of dance therapy based on relevant scientific outcomes.

## Sudesh Mantillake (Sri Lanka)

A Call for Culturally and Locationally Sensitive Approaches to Dance Therapy: Imagining Future Dance Therapy based on Sri Lankan Experience.

Sudesh Mantillake, a dancer, educator, researcher, and activist from postcolonial Sri Lanka, offers a nuanced perspective on the development of dance therapy in a cultural context deeply influenced by traditional healing rituals and the impact of colonialism. In his exploration, Mantillake advocates for a culturally and locationally sensitive approach to dance therapy. Drawing on his understanding of local traditions, he highlights the holistic nature of traditional healing rituals in Sri Lanka, which incorporate dance, movements, touch, herbal plants, and more.

Mantillake critically examines the historical transition in Sri Lanka from traditional healing practices to Western biomedical models, emphasizing the compartmentalization of mind and body in Western medicine. This compartmentalization poses challenges to the integration of dance and movement therapy within the Sri Lankan medical system. Moreover, he underscores the enduring influence of Western scientific knowledge over indigenous practices, contributing to the marginalization of dance therapy in the broader healthcare landscape (Mantillake, 2021).

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His advocacy extends to the need for a therapeutic model that embraces different epistemologies, acknowledges historical and present-day epistemological violence, and draws from various sources to create a culturally sensitive and inclusive framework for dance therapy.

In contrast, Wolfgang Mastnak, representing Germany/China, brings attention to the global dynamics of dance therapy, cautioning against the imposition of American dance therapy models on diverse cultures. He expresses concerns about potential dance therapeutic colonialization and hegemony, emphasizing the importance of mutual understanding and unbiased collaboration in the field.

Mastnak's perspective broadens the definition of dance therapy, suggesting that it encompasses more than the psychotherapeutic use of movement. He highlights its broader impacts on neuroplasticity and specific central nervous processes, urging a comprehensive view that considers aesthetic factors and the diverse cultural contexts in which dance therapy is practiced.

The call for a more expansive and culturally sensitive approach to dance therapy is echoed by both Mantillake and Mastnak. Their insights underscore the complex interplay between cultural traditions, historical legacies, and contemporary challenges in shaping the future of dance therapy. In this evolving field, they advocate for research that explores underlying mechanisms, acknowledges cultural sensitivity, and embraces a global understanding of dance therapy that goes beyond predetermined ideologies.

## Athina Copteros (South Africa)

Athina Copteros from South Africa provides a profound exploration of the historical and cultural context of dance and movement therapy in her country. She begins by acknowledging the deep roots of dance as a healing, ritualistic art in indigenous cultures in South Africa, emphasizing its connection to healing, interpersonal relationships, and the natural world.

Copteros highlights the shift in Western thought during the 20th century from a dualistic view of the separation between body and mind toward a more integrated understanding of the interdependence of body, mind, soul, and spirit. She argues that DMT can benefit from the long history in South Africa that values movement and dance as mediums for promoting health at individual, group, and community levels. Furthermore, she emphasizes the significance of embodiment and the indigenous connection to dance for healing in the South African context.

The historical and sociopolitical backdrop of South Africa, marked by a legacy of colonialism, oppression, and segregation, shapes the challenges faced by DMT in the country. Copteros addresses the prevailing issues of poverty, HIV/AIDS, unemployment, crime, violence, and various inequalities. Despite having a progressive constitution, South Africa grapples with high rates of violence against women and children, HIV/AIDS, corruption, and other social issues.

Importantly, Copteros underscores the limitations of verbal, insight-focused psychotherapy in resolving traumatic experiences, particularly in a context where trauma exposure is widespread. She argues that arts therapies, which integrate experiences

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through creativity and the body, hold great promise in addressing the psychological distress resulting from trauma.

Copteros introduces SANATA (the South African National Arts Therapies Association), founded in 2019, as a professional body representing various arts therapies, including DMT. However, she notes the challenges arts therapists face in terms of recognition, government support, and the need for an enabling regulatory and operational environment.

The unique approach to DMT in South Africa involves adapting to the local context and drawing on other disciplines, given the underfunded resources and overwhelming therapeutic needs. Copteros shares her personal journey, integrating water resource management and ecopsychology into her DMT practice, highlighting the importance of interdisciplinary approaches.

In conclusion, Copteros emphasizes the necessity for DMT in South Africa to be deeply aware of the country's psychosocial dynamics and embodied realities. This awareness is crucial for engaging constructively with embodied trauma, fostering empathy, and promoting equal partnerships in the therapeutic process. The embodied connectedness introduced by DMT resonates powerfully with indigenous cultures and practices in South Africa, further emphasizing its potential impact.

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