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# Authenticity: A dramatherapeutic reflective exploration using Authentic Movement with childcare workers in a group of foster care homes in Johannesburg, South Africa

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Wits School of Arts

Drama for Life

Master of Arts in the field of Drama Therapy

Research Report

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# Authenticity: A dramatherapeutic reflective exploration using Authentic Movement with childcare workers in a group of foster care homes in Johannesburg, South Africa

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Research assignment submitted to the University of the Witwatersrand in partial fulfilment of requirements of M.A. (Masters) in the field of Drama Therapy.






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I, Nina Karolin Neubauer, Student number: 2603263,
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Date: 30 June 2025

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Lecturer: Dr. Sibongile Bhebhe

“There is that in us which has moved from the very beginning; it is that which can liberate us.”

-Mary Starks Whitehouse, a founder of Authentic Movement (1987:53, as quoted in Avstreih 2017)

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This research is the culmination of my academic journey in obtaining my masters in Drama Therapy towards becoming a Drama Therapist. A few years ago I did not know what Drama Therapy was or that the profession existed, but through a myriad of steps, the influence of people and friends, and the direction of my Creator, I arrived at this beautiful place.

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Lastly, I am grateful to myself for having the courage and endurance to go on this journey. Drama Therapy has brought me hope and healing and I have faith it can do the same for many others. Onward and upward!

# ABSTRACT

This research investigated the use of Authentic Movement as an explorative tool with childcare workers in a group of foster care homes in Johannesburg, South Africa. It asked if childcare workers would be receptive and responsive to Authentic Movement and if Authentic Movement could be of benefit to them, especially in the reduction of stress, work-life integration, and the prevention of burnout. Authentic Movement is a self-directed movement practice that occurs in the presence of a witness. Goldhahn (2015:57) states Authentic Movement has often been limited to the white educated middle class due to cost and availability. This study wanted to extend Authentic Movement's reach to a new community and demographic. Four workshops were designed using a dramatherapeutic framework to enhance access to Authentic Movement and provide extra containment. The childcare workers engaging in the workshops embarked on a journey of self-discovery and embodied consciousness through Authentic Movement. The research concluded Authentic Movement helped the childcare workers by relieving stress in their bodies and mind, helping them develop an awareness of their emotions, providing the ability to express themselves (authenticity), increasing work-life integration and increasing their connection with others in the group. The research noted that participants' bodies initially engaged in dynamic stretching during Authentic Movement, but also explored gestures, story, and expression through their bodies. The researcher also acknowledged how the dramatherapeutic frame of the workshops using aspects of the Sesame approach assisted in receptivity and containment in the workshops, and possibly to Authentic Movement. This research, therefore, supports the use of Authentic Movement in mental wellness programs, personal and professional development, and self-care practices for childcare workers and those in helping professions in South Africa and beyond as a way of caring for the carer.

# ABBREVIATIONS

AM- AUTHENTIC MOVEMENT

CYC- CHILD AND YOUTH CARE

CYCC- CHILD AND YOUTH CARE CENTER

PaR- PRACTICE AS RESEARCH

SA- SOUTH AFRICA

# KEYWORDS

DRAMATHERAPEUTIC/DRAMA THERAPY, AUTHENTIC MOVEMENT, AUTHENTICITY, CHILDCARE WORKERS, WELLBEING, SOUTH AFRICA

# DEFINITION OF TERMS

## 1. DRAMATHERAPEUTIC/DRAMA THERAPY

The adjective form of Drama Therapy. Jones (2007:37) explains that Drama Therapy does not have a one-size-fits-all definition, and it is often helpful to have it contextualized. However, this definition of Drama Therapy presents a holistic picture:

> The intentional use of healing aspects of drama and theatre as the therapeutic process. It is a method of working and playing that uses action methods to facilitate creativity, imagination, learning, insight and growth (British Association of Drama Therapists 2004:1, as cited in Jones 2007:37).

## 2. AUTHENTIC MOVEMENT

A set form of movement practice coined by Janet Adler, consisting of the following steps: a mover moves with their eyes closed, a witness witnesses the mover, then the mover and witness usually speak about the material that emerged for the mover during the movement time, and if invited, the witness shares their experience of the mover (Adler 1987:42, as cited in Pallaro 2007:52). In addition to Adler's basic form, today Authentic Movement has also come to be understood as "a particular kind of movement-based exploration—personal, collective, transpersonal—structured around a set of core beliefs and principles" (Pallaro 2007:52).

## 3. AUTHENTICITY

A state of inner being (Goldhahn 2015). An acceptance and ability for self-expression (of the inner being) that contributes to a greater sense of congruence (authenticity) and leads to a greater sense of wellbeing (Payne 2006). "Congruence is experienced as a felt-sense of truth" (Payne 2006:161–162).

## 4. CHILDCARE WORKER

According to the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP 2024), Child and Youth Care work is defined as a "practice (that) focuses on the infant, child and adolescent, both normal and with special needs, within the context of the family, the community and the life span." Child and Youth Care work includes "…participating in systems interventions through direct care, supervision, administration, teaching, research, consultation and advocacy" (SACSSP 2024). The childcare workers involved in this study are housemothers or shift childcare workers in a group of foster care homes in Johannesburg, South Africa. Their duties may vary, but all of them are responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children placed in the homes by the State (South Africa).

## 5. WELLBEING

Using Payne's (2017:806) definition, wellbeing is "a state in which every individual realizes their own potential, can cope with the usual stresses of life, and can work productively and fruitfully to make a contribution to the community." The World Health Organization describes health as "a

state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (World Health Organization 2025). Wellbeing is holistically and intrinsically linked to health (Payne 2017:806).

## 6. SOUTH AFRICA

County in Southern Africa in which this study was completed.

# CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

## 1. Background of Study

The 21st century is one of increasing noise, poverty, violence, addiction, and disparity in South Africa (Swartz, L., de la Rey, C., Duncan, N., Townsend, L., & O'Neill, V. 2016). It can be challenging to maintain a sense of balance personally, professionally and collectively, in South Africa, as seen from research on burnout, as well as, figures on the state of mental health in South Africa (Norman, R., Matzopoulos, R., Groenewald, P., Bradshaw, D. 2007; Heywood 2021). Those working in helping professions are particularly susceptible to burnout and can struggle to maintain a sense of wellbeing (Jordaan, I., Spangenberg, J., Watson, M., & Fouché, P. 2007). This research is concerned with the wellbeing of childcare workers in foster care homes in South Africa. It explored if childcare workers in a group of foster care homes in Johannesburg, South Africa could benefit from a practice called Authentic Movement, and if so, in which specific ways?

Before becoming the researcher of this study, I served in a group of foster care homes in South Africa for more than a decade. I served voluntarily in different capacities, from spending time with the children, to helping support extra-mural activities, to leading training for housemothers and childcare workers on attachment and Trust-based Relational Care. My longevity at these homes helped develop long term relationships and build trust with the children and staff. It also opened my eyes and body to the intense stress and weight childcare workers can experience.

The American Psychological Association defines helping professions as "occupations that provide health and education services to individuals and groups, including occupations in the fields of psychology, psychiatry, counseling, medicine, nursing, social work, physical and occupational therapy, teaching, and education" (APA 2024). Given their responsibilities for both physical and emotional care, childcare workers in the foster care homes in Johannesburg can be understood as members of the helping professions.

Within helping professions, burnout has been an increasing phenomenon (Jordaan et al. 2007). Jordaan and colleagues (2007) define burnout as a stress-related syndrome that can have negative physical, emotional, and professional consequences. Not only does burnout affect the individual

professional, but it can also affect the quality of service to clients (Huebner 1993, as cited in Jordaan et al. 2007). Emotional exhaustion is a key factor of burnout, as well as depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment (Du Plessis, Visagie & Mji 2014). These factors can trickle down and affect clients who  in this study are children in foster care, thereby causing harm (Jordaan et al. 2007). Pitsoane and Makahane's South African study (2023) found that childcare workers expressed the desire to receive necessary resources to deal with stress inflicted by both professional and personal issues. In addition to the above-mentioned wishes of childcare workers, South Africa is rife with trauma, addiction, poverty, and violence (Swartz et al. 2016). This combination of factors makes it imperative for childcare workers in South Africa to engage in practices to help sustain and care for themselves in order to conduct their work with integrity. The South African Department of Social Development recognizes the value Child and Youth Care workers bring to South Africa. In a press release from 8 May 2024, the Department of Social Development stated it was aware "of challenges that Child and Youth Care Workers experience in their daily duties and calls for support to this dedicated team of Social Service Professional" (Government of South Africa 2025 A).

Personal experience as a volunteer in a group of foster care homes in Johannesburg, South Africa led me to both observe and experience that the tasks of a childcare worker can be difficult, draining and even traumatic. I witnessed childcare workers being especially vulnerable to stress, burnout and ill health. While not all stress can be attributed to their profession and context as economic, societal and political inequalities are real in South Africa, their work does carry trauma and is more susceptible to burnout (IMF 2020) (Kind, N., Bürgin, D., Fegert, J. & Schmid, M. 2020). The children entering foster care homes often arrive with physical, emotional and mental trauma, and it is the childcare workers' role to integrate them into the homes and assist in facilitating restoration and healing for these children. It is the childcare workers who are on the frontlines of the work, daily present and spending the most time with the children in the homes. I came to realize that childcare workers encounter oppression and trauma as they desire to move the children in foster care toward integration and transformation as articulated by Freire (1993).

Foster care and children's homes are still very prevalent in South Africa. Recent statistics from 2024 suggest South Africa has about 400,000 children in foster care (Janse van Rensburg 2024).

This number may or may not include children in other alternative care settings such as Child and Youth Care Centers (CYCC), Temporary Safe Care, or Secure facilities (Janse van Rensburg 2024). Children in need of foster care are placed with adults who are approved for foster care or in registered facilities such as children's homes, CYCCs, and cluster foster care homes. Studies in South Africa show high percentages of children are exposed to violence, whether directly or vicariously experienced (Swain, Pillay & Kliewer 2017). Percentages range from 58%–95% of children in different areas of SA who have been exposed to violence (Swain, Pillay & Kliewer 2017). This high volume of violence often disproportionately affects the children in foster care homes. Children are usually placed in foster care homes due to abuse, neglect, abandonment, or because they have no family or relatives who can care or provide for them (Janse van Rensburg 2024). All of these situations carry trauma. Many childcare workers themselves also come from environments of trauma and violence, as interpersonal violence in South Africa has a mortality rate seven times the global rate (Norman et al. 2007). Manyerenyere (2017, as cited in Pitsoane & Makahane 2023) explains that childcare workers are on the frontlines and often experience stressful challenges due to the nature of their work. Their work carries the oppression and trauma of others, which can vicariously affect them (childcare workers) as secondary trauma (Fox & Salas 2021).

Motsei (2020) has compared the work of love and transformation, which childcare workers are engaged in, to revolutionary work. She highlights the importance of love by citing how revolutionaries such as Guevara and Biko used this call to love and "consciousness of the self" as a precondition to revolution and liberation (Motsei 2020). Part of the liberating work in the foster care space is to fight against the dehumanization so prevalent in South Africa's history and present (Motsei 2020; Brown 2017). As childcare workers in South Africa are engaged in this work of love, transformation, and liberation, it is exceedingly crucial for them to engage in practices that help them humanize and care for themselves as they care for those in need. They must also be conscious of themselves.

In order to assist childcare workers in caring for themselves and maintaining a sense of wellbeing, the concept of work-life integration can be explored. The concept of work-life integration seeks to bring work and life closer together; "Rather than drawing lines between 'work time' and 'personal time,' professionals can tackle their responsibilities at the times that work well for them" (Fallon-

O'Leary 2021: para. 9). This idea may be especially helpful to childcare workers who spend so much time in foster care homes. Childcare workers often cannot attend to their own responsibilities or retire during the evenings with their families as their shifts require overnight work or long-term stays at the foster care homes. House parents or housemothers live at the home and are the primary guardians or carers of the children. Since houseparents live at the homes, they are essentially present twenty-four hours a day, with two days off during the week. Additional childcare workers come on shifts which usually last 20-24 hours and require an overnight stay. Of course, the childcare workers and housemothers can sleep during the evening, but they are always on call if something happens or a child needs them. These schedules often mean childcare workers are away from their own homes and families for extended periods of time, which can contribute to burnout (Kind et al. 2020). When and how can they take time to care for themselves with these shifts and schedules? Can a practice, such as Authentic Movement, which can be done at work with little resources assist them with work-life integration?

This research set out to discover if Authentic Movement as a practice can be of benefit to childcare workers in foster care homes in Johannesburg, South Africa and if so, how? The researcher became familiar with Authentic Movement through a workshop they participated in in 2023. The freedom, joy, release and connection the researcher felt immediately after engaging in Authentic Movement led them to wonder if practice could be of benefit to others, specifically the childcare workers in the foster care homes. Could Authentic Movement help mediate some of the stresses that lead to burnout in the profession and provide meaningful relief? The practice did not require much prerequisite knowledge and needed minimal resources. Would the childcare workers in the homes be open to it and experience similar benefits?

Authentic Movement is a self-directed movement practice begun by Mary Starks Whitehouse and further developed by her students Janet Adler and Joan Chodorow (Pallaro 2007; Payne 2006). Authentic Movement requires few resources. To engage in the practice at least two people need to be present: a mover and a witness. Authentic Movement can be used by different people for different purposes such as a form of movement meditation, for spiritual and personal enrichment, as a mode of therapy, as a democratic practice, etc. (Pallaro 2007:50). Daphne Lowell, a practitioner of Authentic Movement, explains people come to Authentic Movement "for refreshment, revelation, rest and recuperation" (Lowell 2007, quoted in Pallaro 2007:50). This

research, therefore, set out to find if engaging in the practice of Authentic Movement can benefit childcare workers, specifically in South African foster care homes, as well as, to explore if it can contribute to achieving greater work-life integration for the childcare workers.

In conducting the research, a dramatherapeutic framework was used to construct the workshops to explore whether such a framework could assist in encouraging and holding the participants, the Authentic Movement, and the material.

As the researcher, I was hopeful the practice of Authentic Movement would bring benefits to the childcare workers, improving their work-life integration and helping them care for themselves, thereby reducing potential burnout so prevalent in the profession. The exploration of Authentic Movement sought to discover if the childcare workers in these particular South African foster care homes would engage in the process and what outcomes or benefits, if any, would result.

## 2. Rationale

There is a gap in academic research in regard to the practice of Authentic Movement as a self-care practice for those in helping professions, especially in minority ethnic groups (Payne 2006:162). There was also a gap in research of Authentic Movement use in South Africa. Authentic Movement is often practiced by middle-class female participants, while other demographics do not often readily have access to learning or engaging in this practice (Payne 2006:162). Goldhahn (2015:57) says Authentic Movement has often been limited to the white educated middle class due to cost and availability. Davis Aubrey (2019), a Dance and Movement student at the time, also explained the months it took her to find an Authentic Movement group in New York, partially due to cost and scheduling, and how when she finally found one for women of color, she was thrilled. For these reasons Dr. Helen Payne (2006:162) states more needs to be done to encourage others, and particularly those from ethnic minorities, to experience Authentic Movement. Dr. Payne is a researcher and Authentic Movement practitioner in the United Kingdom where the largest ethnic group is white British and minority ethnic groups are mostly non-white, for example, “Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh” and “Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African” among others (Ethnic group, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics, no date). In this research there was also a paucity of literature about the use of and practice of Authentic

Movement in South Africa. An online search in October 2025 for an Authentic Movement group in Johannesburg came up with no results. Despite this, for centuries dance and movement have been integral in effecting healing and change in many cultures (Karkou and Sanderson 2006; Hanna 2004 as cited in Copteros, Karkou and Palmerpalmer 2017). According to Primus, who studied and choreographed African dance, dance in Africa is seen as part of the experience of living, not only as a separate art form; it is about "community, education, magic and spirit" (Primus 1998 as cited in Copteros, Karkou and Palmerpalmer 2017:721). Dance and movement, therefore, seemed to be a natural medium/tool for this study.

This study was conducted with childcare workers in a group of foster care homes in Johannesburg, South Africa. The childcare workers are working class and, while not an ethnic or racial minority in their country, they are a marginalized ethnicity economically and in relation to those who practice Authentic Movement (Payne 2006:162). The participants in this research were all black African female childcare workers. This research wanted to extend the practice of Authentic Movement to this specific demographic.

In addition to wanting to give groups who may not normally have access to and knowledge of Authentic Movement access, the researcher hypothesized Authentic Movement could potentially be of benefit to the childcare workers by helping with stress management, wellbeing, and guarding against burnout. According to the Employee Assistance Professional Association of South Africa (EAPA-SA), recent research has confirmed those in helping professions, such as social workers, teachers, and educators, are more vulnerable to burnout (Employee Assistance Professional Association of South Africa 2023). As part of the helping professions, childcare workers are also more susceptible to burnout (Kind et al. 2020). This was witnessed first-hand by the researcher in these foster care homes prior to the research.

The researcher hoped the study would add value and information to academia, individuals in childcare, and employers in the helping professions in South Africa. Ultimately, if Authentic Movement can benefit the childcare workers, this can also indirectly benefit the children in foster care. The Authentic Movement practice could then be taken into non-profit spaces in South Africa or other spaces where caring for the employee, specifically a caregiver, is valued and needed. It could lead to implications for supporting those in helping professions such as childcare, health services and social services in a South African context. Hopefully, the reach of this study would

also ultimately penetrate the communities in which the childcare workers live, thus the possible benefits of Authentic Movement could spread and affect their families and communities. The practice would then be expanded to new demographics.

The passion and drive for this research came from my personal experience with Authentic Movement in 2023. I attended a session of Authentic Movement led by Professor Vivien Marcow-Speiser during my Drama Therapy class in my Honours degree of Drama Therapy at the University of the Witwatersrand. Professor Marcow-Speiser led me and eleven classmates in the basic form of Authentic Movement. It was a revolutionary and counter-cultural experience for me, as an adult, to move so freely, led by impulses, attention turned inward, and eyes closed with no specific goal in mind other than to listen within myself. It also had the immediate effect of connection for me with my classmates as we witnessed one another and were witnessed in a non-judgmental way. The non-directive, non-judgmental moving and witnessing was something unique I had not experienced in my adulthood. I, therefore, sought to investigate the potential value of this practice for other adults, specifically to the childcare workers in foster care homes in Johannesburg, South Africa that I had worked in. I wondered if Authentic Movement could help aid them from or through burnout and with other challenges and stresses related to their work and personal lives.

# 3. Research Questions

Most research has a question or questions of inquiry as the starting point (Nelson 2022:39). The main question of this research was:

To what extent may Authentic Movement serve as an explorative tool and benefit childcare workers in a group foster care homes in Johannesburg, South Africa?

In investigating this question, the following subordinate questions were also considered for deeper exploration:

1. What benefits, if any, do the childcare workers experience from the Authentic Movement practice?
2. Do childcare workers experience a greater sense of work-life integration after engaging in the practice of Authentic Movement?

3. How do the childcare workers' bodies respond through a series of Authentic Movement workshops?
4. Will the possibility to move (or not move) freely ("authentically") be embraced by the participants in this study and have results on their wellbeing?

# 4. Aims and Objectives

This research sought to consider if Authentic Movement could serve as an explorative tool for childcare workers in foster care homes in Johannesburg, South Africa, and if some proven benefits of Authentic Movement would translate into the context of the foster care homes in South Africa and with the specific demographic of childcare workers. Through the research methodology of Practice as Research (PaR), Authentic Movement was explored as a practice, as well as a tool of inquiry. Using a conceptual framework, aspects of Authentic Movement and Drama Therapy were explored, such as Jungian underpinnings, embodied consciousness and embodiment, and the roles of mover and witness.

The research also looked at the movements of the participants and explored their individual and collective experiences of Authentic Movement. The research explored whether Authentic Movement could be of use and benefit to childcare workers in South Africa and improve their work-life integration and sense of wellbeing.

In order to explore the above aim, childcare workers from one organization of cluster foster care homes were invited to engage in four workshops where Authentic Movement was explored. The workshops were created within a Drama Therapy framework using aspects of the Sesame approach to encourage and contain the work and experience. The Drama Therapy framework, using aspects of the Sesame approach, was intentionally used to help participants slowly move into embodiment and mindfulness before entering the practice of Authentic Movement. This will be further described in the methodology of this research.

The objectives were the following:

1. To test Authentic Movement's suitability as an explorative tool and practice with childcare workers (marginalized ethnicities) in foster care homes in Johannesburg, South Africa.

2. To determine Authentic Movement's ability to relieve stress and create more work-life integration.
3. To test Authentic Movement's ability to foster group cohesion as a tool for wellbeing.
4. To see how childcare workers' bodies would respond physically in movements to Authentic Movement.
5. To determine if Authentic Movement was of benefit to the childcare workers and if so, how?

The above objectives were explored through four workshops with childcare workers, data gathering, and analysis. The findings are presented in Chapter Four of this paper.

# CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review focuses on the practice of Authentic Movement and its benefits, Drama Therapy (dramatherapeutic work) as a container and some core Drama Therapy processes, as well as the experience of childcare workers in foster care homes in South Africa. The main researchers and thinkers incorporated in this review were: Adler, Bacon, Chodorow, Pallaro, and Payne (Authentic Movement practitioners), Jones and Pearson (Drama Therapists), and Pitsoane & Makahane (Childcare in South Africa).

## 1. Authentic Movement

### 1.1 Authentic Movement: Its beginnings and intentions

Authentic movement had its beginnings in the 1950s with US dancer and Dance Movement Therapist Mary Starks Whitehouse. Whitehouse began to experiment with movement in a self-directed way leading to self-exploration (Pallaro 2007). She was influenced by Mary Wigman in Germany regarding individual creativity, Martha Graham in terms of archetypal movement, and Carl Jung in terms of connecting with the unconscious and the Self (Pallaro 2007:51; Bacon 2017). Jung defined the "Self" with a capital "S" as "the totality of a person's being", a unity of the unconscious and conscious (Jung Society of Utah 2025: para. 1). Whitehouse first called this kind of movement "Movement in Depth" and it included expressive creative movements following internal impulses, which she called "authentic" movements (Pallaro 2007: 51).

> When a movement was simple and inevitable, not to be changed no matter how limited or partial, it became what I call "authentic"- it could be recognized as genuine, belonging to that person. Authentic was the only term I could think of that meant truth- truth of a kind unlearned…It is a moment when the ego gives up control…allowing the self to take over moving the physical body as it will (Whitehouse 1979: 81-82, as quoted in Pallaro 2007:51).

Whitehouse's "Movement in Depth" was an embodied expression rooted in aspects of Carl Jung's depth psychoanalysis and concepts of the unconscious and active imagination. Participants were encouraged to be led by inner impulses or sensations and thereby explore the Self (Pallaro 2007) (Bacon 2017). This exploration of the Self through movement aligns with African notions of dance

being intrinsically linked with life experience (Primus 1998 as cited in Copteros, Karkou and Palmerpalmer 2017: 721).

Joan Chodorow and Janet Adler, two students of Mary Starks Whitehouse, expanded her original practice of Movement in Depth to see if it could be used to further integrate the mind, body, and spirit connection (Good Therapy 2024). Joan Chodorow was a dance and movement therapist and a Jungian psychoanalyst. Chodorow was interested in how the movement could connect with emotions and the unconscious, describing it as 'active imagination in movement' (Chodorow 1995/99, as cited in Bacon 2107:186). Janet Adler, Whitehouse's other student, was interested in the mystical and spiritual possibilities of the movement practice (Bacon 2017).

It was Adler who, in the mid-1980s, began to formalize a set form of the practice and use the term Authentic Movement (Pallaro 2007:51). Authentic Movement according to Adler was the term used to refer to the form of the work, not only the kind of movement it facilitated (Pallaro 2007:52). In Adler's basic form at least two persons are needed: a mover and a witness. A mover moves with eyes closed and a witness witnesses the mover. Following the form, the mover usually speaks about the material that emerged for them during the movement time, and if invited, the witness shares their experience of the mover and what the mover shared, noting their personal experience (Pallaro 2007). This final reflection stage helps bring the unconscious processes into consciousness through language though it can also be done using art or writing (Adler 1987:42, as cited in Pallaro 2007:52). Today what is called Authentic Movement has come to mean not only Adler's form described in the 1980s, but "a particular kind of movement-based exploration—personal, collective, transpersonal—structured around a set of core beliefs and principles" (Pallaro 2007:52). Key to the Authentic Movement practice is the presence of a witness who helps provide safety and trust for the mover through an attitude of non-judgement, compassion and curiosity (Payne 2014). This external witness plays a role in helping the mover to develop their own internal witness or inner observer as emulated by the external witness.

Authentic Movement is often practiced in groups which provides a community aspect to the experience. The group experience (even the experience of one witness and one mover), align with African notions of health and wellbeing in that wellbeing is connected to harmonious relations with the world around one (Primus 1998 as cited in Copteros, Karkou and Palmerpalmer 2017). Sinethemba Makhanya (2014), a South African Drama Therapist, explains the Zulu view of health

and wellbeing as one not only of a healthy body, but also, of healthy and harmonious relationships with all present in the universe. In African indigenous thought, health and community are inseparable (Makhanya 2014). Spirituality is also an important aspect of health in African definitions (Makhanya 2014). Therefore, a practice such as Authentic Movement, where one moves the body, is witnessed by others, and may get in touch with/experience spiritual or mystical elements, seems like a natural link to affecting wellbeing for the childcare workers at the foster care homes in South Africa.

## 1.2 Authentic Movement: Its benefits

Authentic Movement is practiced today for multiple purposes and reasons. For some people, it is a mode of therapy, for some a resource for image and movement material in dance-movement, for some an awareness of kinetic experiences, for some a form of movement meditation, and for others a process of spiritual and personal enrichment (Pallaro 2007:52).

Growing research has shown Authentic Movement to bring healing, personal growth and connection to others and the self (Stromsted 2024). Karl Frost, in a point of departure, uses Authentic Movement without the Jungian underpinnings or possible connections, but as "…a simple physical score, without intrinsic purpose, the use of which we individually discover or not" (Body Research 2012: Background). Lewis (1993, as cited in Pallaro 2007:57) explains that Authentic Movement can provide an explicit and secure space to explore all that impedes. It may assist those practicing it to identify interpersonal themes, boundaries, and group dynamics, as well as develop skills such as listening observation, reflection and empathy (Pallaro 2007:57). Authentic Movement also provides an opportunity for participants to connect with their body and the innate or intuitive knowledge it contains (Bacon 2017). "At its core, Authentic Movement is about trust in the innate wisdom of the body to sense and express what may not be known on other levels of consciousness" (Avstreih 2017:205-206).

Although Authentic Movement was not designed as a therapeutic tool, it has led to benefits similar to those found in therapeutic practices (Bacon 2017). Bacon (2017:195) states, "Authentic Movement is inherently therapeutic although it is not therapy per se." That being said, Authentic Movement is now also used in clinical settings and as a part of therapy (Bacon 2017). While Authentic Movement can serve different aims or intentions, one effect can be to bring wellness,

self-revelation, and positive outcomes for individuals and groups (Bacon 2017). Researchers Bacon and Avstreih (2017) explored and confirmed Authentic Movement as a practice of wellbeing and health with their clients.

One way in which Authentic Movement helps facilitate wellbeing is by connecting the internal and unconscious to the external through the body. While modern times may see the body mainly as a tool or machine to get work done, philosophers, psychologists such as Freud and Carl Jung, therapists, and artists have long held onto the integral role the body plays in people's sense of self and wellbeing (Bacon 2017:187-189). Antonio Damasio (1996, 2000, as cited in Bacon 2017:188) explains that the brain is part of the body, and emotional processes take place in a body-mind environment. García-Días (2018) states there is extensive literature linking the body, posture, movement, and facial expressions to states of emotion, affection and cognitive processes. The connection between the body and mind can be referred to as the psychophysical domain involved in psychosomatic processes (Bloom 2006:62).

Authentic Movement acknowledges the deep connection between the mind, body, emotions, and spirit. Whitehouse, Chodorow, and Adler all acknowledge the influence of Jungian thought in the development of Authentic Movement (Bacon 2017). Jung's connection with Authentic Movement is founded on the premise that the body and mind are connected and not separate as Descartes and Enlightenment thinkers proclaimed (Bacon 2017; Chodorow 1997). Jung said, "the difference we make between the psyche and body is artificial…In reality there is nothing but a living body" and that the self means to live in the body (Jung and Jarrett 1989:396,403 as quoted in Bacon 2017:196). Moving the body is in the foreground in Authentic Movement, and language comes afterward in the reflection (Bacon 2017). Authentic Movement also reflects Jungian thought that recognizes the personal and collective unconscious and how "…emotional inner forces of the unconscious psyche need an imaged form or personification as a channel through which to emerge and be made conscious" (Dekker 1996:39). Dekker (1996:39) believes movement and drama can give channel and form to the emotional forces of the unconscious psyche. Bacon, an Authentic Movement practitioner, also acknowledges that practices which aid a connectedness between mind, body and spirit can make our lives more meaningful and enhance wellbeing (Bacon 2017:189). Authentic Movement provides the space and stillness to listen to the internal domain

via sensations, impulses and/or images and express it through the body. Bloom (2007:65) calls this an "embodied attentiveness". Authentic Movement provides the frame and stillness to look within.

Jungian analyst Donald Kalsched (2013) reported in his recent book that bodywork such as Authentic Movement offers a means to aid the deep healing of trauma (Bacon 2017:195). García-Días (2018) mentions several authors in his study, including Bessel van der Kolk, who maintain that certain traumatic emotional experiences are stored in the body apart from consciousness. Therefore, by activating the body, there is the possibility of releasing the trauma (Van der Kolk 2015). García-Días' (2018) research on Authentic Movement suggests it helps movers come in contact with repressed or inhibited emotions, and while those emotions may contain negative emotional states such as anger, the release of inhibited emotions can lead to greater congruence or authenticity. The motor expression of emotions can also be a way to facilitate emotional regulation (García-Días 2018). Bacon concludes that Authentic Movement offers a way of knowing and is a wellbeing practice that allows participants to "notice who we are, where we are, and with whom we are as present unfolding moments of experience which contain vital fragments of our past, present and future" (Bacon 2017:198).

In addition to helping participants become more mindful of emotions, Authentic Movement can help foster empathy and connections to self, others, and even, the spiritual or mystic (Payne 2006). The act of being a witness to another in Authentic Movement and "be-holding" them as they move is an act of co-creation that can foster safety, empathy and deep respect for one another (Payne 2006:166). Research with primates found that when one primate watched another perform an action that they were also capable of, mirror neurons were activated in the frontal cortex of that primate in a form of kinaesthetic empathy (Rizzolatti, G., Fadiga, L., Gallese, V. and Fogassi, L. 1996 and Moore & Yamamoto 1988, as cited in Payne 2006:166). In a similar way to the above example, empathy can also be fostered between the mover and witness, and as they develop their own inner observer/witness (Payne 2006:166). In addition to empathy and connection developing within oneself and between a witness and a mover, social connection can be made in a group setting. Adler (2000, as cited in Payne 2006:170) used the term "collective body" to describe the group as a whole in Authentic Movement. Moving, witnessing, and sharing with one another can enable connections between individuals, the collective body, and a higher spiritual or universal body (Payne 2006:170).

## 1.3 Authentic Movement: Authenticity

How does authenticity connect to dance and, specifically, Authentic Movement? In terms of how the word authentic came to be linked with dance, the first coupling of the word may be from American critic John Martin in 1933 when he observed Mary Wigman's German expressionist dance in New York (Goldhahn 2015). Martin used the words when he described Wigman's highly emotive dance to contain "certain entirely authentic movements" (Goldhahn 2015).

Goldhahn (2015), an independent practitioner of Authentic Movement, questions the term authenticity and looks at its historical background, as well as the values placed upon the term. If Authentic Movement is supposed to be a judgment-free practice, how can one determine if some movements are authentic or not? Is there a specific way to move that is authentic and inauthentic? Goldhahn (2015) suggests that authenticity should not be prescribed to any activity but perhaps only to a state of inner being. Only the person themselves will know when that (authenticity) is achieved. Instead Goldhahn (2015:279) offers that "…authentic could perhaps mean an identity-affirming effect, one in which the individual, through practicing Authentic Movement, affirms and strengthens her ego."

The idea and practice of authenticity has been linked with good health as a predictor for mental wellbeing (Grijak 2017). A combination of different definitions has been used here to generalize authenticity as a congruence between a person's thoughts, emotions, and ideas of self, and how they actually live out in the world (Harter 2002, Snyder & Lopes 2009, as cited in Grijak 2017). Some researchers, such as Wood and colleagues, have even developed an Authenticity Scale that can be used to measure a person's authenticity (cited in Grijak 2017). In their Authenticity Scale participants are asked to answer statements on a scale of 1 to 7 based on how well the statement describes them, leading researchers to determine how authentically they living, how prone they are to external pressures, and how alienated they feel from themselves, all of which contribute to the overall scale. (Wood et al. 2008). Anna Yusim, a psychiatrist, describes authenticity as a key component of mental health and wellness (Yusim 2020). She says authenticity is "having the courage and taking the risks to be the person you truly are, as opposed to the person others expect and want you to be" (Yusim 2020: para. 4). Yusim explores this concept of authenticity with clients in her practice and asks questions such as: "How honest and in touch are they with themselves? Do they feel authentic in their day-to-day interactions with the people in their lives? Are they

comfortable in their own skin? How aligned do they feel with their life choices?" (Yusim 2020: para. 2). In agreement is author and researcher Brené Brown, who describes the dangers of not living authentically, potentially leading to anxiety, depression, rage, inexplicable grief, etc. (Yusim 2020). Brown contends the symptoms and disorders mentioned above are the price of living out of sync with one's soul (Yusim 2020). Authenticity requires a level of vulnerability and may look different in individuals and differing cultural contexts. Since movement is self-directed in Authentic Movement, it is left up to the individual how they express themselves and move in a way that is authentic to them.

## 2. Practice as Research (PAR)

Practice-as-Research (also known as PaR) is a methodology that looks at the act of doing or practicing something as a way of knowing; a way of gaining information, insight, and knowledge (Nelson 2022). PaR allows practitioners to initiate and pursue research in their fields through practice (Barrett & Bolt 2010:147). For Nelson (2022:7), the "practice" in PaR is an investigative praxis, a "*being-doing-thinking"*, "the imbrication of theory" (Nelson 2022:19). Robin Nelson is an emeritus professor of Theatre and Intermedial Performance and former Director of Research at the University of London. As a "champion" of Practice as Research, he has widely engaged with and written about Practice as Research (Nelson 2022). As Nelson (2022:11) explains, the idea of "Practice-as-Research" emerged over the last four decades because the practice-based research of staff and students, including established artists, was not fully recognized. Today Nelson believes Practice-as-Research has achieved acceptance in the Academy; however, there are still slight differences in terminology and degrees in parts of the world (see Artistic Research, Practice Research, etc.) (Nelson 2022:12). For Nelson the "practice" or praxis in PaR embraces ecological knowing (the knowing-body or intuition) along with or in engagement with other modes of knowing, in order to produce new knowing that can be effectively shared (Nelson 2022). The body-mind knowing or experiencing is also a key aspect of Authentic Movement as described earlier. Another key aspect of PaR is reflexivity, requiring the practitioner-researcher "to be aware of where we are situated and where we are coming from, to be open to the discursive positions of others, and to engage dialogically (and not just in words) with others" (Nelson 2022:12). Nelson uses the term practitioner-researcher because it combines a practitioner (arts professional

disposition) and a researcher (academic research disposition) in one (Nelson 2022:38). Reflexivity is a part of the practitioner-researcher's experience, as well as, a part of the mover and witness' experiences in Authentic Movement.

As part of PaR is the use of all the senses for discovery, as well as exploring the relational aspect of knowledge described by Pierre Bourdieu (Barrett & Bolt 2010). PaR allows the researcher to look not only at explicit knowledge, but also to be aware of and harness tacit knowledge (Barrett & Bolt 2010:4). Tacit knowledge "refers to embodied knowledge or 'skill' developed and applied in practice and apprehended intuitively…" (Bolt 2004, as cited in Barrett & Bolt 2010:4). Pierre Bourdieu argues "tacit knowledge and the alternative logic of practice underpins all discovery;" (Barrett 2003, as quoted in Barrett & Bolt 2010:4). Barrett explains PaR uses subjective, emergent and interdisciplinary approaches (Barrett & Bolt 2010:3). This is similar to the experience of Authentic Movement, which is also subjective and emergent, personal and embodied. PaR's approach and method, therefore, were well fitted for this embodied research which used Authentic Movement as a tool of exploration and inquiry.

# 3. Drama Therapy

## 3.1 Drama Therapy: Using aspects of the Sesame approach for containment

Using the British Association of Drama Therapists' definition (BADth 2004:1, cited in Jones 2007), Drama Therapy is the "intentional use of healing aspects of drama and theatre as the therapeutic process. It is a method of working and playing that uses action methods to facilitate creativity, imagination, learning, insight and growth." Drama Therapy methods were used in this research to explore the use of Authentic Movement and create an entryway for participants to engage with and hold the material that arose in the workshops. The Sesame approach, a form of Drama Therapy, was used to structure the workshops. Marian Lindkvist created the Sesame approach, which has a basic session form including a physical warm-up, a Main Event, and a grounding (Stevens 1996). Two essential components in its way of working are movement and non-interpretation (Stevens 1996). The general goal of the Sesame approach is to help clients make contact with one another and themselves through the medium of drama and movement (Stevens 1996). Similar to Authentic Movement, Sesame is closely linked to Jung and his ideas of healing

and the imagination (Stevens 1996). Stevens explains that the form and content of the Sesame approach sessions are designed first to create a sense of safety and of being "held", and secondly to open up the possibility of "play" for the participants (Stevens 1996:12). Similar to a mother/infant dyad, the Sesame approach is able to safely hold the material and emotions of the participants without judgement (Stevens 1996:12). The grounding at the end of a Sesame session also ensures that the participants return from the experience or "Land of Imagination" back to their own selves and reality (Stevens 1996:2). Drama Therapy methods (such as the Sesame approach) can provide containment for clients in many ways such as through delineated space, the professional therapist, structure of session and the processes themselves, for example (Jones 2007).

Drama Therapy is also known for its emphasis on authenticity in regard to valuing a person/client's individual experienced reality over an abstract or given reality or authority (Jones 2007:164). The valuing of personal experience and expression is seen in different core processes in Drama Therapy, such as embodiment and projection (Jones 2007:164). Similar to Authentic Movement, there is no right or wrong way of doing something in Drama Therapy. This intent puts an emphasis on direct experience and engagement and can help clients or participants move towards a sense of safety and expression (Jones 2007:164). Other core processes, such as dramatherapeutic empathy and distancing, as well as projection, can ease participants into revealing or protecting parts of themselves and move into authenticity at their own pace (Jones 2007).

## 3.2 Drama Therapy: Core Processes

Phil Jones defined core processes as key aspects of Drama Therapy. As mentioned above, Drama Therapy can be defined as the use of drama and theatre methods for therapeutic purposes. The core processes proposed by Jones in 1996 were as follows: dramatic projection, dramatherapeutic empathy and distancing, role play and personification, interactive audience and witnessing, embodiment: dramatizing the body, playing, life-drama connection, and transformation (Jones 2007:181). In Jones' 2007 edition, he changed interactive audience and witnessing to active witnessing. It is active witnessing and embodiment, two core processes in Drama Therapy, that are visible in Authentic Movement, although other processes can be seen at work as well.

According to Jones (2007), witnessing is the act of being an audience to others or oneself in Drama Therapy. Both aspects of witnessing are important. Jones highlights benefits of the active

witnessing processes as the client feeling acknowledged and supported, as well as developing the "audience aspect of themselves, enhancing the capability to engage differently with themselves and life events" (Jones 2007:216). In Authentic Movement, the witness is also multifaceted. The external witness is there not solely to observe the mover but to act as an attuned, non-judgmental, open participant and create a safe "holding" space for the mover to see and be seen, similar to the role of the Drama Therapist (Avstreih 2014, as cited in Avstreih 2017:205). The external witness is also not focusing solely on the mover but is also aware of what sensations, feelings, and images may be arising in themselves as they watch the mover. Thus, a dual role is created as witnessing another and oneself at the same time. The witnessing of oneself in Authentic Movement, whether as the witness or the mover, has led to the coining of the role of inner observer. Developing one's inner observer is the ability to witness oneself even as one moves or watches and holds space for another (Payne 2006). This can be similar to Jones' idea of becoming an audience to oneself (Jones 2007). In Authentic Movement, however, a witness needs to be judgment-free and not project their thoughts or ideas onto the mover. In that way, the mover can move in the presence of another and have their kinesthetic truth be received free from judgment or projection (Avstreih 2017:205). Witnessing in Authentic Movement is the practice of seeing and being seen through which "we are birthed into the fullness of our being by the attuned presence of another…" (Avstreih 2017:205). Thus, there are similarities in active witnessing in Drama Therapy and the witnessing in Authentic Movement.

## 3.3 Embodiment in Drama Therapy and Authentic Movement

The core process of embodiment in Drama Therapy "involves the way the self is realised by and through the body" (Jones 2007:233). Embodiment in Drama Therapy deals with the way a person physically expresses themselves and material in a Drama Therapy context (Jones 2007). The body is one of the primary ways inter- and intra-communication occurs between the Self, itself, and others (Jones 2007:233). Jones states that in embodiment, the self is seen to be intrinsically connected to the world it perceives and participates in (Jones 2007:173). Jones highlights "attention is given to the ways in which the body communicates on an unconscious, as well as conscious, level" (Jones 2007:233). As in Drama Therapy, embodiment is also a key aspect of Authentic Movement. In Authentic Movement, a mover is asked to follow impulses and sensations within themselves and allow their body to express or reveal those internal perceptions (Bacon

2017). The mover endeavors to embody their internal world and allow it to take shape in their moving body (Bacon 2017). This is a form of embodiment as images, thoughts, and sensations express themselves in the body. Authentic Movement cannot be done without a body, and so embodiment or in-body-ment is a key to the practice. In Authentic Movement, embodiment may look different than in a Drama Therapy context as it is predicated on authentic impulses and inner sensations and is self-directed whereas that is not always the case in Drama Therapy. In Drama Therapy, embodiment can take different forms, such as through images, role play, movement, and scripted characters, and may be self-directed or guided/directed. It is, however, usually more consciously driven than Authentic Movement (Jones 2007). Both Drama Therapy and Authentic Movement, however, value the experience of the body as a way to understand the self and acknowledge the body communicates on an unconscious as well as conscious level (Jones 2007:233). Both focus on how embodiment helps clients or participants deal with material in the "here-and-now" (Jones 2007:233). Finally, both Drama Therapy and Authentic Movement may involve stimuli from images, thoughts and sensations from conscious material or unconscious impulses.

# 4. Childcare work in South Africa

Childcare workers in South Africa face a number of challenges and stressors. Thumbadoo (2013, as cited in Pitsoane & Makahane 2023) explains that a childcare worker is expected to be a supervising adult and provide support to vulnerable children, as stated in the Children's Act 38 of 2005 in South Africa. Manyerenyere (2017, as cited in Pitsoane & Makahane 2023) states that childcare workers can be considered as either primary or secondary caregivers, and both categories can experience stress and stressful conditions in providing care to "orphans" or children in the foster care system. Another study by Manyerenyere (2017, as cited in Pitsoane & Makahane 2023) discovered that a lack of training and motivation was one of the challenges faced by childcare workers and that these challenges affected the level of dedication and desire to be a part of childcare programmes. In order to see what could assist childcare workers, Pitsoane and Makahane's study (2023) found childcare workers expressed the desire to receive necessary resources to deal with stress inflicted by both professional and personal issues. One participant in their study said, "I need stress reliever, because the problems that we face sometimes they

traumatize us, because some of the issues we can't resolve" (Pitsoane & Makahane 2023:15.1 Mental Wellness). Another childcare worker in the study explained, "I've suggested we should have a workshop where we talk about our home problem," whilst another suggested, "Childcare workers should be motivated time and again to boost their morale" (Pitsoane & Makahane 2023: 15.1 Mental Wellness). In Molepo and Delpot's (2015) South African study, the most prominent challenges childcare and youth care workers faced were: dealing with client behaviours, lack of tangible and immediate results, poor stakeholder relations, lack of recognition, lack of clarity on the role and title of the Child and Youth Care Worker, inconsistent job requirements, lack of professional growth and development opportunities and inadequate working conditions. Pitsoane and Makahane (2023) indicate that previous research studies support the argument that consistent personal and professional support of childcare workers is necessary. Molepo and Delpot's study (2015) discovered that Child and Youth Care Workers in South Africa experience a range of professional challenges. One recommendation is to provide these childcare workers with opportunities to experience personal and professional growth through consistent training and mental wellness programs (Pitsoane & Makahane 2023). The above studies highlight some of the challenges faced by childcare workers in South Africa and the need to find ways to assist with their stress and improve their wellbeing.

# CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY

## 1. Conceptual Framework to the Research Methodology

The framework used for this research is conceptual and examines aspects of the practice of Authentic Movement and Drama Therapy. As discussed in the literature review, Authentic Movement was not designed as a therapeutic tool, yet it has led to benefits similar to those found in therapeutic practices and is now also used in therapeutic and clinical settings (Bacon 2017). Some concepts examined are Jungian underpinnings in both Authentic Movement and the Sesame Approach in Drama Therapy, embodied consciousness and embodiment, and the roles of mover and witness.

### 1.1 Authentic Movement and Drama Therapy

Both Authentic Movement and the Sesame approach in Drama Therapy have Jungian underpinnings and focus on movement and embodiment to help people tap into their inner worlds. Jungian psychology recognizes the personal and collective unconscious and how these often need an imaged or physical form to be made conscious (Dekker, as cited in Pearson 1996:39). Jung first used the term “active imagination” in 1935 to describe a healing method of concentrating on what was within or unconscious initially through images, dreams or fantasies (Chodorow 1997:3). Jung, however, realized active imagination can have many forms that can include art, movement, dance, and dramatic enactment, and he once told a colleague that symbolic enactment with the body is more efficient than “ordinary active imagination” (von Franz 1980:126, as cited in Chodorow 1997:8). The essence of active imagination is the ability to hold the tension between the conscious and unconscious (Chodorow 1997:8). In Jung’s words (1916/58 para. 168, as quoted in Chodorow 1997:8), in active imagination “A product is created which is influenced by both conscious and unconscious, embodying the striving of the unconscious for the light and the striving of the conscious for substance.”

Joan Chodorow was the first to describe Authentic Movement as “active imagination in movement” (Chodorow 1995/99, as cited in Bacon 2017:186). However, Whitehouse began to

understand her movement work as a form of Jung's active imagination in movement as well (Avstreih 2017:202).

Whitehouse stated:

> Following the inner sensation, allowing the impulse to take the form of physical action, is active imagination in movement, just as following the visual image is active imagination in fantasy. It is here that the most dramatic psychophysical connections are made available to consciousness. (Whitehouse 1999b:52, as quoted in Bacon 2017:185-186)

Adler's "Discipline of Authentic Movement" is her unique approach, which she calls a potential model of embodied consciousness (personal communication 2013, cited in Bacon 2017:191). Our moving body is also our consciousness, or as Adler says, our "body consciousness' (Adler 2002, as cited in Bacon 2017:192). It is through direct experience that one can create intuitive knowing (Adler 2007:262, as cited in Bacon 2017:193).

Drama Therapy and the Sesame approach also highly value the experience of the body as a way to understand the self. They acknowledge the body communicates on an unconscious, as well as, conscious level (Jones 2007:233). The Sesame approach is closely linked to Jung and his ideas of healing and the imagination (Stevens 1996).

## 1.2 The Mover and the Witness

The two main roles, which are equally important in Authentic Movement, are that of the mover and the witness. While Whitehouse focused on the role of the mover, it was Janet Adler who introduced and named the role of the witness as an essential part of the practice (Pallaro 2007). This research used Adler's general form of Authentic Movement as a guide. During an Authentic Movement session, participants can take up one or both roles: mover and witness.

Both the mover and witness are focused on embodied attentiveness or attuning to their own sensations and emotions during the practice. While the mover chooses to move or not move out of the stillness, they are also tuning in to themselves and developing an inner observer. The mover is given an opportunity to embody their internal world through movement and a process of both will and surrender. The witness, however, is not moving and is seated, observing the mover yet also

tuning in to themselves. The witness is encouraged to hold and see the mover while being aware of the sensations they are experiencing as the mover moves (Bacon 2017).

All of this is done in stillness and with non-judgmental attentiveness. After the mover finishes moving based on the agreed-upon amount of time, the mover can share their experiences verbally with their witness. The mover can also ask the witness to share their experiences as witness to the mover. Both the mover and the witness can speak about their physical experience and their own internal or emotional experience. Both are concerned with "an awareness of what I am doing and what is happening to me" (Whitehouse 1999a:82, as cited in Bacon 2017:185-86). Adler introduced the idea of using precept language in Authentic Movement and speaking from an "I" perspective in order to refrain from interpretation of the other's movements or state of being. Reflections after the movement are usually done orally between the mover and witness, but can also be done alone via artwork and other forms, or later in a group (Goldhahn 2022).

# 2. Research Method and Procedures

Practice as Research (PaR) was the methodology chosen and applied to conduct this embodied practice of Authentic Movement with childcare workers in foster care homes in Johannesburg, South Africa. Although PaR is grounded in practice or doing as the primary means of research and primary evidence of research, it is not devoid of thought, planning, or analysis; its findings are to be shared in order to contribute to knowledge and possible transformation (Nelson 2022:20-22).

Four workshops were conducted for this research, which included Authentic Movement as the main practice/praxis. Knowledge was garnered through the participants' experience ("practice") of Authentic Movement and the researcher's experience and observations. The word "experience" can mean "to put to the test" (derived etymologically from the French); experience then is an experiment similar to how research can be (George 1996, as cited in Nelson 2006). Conquergood describes this kind of research as "grounded in active, intimate, hands-on participation and personal connection" (Conquergood 2002, as cited in Busika 2016:104). That is the research this study encapsulated.

In conducting this research, Authentic Movement was an explorative tool, as well as a practice/praxis for the childcare workers and researcher-practitioner. I personally invited childcare

workers from one group of foster homes and gave them an information letter as well that detailed the process of four workshops over four weeks (one per week). I asked five childcare workers who were available on the days of the workshop and four of them agreed to participate and signed the consent form. They were all black African females ranging in age from 47–54 years old. For each workshop, I created a session plan following a Drama Therapy framework using aspects of the Sesame approach. Each session included a check-in, warm-up, main event, reflection, grounding, and a closing ritual. The main event of each workshop was Authentic Movement.

I took time to explain/teach what Authentic Movement was and highlight certain aspects during the first and third sessions. In the third session, I expanded on the role of the witness and talked about using percept language as the witness (Goldhahn 2022:50–55). The main event was Authentic Movement, which could be done in an open circle, dyads, or triads. I had to maintain flexibility because one person came late in the first session because of an errand, and one person could not make the second session due to another errand. The last two sessions had all four participants present for the full duration of the session. Each session plan was created after the previous week's session to take into account what happened in the previous session. Two sample session plans are included in Appendix A. In terms of Authentic Movement, the first session had an open circle, the second session consisted of a triad, and the last two sessions had the same pair of dyads. As the researcher, I vacillated between being the facilitator and researcher, and during the first session, I briefly entered the open circle as a mover. The reason for entering into movement in the first session of the open circle was to model and encourage movement, as well as to give authenticity to my own impulse to move. Generally, I assumed the position of a meta-witness, a form of free-floating witness normally occupied by the facilitator (Payne 2006:167). The facilitator can also assume the role of "non-witness-non-mover" where they are outside the form but remain in the group, sitting outside of the dyad or circle of movers (Payne 2006:167). I assumed both positions as a researcher.

The sessions were held on Friday mornings from 9–10 am when the participants were at work, but the children had gone to school. Permission had been granted by the organization running the homes. There were other childcare workers still on duty while the four participants attended the sessions in case children stayed home sick from school or there were other emergencies. The need to have some childcare workers still on duty limited the number of people I asked to participate.

The sessions were held inside one of the foster care homes in the living room, and then expanded to the living room and dining room in workshops three and four. Furniture, consisting of couches, tables, and chairs, was moved out of the way but was still bordering the edges of the room. The living room and dining room had wooden floors.

The data collection methods for this research consisted of the practice of Authentic Movement, observations, reflections, a survey, and videos. As the researcher, I journaled after each session to note down what I heard and observed. A video recording from a stationary laptop was also taken of each session with the participants' prior consent. In the third and fourth sessions, when both the living room and the dining room were being used, I (with permission) recorded short clips of the movement on my mobile phone as well, since the laptop was in a fixed position focused on the living room space. The video data was watched after all the sessions by the researcher in order to gather more data and look at participants' movements. Participants were given the opportunity to reflect on their experience within the Authentic Movement practice as well as afterwards through dialogue and artwork. Finally, after the last workshop, each participant was given a survey to take home and complete within two weeks and return to the researcher. In these way, the participants were able to give feedback and offer insights on their experiences such as Nelson speaks of:

> Where the experience of performers is in a mode of tacit knowledge, or the perceptions of visiting 'experiencers' are solicited, it may be that a simple form of documentation of them giving witness to their experience contributes to the overall insight afforded by the piece (Nelson 2006:112).

## 3. Research Instruments

The research instruments used were: Authentic Movement, researcher observation, video recordings, participant reflection through artwork and dialogue, researcher journaling/drawing, and a participant survey. As a researcher, I used both direct observation and undisguised participant observation. Direct observation is looking at what one can observe, such as who is there, what they are doing, how intense the action is, etc. (Participant Observation n.d.). This was done by observation during the sessions and by watching and re-watching video recordings. Undisguised participant observation is when the researcher is part of the group, yet the participants know of their role as researcher (Price, P., Jhangiani, R., Chiang, I., Leighton, D. & Cutter, C.

2013). This was the case for me as I facilitated the workshops and was present during the Authentic Movement as a meta-witness and "non-witness, non-mover" witness (Payne 2006:167).

The video recordings were conducted via a static laptop that sat in one position on a counter directed at the living room space and a mobile phone in sessions 3 and 4. The laptop started recording at the beginning of the workshop and was turned off at the end of the workshop. Since the laptop was immobile and at a certain height, it did not catch all of the action. In addition to the action, the laptop also recorded sound and therefore dialogue. In workshops 3 and 4, the researcher added some short mobile phone videos as the participants had split into two different areas for the Authentic Movement dyads. The participants agreed on the consent form to be video-recorded and the static laptop did not seem to impact or influence the participants in the workshops.

After each Authentic Movement session, the participants were invited to reflect on their movement and experience not solely through dialogue but sometimes also through artistic or creative expression. Session 1, 3, and 4 had artistic reflections, while session 2 had an oral reflection and a check out using objects. The reflection in session 1 was a free drawing and/or writing time, session 3 reflection used clay, and session 4 reflection used two artwork templates: the shape of a body and a timeline. The artwork/reflection pieces were gathered from the participants with their permission and also used as data.

The final form of data collected for analysis was a survey given to participants after the last session to obtain feedback about their overall experience. The survey was composed of short answer questions as well as some numerical scales where participants were asked to select a number from 1–5 to best describe how they felt. In order for the participants to have time to reflect on their experience and for it to distill, two weeks were given to complete the survey at home, after which it was collected by the researcher. The survey was anonymous and no names were written on it.

As noted above, the data came from the perspective and experience of the participants themselves, such as their artworks, direct dialogue, and completed surveys, as well as, from the researcher as facilitator, meta-witness, and researcher. The collected data then went through a thematic analysis.

# 4. Data Analysis Approach

A philosophical phenomenological approach was taken when looking at the data, one that values individuals' lived and direct experiences. Much of the data collected was subjective, based on my observations and analysis as the researcher and on the lived experience of the participants engaging in the practice. The phenomenological approach considers the subjective experience as valuable. Nelson (2006:110) explains that for Maurice Merleau-Ponty, a French phenomenological philosopher, "perception is always incarnate, context-specific and apprehended by a subject, and thus any knowledge or understanding is achieved through an 'encounter' in a subject-object inter-relationship". Merleau-Ponty also focused on "…incarnate perception as an 'inter-twining' ('the chiasm', 1969) in which experience is perceived through the body and its immersion in the world" (Nelson 2006:110). The workshops and Authentic Movement as an explorative tool and practice provided an avenue for the kind of incarnate (embodied) perception Merleau-Ponty spoke about.

## 4.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to understand and interpret the data in this research. Thematic analysis is a method used to analyze qualitative data and can vary in its application and understanding (Terry, G., Hayfield, N., Clarke, V., and Braun, V. 2017:17). Creswell (2014, as cited in Pitsoane & Makahane 2023) describes thematic data analysis as identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning found within qualitative data. I used an "experiential" orientation that focuses on what participants think, feel and do within a critical realist framework, acknowledging socio-cultural meanings and the participants' and researchers' interpretative resources (Terry et al. 2017:21). My primary (though not exclusive) approach was deductive in that I moved from theory to hypothesis/prediction (identifying themes) to evidence gathering (coding) (Terry et al. 2017:19). I was also open to data-led themes that emerged (Terry et al. 2017:19). I captured the data after each session (video recording, artwork, and my journal) and stored it in a secure location. After all the workshops and the return of the survey, I looked at the different sets of data one by one to highlight themes and code the data (Terry et al. 2017:22). My coding focused primarily on semantic (or descriptive) coding but also looked at latent (or interpretative) coding to find patterns, relationships, themes, and similarities and differences in the data, and looked for clues that answered my research question. Coding required repeated engagement with and immersion in the

data (Terry et al. 2017:19). The thematic analysis assisted in identifying recurring themes that were further explored (Creswell 2014, as cited in Pitsoane & Makahane 2023). The data was further distilled by looking at repetition and any surprising information that arose. The coding process culminated in interpreting the data into new knowledge and conducting more literature reviews to see if corroborating or contradictory evidence was available. Specifically, the analysis process consisted of the different data sets going through the steps of: familiarization with the data, theme development, coding, reviewing potential themes, defining and naming themes, reviewing literature, and producing a report with new findings/knowledge (Terry et al. 2017:22).

# 5. Ethical Considerations

As the researcher, I acknowledge my role and engagement with the childcare workers of the foster care homes in this study. I served at this specific set of foster care homes for thirteen years as a full and part-time volunteer and have worked with some of the childcare workers in a support role. I know the childcare workers to differing degrees and have a closer friendship with one of the childcare workers in this study. This knowledge of the childcare workers and their work, however, is what led to this research in order to find ways to care for the caregiver and support them in their intense and important work. The prior relationships with the childcare workers and the group of foster care homes (organization) allowed access into a space where it may ordinarily not be given. It also supported or encouraged participation and a level of vulnerability and depth that may not have been possible in four workshops had the facilitator come from the outside. However, in acknowledging this prior connection to the homes and the participants, I was intentional in clarifying my role during this research to the participants as the researcher and the boundaries and expectations of this role. I discussed the purpose of this study and made participants aware that they could discontinue the process anytime they wished. The art reflections and surveys were submitted without names, although I may be able to gather which one belonged to whom.

Prior official agreement to conduct this research was obtained from the organization running the foster care homes, and each childcare worker had the autonomy to decide if they wanted to participate in the study or not. The consent forms that the participants signed assured their anonymity (to the broader group of people who may read this paper, but not necessarily towards each other and the researcher). Confidentiality was maintained as data was collected and in the

written research report. The consent form also acknowledged requirements of the Protection of Personal Information Act (Act 4 of 2013) and asked for consent in relation to the act. The data gathered was safely contained on the researcher's computer with password protections, and documents were kept in a contained room. The intention of the reflection, grounding, and closing aspects of the sessions was to provide a way to regulate participants' physical and emotional reactions if necessary. Additionally, the phone number and services of a Drama Therapist were made available to the participants should they need additional support.

All the necessary and appropriate documents required to conduct this research were submitted to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg Ethics Committee, since human participants were involved in this research. The participants, however, were adults and not in the category of vulnerable participants, as they were more than 18 years old and voluntarily taking part in the research. The workshops explored an introduction to Authentic Movement, and no prompts were used to attempt to dive into deeper or sensitive material. The Drama Therapy framework of the sessions provided additional safety, as well as the availability of a Drama Therapist for the participants if additional support was needed. The research, therefore, carried a low risk, and ethical clearance was obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand before beginning the research.

Finally, since I used other people's literature and research in my thesis, I needed to make sure I referenced their thinking properly. This was done using the Harvard referencing style.

# CHAPTER FOUR - FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

## 1. The Survey

The final survey given to the participants after the fourth workshop allowed the participants time to reflect on their experiences in the workshop and provided the researcher with more data related to the research questions. The participants were given two weeks to complete the survey on their own so that they would have time to distill their experiences.

The survey (Appendix E) was composed of short answer questions and some multiple choice questions using a scale from 1–5. The surveys were handed in anonymously without names, therefore, when participants are quoted, I use the labels Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, or Participant 4.

In relation to stress, the first question asked how stressed the participants had been at work in the past year. Two participants responded with a '5' (very stressed), one with a '3' (somewhat stressed), and one with a '1' (not much at all). In response to the question, "Has it been easier to cope with stress after the sessions?" all participants responded positively, with two saying 'somewhat (3)', one marking 'yes (4)', and one marking 'very (5).' The final questions using a 1–5 scale, asked participants how their mental and physical health was before the workshops and after the workshops. The scale went from '1' being distressed to '5' being thriving/very good. Two participants marked an increase in wellbeing, one participant stayed the same, although they were already at a '4 (good)', and one participant went down one number.

There was one specific question linked to work-life integration. It asked, "Do you feel more balanced (integrated) with life and work after the sessions?" All the participants responded in the affirmative, with three participants saying "yes" and one participant saying "a little bit."

When asked at the end of the survey what they got out of the workshops, if anything, and if they had any other thoughts they wanted to share, the participants wrote the following in their own words:

Participant 1 - “ It (Authentic Movement) helps me feel more connected to my body. Reduces stresses. It helps me to bring a sense of peace and express my feelings through movement. I learnt that Authentic Movement makes you feel more balanced and aware of your emotions.”

Participant 2 - “It helps my mind. When tyme (time) goes we can do it more.”

Participant 3 - “It helped me see how to relieve my stress. I would love to do the Theraphy again. It helped me a lot.”

Participant 4 - “ To be focused and listen to your body. I wish we can continue doing it because it really helped me.”

The above answers to the survey highlight how Authentic Movement helped participants connect with themselves and each other and bring a sense of relief and wellbeing. Although some emotions with a negative affect, such as sadness and anger, also arose, processing them together helped participants become more congruent and authentic with themselves and each other.

Payne and others compare the moving meditation and witnessing state in Authentic Movement to mindfulness practice (Payne 2017:812). The participants in these workshops were able to turn inward and become mindful of themselves and their thoughts and emotions, as well as those of others, through witnessing, reflecting, and sharing. The participants' overall sense of wellbeing increased through Authentic Movement by listening to their inner body wisdom and developing their inner observer, becoming more authentic, and sharing with one another in the group process. Through the practice of Authentic Movement and the reflexivity with in and the sessions, participants discovered a new way of knowing which is indicative of and essential to PaR.

## 2. The Workshops

Through the four workshops, the researcher observed and collected data regarding the participants’ experiences. The workshops provided data in the form of observations, videos, dialogue, movement, and artwork. The data and experiences provided new information and knowledge for the participants themselves and for the researcher as PaR indicates. In general, the participants seem to have experienced a sense of release and relief in various ways. The researcher, through the workshops and a thematic analysis of the data, found the following

themes emerged: mindfulness and self-awareness, stress release and relief, and connection. These themes are explored and discussed in this chapter, along with the support of literature based on what others found in their work.

## 2.1 From Mind Full to Mindful

When the four participants (now called Participant A, Participant B, Participant C, and Participant D in order to maintain their anonymity and track their experience) entered the space for the workshops each morning, they appeared as if their minds were full. This was observed as they talked briefly about a message they received about work, by their faces, and how their bodies slumped on the couches. The stress and fatigue were visible via their words, faces and bodies. Sometimes it was not possible for all participants to be present; a family emergency had to take priority, or their day off needed to be used to attend to their family. Participant C and Participant D each missed one workshop, or part of a workshop, due to juggling personal family matters. Research shows shift work can lead to increased burnout (Kind et al. 2020). Shift work involves working outside of the typical 9-5 work day and can include evening and night work and rotating schedules. The participants verbally expressed stress and tiredness during the workshops, which their bodies also portrayed during Authentic Movement. However, at the end of each workshop, their mood and outlook had changed, according to their statements and body language. Their full minds became mind*ful* of themselves and others as witnessed through their time in Authentic Movement and moments of reflection and sharing. This chapter will examine what occurred in the workshops and how it affected the participants. Having these workshops during work time contributed to the idea of work-life integration, where they could engage in time for themselves during working hours.

Participants had different experiences during their time as movers and witnesses, as observed by the researcher based on movements, reflections, and feedback. In terms of background, the participants did not have much experience with drama or dance, or were what Drama Therapists call ‘drama-ready’. In terms of movement, however, Participant C had some dance experience, although in what capacity is unknown. Therefore, different ways of moving and different themes emerged for the participants.

## 2.2 Drama Therapy Framework: How it aided the work

It was not a specific intention of this research to measure how or to what degree the Drama Therapy framework of the workshops aided the receptivity to and experience of Authentic Movement. However, after conducting the workshops, the researcher believes using Drama Therapy as framework/structure for the workshops was important in preparing this group of participants for engagement with Authentic Movement. The dramatherapeutic framework using aspects of the Sesame approach helped create a container for participants to prepare for Authentic Movement, as well as, aided in facilitating connections through additional reflection time and rituals.

Aspects of the Sesame approach in Drama Therapy were used to create and structure the workshops. Similar to Authentic Movement, the Sesame approach does not attempt "interpretation" of personal material but uses the art form of movement and drama to assist people (Stevens 1996:2). Sesame also uses movement as an essential component and rests in part on the psychology of Jung (Stevens 1996:2). The researcher used aspects of the Sesame approach to assist in creating a container of safety for the participants and to awaken them to movement and feeling before the main event of Authentic Movement in the workshops. Thorton states (1996:91) that the material before a main event is a preparation phase which "awakens and challenges the body and encourages awareness of the space around and the different changes of energy which will be needed in the creative work to follow." The check-in and warm-ups during the workshops were, therefore, important to prepare for the main event of Authentic Movement. The art reflections and group sharing after the Authentic Movement also served as a bridging out and grounding for the participants. Finally, a ritual concluded the workshops in order to bring the participants back into the reality of everyday life and the room they were working in (Thorton 1996:91). In this way, the Drama Therapy framework provided an additional "cushion" , time, and processing for entry into and out of Authentic Movement.

The Drama Therapy (dramatherapeutic) framework of the workshops also facilitated participant engagement and provided an avenue to mindfulness and the 'here and now.' During the check-ins, the participants had to become present to their own emotions and sense of being. The check-ins at the beginning of each workshop were used to see how participants were doing and feeling, to get a sense of the energy in the room, and for participants to become present to themselves and each

other in the here-and-now. Check-ins were the first exercise of mindfulness and presence for the participants. During the first check-in in Workshop 1, Participants A, Participant B, and Participant C were present. When asked to choose a word or two to describe how they were feeling, their words included "tired", "sad and happy", and "ready and unsure." The participants were then asked to reflect on their chosen word in a movement or image. That image/movement was then reflected back to them by the whole group. Beginning with this check-in, participants were encouraged to become mindful of themselves and others. The mirroring of the movements back to one another was a simple form of witnessing and the beginning of "being seen," which would follow throughout each workshop.

The warm-up used in the first workshop was a game of moving and stopping, in which the group could start and stop moving together without using words or gestures. The physical warm-up encouraged participants to begin using their senses and body to become aware and attuned to one another, both of which are skills needed in the roles of mover and witness in Authentic Movement. It was, therefore, an important part of the preparation for the main event of Authentic Movement. Authentic Movement, as the main event of the workshops, will be discussed in the next section.

The bridging out, grounding, and ritual at the end of each workshop helped to further contain and release material that emerged during the Authentic Movement. It helped bring the participants back to reality, their senses, and their surroundings. The word ritual can be used to explain an exercise done at the end of each workshop to signify the closing of the workshop (Jones 2007:516). As Thorton (1996) mentions in the grounding during Sesame sessions, long, deep breathing is encouraged together, movements slow down, story is sometimes peeled off, and a sharing of the session is acknowledged. This occurred in each of our closings, as seen in workshop session plans (Appendix A). After the first workshop, during the closing ritual, the participants grabbed each other's hands instinctively in the circle in a gesture of solidarity and shared experience. They then spontaneously let out a shared scream/shout as a sign of release. During another grounding and ritual, the participants moved from a place of expressing stress and frustration during the check-in, to suggesting how to resource themselves and care for themselves, for example, picking lotion as an object to symbolize caring for oneself or holding a shiny coin and saying they must keep shining no matter what is happening around them.

The closing ritual was always the same. My hope is that this gave participants a sense of security as they knew what was to come. The words and actions of the closing ritual acknowledged the time spent together and the need to move back into the world. Taking a step into the circle together, then a step out, and then a step forward along the circle, we would all say, "We move together, we move apart, we move on." This phrase and movements were repeated twice and then done a third time without words to close the session.

The aim of the Sesame approach in Drama Therapy, as Dekker (1996:39) says, is first to create a safe space in which to explore possibilities. Having the workshops structured within a Drama Therapy framework using aspects of the Sesame approach provided an extra layer of safety for participants and time and opportunity for them to warm up for the main event of Authentic Movement and to bridge-out and close afterwards.

## 3. Entering into Authentic Movement

During the first workshop, Participant A, Participant B, and Participant C were present for the initial introduction to Authentic Movement. Prior to the workshop, the participants received a short written introduction to Authentic Movement (Appendix B) along with their invitation to participate and consent form. In the oral introduction at the beginning of the first workshop, the researcher explained these workshops were meant for the participants as time for themselves, as well as a time to explore if Authentic Movement could benefit them or not. The researcher explained the format of Authentic Movement and used the word "real" to describe Authentic Movement, using "real" as a synonym for authentic. For all the participants, English was their second language so using the word "real" as a synonym for authentic seemed more understandable. Expanding on that, the researcher said: "You can do whatever you want. Anything your body feels like. Or you don't have to move." I continued explaining to the participants, "You are trying to sense what your body feels like (doing)… listen to your body. We are trying to listen inside." The researcher explained that in Authentic Movement, there was a mover and a witness, there was no talking, and ideally, the mover moved with their eyes closed. Vocalization from movement was welcome. I also explained that if participants did not feel comfortable with eyes closed they could open their eyes occasionally or as needed, but the stillness and function of moving with eyes closed was intended

to help participants listen inside themselves without exterior distraction and sense what their body wanted to do. The role of the external witness was explained as someone “taking someone in”, being present to the mover, and not judging or interpreting what they did. Also the external witness could assist in providing some protection when the mover was moving with eyes closed. There was a set time limit and chimes, used by the researcher, to indicate the start and stop of the movement time.

During the workshop and Authentic Movement, the researcher was also the facilitator. As the facilitator, I decided to start with an open circle in the first session of Authentic Movement since there were an odd number of participants. In the open circle, we stood on the outside of the circle looking in and could be both witness and/or mover. I explained that when we are on the outside of the circle, we are witnessing whilst creating a space of safety, holding those who moved inside the circle. Participant B asked me to demonstrate before we started, so I moved into the circle with some movements and then came back to the outside of the circle. The group decided to move for 10 minutes. When the chimes rang to start the time, all the participants in the circle started moving in place. Only Participant A ventured into the middle of the circle with their eyes open and did a spin. Participant A would become the most curious and explorative in their movements during the workshops, exemplified by the diversity and range of their movements. Most of the participants moved within their space/place on the outside of the circle or made a small circle or movement (turned) in their spot. The researcher went with the flow and served as the meta-witness for the group. Many of the movements were an awakening of the upper body first: stretching arms, swaying, and rolling necks and shoulders. While the open circle was mostly silent, there was some grunting as the participants moved. Two participants kept their eyes open for part of the time. Possibly, they did not feel safe or secure enough to close their eyes. Participant D entered the workshop during the Authentic Movement session. They were given the choice to either observe or join the movement. Participant D decided to join and had their eyes open most of the time, possibly due to the fact that they missed the oral introduction/teaching on Authentic Movement. Slowly, toward the end of the movement time, some participants activated their legs by pointing their toes and stretching their legs in front of them. Participant D started to do squats on the outside of the circle. When the chimes rang to end the movement, I asked participants to take five minutes alone for reflection and write or draw anything that arose for them during the movement on a piece

of paper. After the five minutes of silent reflection, the group was invited to come together and share anything from their experience. I said, “There is no right or wrong and you do not have to share.” Throughout the workshops, I would reiterate this statement. A participant did ask to confirm “There is no right or wrong?” before sharing, indicating the importance of non-judgment and non-interpretation for them. The idea that there was no right or wrong, in movement or language, seemed to free the participants and add to their sense of safety and level of vulnerability.

In addition to the oral introduction of and short teaching about Authentic Movement by the researcher in the first workshop, there were moments of reiteration in each workshop about the form of Authentic Movement. This teaching was important and happened during the workshops, as all the participants were new to Authentic Movement, and the practice was being learned during the workshops. Payne (2000:163) explains that the group facilitator plays an educational role as well as that of facilitator and meta-witness. In the first Authentic Movement session of the open circle, for example, the movers moved mostly in place as opposed to moving into the circle. That meant when they were moving in place, they were not able to witness one another, which is the usual role on the outside of the circle. As the facilitator, therefore, I held all the participants as the meta-witness. Even though the open circle did not go as the form dictates, this was the first session of movement, and I went with the flow. In workshop 3, I spoke about witnessing and using percept language after noticing witnesses were starting to interpret what the mover was doing in their shared reflections (Goldhahn 2022:48). Percept language uses the first person such as “I felt…”, in order to focus on the witness’ own experience and to move away from interpretation (Goldhahn 2022:48). Therefore, as needed, moments of teaching, reviewing and learning were important to guide participants in the practice of Authentic Movement. We were all learning by doing in this process.

# 4. Emerging from Authentic Movement

In addition to the physical movements of the body, which will be examined later in the research, what emerged in the Authentic Movement for participants were stories, explorations, and emotions from their interior, as well as a sense of authenticity toward themselves and others. This was evidenced in their movements, reflections, dialogue, and surveys, and will be explored below.

## 4.1 Stories

For Participant B, stories seemed to emerge during their time as a mover. The first story emerged in workshop two when they were part of a triad. At the beginning of their movement, Participant B was hunched over with what appeared as a face of concern and distress. Through gestures and movements—including pacing around, holding a hand to their ear, and holding their hands together in a position of prayer—a witness could make out the outline of a story about conflict. Toward the end of the movement sequence, Participant B's body became more upright in posture, and their facial expression shifted to reflect calmness; it seemed as though they had resolved the conflict in their story. Participant B had their eyes open during most of the movement. During their reflection, Participant B began with "My story was…" They spoke of a story and a problem they were trying to solve. At first, they said they were angry, but gradually (through the movement and story) they said God helped them. By the end of the movement/story, Participant B said the conflict had been resolved. This was the first witnessing of material coming from within a participant and emerging in movement, a possible example of the unconscious becoming conscious. It could also be an example of inhibited emotions, such as anger, coming to the surface. García-Días' (2018) research examining the emotional state of movers in Authentic Movement found that emotional states changed for movers and *Anxiety* and *Happiness* subscales decreased in his Authentic Movement group, whereas items *Melancholy, Sad* and *Angry* increased. The increased emotional states García-Días' (2018) study experienced (*Melancholy, Sad* and *Angry)* were also witnessed in some of the participants in this research, particularly Participant B.

Through the time of stillness and movement, Participant B as mover was able to express their emotions of anger and move through a conflict toward a point of resolution and calm. This is an example of processing through the body and embodiment resulting in problem-solving. In the movement, Participant B was able to draw on and recognise their own resources, such as prayer and faith, as seen by them making a gesture of prayer. Participant B acknowledged this connection by saying God helped them resolve the conflict in their story. Could this have been an example of Jones' core Drama Therapy process of transformation? Jacques, a Drama Therapist, describes part of transformation as "the potential for personal transformation as well as social transformation as a result of the creative experience" (Jacques 2006:11, as cited in Jones 2007:247). Transformation

in the creative processes, whether in Drama Therapy or Authentic Movement, can assist clients/participants in developing a sense of agency and empowerment (Jaques 2006, as cited in Jones 2007:247). It seemed by the end of Participant B's movement/story, they had gained a sense of agency. They were also able to practice emotional regulation through their story, moving from an angry state to a calm state. Both a sense of agency and emotional regulation can lead to more resilience (Kind et al. 2020). Avstreih, a practitioner of Authentic Movement, claims the practice of Authentic Movement helps participants develop a greater trust in the integrity of their being, their innate intelligence, and their self-regulating capacity for wellness (Avstreih 2017:208).

This was the first time, but not the only time, Participant B tapped into their faith and spirituality during their movements, expressed for them by putting palms together as in prayer, and sometimes putting these palms in front of their mouth. It is important to note these foster care homes have a strong Christian ethos which is part of their daily lives. Thus, Participant B may have felt more comfortable incorporating their faith. Tapping into spirituality and faith is what Adler (2002, as cited in Payne 2006:170) perceived as mysticism or a transpersonal experience in Authentic Movement. Avstreih (2017:202) describes the practice of Authentic Movement also as an embodied spiritual practice that "fosters a connection to the true Self, promoting a sense of health and wellness that flows from an increase in empathy, compassion for self and other, and a deepening sense of the sacred quality of life itself." Payne (2000:173) also agrees that creativity experienced in the movement process is another path to spirituality for some participants.

Participant B's movements during the dyads in workshops three and four also mirrored stories and a connection to their life, possibly reflecting Jones' core concept in Drama Therapy of life-drama connection. In Drama Therapy, "the notion of a life-drama connection acknowledges the therapeutic potentials of bringing life into contact with drama within a framework of intentional personal change." (Jones 2007:242) The space in which drama, movement, or creative processes occur is often likened in Drama Therapy and Authentic Movement as a "transitional or potential space", coined by psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott, which allows for spontaneity and authenticity (Jones 2007:242; Avstreih 2017:208). The transitional space is a "realm that occurs between subjective and objective worlds" (Jones 2007:242). In Drama Therapy, as in Authentic Movement, the possible life-drama connection may be conscious and overt or unconscious (Jones 2007:242).

In workshop three, Participant B expressed their excitement about a weekend off and celebrating a birthday by dancing and jiving throughout most of their movement. Their facial expression seemed to reflect this excitement in a continual smile. The anticipation and joy were visible and palpable in their movement and body. Even the external witness felt joy when they reflected on seeing the mover. The external witness mirrored some of these movements and energy when it was their turn to move afterwards. This highlights the connection and kinesthetic empathy developed between a witness and a mover, their interpersonal interaction, a "'you', a 'me', a 'you-in-me' and a 'me-in-you'" (Weir 1975:9, as cited in Goldhahn 2022:49).

In the final Authentic Movement session, Participant B moved slowly and looked as though they were in despair, their head often down and held in their hands. The emotion of melancholy was very present. They again put their hands together in prayer and raised them to their mouth. It seemed another inner story was emerging for the participant as they were experiencing emotions, as well as, drawing on their resources and self-regulating capabilities.

Although most stories from a mover came from Participant B, Participant D also seemed to be in a story of their own in workshop two. Participant D's movements of going back and forth from one corner of the space to another, looking forward and backward, gave a sense of searching and being lost, which Participant D acknowledged earlier in their check-in and later in their reflections. This highlights the connections made between the mind and body and the conscious and unconscious, that often occur in reflection and moments of sharing.

The stories that emerged for Participant B and Participant D allowed for a greater sense of awareness into their emotions and their lives, as verbally expressed by them during the reflection, and demonstrated a possible life-drama connection (Jones 2007). This act of looking within that occurs in Authentic Movement helps to develop the inner observer or inner witness. The inner observer in Authentic Movement refers to participants' ability to witness their own movement and internal experience without judgement (Gluck 2013). The inner observer is developed over time in both the mover and witness, and allows for more self-awareness as one cultivates an internal presence that observes feelings, thoughts and sensations (Payne 2006). It is another entrance into mindfulness and a cultivation of consciousness that can help participants explore the unconscious and integrate different parts of themselves (Gluck 2013).

Some of the stories that came out for the movers ended with a sense of resolution. Some stories expressed joy and pain without a resolution, but all the stories enabled Participants B and Participant D to gain a deeper awareness and mindfulness of their interior thoughts through their bodies and potentially find ways to self-regulate. Thus, Authentic Movement proved to be beneficial for Participants B and Participant D in terms of providing a way to bolster their wellbeing through mindfulness, unconscious processing, and emotional self-regulation.

## 4.2 Exploration and Curiosity

While all the participants engaged in exploration as movers, one participant in particular engaged in exploration and curiosity in a different manner. In three out of their four times as a mover, Participant A considered and explored the experience of being something or someone else. During the first workshop in the open circle, after the movement, the participants were given a piece of paper and colours to draw or write anything that arose for them during the movement. Participant A drew a bird (Appendix C). During the second workshop, when they moved in a triad, Participant A moved their arms up and down as if they were flying. They also got down on all fours, hands and feet, and walked around like that briefly. Hopping, squatting, leaping, and turning were other movements they made. During their reflection time, Participant A said they were moving as animals to see how it felt. They asked themselves, “Is it nice? (to move on all fours)”. Participant A further shared that they were “flying” during the movement. They had embodied a bird like the one they drew in the previous workshop, explaining in their reflection as mover: “I think the birds enjoy the fresh air.” It seems possible Participant A was looking to experience some of the same freedom or enjoyment the birds felt.

During the fourth and final workshop, Participant A was on the floor most of the time as the mover. They were moving around on all fours—this time on their hands and knees. They were touching the wall and the chair with their hands. Then they kicked off their shoes and started pushing them along the floor and playing with them. Twice, Participant A sat on the floor and leaned against the wall. During their oral sharing as the mover with their external witness, Participant A said they were exploring how it was to be a baby and crawl as a baby on the floor. It is interesting to note that Participant A had their eyes open the majority of the time during their movement, not only in

that workshop, but in all the workshops. This may be why they tried more varied types of movements; they could see and keep their balance. Closing one's eyes can also indicate the level of trust or safety one feels within oneself, the group, and the practice (Payne 2006). Payne describes that formative stages in Authentic Movement groups can consist of difficulties including movers not being able to move with their eyes closed or participants not wanting to take on certain roles (Payne 2006:176–177). As the group continues to meet together and practice, the need for defensiveness and a safe persona can be dropped and a more real and accepting process can be engaged in (Payne 2006:177). Keeping their eyes open may have made it more challenging for Participant A to surrender to internal impulses and, therefore, their movements may have been driven more out of will and conscious curiosity. As Payne (2000:164) explains, having one's eyes closed enables movers to attend more to inner sensations, feelings, thoughts, images and movement impulses. Avstreih says each individual in Authentic Movement is free to choose moment-to-moment between will and surrender in response to the voice of the inner teacher/innate knowledge (Avstreih 2017:212). Authentic Movement is a practice, and in practicing it, one can become more familiar with the roles of mover and witness and possibly take more risks and deepen the practice as one continues. Possibly with more workshops, Participant A may have become more comfortable closing their eyes. Each participant is on their own journey in their own time.

## 4.3 Expressions of Feeling and Authenticity

From the workshops and Authentic Movement experiences, the participants as individuals and as a group/collective, were able to drop their figurative masks and foster a sense of connection and empathy for themselves and one another. Payne (2006) also noted this outcome in her work and research with Authentic Movement groups.

Empathy for themselves and one another was often the product of witnessing and sharing in reflections. In addition to a mover listening within and developing their inner observer/witness, the presence of an external witness who is attuned and non-judgmental, aids the empathy experienced by being seen and seeing one another. The use of language and sharing in the times of reflection, between the mover and witness, and within the larger group, also help create a shared experience of being seen and held by one another (Payne 2006:166).

The workshops and practice of Authentic Movement provided time, space, and stillness for participants to slow down and start listening within themselves. It invited mindfulness. Through stillness and movement, participants became aware of emotions which emerged in stories for Participants B and Participants D, for example. By being able to tune into themselves, the participants were able to become aware of their emotions and thoughts and then express them first through their bodies. Afterwards, they were given the opportunity to reflect on them orally in pairs and in the group. This moving from internal to embodied to 'languaged' helped bring a sense of congruence and authenticity to the participants, which in turn led to a greater sense of wellbeing. The congruence of emotion can lead to an improved emotional repertoire, as Drama Therapist Nancy Secchi explains (Jones 2007:218). Secchi goes on to say it "also gives us insight into ourselves and others and allows for better effective regulation" (as quoted in Jones 2007:218). One participant shared, "It's tiring to pretend if we are not feeling well. It's hard. You don't want to end up in hospital." Participants orally expressed that they did not need to pretend in this space and also showed this by revealing emotions in their movement such as anxiety and melancholy, emotions that may typically be inhibited and cause more illness (García-Días 2018)(Yusim 2020). This lowering of their figurative masks, first to themselves and then to others, helped the participants become and feel more authentic.

Adler (as cited in Pelvin:132) has said Authentic Movement is all about relationships. Relationship to the self, to the divine, and to others. As stated in Plevin (2014:132), Adler explained:

> The center of the work in the discipline of Authentic Movement is about relationship: between a mover and an outer witness, between the moving self and an inner witness, between the self and the collective. The self and the Divine. Relationship, relationship, relationship.

Payne adds that Authentic Movement allows participants to "express themselves, be themselves, accept themselves and be accepted by others without an outer task to perform" (Payne 2006:174). This acceptance and ability for self-expression contribute to a greater sense of congruence or authenticity, which can lead to a greater sense of wellbeing (Payne 2006). This was experienced by participants in the workshops. Participant D shared in workshop two that "I am just hanging. I don't know where I stand. I don't know where I am and I don't know how to feel." This statement highlighted a lack of awareness and reflection about themselves and their emotions. During that workshop, Participant D was given the opportunity to explore their feelings through the Authentic

Movement and personal and group reflections. Participant D shared after their moving, "I felt like I can just go. I am feeling tired. (I) try to forget some of the other things." Participant D was able to process some of their feelings/emotions after their movement. During the check-out Participant D said, "No matter what is happening, I must keep on shining." They seemed to have a new sense of agency and determination in the midst of their struggles. Participant C was able to voice and acknowledge their emotions as well, explaining they felt depressed the week before but then after the workshop they felt relieved, saying, "we can do this." They also shared about their experience in the workshop saying, "First I felt I am in the shell. Then I managed to step out and then I managed to talk." Throughout the workshops and Authentic Movement, participants were able to explore how they felt, develop their inner observer, and become more empathetic towards themselves.

In the fourth and final workshop there was a time of group sharing and reflection. Participant C said "A problem shared is a problem solved. Something is coming out. If I cough it out…It helped me…You are not the only one (alone)." Another participant said, "We need to share." One participant, through tears, said, "We had to express ourselves and how we are feeling and to share. Thank you. In our hearts we are crying." Participant C finished by saying, "We need this but we never had this. We thought we were strong but…" During this final time of group sharing and reflecting, two participants were in tears. In sharing with one another in movement, words, and witnessing, something was released in the participants, perhaps emotions they repressed, and they felt closer to themselves and to one another. This is echoed by Payne's (2006) experience with groups and participants. When participants are able to express themselves in movement and a time of group reflection is held, participants develop a "growing acceptance of each other, built on a deep respect that each is doing the best they can" (Payne 2006:177).

In the survey participants completed anonymously after all four workshops, more information arose about the importance for them to be able to express themselves and their emotions with one another. All the participants said Authentic Movement was helpful to them in expressing their emotions and sharing with each other. Two participants focused on sharing their experiences verbally with one another, as witness and mover, as well as in the group. One participant emphasized the expression of emotions through movement instead of words, saying, "Authentic Movement can help some people by letting them express emotions through movement instead of

words. It's good for those who find it hard to talk about their feelings or need to relax." This insight by the participant highlights how Authentic Movement can be useful in multicultural settings where there is not one dominant language or where participants may not be as comfortable sharing verbally. Payne says focusing on the content of movement rather than directly on a person or group can aid communication and an understanding of the other from their point of view (Payne 2006:176). Witnessing one another can foster clearer communication (Payne 2006:176). Just as the research participants said that "a problem shared is a problem solved", Yalom (1985:8, as cited in Payne 2006:171) explains the experience of unity with others may increase their sense of wellbeing and "their understanding of personal themes and their felt-sense of 'universality'– the relief they are not unique in their suffering."

By the end of the workshops, the participants had discovered a greater awareness of themselves and their emotions, a sense of agency, a connection with others, and a resourcing within themselves, as witnessed through their movements, reflections and words. Pelvin, a dance movement therapist, says the practice of Authentic Movement is often called a "path of consciousness" because through the practice, one focuses attention, develops awareness and brings consciousness to how the inner observer influences movement in the practice, as well as in life (Pelvin 2014:132). In these workshops one could say Authentic Movement helped the participants gain an awareness of their emotions and possibly suppressed emotions in their unconscious. Awareness and empathy were also gained from times of reflection: talking with one another as mover and witness, in the art reflections and in collective sharing during the workshops. According to Bacon (2017) an unfolding experience of self and relation to self as experienced in Authentic Movement can aid in wellbeing, as well as, relation to others. During the workshops it appeared the participants experienced an unfolding of themselves, through movement, reflection and sharing. This was supported by the participants' comments and reflections. Again, not only was the researcher gaining knowledge and understanding through the practice of Authentic Movement, so were the participants.

# 5. Participants' Final Thoughts

Through stories, exploration and curiosity, and the expression of emotions during Authentic Movement, participants experienced increased mindfulness and awareness, a sense of release, and

the benefit of seeing and being seen in community. During the first workshop, participants were already experiencing some benefits of Authentic Movement. Participant A said Authentic Movement helped them to focus their mind. They said they had too many things on their mind, but when they started the movement, they had to focus on what they were doing. “It helps my mind, thinking” they said. Participant A also realized “You don’t just need to move, move, without stopping. There is a time you have to end.” Participant D said they felt stress-free when moving and that they were relieved by doing movements. The other two participants shared the physical effects the movement had on their bodies such as feeling relieved and released after the first workshop. Participant C said they felt relieved afterwards because before the workshop it felt like their body was shutting down and was feeling very tired and painful. Participant B said the moving helped them with their stress and that they felt better afterwards. After the first workshop, all of the participants felt a sense of physical relief and three participants mentioned an emotional release as well. Participant A connected the Authentic Movement directly with being mindful and present. The connection between the participants’ mind, body and emotions through the cultivation of stillness, awareness and movement, grew with each workshop and was reflected in movement, story, art and language and confirmed in the final survey.

## 6. “Stretching” and “Exercise” in Authentic Movement

This research examined not only how the practice of Authentic Movement impacted the participants’, but also how the participants’ bodies moved during the practice.

As seen in the sections above, participants stretched themselves emotionally in Authentic Movement by developing an awareness of self, emotions and others. The interior or unconscious became conscious at times and resulted in release/relief. The participants, however, also spoke of the physical relief their bodies experienced through movement in the workshops and the Authentic Movement.

Although movement can be analysed through different lenses such as Laban Movement Analysis, the researcher is not versed in these and therefore described the movements as they observed them. The participants often spoke of stretching their bodies and exercising during the workshops and how that helped to release tension. The participants initially performed movements that appeared

to be natural and known to them. Walking in the space during the warm-ups was mentioned as beneficial by them. In the group sharing after the first Authentic Movement of open circle, Participant B said it was helping them stretch and that walking around "is helping my body."

During the first Authentic Movement session in the open circle, participants mostly moved in place on the outside of the circle. Their movements consisted of: stretching arms up, pushing arms forward and back, opening chest and neck up, scrunching arms, moving the neck, bending forward/down/back/side to side, rolling around the waist, pushing arms back and crossing arms in front. Only towards the end of the ten minutes of movement did one participant, Participant C, start pointing their toes and legs. Another participant then started to lift and bend their knees and Participant D started to do squats. During this first Authentic Movement session there was also the wiping of a face (due to the heat), the rubbing of a neck and some grunting during the movements.

The researcher discovered these types of movements can be called dynamic stretching. Dynamic stretching is a type of stretching that requires movement as opposed to being static and can help joints and muscles go through a full range of motion (Chertoff 2019). Dynamic stretching uses controlled movements to take the joints and muscles through their range of motion (Chertoff 2019). Included in dynamic stretching are arm circles, arm swings, hip circles, torso twists, shoulder roll, leg swings, squats among others (Amen 2023). Many of these movements were done by the participants. These stretches are often used to help warm-up the body before exercise (Chertoff 2019). Deshmukh (2019) says dynamic stretches are the most effective or common types of stretches. The benefits of dynamic stretching are: increased circulation, increased range of motion, flexibility, stress reduction and alleviating lower back pain (Deshmukh 2019). The use of dynamic stretching by participants is likely because they were used to/familiar with these movements and were a way to warm-up the body.

When participants described how they felt after the first Authentic Movement they used phrases such as " It helped my body, the stretching thing. My body was already shutting down (before)." Participant A said, "It's exercising my mind… and it's a type of exercise for my body."

During workshops two through four, there was only one mover moving at a time and designated external witnesses. This is when participants started to move away from dynamic stretching at times and instead cover more ground in movement, as well as try different movements and

gestures, and express stories. This may have been because participants now had a designated external witness who was “holding” them and also making sure they didn’t bump into things in the space. It may have also been because participants were slowly getting more comfortable with the practice of Authentic Movement. Since Authentic Movement is a practice, the more one engages in it, the more one can grow in the different roles, develop their inner observer, and become used to responding to inner impulses and sensations for movement (Payne 2006). At first participants may feel nervous and not know what to do, which was visible at times in the participants. Boredom can also occur for both the mover and witness for multiple reasons as Authentic Movement demands a high level of focus (Goldhahn 2022:55-58). Although some participants experienced boredom, as expressed verbally, they were able to explore and engage in Authentic Movement more and more as the workshops progressed. During workshop two, when three participants worked in a triad, the participants’ movements included more exploration and stories as opposed to workshop one which consisted mostly of dynamic stretching. Participant A engaged in exploration with movements which looked like walking on a tightrope, running with little steps, moving their arms by their sides similar to wings and walking with their hands and legs on the floor. Participant A shared in the reflection that they were curious to explore how animals and birds moved. They seemed to be playing with different roles or ways of being. Participant A also said they were exercising their body and suggested they could do those movements at home for their exercises. Interspersed in their exploration of animal movements, Participant A also did lunges, squats, hopping, leaps and turns (some dynamic stretches).

Participant B and Participant D embodied stories using gestures, movement and facial expressions. Participant B enacted a story of conflict as mentioned earlier in this paper. They walked around the space and started by having their hand to their ear as if speaking on a mobile phone. The facial expression appeared to be very concerned and upset. Their body movements and gestures reflected their inner story with their body hunched over at first and moving slowly while at the end they stood upright and their face had a sense of calm.

Participant D also embodied an internal story. They started off with strong forceful movements of walking and running back and forth. They then fell on the floor and made a sound of release while lying on the floor. During their movement they picked up a pillow from the couch and started using it as a prop, first on their head, then under their arm, and then hugging it in front of the chest. The

mover looked back and forth from one corner of the room to the other and moved back and forth as well. Their eyes were primarily open. When the mover shared what they were feeling there was a story of being tired and also wanting to just go and forget things. The researcher felt this participant's tiredness in her own body for the next three hours. This body-centered or somatic countertransference surprised the researcher. The researcher had taken on the participant's fatigue and exhaustion physically in a way of responding to the participant's experience (Egan and Carr 2008).

In the second workshop with designated external witnesses, the movers' internal world and images started to be reflected in their movement as opposed to solely using dynamic stretching. When asked the next week how they felt after that second workshop, the participants responded with "Feeling released, my body was okay" and "I felt relieved, we can do this." Another participant said "First I felt I am in the shell. Then I managed to step out and then I managed to talk." These statements show a physical release was experienced, as well as an emotional release. The statements also highlight how Authentic Movement is a practice that develops as individuals and groups grow in different roles and in trust of themselves and others. Each session of Authentic Movement is unique for the participants based on what they carry with them to the session and what they choose to explore.

In the third and fourth workshops the participants were in dyads/pairs. In the third workshop each mover was given 10 minutes to move. In both dyads, the second mover mirrored many of the movements and, at times, the energy level of the first mover. In the dyad of Participant B and Participant D, the first mover was very energetic and danced around in a circle for most of the time with a smile on their face. Their designated witness felt this joy and excitement. When it was their turn to move they also danced around for a bit. The second dyad of Participant A and Participant C also mirrored each other in their movements. This dyad was interesting as they each stopped and drank tea or coffee with eyes closed during their movement time. They also sat on the couch during their movement and engaged with the furniture around the perimeter more. This second dyad contained more dynamic stretching. The dynamic stretching movements consisted of arms swinging, knee lifts in a mini jog, jumping, side leg swings, and leg lifts. The researcher hypothesizes that the dyad went back to this dynamic stretching because they both mentioned they were very tired and Participant C mentioned in their reflection they were feeling bored at first.

Participant A reflected that at first they were feeling tired and then they began "doing exercise so my body is flexible. I did a lot of exercises for me to take out my energy." Participant A used the term exercise the most during the workshops. The dynamic stretching may have been a way of moving that the dyad was familiar with and therefore easy to fall back into. This dyad may have also possibly used the dynamic stretching to warm-up their bodies as they were tired and expressed fatigue. Payne also explains that individuals and groups can go through phases or stages and that there may be times when participants can't concentrate as much or when there is reluctance, tiredness, shyness that could appear in the movement (Payne 2006:176–177). The dynamic stretching and boredom could have been a defence mechanism, a type of avoidance, or hinted at a lack of focus or trust (Goldhahn 2022:55-58). This milling around stage also occurred in workshop four with one participant who did more dynamic stretching during their movement such as swinging their arms in front of their torso, moving their torso around, and stretching their lower back. In their reflection that participant/mover said, "I don't know what to do. I am tired. I am very tired. I am sleeping." The ability to respond to thoughts, sensation or emotions is not always the same and takes time and focus to develop.

Physically mirroring one another became a part of the dyad experience. Mirroring began when participants were working in dyads and was seen in the physical movements of both movers who went second in the dyads. Experiencing shared emotions, such as joy and tiredness, was also visible in the dyads. Mirroring, as mentioned in the literature review, has physical indicators in the brain and can create a kinaesthetic empathy (Rizzolatti et al. 1996 and Moore & Yamamoto 1988, as cited in Payne 2006:166). Some collective syncing may have happened as well because while the two dyads could not see each other, three of the movers started dancing in their movement time. This alludes to the collective consciousness where participants may experience synchronicity in group movements and themes (Payne 2006:170).

It seemed the movements participants began with and also fell back on at times during Authentic Movement were dynamic stretches. These dynamic stretches were familiar to participants, provided tension/muscle release, were a way to warm-up and ultimately provided a sense of wellbeing for the participants. As the Authentic Movement sessions and workshops progressed and depending on individual focus, participants were also able to tap/move into story, exploration and emotions as illustrated through their movements and facial expressions. In the dyads with a

designated witness, participants' movements and emotions also began to mirror one another, building a sense of empathy and connection.

## 7. Roles: Researcher and Facilitator Reflections

As researcher and facilitator, I experienced and recorded my own reflections and made a drawing after the final workshop, highlighting some of the things I witnessed (see Appendix D). The drawing consists of words, expressions, images and sketches of bodies. It shows the range and variety of emotions and movements I experienced in our Authentic Movement sessions and workshops. Included is the South African English expression of "Yo" or "Yoh" voiced by one participant. "Yoh" can be seen as a cry or exclamation to express various emotions such as surprise, admiration, wonder, shock or distress (Nefdt 2025). Just as "Yoh" can express a range of emotions, the movements of the participants did as well.

During all of the workshops, I engaged with the participants as the researcher and facilitator, as well as a free-floating meta witness during Authentic Movement. I explained my roles as researcher and facilitator to the participants in the first workshop. The researcher role was evident to participants in the setup of my laptop, for example, and my use of my mobile phone, in recording movements. The facilitator role was essential in the workshops and Authentic Movement, as through it I laid the ground rules of the group and practice for participants and addressed concepts at the beginning such as confidentiality, time, structure, etc., all in order to build a safe climate (Payne 2006). In this way, the facilitator is similar to the role of therapist in Drama Therapy (Jones 2007). In addition to setting the stage and maintaining a sense of safety, the facilitator can also play an educational role in teaching participants about the practice of Authentic Movement (Payne 2006). In my role as educator, I spent time speaking about the roles of the mover and witness in Authentic Movement, as well as, the use of percept language for the witness (Payne 2006). All the participants were new to Authentic Movement and therefore this role was important.

Payne (2006:171) explains the facilitator also often acts in the role of a free-floating meta-witness in Authentic Movement, holding the overall container of the group and aiding the development of the group. As mentioned before, the meta-witness can move around and witness the whole group and can also share if requested during the time of sharing between movers and witnesses but does

not need to. I shared verbally as a meta-witness during the first and second session of Authentic Movement. This was done to convey what I experienced and also model using percept language as a witness. During the third and fourth sessions of Authentic Movement when the participants were in dyads, I moved around as a free floating meta-witness but did not participate in the verbal sharing, in part because I could not fully witness both pairs at the same time. In my role as meta-witness, I witnessed the collective or whole group as well at times. My role as meta-witness can contribute to participants' sense of felt-safety and of being seen, and acts as another container for the group (Payne 2006).

During the second workshop as a meta-witness I experienced an intense counter-transference of fatigue from the participants. Counter-transference is typically when a therapist takes on the emotions or experience of the client and redirects it. After the workshop and for hours beyond, I experienced profound exhaustion. When attending my own therapy session after that workshop, my therapist explained that my fatigue was likely not my own but that of the participants. The fatigue was so heavy that I needed to create a movement ritual for myself in order to release it. I later read that counter-transference can take on a body-centered or somatic form such as my fatigue when I physically reacted to a participants movement (Egan and Carr 2008). When I came back for the third workshop the following week, I asked participants how they felt after that last session because I had felt so exhausted. The participants had felt a release, whereas I, as the meta-witness, had experienced exhaustion and fatigue. I shared that experience with the group and how I believed I had taken on their tiredness. As the researcher, facilitator, and meta-witness, I felt it was important for me to share this experience with the participants in order to acknowledge their fatigue. It also demonstrated the connections made when witnessing one another, and how the body can store emotions. Bessel van der Kolk (2015) explains in his research how the body can hold trauma, emotions, and memories and how often it is only through the body that one can release them.

The multiple roles the researcher played, such as facilitator, educator and meta-witness, all the while researching, sometimes led to clashes. One example of struggle as the facilitator was when I prematurely stopped the agreed-upon time for a mover during Authentic Movement. This was the first time movers were moving alone with designated witnesses, and in this case, there was one mover and three designated witnesses (myself included). Collectively, the group had decided the

mover would have eight minutes, but the first mover seemed to stop after four minutes. The mover had their eyes open and made eye contact with me. Thinking the mover was uneasy and had run out of ideas on what to do and how to move, I rang the chimes to stop the movement time. I had prioritized my role as facilitator as opposed to meta-witness. In hindsight, I could have waited and allowed time to pass since not moving is also part of Authentic Movement and movement can still occur (or not) in the allotted time. I had personally felt uncomfortable, however, and had not wanted to "push" the mover and so I made the quick decision to stop the time. I did not want to dampen their enthusiasm for Authentic Movement or have them feeling stuck. Those assumptions were mine though and I made that call in the moment. Goldhahn (2022:44-45) explains the recommended time limit for a mover to "blindly move" is set based on the mover's experience. This was the first time the movers were moving alone and watched by designated witnesses so possibly the shorter time did assist the mover in the end.

Another time the roles intertwined and became challenging was in the last two workshops when the dyads moved into two different spaces in the house. The stationary laptop could only capture part of one of the dyads' movements, so I asked participants if I could use my mobile phone to capture parts of movement. The participants agreed and I filmed short segments of the movers and witnesses in both areas, moving between the dyads in order to capture the data I needed as the researcher. I noticed, however, that being behind the mobile phone impacted my ability to be truly present as a meta-witness. Standing and moving with the mobile phone was also more noticeable to the participants initially, and caused some distraction that could have affected their experience in Authentic Movement.

Adaptation and flexibility, as well as relying on my intuition, were important in holding and juggling the roles of researcher, facilitator, educator and meta-witness. Just as each workshop and Authentic Movement session was different, it was important for me to be knowledgeable about the practice and adaptive, in order to maintain safety for the participants and an experience reflecting the aim of the practice (Goldhahn 2022:40-41). As participants in a group grew in their exploration of roles and themselves, I also grew in my roles as a researcher, facilitator, educator and meta-witness. Although I did not have training in Authentic Movement, my experience and understanding of the practice, training in Drama Therapy and research, and the guidelines around the research itself including ethics and supervision, all helped hold and balance my multiple roles.

# 8. Summary of Findings

This study asked one main research question and three sub-questions. After using Practice as Research (PaR) and conducting four workshops with childcare workers in a group of foster care homes in Johannesburg, South Africa, the following was discovered in answer to the research questions:

Main Research Question: To what extent may Authentic Movement serve as an explorative tool and benefit childcare workers in group foster care homes in Johannesburg, South Africa?

The researcher discovered one could use Authentic Movement as an explorative tool with the childcare workers. The childcare workers understood the basic form and roles in Authentic Movement quite quickly and engaged in the practice for limited periods of time. They were open to entering into stillness and participating as both movers and witnesses. The researcher was able to utilize a basic form of the practice in the foster care home as few resources were needed to engage in the practice, mainly willing participants and space for movement, which were present.

The benefits the childcare workers experienced from Authentic Movement were expressed and shared orally during the workshops, as well as, in the final survey. The main benefits participants recalled were: connection with others, stress relief, becoming aware of their emotions, expressing themselves (authenticity) and work-life integration. As Payne (2006:174) also found in her work and research, Authentic Movement "fosters personal growth by building upon our natural, dynamic, creative, spontaneous and self-expressive capabilities in an interplay of inner and outer worlds." Authentic Movement can foster a connection to spirituality, as well as increase emotional wellbeing, emotional regulation, self-reliance and the capability to join with another (Payne 2006:169). These outcomes were experienced by the participants in this study as previously described in the sections above. All of the childcare workers expressed gratitude for the opportunity to engage in the workshops and wanted to continue with them.

In regard to the sub-questions, the following discoveries were made:

1. What benefits, if any, do the childcare workers experience from the Authentic Movement practice? As mentioned above, the child case workers experienced stress relief, connection

with others in the group and social support, an awareness of their emotions, the ability to express themselves (authenticity), and work-life integration.

2. Do childcare workers experience a greater sense of work-life integration after engaging in the practice of Authentic Movement? All four participants indicated in the survey they experienced more work-life integration after the workshops, with three participants responding with a "yes" and one participant saying they experienced "a little bit" of work-life integration. Although work-life integration was not specifically mentioned during the workshops, all four answered the question affirmatively. Being able to participate in the workshops while at work and during work time was an example of work-life integration and its benefit.

3. How do the childcare workers' bodies respond through a series of Authentic Movement workshops? In reviewing and analysing the data and movements, it was discovered that participants first engaged in dynamic stretching movements which involved the arms, neck, shoulders, back and torso and consisted of stretching, rolling, swaying, and swinging. The participants referred to these movements as "stretching" and "exercises" and the movements seemed to relieve stress and release tension. As participants became more familiar with the practice, their movements revealed the use of story and exploration as they took up more physical space and tapped into their internal thoughts and emotions. The presence of designated witnesses also aided movement away from solely dynamic stretching. Dynamic stretching, however, would appear again in their movements, specifically, it seemed, when they were tired or didn't know what to do.

# CHAPTER FIVE - LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In all research, there are limitations, recommendations and future research suggestions. This research was no different.

## 1. Limitations

Some of the limitations this research faced were centered around time, size of study, and experience. This research was conducted as part of the requirements of a master's degree in Drama Therapy, which itself has limitations in time and scope. The researcher, however, did activate an extension in order to complete the research with diligence and integrity. Another limitation of time could be the number of sessions held with participants, four session over four weeks. The duration of the practice of Authentic Movement with the participants could only develop so far during that time. It may have been beneficial if more and longer sessions were conducted over an extended period of time in order to see if other benefits arose from the practice and to explore longer forms of the practice. That being said, being able to conduct four workshops with participants at their work place during their work time helped address the research questions and provided access to a context and demographic that might otherwise be unavailable.

The sample size of the study was also small due to the nature of the childcare workers' duties, shifts, and availability. It would have been difficult logistically and financially to get more childcare workers from these homes to participate in the study due to their own work, financial constraints, and transport issues. I had hoped for four participants at a minimum and this was the number achieved. Space was also an issue since in order to facilitate participation, the study was held at the foster care homes and limited open space for movement was available. Another limitation could be that the researcher knew the participants and the foster care homes; however, this aided in a willingness to participate in the workshops and for the establishment of trust and safety in the group and with the organization running the homes.

The use and positioning of the stationary laptop to record the workshops was limited by only capturing part of the room at a certain angle. Therefore, in re-watching the videos, even though

audio was present, full visuals were not always present. The addition of filming with the mobile phone in workshop three and four may have initially caused some distraction for participants as well. A final limitation could be the researcher's lack of training in, and limited experience with Authentic Movement.

## 2. Recommendations

The main recommendation stemming from this research is that Authentic Movement can be used as a practice to promote wellbeing for childcare workers in foster care homes in South Africa. It is recommended organizations provide more opportunities to childcare workers to learn practices that can assist them with self-care and prevent burnout. Practices that encourage mindfulness and reflection, such as Authentic Movement, can help foster an awareness of self and others which can improve wellbeing (Payne 2006) as demonstrated by this research. Utilizing Authentic Movement in this study was shown to increase the childcare workers' sense of wellbeing as experienced and described by them.

There is a need for organizations that run foster care homes and children's homes and engage in Child and Youth care, to prioritize the wellbeing of their staff by creating space, time and resources for mental wellness programs, personal and professional development, and self-care activities. As Pitsoane & Makahane (2023) found in their study with childcare workers both as a request from childcare workers and as a future recommendation of the study, personal and professional growth through training and mental wellness programs is needed and desired. By implementing programs like these, foster care homes and Child and Youth Centers will be able to increase the efficacy and resilience of their childcare workers (Kind et al. 2020). Kind et al. (2020) note that resilience measures include self-care behaviors such as team supervision, work-life balance, physical health and social support. Resilience against burnout also includes a sense of perceived self-efficacy - the subjective belief that one is able to act in order to manage and handle situations (Kind et al. 2020). Through the workshops and practice of Authentic Movement, the four participants noted that they experienced work-life integration, stress release, social support, and self-efficacy. These can assist in preventing burnout, building resilience and helping them more readily cope with future stressors, thereby promoting wellbeing (Kind et al. 2020; Payne 2017). The practice of Authentic Movement and the workshops, through the doing, the movement, and the being present, allowed

the childcare workers to experience resilience and embodied awareness not only afterwards and as an outcome, but during and through the process, which continues with each new engagement.

A benefit to Authentic Movement is that it does not require many resources and therefore has the possibility of being shared more widely with different communities and populations. Once the basic form is learned well by participants, there is the possibility participants could run the sessions themselves. Training of South African lay people in Authentic Movement could spread the practice of and access to Authentic Movement to diverse demographics and geographical locations. Gluck (2013:32) suggests that once a participant's inner observer is developed enough, it could be possible to move alone without a witness. In this way, a person/mover could make the mind-body connection without needing to rely on a witness. This, however, can have potential dangers and would need to be evaluated and determined by a professional, as well as have support available in some form for the mover. What Gluck (2013) suggests is a departure from Adler's form of Authentic Movement and therefore must be done carefully. It also removes the role of witness and witnessing which greatly contributed to the benefits and outcomes the participants experienced in this study.

## 3. Forward-Looking Research

In terms of research, it could be valuable to conduct similar research using Authentic Movement with additional groups of childcare workers, as well as with other helping professionals in South Africa, such as nurses and community workers, to see if results are similar or not. Variables could consist of different group sizes, locations on and off worksites, mixed gender groups, different populations, using languages other than English to facilitate the sessions, etc. Incorporating indigenous instruments such as the djembe drum instead of symbols for instance, or other indigenous instruments and images could also be valuable. It is important to note that in this research, three participants had the same professional title, and one participant was a level below them. If the Authentic Movement group had included members of their management such as their supervisors, the results may have been different.

It would also be of value to eliminate the Drama Therapy framework of the workshops to see if and how participants' receptivity and openness to Authentic Movement would be impacted and what role the Drama Therapy framework played.

# CHAPTER SIX - CONCLUSION

Working in the helping professions can take a toll on a person's professional and personal wellbeing (EAPA-SA 2023). Stress and burnout are especially prevalent in South Africa in helping professions (EAPA-SA 2023). Working as a childcare worker, a helping profession, in foster care homes in South Africa can be taxing not only because of the specific nature of the work, but also, because of the South African context of violence, trauma, inequality and poverty. This context can affect the children in childcare workers' care, as well as, themselves and add the already challenging nature of their work (Swain, Basil, & Kliewer 2017) (Swartz et al. 2016).

This research set out to discover if Authentic Movement could be used as an explorative tool with childcare workers in foster care homes in Johannesburg, South Africa, and if it could provide them with any benefits. Prior research in other contexts had shown Authentic Movement to bring connection to others and the self, as well as healing and personal growth (Stromsted 2024). It was hoped the demographic of South African/African childcare workers would be willing to engage in the practice of Authentic Movement and experience benefits from it.

The research concluded Authentic Movement did benefit the childcare workers by relieving stress in their bodies and minds, helping them develop an awareness of their emotions, providing the ability to express themselves (authenticity), increasing work-life integration, and increasing their connection with others in the group. Authentic Movement seemed to have assisted the four participants in being able to lower their figurative masks and become more authentic with themselves and others. Through this embodied practice, participants were able to awaken to their bodies, minds, interiors, and for some, their spirituality. Participants were also able to build empathy for themselves and others and social support within the group, all of which can act as a buffer against burnout (Kind et al. 2020). Authentic Movement was able to function as a self-care practice for the participants by bringing awareness to and expression of their emotions, providing social support, helping with their physical tension, and increasing their self-efficacy (Kind et al. 2020).

In terms of movement during Authentic Movement, participants seemed to initially engage in dynamic stretching, as well as throughout, as a way to release bodily tension. It seemed to be a way of moving that was familiar to them. As participants engaged more in the practice of Authentic

Movement, stories, gestures, exploration and facial expressions were also expressed through their bodies and movement.

The researcher also found that the dramatherapeutic framework using aspects of the Sesame approach contributed to the participants' receptivity to Authentic Movement and created an extra layer of preparation and containment for the participants. It enabled the participants to check-in with themselves and others emotionally, to presence themselves, and to warm-up physically as a precursor to Authentic Movement. It also provided space and time for bridging out of the practice, reflecting, sharing, and grounding themselves in order to close the sessions safely. For those unfamiliar with or uncertain in movement, dance, drama, therapy, etc., the dramatherapeutic Sesame approach could ease and support the entry into the Authentic Movement practice.

It is the researcher's hope that this study will encourage those in helping professions and organization leaders in general and specifically in South Africa, to explore using Authentic Movement as a self-care practice to support wellbeing. This, in turn, can assist in preventing burnout and illness, and provide better services to the clients they serve. Pitsoane and Makahane (2023) confirm that in order to create a beneficial environment for both childcare workers and children, childcare workers need training and supervision regularly, which includes providing childcare workers with the opportunity for both personal and professional growth through mental wellness programs. This research concludes Authentic Movement can be a part of mental wellness programs and self-care measures that childcare workers in South Africa utilize in order to perform optimally and prevent burnout. I would like to close with the words of one of the participants, "We didn't know we needed this… (but we do)."

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# APPENDICES

Appendix A: Workshop Session Plans

Appendix B: Introduction Letter to Authentic Movement for Participants

Appendix C: Example of Raw Data from Participant: Art Reflection by Participant after first Authentic Movement experience

Appendix D: Reflective Drawing by Researcher

Appendix E: Final Survey for Participants

Appendix F: Ethics Clearance

# Appendix A

Workshop Session Plans: Workshop 1 and 2

Sessions Plans for Workshops for Authentic Movement research with childcare workers

Workshops Dates and Times: 9-10 am;  Feb. 21, Feb. 28, March 7, March 14

Location: Living Room of one of the Children's Homes

| **Session 1: Feb. 21**<br>**Four Participants though one came late during the main event** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Structure** | **Time** | **Activity** | **Purpose** | **Admin** |
| Welcome and Intro | 10 min | Greeting Everyone and Explaining the Purpose of these sessions and my role as facilitator/researcher.<br><br>Signing of Consent Forms<br><br>Naming this as a safe and confidential space<br><br>Explaining Authentic Movement and the basic elements of it and the purpose of this research: Is this of benefit to you? | To welcome everyone and go through process and guidelines in order to create safety and answer any questions<br><br>To describe what Authentic Movement is and how it looks<br><br>To create and understanding of the purpose of the workshops: Research Question: Is this of benefit to you? | Consent Forms |

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| Check-in | 5 min | <u>Name, Feeling, Action:</u><br><br>First Round - Name and Feeling:<br><br>- Each participant takes a turn to say their name out loud and how they are currently feeling<br>- After a participant says their name, the whole group repeats the name and feeling together to reinforce memory.<br><br>Second Round – Name, Feeling and Action:<br><br>- Each participant says their name and along with their feeling word they add an action to embody their feeling (a simple movement or gesture).<br>- The group then repeats the name and mimics the word and action. | Icebreaker activity used to help participants use each other's names and get a sense of how each person is feeling.<br><br>This is a way to build ritual, community and start reflection and embodiment processes. | |
| Warm-up | 10 min | <u>Walking/Responding Game</u><br><br>Asking participants to walk around the space and respond to certain cues given by me, for example, one clap means touch the ground, two claps means freeze, three claps means jump up, four claps means change direction.<br><br>Part 2 of walking in the space was challenging them to start and stop | This exercise helps the group start moving in the space. It is also an energizer to get them to start moving more quickly and in different ways. Finally it is also a game of "play" to help loosen up the participants physically and emotionally (mood). | |

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| | | walking in unison, based on what the group was doing. | The second part of the exercise helps them gain an awareness of others in the space and can help to create a group dynamic and sense of working together. | |
| Main Event | 10 min | <u>Authentic Movement:</u><br><br>This was the first session of Authentic Movement. After the cues and instructions were explained to them, we stood in a circle and set the timer for 10 minutes.<br><br>Participants were invited to move in the circle and out. I stood mainly on the edge of the circle holding the position of witness although I did move into the circle twice. | Authentic Movement is a process to help people start to listen to their bodies and move from impulses in their bodies. There is no music or sound. Participants are encouraged to move with their eyes closed and witnesses are encouraged to observe those moving (the movers). | Cymbals<br><br>A timer or watch<br><br>Computer for filming |
| Bridge Out/Reflection | 15 min. | <u>Art Reflection</u><br><br>Participants get a chance to draw any reflections or thoughts they may have from the time of movement.<br><br><u>Sharing Time</u><br>In a circle participants are given the opportunity to share with each other about their drawings or experience if they want to. | This reflection time individually and then as a group allows participants to reflect on their experience first in a nonverbal way and second in a verbal way if they choose so. | Paper and colors |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Reflection provides time for mindfulness and introspection.<br><br>The time of sharing can facilitate community building and a sense of release or self-disclosure. | |
| Cool Down and Grounding | 4 min | <u>Breathing Exercise:</u><br>Guide them to breathe in deeply through the nose and out through the mouth, focusing on the breath. We took three breaths in and out together as a group.<br><br>I then ask participants to put their hand on a place in the body that needs some extra love. Participants put their hand on that place and hold it there for a few moments. | Breathing exercises can help participants relax and become more present to themselves<br><br>Grounding techniques help clients to focus on the present moment and prepare mentally and emotionally to bring them back to reality, to the "here and now." | |
| Closing Ritual | 1 min | <u>Chant and Movement:</u><br>As a group we move in and out of a circle and then along the circle saying;<br>" We move together, We move apart, We move on."<br><br>We repeat this two times with words and once silently. | Rituals help mark the end of the session and create a sense of continuity and security, ensuring that participants leave feeling safe and contained. | |

2nd Group Session:

Location: Living Room of one of the Children's Homes

| **Session 2: Feb. 28**<br>**Three Participants. One participant had an emergency last minute and couldn't make it.** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Structure** | **Time** | **Activity** | **Purpose** | **Admin** |
| Check-in | 5 min | <u>We Are Community Greeting</u><br><br>A group greeting/chant that acknowledges one another and greets one another.<br><br>"Community, Community, Community"<br><br>Stomp feet three times, clap hands on knees three times, and then blow three kisses toward each other. After a participant says their name, the whole group repeats the name and feeling together to reinforce memory.<br><br><u>Object Check-In</u><br><br>Pick an object in the middle of the circle and check-in using that object, explaining how you feel and why you choose that object. | Introducing the "Community" chant is a way to build ritual as well as to ground oneself and greet and acknowledge each other.<br><br>The check-in gives participants a way to settle into the space and see how they are feeling as well as get a sense of how each participant is feeling. | A number of different objects. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Warm-up | 10 min | <u>Shaking Body and Counting down</u><br><br>Have participants shake out their arms and then legs together for five counts, then four, then three…We all do it in unison.<br><br><u>Roll down and Breathing</u><br>Have the participants slowly roll down from their head down to their toes, hanging down at their waist. Rolling up and breathing together.<br><br><u>Part 2 of walking in the space in different roles</u><br>Walk around the space and follow the facilitators' cues. Walk around as if you are a child having a birthday, as if you are mourning the loss of a loved one, as if you are the boss, etc…. | These exercises help the participants start moving in their bodies. The first one is an energizer to get them to move more quickly while the second one is a stretch and grounding exercise. Both exercises allow participants to be more aware of their bodies and enter the present moment.<br><br>The second part of the exercise helps participants start moving in the space again and uses their imagination by asking them to take on different roles and move in those roles. | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Main Event | 30 min | <u>Authentic Movement:</u><br><br>Because one participant had an emergency and could not make it, I had the participants move in a trio for Authentic Movement.<br><br>One participant would move for 5 minutes while the other two would be the witnesses. Then we rotated until everyone had a turn.<br><br>The mover moved for 5 minutes. Then they shared oral reflections together. Then the next person would move for 5 minutes. Five minutes seemed a long time for each person. | Authentic Movement is a process to help people start to listen to their bodies and move from impulses in their bodies. There is no music or sound. Participants are encouraged to move with their eyes closed and witnesses are encouraged to observe those moving (the movers).<br><br>Reflection provides time for mindfulness and introspection as well as allows participants to build connection with one another through disclosure. | Cymbals<br><br>A timer or watch<br><br>Computer for filming |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bridge Out/Reflection | 14 min. | <u>Shake and Wipe it Off</u><br><br>To leave the Authentic Movement time we shook our bodies and wiped off physically anything we were holding on to.<br><br><u>Object Check-Out</u><br><br>To check-out participants were again invited to choose an object to check-out with (echoing the earlier check-in exercise) | Grounding techniques help clients to focus on the present moment and bring them back to reality, to the "here and now."<br><br>The time of sharing can facilitate community building and a sense of release or self-disclosure. | Same Objects again |
| Grounding and Closing Ritual | 1 min | <u>Gratitude:</u><br>The participants were asked to put their hand on a part of their body that needed more love and care. We then thanked our body for all it does for us.<br><br><u>Chant and Movement:</u><br>As a group we move in and out of a circle and then along the circle saying; " We move together, We move apart, We move on."<br><br>We repeat this two times with words and once silently. | We thanked and acknowledged our bodies, also acknowledging where we needed extra support.<br><br>Our closing rituals mark the end of the session and creates a sense of continuity and security, ensuring that participants leave feeling safe and contained. | |

# Appendix B

Introduction Letter to Authentic Movement for Participants

Here is a short description of Authentic Movement:

**What is Authentic Movement?** Authentic Movement is a completely self-directed form in which individuals discover a movement pathway that offers a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious. It is a type of free movement led by impulses and explores the relationship between a mover and a witness, being seen and seeing. With eyes closed, the mover listens inwardly and finds a movement arising from a hidden prompting (Authentic Movement Institute 2017). It is done for many reasons such as stress release, enjoyment, reflection, etc.

# Appendix C

Reflective Drawing by a participant after the first Authentic Movement experience/session.



# Appendix D

Reflective Drawing by researcher after final workshop



# Appendix E

Final Survey for Participants

## Childcare Worker Survey

Thank you for completing this survey. It is an **anonymous** survey and all answers are treated with confidentiality and kept in a secure location. Thank you for your participation.

1. How stressed have you been at work in the past year?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not much at all | | somewhat | | Very |

2. How stressed have you been at home in the past year?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not much at all | | somewhat | | Very |

3. How did you feel doing the Authentic Movement the first time?

4. How did you feel doing the Authentic Movement after all four sessions? Why?

5. What was your favorite part of the sessions and why?

6. What was your least favorite part about the sessions and why?

7. How did your body react to the Authentic Movement?

8. Did your body or how you feel about body change after doing the sessions?

9. Did you learn anything about yourself from doing the Authentic Movement? If so, what?

10. What was easy for you in the sessions?

11. What was hard for you in the sessions ?

12. Would you like to continue to do Authentic Movements sessions like this? If so, why?

13. Did you find Authentic Movement helpful? Why or why not?

14. Do you feel more balanced (integrated) with life and work after the sessions?

15. Has it been easier to cope with stress after the sessions?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not much at all | | somewhat | | Very |

16. How was your mental and physical health **before** the project?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| distressed | surviving | coping | good | thriving/very good |

15. How is your mental and physical health **after** the project?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| distressed | surviving | coping | good | thriving/very good |

16. Are there any specific reasons for the above numbers/answers?

17.What do you understand Authentic Movement to be?

18. What did you get out of the project, if anything?

19. Any other thoughts or comments you want to share?

# Appendix F

Ethics Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

**SCHOOL OF ARTS ETHICS COMMITTEE**
**CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)**

| | |
|---|---|
| **CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE** | **PROTOCOL NUMBER: WSOA20241113-6** |
| **PROJECT TITLE** | Authenticity: A dramatherapeutic reflective exploration using Authentic Movement with childcare workers in a group of foster care homes in Johannesburg, South Africa. |
| **INVESTIGATOR** | Ms. Nina Neubauer 2603263 |
| **SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR** | WSOA –MA Drama Therapy |
| **DATE CONSIDERED** | 28 November 2024 |
| **DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE** | Approved unconditionally |
| **RISK LEVEL** | LOW RISK |
| **EXPIRY DATE** | Date of submission of the project Research Report |

**ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE** 28 November 2024 **CHAIRPERSON** S. Bhebhe
(Dr Sibongile Bhebhe)
(Prof Brett Pyper)

cc: Supervisor: Linda Mdena (Thibedi)

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**DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR**

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

Nina K. Neubauer
**Signature**

10 / 12 / 2024
**Date**

**PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES**