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“Using Drama Therapy as a lens, what can we learn about the intergenerational effects of political violence in communities, even through socially constructed silence?”

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Abstract

In this Performance Ethnographic study, personal narrative is used to trace and analyse the various faces of trauma and its complexity. This study physically takes place in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, and through the mitigation of drama therapy the two geographical locations find an intersection and a language for healing. 18 young actors who live in Gauteng and are living under the shadow of a grossly violent South Africa embody the narratives from 21 mostly older people that survived political violence in Kwazulu-Natal over 20 years ago. The results indicate that even though people do not talk about the political violence, the next generation is not exempt from its traumatic burden. Using Drama Therapy tools, one begins to understand potential methods to navigate the silence with minimum exposure to traumatisation to yourself or your clients.