

**TRAUMA'S HIDE AND SEEK: AN EXPLORATION OF
AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC PERFORMANCE AS A THERAPEUTIC
PROCESS, WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO WOMEN'S
TRANSGENERATIONAL TRAUMA
AND PERSONAL AGENCY**

ABSTRACT

This creative research was a qualitative exploration of the therapeutic value of creating and presenting autoethnographic performance to a carefully selected group of witnesses, with specific reference to women's transgenerational trauma and personal agency. Three women worked with the researcher/aspirant drama therapist/director exploring whether autoethnographic performance can be used as a form of Drama Therapy.

A performance-presentation to carefully selected audience-witnesses was developed using Drama Therapy principles, creative writing and journaling, and visual art installations. This written report is a reflection on the therapeutic discoveries and insights gained through the creation and performance-presentation process.

What emerged through post-performance reflection was primarily an increase in personal agency, understanding of personal relationship patterns through exploring ancestral ties and the beginnings of healing of deep personal trauma. The importance of incorporating body-based therapy in relation to trauma recovery and Drama Therapy was central with embodiment forming a portal to unconscious processes. This study asserts that Drama Therapy is uniquely placed to be able to incorporate holistic mind/body/spirit recovery using symbolic, verbal and physical expression.

KEY WORDS: trauma and complex trauma, Gender Based Violence, embodiment, body-based approaches, autoethnographic performance, Drama Therapy.