



**Creative Movement Therapy Association of India with  
SNDT Women's University Department of Special Education**

presents its

**9th Annual International Conference**

**at SNDTWU, Juhu Campus, Mumbai**

**November 19th and 20th, 2022**

**Holding Spaces Across Communities using  
Dance and other Arts Therapies**

*Sessions are theoretical and experiential in nature and include areas relevant to dance/movement and other creative arts therapies.*

*Session facilitators are listed in alphabetical order by first name.*

**\*PLEASE NOTE THIS SCHEDULE IS TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE\***

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## **9th Annual International Conference**

***Holding Spaces Across Communities using  
Dance and other Arts Therapies***

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### **Session Details**



### **Session: Expressive Arts Therapy in an Oncology In-patient Setting**

**By AKSHATA PAREKH, Expressive Arts Therapist | Pune, India**

Her experience of using expressive arts therapy in an in-patient oncology day care centre at a hospital opened a new world of how expressive arts therapy works differently in comparison to a traditional structural therapy format. These sessions in the hospital follow different ethical considerations as therapy is administered at bedside while the clients undergo chemotherapy simultaneously. In the eclectic approach that she uses in her practice, therapeutic relationships with her clients have proven to be the core of their work together.

This session will begin with a small experiential, which will be followed by a discussion of various themes that emerge while facilitating expressive arts therapy sessions in the hospital, and in her experiences. Ethical considerations and challenges that are faced while providing mental health support will be discussed thereafter. The session will end with a group discussion and questions.

**Bio:** Akshata Parekh is an Expressive Arts Therapist from Pune, India with a Master's degree from Lesley University, USA. She is presently working in Sahyadri Hospitals, Tenergy India Pvt. Ltd, Taal Inc. and has a private practice. Currently, she has enrolled in an International Diploma in Mental Health, Human Rights and Law. She danced into the field of mental health and the arts back in 2014. Completing her certificate courses in dance movement therapy, visual art therapy and drum circle facilitation, she took psychology and counselling from Fergusson College, Pune. Through the last few years, she had the opportunity to work with various populations and groups. Her experience ranges from community centers, old-age homes, schools, hospitals, corporate groups and individual practice.



### **Session: Nurturing Nature: A Journey of Joy**

**By BETTY ABRAHAM, Assistant Professor, Special Educator, Certified Art Based Therapist | Mumbai, India**

Art based therapy provides individuals facing physical, emotional, and cognitive challenges with new pathways toward understanding and self-expression. ABT can also help people enhance specific skills by improving their approach to conflict resolution, enhancing social skills, managing stress, strengthening their ability to self-regulate, and improving their understanding of themselves. For children, it can help them to deal with specific challenges like childhood trauma, disabilities and special educational needs.

The way "nature versus nurture" is phrased suggests that either a person's genes or upbringing determine their personality traits, IQ, interests, and other qualities. The reality is more complex, and these as well as other elements might contribute to the explanation of the numerous ways in which people differ from one another. The science of altered gene expression, or epigenetics, exemplifies the intricate interplay between "nature" and "nurture." While these epigenetic alterations don't completely negate the significant influence of genes generally, they do introduce new channels via which that influence is filtered by "nurture" or the environment. These new channels can be harnessed for interventions taking into account both the characteristics of nature and nurture. Therefore, during the intervention process, giving

clients experiences that will have an impact on them personally becomes necessary. Most importantly is keeping the interventional process as stress-free and joyful as possible through the use of natural materials.

The session will include some theoretical discussions and sharing, storytelling and creative activities using materials from nature, all based on the theme of working with 'nature,' focusing on the nature vs nurture debate.

**Bio:** Betty Abraham is committed to student success inside the classroom and in life, be it her SEN (Special Education Needs) students or her teacher trainees. Her dedication to her students is noticeable and reflected in the student feedback she receives. Currently, Betty is an assistant professor at the Department of Special Education and a Visiting Faculty with other institutions. Betty is a certified Arts Based Therapy (ABT), Sensory Enrichment Therapy (SET), Handwriting Without Tears (HWT) and Jolly Phonics practitioner. She has also received training in therapeutic interventions like Brain Gym, Aquatics, Masgutova Neurosensorimotor Reflex Integration (MNRI), Touch for Health and Waldorf (Rudolf Steiner) Education. She has presented papers at national and international conferences. She is also the classroom mentor for Anantaraa Art Based Therapy. A crossword, word search and puzzles aficionado, she believes in continuously training the brain, engaging its characteristic neuroplastic nature to challenge and improve skills.



**Session: Eurythmy: A Healing Movement Art in Primary School (Waldorf)**

**By DEEPA MAHESH, Life & Leadership Coach, Eurythmist, Arts-based Facilitator| Bengaluru, India**

Eurythmy, developed by Dr. Rudolf Steiner, is the movement practice adopted in Waldorf school curriculum. It means “beautiful” or “harmonious rhythm.” Rhythm lies at the core of eurythmy, which provides a health-giving rhythm to the child. It promotes holistic wellbeing of the child while contributing to their academic development.

This session has 2 components:

1. Component 1 - Encourage conference participants to embody primary school students (grade 1 to grade 5) and experience the Eurythmy curriculum first-hand.
2. Component 2 - Foster participants’ understanding of the child’s consciousness from Steiner’s perspective (grade-wise) and the prescribed grade-specific Eurythmy curriculum. This would be supported with live examples to form a picture of Eurythmy in action for a child.

This would enable participants to understand the power of Eurythmy for holistic development of the student which impacts all areas of their life – play, academics, overall expression, social development boundary setting, joy and more.

**Bio:** Founder & CEO of Poorna Wellbeing, Deepa Mahesh is a Life & Leadership Coach and an Arts-based leadership development facilitator. As a self-mastery expert, Deepa facilitates conscious leadership journeys through her coaching, workshops, and training programs. Majoring in Psychology, armed with a Masters in Human Resource Management, she initially worked for some of the top corporates of India, including Aditya Birla Group, as an HR Leader. In search of her purpose, she quit to invest time in herself which finally led to the birth of Poorna Wellbeing. Dance & other arts have been her friends since childhood. Her curiosity to explore the mind-body connection led her to exploring expressive

arts therapy as her profession and thereafter practising as an embodiment coach for leaders. As a natural progression, she completed her 6 years Eurythmy training in 2022. She now holds Eurythmy workshops for adults and teaches the curriculum to primary school students of Kingdom of Childhood, a Waldorf school in Bangalore.

A TEDx speaker, mandala artist & teacher, Eurythmist, dancer, embodiment coach, poet and an upcoming author, Deepa balances her life with a myriad of passion projects.



**Session: Dancing Earth Creations: Dance Movement Therapy and Ecological Grief**

**By DEVIKA MEHTA KADAM, Dance Movement Psychotherapist | Mumbai, India**

The session focuses on using movement-based expressive arts to open our bodies and minds to understanding Ecological Grief. This workshop is based on her work with a group of adolescents (from adivasi and marginalised communities) to process ecological grief and explore embodied hope towards eco-restoration.

In this session we will focus on concepts of ecological grief, the interconnection of mind, body and nature, and the impact of ecological damage and climate emergency on the bodies of adolescents. The workshop aims to offer insight and tools for embodied reconnection with nature-based rituals and movement choreography for activism.

**Bio:** Devika Mehta Kadam is a licensed Dance Movement Psychotherapist. She is the Program Head for the Post Graduate Diploma in Expressive Arts Therapy at St.Xavier's College, Mumbai and faculty in DMT. She is the Co-Founder of Synchrony. She is the founding board member and Elected Treasurer of the India Association of Dance Movement Therapy. She is the Regional Director of Asia for the International Association of Creative Arts in Education and Therapy. She is the past advisory board member for CMTAI. She has represented her work in India at international conferences globally. She holds Masters in Clinical Psychology, Indian Folk Dance and in DMT and is currently pursuing a PhD. Her interests are in the area of indigenous knowledge, neuroscience and work with adolescents.



**Session: Making Health Contagious**

**By EVAN HASTINGS, Drama Therapist (RDT) and Creative Arts Therapist (AThR) | Bengaluru, India**

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted more than the physical health of individuals. It has tested the fabric of society, deepened existing inequities, and taken a toll on mental health. Over the last year, as in-person work and school have resumed, anxiety, depression and uncertainty have been evident. What role can the arts play in rebuilding social cohesion at this point in the pandemic?

This session is about the use of play, performance and embodied encounters to rebuild social cohesion toward collective well-being. Drawing on Public Health and the Creative Arts

Therapies for theoretical framing, this work is fundamentally relational. The aim is to leverage the power of a transformative experience to motivate social change, inspire health-advancing behaviour and cultivate social cohesion. This participatory and playful approach to advancing collective well-being is an essential pivot toward an “open for business” pandemic world given the proliferation of false information, conspiracy theories, and apathy that have hindered the public health response to Covid-19. Through case examples and hands-on activities, participants will engage with the question: How do we gamify mental health promotion to advance collective approaches to well-being and make health contagious?

**Bio:** Evan Hastings is the founder of Shadow Liberation, a globally reputed participatory theatre method for facilitating sexual violence prevention. Evan was a 3-time Faculty Fellow at Project Zero within Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. At Lesley University in Cambridge, MA, USA, he taught in the Masters in Teaching program and the Bachelors in Expressive Therapies program. In India, Evan was faculty at Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design, and Technology, taught in the Foundation in Expressive and Creative Arts Therapies program at the Studio for Movement Art and Therapies, and has been visiting faculty at Xavier's College Mumbai and Ahmedabad University. Evan spent 2 years in Aotearoa New Zealand as the Artistic Director of the Theatre in Health Education Trust and an Honorary Fellow in Theatre Studies at the University of Otago. Evan is an Assistant Professor at Azim Premji University in Bengaluru, India.



**Session: Creative Genius Out to Play (through Double Doodle)**

**By GEETA RAJIV DALAL, Arts Based Therapist | Mumbai, India**

The session will help us to explore Creativity and Movement through Double Doodle Play. Doodling is a very effective form of therapy as it permits emotions to flow without any restraints.

Double Doodling – drawing with both the hands simultaneously - is an extremely therapeutic brain gym exercise. The participants will explore connecting and communicating with ourselves in air (through gross motor movements) and on blank paper (through fine motor movements).

Participants will be provided with colour pencils, oil pastels, crayons, paints and markers for this bilateral doodling experience. The use of various colours, shapes, lines and dots will help us unleash our creativity and experience being in the moment.

**Bio:** Geeta Dalal is a Clinical Psychologist, Special Educator and Dyslexia Therapist who has changed the lives of innumerable children and adults through her years of work. She is a certified Arts Based Therapist and a Drum Circle Facilitator. Geeta is an International Movement Based Learning, Brain Gym and Double Doodle Instructor. She has been working as the HOD of the Learner Support Centre at JBCN International School, Borivali, Mumbai since the past 10 years.



### **Session: Free Flow Painting**

**By LINA LIENAU, Movement & Art Therapist | France / India**

FREE FLOW is a method to take away creative blockages and to ensure that people from all walks of life are able to paint. In this session we will partly experience intuitive painting ourselves and partly explore how to enhance creativity in underprivileged communities. It will give the participants practical and theoretical tools for the use of Colours space and spontaneous creativity.

**Bio:** Lina Lienau, born in Germany and married in France, now shares her life between France and India. She worked in Delhi as an art therapist with cancer children for many years. She has animated many workshops in India and Europe with the objective to enhance and awaken creativity. She is a Movement and Art therapist (Paris, Profac), trained in Yoga as well as Yoga teacher and Pranic healing. Being an artist herself, with several exhibitions of her work, she believes in the creative potential in each person, which is closely related to our spiritual creative power. Her paintings reflect these spiritual influences (exhibitions with Alliance Francaise, Abbaye Valmagne), as do the workshops she guides.



### **Session: Channelling the Wisdom of Dramatic Reality & Collective Symbols (An Expressive Arts Therapy based approach to Group Support & Collective Resilience)**

**By MADHURI ANKITKUMAR TALIM, Expressive Arts Therapy Practitioner | Mumbai, India**  
**SUPARNA KUMAR CHAKRAVARTI, Visual Artist & Expressive Arts Therapy Practitioner | Mumbai, India**

The core intent of our session encompasses tapping into creativity and co-creating resources that can supplement and inform our collective mission of holding therapeutic spaces across communities.

The session is focused on an embodied exploration of Dramatic Reality (Susana Pendzik, 2006) and collective symbols, through an intermodal, ExAT-based experiential. We will also be drawing from cultural artforms (Indian) and their ability to serve as collective coping mechanisms. Through role play and co-creation of stories & narratives, the session aims to invite discussion and reflection on a relational cultural perspective to community based work, and how understanding these concepts can support our work towards 'Resilience'. The language of facilitation would be English and/or Hindi, depending on the requirement of the participants.

**Bio:** Madhuri Ankittkumar Talim is an Expressive Arts Therapy Practitioner and Dance Movement Therapy Facilitator from Mumbai. She deeply believes in the therapeutic potential of creative arts, play, imagination, and artistic expression to facilitate growth and holistic wellbeing. She is committed to creating therapeutic spaces wherein lived experiences can be explored with compassion and authenticity. She is also passionate about making ethical mental healthcare accessible to all, and about the integration

of expressive arts within mental health systems. Further, she is working towards bringing traditional and cultural artforms closer to therapeutic spaces. Her favourite quote is “Creativity is our birth right.”

Suparna Kumar Chakravarti is a Visual artist and an Expressive Arts Therapy Practitioner. Her educational background is a mix of a lot of varied interests, and a love for learning, right from Architecture, Baking, Fine Art, and now the field of Mental Health. She believes that as humans, we each hold complexities, and that in learning to comprehend, make space for and hold them, we make this world a better place to live in. She is passionate about understanding and highlighting the interconnectedness of the world around her, within the social-cultural context she grew up in. The 'Arts' in her experience, are not only a language, but also a powerful medium and a tool that can facilitate and support change. Stories are a way, she learned, to make sense of her experiences, and in wanting to expand on this knowledge, she is now pursuing her studies in narrative practices.



**Session: Living LITE with Type-1 Diabetes: Mental-Emotional Support and Resilience Building for Type-1 Diabetics (subject/patient and family)**

**By MALABIKA GUHA, Neuro-Dramatic Play and Expressive Arts Therapy Practitioner | Kolkata, India**

The session is about the basic understanding of support requirements for Type-1 Diabetics and the use of Expressive Arts Therapy techniques for mental-emotional resilience building in this condition. Type-1 Diabetes, also called juvenile diabetes, is on the rise in India and a large number of cases are being added every year. Apart from the physical side of the treatment, there is a psychosomatic and psychosocial aspect of this condition that requires support along with mental-emotional resilience building. Expressive Arts Therapy has a major role to play in the psychosomatic and psychosocial healing and support. For a Type-1 diabetic juvenile, support for parents also becomes important. The session will include some theoretical concepts about Type-1 Diabetes, the symptoms (for awareness purpose), the physical/somatic characteristics of a Type-1 diabetic, and the medical treatment process involved (to understand the mental-emotional support required). This will be followed by experientials using the expressive arts therapy modes for support of the patient and also for the parents/family.

**Bio:** Malabika Guha is a Neuro-Dramatic Play and Expressive Arts Therapy Practitioner from Kolkata, India. She is extremely passionate about exploring the psychosomatic aspect of the arts based therapy approaches and their clinical application. She has worked with populations of all age groups. She has worked with medical teams in the psychiatry, geriatric and general medicine faculties and also with Ayush practitioners. She is associated as Honorary Program Coordinator with Creative Sphere, an organisation working to create awareness on mental-emotional health and therapeutic approaches of expressive art forms. Her special areas of interest are to explore the usefulness of expressive arts and Neuro-Dramatic Play techniques for various medical conditions of children and adolescents.





**Session: Rediscovering Therapy Using Facets of Indian Culture with Special Emphasis on Indian Classical Dance (Bharata Natyam)**

**By DR. MEENAKSHI IYER GANGOPADHYAY, Professor in Indian Classical Dance at Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya | Mumbai, India**

Indian Culture, as we know it today, is the beautiful synthesis of Indian Arts - Dance, Music, Drama, Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Literature, etc. that have evolved over centuries and represents the rich civilization of India. Every Indian art form is linked with the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of an individual. The arts have a deep impact on the physical and mental health of a human being, thereby slowly, gently making him/her aware of the physical body, sensitising and elevating him/her to a spiritual level.

This session will be exploring the effects of Indian classical dance (BharataNatyam) on the physical and mental health of a human being. There are two main aspects of Indian classical dancing – ‘Nritta’ (Pure Dance) and ‘Abhinaya’ (Expressional Dance). These two aspects are both directly as well as indirectly connected to the dancer’s body and the mind. This session will be focussing on the various elements of classical dance such as the various movements of the head, neck, eyes, legs including various dance postures, hand gestures, etc. that can be employed for physical wellness. The soul of Indian classical dance - ‘Abhinaya’ will be explored for emotional and mental well-being. The session will have a judicious blend of both theory and practical. Participants will be gently led through the journey of ‘Wellness through Movement’ by engaging them in a wide range of activities.

**Bio:** Dr. Meenakshi Iyer Gangopadhyay finds creative expression in BharataNatyam, vocal music, choreography, teaching, research and a host of such related artistic activities. Trained from a very young age in Bharatanatyam, Meenakshi has pursued a Master’s degree in Fine Arts (Dance) and Ph.D. in Dance under the guidance of her mentor, Padma Bhushan Dr. (Smt.) Kanak Rele. Apart from this, she also holds a Master’s degree in Commerce and Diploma in Sanskrit from the University of Mumbai and an M.A. in Indology from Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth (Pune). She is a Professor in Dance since the past 27 years, at her alma mater, Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya, Mumbai. She conducts lectures on “Drama and Art in Education” and regularly conducts workshops for the promotion, propagation, and appreciation of Indian classical dances. She is a recognized Research-Guide of the University of Mumbai for Ph.D. in Dance and has guided several students on topics such as “Emotional Literacy in Indian Classical Dance”, “Dance Movement Therapy for Persons with Disabilities”, “Indian Classical Dance Elements and Human Fitness”, etc.



**Session: Using Brain Gym® as a Therapeutic Intervention Tool for those with Learning Disabilities**

**By MINAZ AJANI, Brain Gym® Instructor and Consultant | Mumbai, India**

The Brain Gym® program is a holistic system based on the principles of kinesiology and learning theory, developed by learning specialist Paul E. Dennison, PhD and his wife and partner Gail E. Dennison. It offers a proven approach that addresses and incorporates the often overlooked physical components of learning -visual, auditory, motor, and stress management skills.

Utilising 26 designed movement activities and related techniques, the Brain Gym® system helps people reach their peak mental performance for life's most important moments. In order to best learn through movement, it helps to notice when learning is stressful versus when it's being smoothly integrated. We will explore our understanding of the learning flow and do various Brain Gym® movements including PACE, The Lazy 8s, and The Double Doodle. This workshop will be very experiential and engaging. We will understand the physical skills of learning and challenges that are faced by those with learning difficulties. The workshop will give an understanding as well as tips and strategies that teachers, therapists, and parents can incorporate into what they are already doing to support their students, clients, and children.

**Bio:** Minaz Ajani is an International Faculty Member of Breakthroughs International (House of Brain Gym® Program), Licensed Brain Gym® Instructor and Consultant, Touch for Health® Kinesiology Instructor, and Movement based Learning Teacher Trainer. She has a Masters in Special Education with a focus on Learning Disabilities from DSE, SNDT Womens' University, and Postgraduate Diploma in Counseling Psychology from Xaviers Institute of Counselling Psychology. She is currently pursuing an Arts Based Therapy course. Minaz is an Audiblox, Handwriting Without Tears, and NILD Search and Teach specialist. She is also an NLC Learning Specialist, Life Skills and Feuerstein Instrumental Enrichment Teacher, with overall 18+ years of experience. She developed the social skills curriculum for Kangaroo Kids Education for grades 1-12. She was a Co-founder of Leap Ahead Assessment and Learning Centre as well as of Learn Studio LLP. She is the founder of the manifesturpotential.com. She has started a YouTube channel called House of Wellness to empower and create awareness in senior citizens. Her mission is to support people in their quest to reach their peak potential regardless of age.



**Session: Kahaani: Where Story Unites with Body**

**By MURTUZA K. RAILWAYWALA, Psychologist,  
DMT Practitioner | Surat, India  
DISHA SAMPAT, Dance Movement Therapist |  
Mumbai, India**

This experiential session delves into blending the concepts of psychodrama with dance/movement therapy. The session will be facilitated in English and Hindi where participants will have experiences of story building along with non-verbal expression of movement

intervention with the use of props. The goal of the session is to explore the concept of story along with an embodied experience within a closed group setting. Through the lens of psychological theories and arts, this session will focus on exploring the relationship between the two modalities in relation to incorporating them with varied populations.

**Bio:** Murtuza K. Railwaywala is a Psychologist, Movement Therapy Practitioner and Psychotherapist, Founder and Director of SPARSH “mental health and wellness center”, Surat. He holds a Master’s degree in Clinical Psychology, PG in Mental Health profession from University of Roehampton, PGD in Naturopathy, Bachelor degree in Performing Arts (Dramatics), Certification in Creative Movement Therapy from CID and CMTAI, Bengaluru and PG Diploma in Dance Movement Therapy from CMTAI and

St. Mira College, Pune. A trained and passionate mountaineer and theatre artist, he also works as TIE (Theatre -in-education) facilitator for children with different disabilities. Personality development programmer amid adventure, theatre and psychology, Murtuza holds 20 years of experience in the field of mental health, adventure and theatre. He believes in, and practices blending adventure activities with theatrical action, (theatre performances based on stories) along with psychotherapies with different groups and populations.

Disha Sampat, is a practising Dance/Movement Therapist from Pratt Institute, USA, as well as affiliated with Indian Association of Dance Movement Therapy (IADMT) as an Executive Board Member. She is the founder of MotionsEmotion where she offers mental health services for individuals and groups. Additionally, she also offers mental health services through Dance/Movement Therapy at ManoShala Foundation and Urja Trust.

Over the years, Disha has worked with individuals who have experienced trauma, depression, anxiety, and other mental health concerns. Her approach is person-centered, where she believes that people are beyond their diagnostic labels and the traumatic past experience/s faced. She is a strong believer in the role of arts blended with psychological frameworks, that supports in containing spaces for individuals, uncovering themselves through compassion and empathy. She believes this humanises the experiences with unlearning unhealthy patterns, and that is when magic is created.



### **Session: The Stories We're Told: Unravelling The 'Normative'**

**By NIHARICA SHAH, Psychologist, Therapeutic Arts Facilitator | Pune, India**

This experiential session focuses on the use of Therapeutic Arts in questioning the 'normative' social stories we are told. The session is designed to support professionals working with individuals from the queer community in reflecting on and understanding the unique life challenges faced by queer/trans-identifying clients. Using the framework of the 'Charmed Circle' (conceptualized by Gayle Rubin) along with embodied and art-based exercises, the session aims to engage the participants in contemplating how social identities (like gender, sexual orientation, caste, class, marital status, ethnicity, ability, etc.) dictate access to resources and how that experience may impact the mental health of their queer/trans clients.

**Bio:** Niharica Shah is a Psychologist & Therapeutic Arts Facilitator. She is the founder of Interior Gardening Psychological Services and works with fellow professionals to offer ethical and inclusive mental health interventions to individuals, groups, and organisations. She holds an M.Sc. in Clinical Psychology (U.K.) and has trained in India to facilitate therapeutic Art & Movement. She is a certified Queer Affirmative Counselling Practitioner and works from a person-centred and relational therapeutic framework while remaining socio-culturally sensitive. She is also an executive board member of the Indian Association of Dance Movement Therapy. Through her work, Niharica encourages people to question the normative and strengthen their own voice and sense of self that is grounded in curiosity over judgement and self-compassion over criticism.



### **Session: Storytelling and Folklore: A Healing Tool for Communities**

**By NISHTHA AGARWAL, Expressive Arts Therapist | Delhi, India**

The simple act of telling stories has been a part of many cultures since centuries. We may all be able to recall a time in our lives when we may have been walking a painful journey, and then someone told us a story that made us feel seen and heard like never before. What is it about stories that can be so transformative that it can connect us to ourselves and others, break barriers and allow us to heal our deepest wounds? This session will explore storytelling and the concepts of "healing teller and wounded listener" and "wounded teller and healing listener" through theory, experientials and its application in a therapeutic setting for communities and individuals.

**Bio:** Nishtha Agarwal holds a Masters in Expressive Arts Therapy from Lesley University (Cambridge, USA), a Masters in Applied Psychology from Delhi University (Delhi, India), and a certification course in Dance Movement Therapy. She applies a trauma-informed and body based approach in expressive arts therapy. She currently works as a mental health counsellor at Ashoka University, New Delhi. Her past work includes a wide range of populations such as individuals, couples and groups in the outpatient community, mental health clinics, adults and adolescents with eating disorders, homeless adults with acute mental illness, adolescents in high schools and children with visual impairment across India and the US.



### **Session: Coming Home to Ourselves**

**By DR. NIVEDITA CHALILL, Social Worker, Arts Based Therapy Practitioner | Delhi, India**

Most of us are well-aware of the challenges of post-pandemic lives, where we are tired, anxious or over-worked, without adequate work-life boundaries, and often find ourselves stressed or feeling burned out. As we look for ways of rest, recovery and recharging ourselves, we can also step back to examine the strain we are experiencing physically and mentally and try to understand the root of this.

Is our stress/strain/anxiety/worry stemming from the pandemic, our work spaces, or our families? Or is it perhaps coming from a space of trying to chase multiple goals? Are we trying to control many factors in our pursuits? And similar internal factors? And can we stop, take a step further back and examine where we are trying to reach and at what cost? And in the midst of those questions, can we also ask ourselves if there could be a simpler way of feeling more at peace? The idea of 'coming home' is a simple metaphor for a safe space that we can inhabit without fear or anxiety. And the notion of 'coming home to ourselves' is to recognise the possibility of shelter and refuge that we can provide to ourselves at any time, irrespective of the presence of a physical structure or presence of significant others. This session is informed by Buddhist thought and practice. There are many techniques offered by Buddhism, some of which have gained considerable popularity as well such as mindfulness or meditation techniques, but it is critical to remember the wisdom that guides and anchors

these methods. This session will therefore merge theory, or the view, along with select practices that will help embody what 'coming home' could feel like. Participants will be encouraged to build their own daily practice to strengthen that feeling of coming home along with a resource list for future reference.

**Bio:** Dr. Nivedita Chalill runs ARTH, a mental health initiative offering Counselling and Arts Based Therapy for people dealing with mental health issues. ARTH also provides various workshops and training programs for individuals, groups and organisations. Her academic and professional training across 25 years has focused on alleviating suffering through compassionate action. She is a trained Occupational Therapist, and a Psychiatric Social Worker with a doctorate from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, where she also served as faculty. She has provided care in diverse spaces such as Regional Mental Hospital Thane and rehabilitation centres; and has worked in crisis areas including suicide prevention and disaster relief. She facilitates two courses on Applied Buddhist Psychology in Mumbai and Chennai which teaches participants ways of bringing wisdom and compassion to our daily lives. She continues to pursue her studies in Buddhist philosophy from Tibet House (New Delhi) with Ven. Geshe Dorji Damdul.



### **Session: Integrating Passion and Purpose**

**By PALLAVI SHIMPI, Counselling Psychologist, Therapeutic Movement Facilitator | Mumbai, India**

When you are playing multiple roles, you tend to lose yourself in the chaos. The juggle between purpose, passion, action and interaction is where we can feel lost.

The intention of the session is to explore our passion and purpose in life while integrating various elements from within and outside of the self. The session is designed for business entrepreneurs, practitioners and anyone who is striving to discover their own rhythm and create an entity out of their passion and purpose

in this fast-paced and competitive world.

Participants will engage in an experiential journey involving body movement, props, and art to explore the integration of parts within and around them.

The outcome of the session might include:

1. Getting in touch with the creative side
2. Exploring roles and responsibilities
3. Finding the confidence to make decisions from heart space
4. Balancing aspects of mind, body, heart & inner-self

**Bio:** Pallavi Shimpi is a Founder of Moving Minds India, a happiness & healing company being part of the emotional journeys of individuals, groups and corporates. She's a Counselling Psychologist and a certified Therapeutic Movement Facilitator experienced in working with women-centric trauma and with entrepreneurs & professionals, facilitating them to explore, express and regulate their emotions so that they can find their way out of challenging life experiences. With 5+ years of experience in body-based therapies, she is known for facilitating journeys from the lens of Gestalt Therapy, Integral Somatic Psychology and through energy body experiences coming from her being an Advanced Pranic Healer. She has been working with companies like Amazon, Flipkart, Edelweiss, Monarch, Hindware and many more. Her company Moving Minds India is a team of collaborative expressive art therapy & mental health

practitioners who provide nourishing ground for clients and each other while fulfilling their passion & purpose.



**Session: Building Community, Building Resilience: One Story at a Time**

**By RADHIKA JAIN, Accredited Playback Theatre Trainer | Bengaluru, India**

The session would be an experiential workshop, using Playback Theatre, that explores how, through building a safe and inclusive space, the stories of individuals can help members of a group to connect with each other, and tap into the strength of a collective. Through this format, people get to share their personal, real-life stories and actors improvise to present these stories on-the-spot. In this session, the participants will reflect back stories for each other as citizen actors. The non-judgemental nature of the space will encourage multiple, and even differing voices, to emerge, thereby allowing for a healthy way in which

a community can engage, exchange, share and listen.

Along with this, it will let the participants experience the process of creating and expressing, and sharpen their skills of improvised, yet authentic responding. The performative element of Playback Theatre would help the participants to utilise this as a tool for deeper work with their communities.

**Bio:** Radhika Jain is the Co-founder and Artistic Director of First Drop Theatre, Bangalore. An Accredited Playback Theatre Trainer from the Center for Playback Theatre (CPT), USA, she is the faculty for Playback Theatre at the Applied Theatre India Foundation, the co-editor of the International Playback Theatre Network (IPTN) journal and the Secretary (Executive Committee) at the CPT, USA. She is a certified Listening Hour Guide. A theatre practitioner for over ten years, Radhika is trained in multiple formats of interactive theatre like Playback Theatre, Theatre of the Oppressed, Applied Improvisation etc. As an Expressive Arts therapy practitioner, Radhika combines the elements of Expressive Arts with the tools of Theatre in her sessions with individuals and groups, in therapeutic and other settings. Radhika has a PhD in Molecular Microbiology from Germany and has corporate experience of 7 years in the field of Consulting prior to entering the world of Applied Theatre based training.



**Session: Sankalpa: Using Art-Based Interventions to Create Safe Communities to End Gender-Based Biases**

**By RASHMI BALAKRISHNAN, Expressive Arts-Based Practitioner | Bengaluru, India**

Gender is a social construct which distinguishes different attributes of men and women, and also refers to a set of roles and responsibilities that men and women should adhere to. Gender violence has, at its core, some form of gender bias. When we talk about gender equality – what we need to remember is that we are really talking about basic humanity. And why not begin the conversations around gender with one's personal lived experience at its core? Why not shift the focus

from gender equality to gender equity? And let us engage in this work to bring equity to people of all genders. Let us build an inclusive community.

Close to nine out of 10 men and women around the world hold some sort of bias against women (UNDP, 2020). Even when the law of the land talks about equality, people experience discrimination through practice, both within and outside their homes. One also needs to remember that when we talk about gender, it is never in isolation. There are always overlapping social identities around physical ability, race, sexual orientation and much more.

With this session, Rashmi hopes to create a safe space and explore the idea of gender, one's own experiences and the social constructs around gender. She does this as an attempt to create safe spaces that facilitate conversations around gender. This session will use music, active imagination and art to dive into these concepts from the lens of personal experiences. This session will also aim to share ideas around how one can create safe spaces in communities to initiate conversations around the idea of gender.

**Bio:** Rashmi Balakrishnan is a Creative Movement and Expressive Arts Therapy Practitioner, and a youth mentor. She has had the opportunity to work with various populations like adolescents, women, children with risk, the LGBTQ community, people with disabilities, and various fellowship programs. She works with various modalities like movement, visual arts, storytelling, drama, music, and the ancient wisdom of feminine spirituality. She works towards breaking the barriers around mental health and gender-based social structures. She aims to create spaces where no topic is taboo; spaces, where everyone's lived experience is honoured. She strives to create non-judgemental spaces for young adults through 'Trust Circles' where they can share their emotions and experiences. Rashmi is also the Chair of the Creative Movement Therapy Association of India (CMTAI), South Zone and a council member of the Karnataka Mental Health Council, WICCI.



**Session: Social Change and Dance Movement Therapy through a Community Lens -The case of Kolkata Sanved Method, Approaches and Process**

**By RENELLE SNELLEKSZ, Senior Dance Movement Therapy Practitioner | Kolkata, India**

Kolkata Sanved (KS) is a women-led organisation, working towards psychosocial rehabilitation of survivors of marginalisation and gender-based violence, prevention of violence and poor mental health and promotion of mental wellbeing, through the medium of Dance Movement Therapy (DMT). KS is a pioneer in the field of using DMT in the social development sector in India and

South Asia. DMT for Change, is KS's innovative tool. KS's method, approaches and process is culturally contextualised and has been applied to a wide range of marginalised and underprivileged communities including child care institutions, shelter homes, urban and rural slums, railway platforms, red-light areas, villages and many more community settings. KS's significant contribution to Global DMT is that it creates an opportunity for community and for survivors to become DMT practitioners, changemakers and young leaders, so that they are able to enjoy economic independence.

This session will involve an experiential exploration of KS's methodology through creative movement and expression. Additionally, it will highlight the impact of this DMT and creative arts approach for marginalised communities through case studies, testimonials and research.

**Bio:** Renelle Snelleks, quit her full-time job as a TV news presenter at Times Now in 2011 to pursue her passion for dance. She is trained and mentored by pioneers of Dance Movement Therapy in India, Kolkata Sanved. She is a faculty member at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai – Center for Lifelong Learning, for the PG Diploma in Dance Movement Therapy. She works with several marginalized communities and primarily with survivors of sexual violence. Her years of experience involve working with children from the slums, prisoners, survivors of cancer, corporate office clients and those battling mental health challenges, as part of her private practice. She strongly believes in the use of the creative arts and expression as a powerful tool for empowerment, transformation and wholeness for individuals and communities.

**Session: Introduction to Supportive Music and Imagery: Gifts from the Psyche**



**By SAMAY SUJAL AJMERA, Music Therapist, Psychotherapist | Mumbai, India**

This workshop will introduce supportive guided imagery and music therapy through experiential and reflective ways. Participants will work with pre-recorded music to explore their psyches and draw out their own internal resources. Participants will learn how to incorporate supportive guided imagery techniques into their own daily life as well as in their work with clients and groups. The workshop will open up space for deep reflection, discussions, takeaways, and learnings. Music lists, techniques, and resources will be provided.

**Bio:** Samay Ajmera is a Professional Certified Coach (PCC) with the International Coaching Federation, a trained psychotherapist, and a certified music therapist, and has completed level 1 training in Guided Imagery and Music. Samay has worked extensively as a music therapist in Mumbai, within clinics, groups, hospital environments, large corporate groups, and with individuals of all ages on an one-on-one basis. Through his years of work, he has helped individuals combat stress, anxiety, depression and has seen them transform. Samay has worked with individuals who have lost their loved ones, have had serious illnesses, undergone major life changes, and has also worked with some of the highest-performing individuals and organisations. He believes everyone is trying to live their best life, and that's what he's here to help them do. He has witnessed the tremendous benefits and insights received through his own experiences with guided imagery and music (GIM) and aims to help individuals work with this form for deep healing.



**Session: Understanding the Role of Dance Movement Therapy in Community-Based Programs for Parkinson's Disease (PD) With a Movement Experiential with People with PD**

**By TEJALI MADHAV KUNTE, Clinical Psychologist and Creative Movement Therapy Facilitator | Mumbai, India**

This session will include a theoretical framework and experiential movement component to understand the effectiveness of DMT and the use of Indian dance-



based techniques for the rehabilitation of Parkinson's Disease. PD is a neuro-degenerative condition that is caused by the reduction in the level of Dopamine in the brain, which affects not only one's physical movements and mobility but also has an impact on a person's emotional and social well-being. Dance Movement therapy (DMT) and therapeutic dance-based interventions have shown great results to improve physical, emotional as well as psycho-social well-being in People with Parkinson's (PwPs) and thereby improve their quality of life. The session will also cover the aspects of how to make DMT an accessible and effective intervention in the community-based setup in India. This session will be based on real-life case studies, evidence-based interventions, integration of DMT in the holistic management of PD, challenges and triumphs of working with this population through an interaction and movement based experientials with the participants.

The highlight of the session will be an insight into this condition and DMT for PD through the lens of people living with this condition. Participants in this session will get a chance to interact with people with Parkinson's and realise the power of creative movement and dance as a medium of expression to understand this condition. In the experiential session with PwPs, participants will shake legs with them and this can help PwPs increase their level of confidence, and motivation by engaging and reintegrating into the community-based dance and movement session. We will witness that Parkinson's is a debilitating condition, and yet dance and movement can help PwPs empower their sense of abilities and talents in an inclusive environment!

**Bio:** Tejali Kunte is a practising Clinical Psychologist, and certified Creative Movement Therapy Facilitator with an active experience in the field for 8+ years. She is also a trained Kathak artist. She works as the 'Head of Psychology' and Creative Movement therapy facilitator/researcher at an all India NGO- 'Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorder Society (PDMDS)', for 7+ years. Tejali is a Faculty member for Dance Movement Therapy course at MIT-WPU University, Pune and Sathaye College, Mumbai. Tejali has conducted research on using DMT and creative dance programs with Indian techniques for People with Parkinson's and presented it at various national and international conferences including World Parkinson's Congress in Kyoto (Japan). She also works as a member-in-charge of the Research Committee at the Indian Association of Dance and Movement therapy (IADMT). She is a founder of 'MoveMentum'- an initiative to promote awareness about mental health and dance therapy.



### **Session: Introduction to Dance Movement Therapy**

**By TRIPURA KASHYAP, Dance Movement Therapist | Delhi, India**

This session incorporates experiential movement activities, icebreakers and energizers that are creative, expressive and therapeutic. These have been sourced from creative /classical /contemporary dance to contribute to the mental health and well-being of participants. We will also experience small bytes of theory alongside cultivating our personal body language geared towards increasing self-expression and self-confidence in a safe and non-judgmental ambience.

**Bio:** Tripura Kashyap pioneered Dance Movement Therapy in India in 1990. She studied Movement therapy at the Hancock Centre for Dance/movement therapy in Wisconsin, USA and received an M.A. in Psychology. She worked as a Movement therapist at Half-way homes, Special schools, Treatment /

Rehabilitation centers , retirement homes and with individual clients for the next 10 years. Tripura received fellowships from the Ashoka International Foundation and Indian Ministry of Culture for her innovations in dance therapy and contemporary dance. She authored 'My Body, My Wisdom' a book on Creative dance therapy and teaches on certificate, post graduate diploma and M.A programs in Dance Movement Therapy across India. Tripura is the co-founder of Creative Movement Therapy Association of India (CMTAI).



### **Session: Interconnectedness for Thriving and Well-Being**

**By VANASHREE GHATE, Arts Based Therapy Educator | Mumbai, India**

*"I believe in the possibility of a world where our interconnection is a deeply known and motivating force, where no one is left out, where the innate dignity of every person is acknowledged, and where hatred and fear and greed can be tempered." Sharon Salzberg*

Coming out of the pandemic, if there is one thing that everyone can agree on, it would be that humans need a sense of connection and belongingness to feel safe, secure and well. Unless we feel a heartfelt connection with others, we can be deeply lonely in the midst of family & friends. Sensing and sustaining these connections can contribute to personal well-being and flourishing. And in turn, a thriving community. In this workshop, we take the first steps to cultivate this precious sense of interconnection. Rather than relating to interconnectedness as an abstract, esoteric idea, let us experience and sense it as an embodied understanding. The experience of interconnectedness necessitates an open, tender heart, a curious attitude as also an inner motivation of caring. It is rooted in warm-heartedness, mindfulness and being attuned to our surroundings in a meaningful manner. This session is based on principles of Arts-Based Therapy and foundational tenets of Buddhist Psychology. Arts Based Therapy uses integrated arts to create an artistic vocabulary for healing in Therapy. Through the use of artistic activities, short meditation & reflection practice and discussion, we can explore and witness the spaciousness as we open up and dissolve narrow, self-centred attitudes. And as Vulnerable They would say, "**be the interbeing!**"

**Bio:** Vanashree Ghate is the Founding Director of HEAL Foundation, a non-profit organisation established in 2017. A healer at heart, she has a holistic approach to living. Vanashree is an Arts Based Therapist and Arts Based Therapy Educator for Anantaraa Arts-Based Therapy Course. Vanashree has been a Vipassana meditation practitioner for decades. She is a Certified Mindfulness Meditation Teacher and conducts Mindfulness & Mind Training Workshops for professionals and teachers, parents and children. She is also a Facilitator for Socio-Ethical-Emotional (SEE™) Learning & Cognitively Based Compassion Training (CBCT®), both developed by Emory University.



**Session: 'It's the Parts that make a Whole'- ABT as a Tool to Promote Group Dynamics in Therapy**

**By ZILL BOTADKAR, Licensed Arts Based Therapy Practitioner, Educator and Counsellor | Mumbai-Pune, India**

The session begins with a brief about Arts based therapy (ABT), which is defined as the clinical and evidence based use of art forms i.e. music, drama, and visual arts, to accomplish individualised and group goals within a therapeutic relationship. The experiential session focuses on the use of arts based therapy in Group work that is a powerful tool for growth and change. The power in group therapy lies in the unique opportunity to receive multiple perspectives, support, encouragement, and feedback from other individuals in a safe and confidential environment. These interpersonal interactions can provide group members an opportunity to deepen their level of self-awareness and to learn how they relate to others. The focus of arts-based therapy is on the therapeutic effect of the creative experience, and it highlights the human capacity to transform thoughts, emotions and experiences into tangible shapes and forms. The session will offer a space and supportive space for participants to experiment with new ideas and ways of being.

**Bio:** Zill Botadkar, has more than 20 years of experience in working extensively with children, adolescents and adults. She has a Post-Graduation in Counselling Psychology and is a licensed Arts Based Therapy Practitioner and Educator. She is the founder/director of Lighthouse, an arts and wellbeing center. She has been instrumental in starting the groundwork for many centers for therapy in Mumbai. She was an appointed faculty member as an ABT Practitioner in JBCN PAN Academy, Manu Prem, JBCN International School, Disha and Akanksha. She was the Course Director and Core Facilitator for training students as ABT Practitioners at Nirmala Niketan College, Mumbai, and now runs it privately under Lighthouse.

She has travelled around the world to reach out to special educators, counsellors, therapists and the special needs population to educate them on the importance of art forms and its therapeutic benefits. Few places to name are Malaysia, USA, and many states in India too.



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**Research Presentations**



**Title: Sankirtana, a Healing Art: Phenomenological Understanding**

**By CHIRMI ACHARYA, Assistant Professor at Amity University Rajasthan|Jaipur, India**

**Synopsis:** The universe was born out of the Nada or the sound produced by Shiva's damru/drum and he is the Nataraja, the Lord of dance and movement whose limbs are the body of the universe. Music and dance have been an integral part of civilizations, and ever changing genres of music and various dance styles always soothes and calms people. Different kirtana cultures exist in India, one such healing tradition is Sankirtana. The origin of Sankirtana is believed to be from the early bhakti saints; the Vaishanava followers who used to sing and dance on the devotional songs and music as an offering to the Lord.

Kirtana involves chanting and singing the name of God thereby leading people to succumb to crescendo of music and dancing (Kinsley, 1979). The person performing kirtana experiences deep spiritual ecstasy while singing, chanting and dancing to the beats of kirtana which helps in physical and emotional healing (Cooke, 2009). This poster represents a phenomenological study conducted on 10 traditional Sankirtana performers to understand the healing effects and benefits of Sankirtana. The study also helps in finding the relevance of this bhakti practice in modern times of strife when benevolence and empathy are of highest importance to the society. The study focuses on the transcendence experienced through kirtana which can give one a spiritual bliss as one engages in the mindful activity.

Keywords: Sankirtana, healing, spirituality, transcendence

**Bio:** Chirmi Acharya holds a PhD in psychology which she completed with the support of UGS's JRF/SRF fellowship. Her area of interest in research is dance/performance studies, culture, creativity, women/gender studies and positive psychology. Currently she is positioned as Assistant Professor at Amity University Rajasthan, Jaipur. She is also a dance movement therapy facilitator. She is a trained Bharatnatyam dancer and a theatre practitioner. Chirmi has been a recipient of the Ministry of Culture's Young Artist Scholarship in theatre in which she worked on a project on 'aaharya abhinaya.'



**Title: Effect of Dance and Movement Therapy on Language and Communication Skills, Motor Skills and Social Skills of Children with Autism**

**By SHOBA SHRIVASTAVA, RESHMA GAIKWAD, MUDRIKA AWASTHI, SOPAN (Society of Parents of Children with Autistic Disorders) | Mumbai, India**

**Synopsis:** Dance and Movement Therapy (DMT) is an art form fundamentally based on psychotherapeutic principles. Since time immemorial it has been used world-over as a means of human expression. DMT provides a platform for children with autism spectrum disorders to progress through a myriad of skills like motor coordination, social communication and relationship building, expression of emotions, improving memory, promoting body awareness,

improving language, routine interactions and daily living activities. Research evidence suggests several benefits of DMT on children with Autism. The current paper is an attempt to substantiate the research evidence and to gain a deeper understanding on the changes observed before and after the intervention.

For the study, eleven children aged between 4 to 12 years of age having autism have been selected from SOPAN. The intervention program was conducted in 10 sessions of 1 hour each, once a week. The intervention program consisted of dance and movement executed by a Dance Movement Therapy Practitioner. A tool measuring movement patterns, social skills and language and communication skills prior to intervention and post intervention has been administered. The tool used is a 4-point rating scale. It has several skills in each of the 3 domains selected for intervention. The intervention scores have been recorded pre-intervention, post-intervention and during each intervention session. The results obtained have been qualitatively analysed and are indicative of positive behavioural changes for children with autism. The study examines eleven cases to present the effectiveness of DMT in the development of general movement patterns, social skills and language and communication for children with autism and suggests ways of translating them in classrooms.

Keywords: Dance Movement Therapy, autism, communication, social emotional development, movements

**Bio:** Shoba Srivastava, B.Sc, B.Ed (Spl. Edu.), M.A. (Edu) Managing Trustee, SOPAN, India. Ms. Shoba Srivastava is a parent of a young man with autism and Tuberous Sclerosis. She is a special educator and a founder trustee of SOPAN (Society of Parents of Children with Autistic Disorders). She has worked extensively with children with autism and developmental disabilities and has contributed significantly towards expansion of SOPAN's projects and broadening its horizons. She has worked towards creating fundraising opportunities for SOPAN and has forged relations with many institutions and groups who provide a platform for showcasing skills of individuals with autism and developmental disabilities through exhibitions of products. She is a guest lecturer at SOPAN's Suvidya College of Special Education and has co-authored and published a few papers in International and Indian journals. She is a member of Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Kasturba Hospital, Mumbai since 2013 and a founder member of Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance of India (TSAI). She is also a member of the TANDem consortium which is creating a digital App to help TSC parents across the world.



**Title: Dancing to Heal: A Movement Intervention for Persons with Parkinson's Disease**

**By TANVI HEGADE, Freelance Translator, DMT Practitioner | Pune, India**

**Synopsis:** Parkinson's disease (PD) is a neurodegenerative disorder that affects mobility and health-related quality of life (HRQOL). Its symptoms include motor and non-motor ones such as bradykinesia, postural instability, resting tremors, and cognitive and neuropsychiatric manifestations. These effects have been further exacerbated by the Covid-19-induced pandemic. The application of Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) may have benefits in PD patients, as a community-based practice to enhance individual resilience, consequently also fostering collective rehabilitation and healing. The dance style in focus were contemporary movements blended with Bollywood music to provide a sense of familiarity, and a practice narrating Kathak verses as a speech exercise. Incorporating evidence from reviews of participants and family members, observations of facilitators, and tests carried out in collaboration with a hospital, this study demonstrates that the progression of PD was observed to have slowed down in several patients, and it had facilitated an improvement in their motor function ability, focus and their socialisation. It had also reinstated a sense of belonging. The study argues for the necessity of a supplementary treatment in addition to mainstream treatments for PD. Further research needs to be carried out to gain more

conclusive evidence on the efficacy of this treatment approach.

Keywords: Parkinson's Disease, dance and movement tools to enhance resilience, community-based practice, collective rehabilitation and healing, supplementary treatment

**Bio:** Tanvi Hegade is a Pune-based freelance translator and a contemporary dance artiste and works at the intersections of art, social impact and languages. Poetry, reading and writing play an enormous role in the way she makes sense of the world. Her training in contemporary dance and physical theatre allows her to explore the myriad possibilities of expression using the body. A recent graduate of Dance Movement Therapy, she is presently indulging in her interest in the workings of the mind-body connection and kinesthetic approaches, and is in the process of incubating ideas about forming insightful and honest ways of dialogue and connections with people through art.



**Title: An Integration of Dance Movement Therapy for Learners with Visual Impairment: A Field Survey**

**By YUKTI GUPTA, Assistant Professor, Ph.D., Scholar, Department of Special Education, SNDT Women's University and SUJATA BHAN, Professor, Department of Special Education, SNDT Women's University | Mumbai, India**

**Synopsis:** It is seen that dance movement therapy (DMT) improves the physical activity of the learners with the visual impairment. The researcher came across several literatures which indicated a series of psychological and social dynamics which shapes self-esteem and subsequent psychosocial well-being of a learner with visual impairment (Crawford and Connelly, 2017 & Johnson 2004). The objective of the study is to survey dance movement therapists and how the therapist assesses the learner with visual impairment and their psychosocial wellbeing and functioning. It is observed that therapists have insufficient understanding of learners with visual impairment and how learners with visual impairment are being assessed throughout the therapy sessions. It is important to address the problem because assessment is an integral part to create a baseline for treatment and also helps in determining the direction in which therapy should progress. The study consists of a web-based survey of dance movement therapists currently working in the field. The survey will address the aspects of their clinical work including background information, clinical service description and clinical DMT assessment information.

Keywords: Dance movement therapy, Learners with visual impairment, dance movement therapists

**Bio:** Yukti Gupta works as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Special Education, SNDT Women's University. A specialist in rehabilitation of persons with Visual Impairment, a counsellor, and a trainer for the Special Olympics, she is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Special Education and PG Diploma in Dance Movement Therapy. She has undertaken various research related to her field. She has presented papers at national and international conferences and published her work nationally. She strongly believes in the power of assistive technology in creating inclusive environments and opportunities for persons with disability. She has developed study material in the area of special education for Deepak Foundation, Gujarat and Netaji Subhas Open University, Kolkata and also translated an Indian Sign Language Dictionary from English to Punjabi for Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational and Research Institute, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.



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## **Poster Presentations**





**Title: Art therapy in Psychosocial Interventions for Persons with Neuropsychiatric Disorders: A Case Series**

**By ARUN M, PhD Scholar at NIMHANS | Bengaluru, India**

**Authors: Arun M<sup>1</sup>, Vasundhara S Nair<sup>2</sup>, Sinu Jesin Timothy<sup>3</sup>, Priya Treesa Thomas<sup>4</sup>**

Neurological illness can create significant disequilibrium in physical, psychological, financial, and livelihood aspects. Impairment in functioning and associated sequelae can exacerbate psychological distress, especially in long term chronic neurological conditions. Art therapy is a form of psychotherapy categorised as expressive art therapy, which uses drawing, colouring, painting, and sculpturing to elicit information from clients, as well as to facilitate coping and alleviate distress. Applying various approaches based on expressive art therapy is an effective tool for psychosocial interventions but has not been well explored in the Indian context. We describe the art therapy interventions carried out with two clients presenting with chronic neuropsychiatric disorders who received in-patient treatment from a tertiary referral care center for Neuropsychiatry in South India. Case series is used as an approach to describe the exposure to art therapy as the intervention. The clients were interviewed in detail using a standard psychosocial assessment as part of routine psychosocial care services. The identified factors were conceptualised from expressive art therapy and interventions provided during their in-patient care. This case series attempts to understand the feasibility of using art therapy among persons with neurological conditions to enhance better psychosocial functioning. The present paper also tries to expand art therapy's scope for the psychosocial services for persons with neurological disorders in the inpatient care setting. Art therapy sessions could help the service providers to enhance the skills in establishing therapeutic alliance as well as elicit psychological components of distress among the persons with neurological disorders. Art therapy has a number of therapeutic benefits, including the ability to address a variety of psychosocial issues related to illness, particularly in the psychological sphere. It is possible to adopt art therapy in a clinical setting. Incorporating art therapy into psychosocial interventions may be beneficial to both the therapist and the clients.

**Keywords:** Art therapy, chronic neurological condition, Psychiatric Social Work intervention

**Bio:** Arun M is a PhD student at National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) Bengaluru. He also earned a Masters of Philosophy (M.Phil) from the same institute and worked as a junior consultant in the Neurological Rehabilitation Department. He has received Creative Movement Therapy training from CMTAI in Bengaluru. Arun has used art and its components to improve the well-being of children, adults, and other populations in a variety of contexts. He has had articles published, chapters authored, and posters presented at various national conferences. Arun has also served as a resource person in many workshops around India. As his PhD thesis, he is currently researching Parkinson's disease and well-being. His research interests include physical disability (neurological illnesses) and mental health in various populations.



**Title: Can Wearable Sensor Systems Identify and Diagnose Movement Patterns Specific to ADHD And Autism**

**By SUBRAHMANYAM MURAMALLA, CEO nxtQ Private Limited | Bengaluru, India**

The overall focus of this thesis study is to understand the usage of wireless sensor-based systems which can improve the diagnostic capacity of ADHD and Autism. The movement can be an indicator of the psychological, cognitive, social and intellectual ability of a person. The subjects who are suspected for a disorder like ADHD, Autism can be understood on the basis of movement, which levels they belong to (mild, moderate, severe, profound) and what is the possible treatment to rehabilitate them for a normal life. Our central essence is, "To substantiate that an objective analysis like wireless sensor system to observe the symptoms of ADHD, AUTISM can be more reliable" for calculating outcomes and complexity of a particular disorder which will help Dance Movement therapists to formulate a therapeutic setup which is more reliable and walks towards holistic development. We have chosen the a LMA and KMP frameworks to present our observation.

**Keywords:** Dance movement therapy, wireless sensor system, ADHD, AUTISM, Objective analysis.

**Bio:** Subrahmanyam Muramalla is founder and CEO of a movement/posture analysis technology company, nxtQ Private Limited, Bengaluru. An Electrical Engineer by degree, automobile software developer by profession, Subrahmanyam has deep interest in Music, Movement, Cognition and Mental Health. Amateur athlete by passion he has been pursuing work on technologies and modalities related to movement health, movement efficiency and human performance in sport context. The CMTAI annual conference 2021, he claims, had a tremendous impact on his organisation's work and vision. He is currently researching and developing wearable sensor technologies for diagnosis of posture/movement. He envisions that such technologies in combination with holistic movement analysis modalities can have tremendous impact on physical, physiological and psychophysical aspects of our living. At nxtQ Private Limited they quote that "Movement is Sixth Sense and they help bring it back to Humanity".