

of difficulties, ever-changing. "My wish for everyone is that you will draw from the entanglement a guiding thread that will show you the way on your obstacle-filled road."

The tangled skein is also a useful concept in dance movement therapy. An entanglement of knots can be compared to the emotional and physical state of a person seeking our aid. He very often is caught in a web and does not know how to find release for positive functioning. Dance movement therapy, used with kinesthetic empathy and psychological evaluation, helps to loosen the hidden ends and rejoin the broken threads in a new manner. ■

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The battle-dance at Sha'ar Ha'amakin

on the floor, experiencing the space around us as huge. Then we moved into this limitless space. From this sense of boundlessness, of limitless movement possibilities, I asked each dancer to pull his/her body together into a knot, using only two parts of the body.

They moved in this new form for a time, until I suggested working in a polarity form: "Dance, taking up as much space as you want and when you are ready, create a knot again. You are free to change over from form to form. Use different time rates and various levels in space."

Then we worked in couples. Each couple tied itself together in a knot, while moving with individual and mutual awareness.

After this experience each person shared his/her thoughts and feelings, first with the partner and then with the whole group:

"The knot was too strong for me!"

"I relied upon my partner."

"The knot was extremely loose."

"All of the weight fell on me."

"I felt in complete harmony with my partner."

"I felt good being in a knot and I could have continued much longer."

"I thought of a aged person on my kibbutz and began to understand the difficulty of living with body limitations."

From this point, our discussion involved the problems of people who have physical and emotional handicaps, and particularly the problems of old people.

I asked everyone to close their eyes and try to think about someone with a physical handicap. I then requested that each try to find a kinesthetic empathy with the individual they had visualized by taking a space in the room and moving to these thoughts.

This proved to be a powerfully charged emotional and physical experience, which produced not only tears but new thought patterns and new ways of looking at the problem of limits.

The experiencing of a form, the knot, gave birth to a new understanding of the serious problems of the aged and handicapped in our community.

Page from a Case-Study Notebook

I had been working with Dorit's class, as dance teacher,

since she was six years old. I began to work with her in individual sessions when she was eight.

We had been working with the knot imagery when Dorit, with arms wound around her body, began to roll all over the floor. Her face took on a stony expression and her eyes were glazed.

I asked her if the knot was too tight; she just kept rolling. I asked if she wanted me to help her untie the knot; she nodded her head and kept rolling.

After I had been rolling with Dorit for a time, I got close to her and she rolled on top of me. I opened my arms and kept rolling with her. She put one hand on my shoulder and kept the other on her own body.

When we hit the wall, I began to rock her.

At the end of the session, as we were leave-taking I impulsively hugged Dorit and told her that I had always dreamed of having a child with strawberry blonde hair like hers. She looked at me and said: "If you go to Haifa you can get a girl like me who is five and a half."

This was the first time that Dorit ever mentioned Haifa, which is the city where she spent four years of her life (in a children's home). Dorit was adopted at the age of five and a half.

After this session we were able to begin the descent into Dorit's past memories and fears.

The Tangled Skein

I was sitting in a circle with a group of teachers, at their final exercises to conclude three years of work when I took out a tangled mass of string and held it up for all to see.

"We will pass this from one to another and the receiver will in one word describe or express the texture or feeling or other associations that arise. Don't be afraid to repeat words already used by others."

The words used were: grey, natural, winding, crowded, soft, hard, entwining, woven, threads, rough, light, varying, changing, boring, thin, ugly, flexible, complications, pulling, puzzling, mess...

When the entangled wool returned to me, I compared it to life: life can be grey, natural, simple, crowded, flexible, full

all the balloons. At the next session, which started in high excitement, Tomer went straight to the balloons, blew them all up and again launched into his lecture on the high cost of waste.

During the lecture, he tried several times to sit on a balloon, but kept jumping up as if stung by a bee. For quite some time, Tomer sat and sat while I needled him with such remarks as, 'Don't you have the strength?' and, 'Don't you know how to use your weight?' Finally after a long delay, the balloons burst. Tomer laughed hysterically.

This release was immediately followed by a period of play in which Tomer arranged four large cardboard tubes and balloons of various sizes to represent his mother, father, sister and brother, and said to me, "Did you know that I'm adopted?" Thus began our real work together.

Case Study II

Nurit is a beautiful nine year old who is very aware that she is the only adopted child in her family. In her sessions with me, she uses the balloons to play out family fights and friendships using the balloons both for hitting out and for representing the various members of her family and group.

She uses them in an unusual way, dancing with balloons of different sizes and colours as she makes them and her own movements take on different characters. As she holds the largest balloon, the father balloon, she moves in a strong, weighty way; with the mother balloon her movements are swift and light; baby brother balloon is moved with bouncy movements; and as younger brother, Nurit throws herself and the balloon around the room.

When the balloon represents herself, Nurit explores a wide range of movements, representing the complexity and contrasts she experiences in herself.

Case Study III

I prefer to work with a child for 2-3 months before consulting with others about its problems. In this way, I feel a more objective and constructive analysis is possible. Therefore, Reva came to me without comment from the psychologist who recommended dance and movement therapy.

She was at first extremely shy, but as we worked together the shyness disappeared slowly and I found Reva to be a

very bright, musical, well-coordinated eight year-old. After two months, I still could not understand what her problem was.

One day as we were using the balloon as an extension of body parts, the truth emerged. First we used the balloon as an extension of body parts (the head, neck, chest, stomach, between the thighs). Then we put aside the balloon and moved as if we were blowing up various parts of the body. After moving with a swollen stomach, she again took the balloon and placed it between her thighs. At that point, she revealed to me that she had been wetting her bed.

The Knot

...
he is refusing to see
that there is something the matter with him
for not seeing there is something the matter with him. . .

...
I feel you know what I am supposed to know
but you can't tell me what it is
because you don't know that I don't know what it is. . .

(R.D. Laing: *Knots*)

In our second model we work through an image concept rather than with a concrete object.

A knot has many connotations: it ties things together, it holds, it is strong, it can be too binding, it can constrict, it can be loose, it can be very tight.

The knot image can be stimulated in various ways:

- 1) Using two parts of the body to create a physical knot, one dances without untying the knot.
- 2) When the music stops, slowly and using strong resistance, the knot is untied and a new one fashioned.
- 3) Different knots (loose, tight, etc.) are tied and untied at the dancer's will, timing and mood, as one seeks awareness of the feeling of being tied up or being freed.
- 4) An inner sensation is created of being all tied up inside the body in a strong knot or many small knots.
- 5) The dancer ties him/herself to another person and they move together, sense the nature of the knot, make an entangled knot, make a very loose knot.

In a movement class for school teachers we began by lying

the emotional reactions of the participant manifesting themselves in new ways of feeling, new thoughts and insights, new paths to follow and new processes of living in which the participant learns to take risks, to accept his self and to cope with the realities of life.

In order to illustrate the theories we have discussed, we will now display a small sample of our work in using the creative dance process as a therapeutic tool.

Our first model involves working with objects that add a feeling of support and security: one who is afraid to move can forget his/her moving while moving an object.

The Balloon

We use balloons of varying sizes, shapes and colors with both children and adults for the following purposes:

1) Use of breath — how many breaths do you need to blow up a balloon?. Use as many as you can, use as few as you can. With very young children, we blow up imaginary balloons.

2) Sensitivity to and awareness of body image — dance while holding the balloon next to the head, shoulder, stomach, thighs.

3) Coordination and creation of feelings of lightness — bounce the balloon with different parts of the body (head, back, hand etc.)

4) Coordination with others — while dancing with the balloon play “follow your neighbour”.

5) Shaping — by pretending to be a balloon various sensations can be explored: I am blowing air and slowly filling you up; I am inflating you and you will be a gigantic balloon; you are floating and the wind is gently lifting you into the sky.

6) Touch and sensitivity to body change — I will place a patch on your hole; the patch is loose and the air is slowly seeping out, but keep dancing as long as there is any air left.

Dancing with a balloon with *no* direction invites all sorts of movement, and when a creative dance class suffers technique hang-ups, we find balloons invaluable as a release of energy and an aid to finding new ways of moving.

However, in using balloons as a therapeutic tool specific

directions are necessary to pursue the purpose the therapist has in mind. We now will relate three experiences in which balloons served as a specific device in working with individual patients.

Case Study I

Tomer is a tall but chubby 8-1/2 year old with shining brown eyes and an expressive face. Exaggerated mouth and lip movements accompany his non-stop, know-it-all talking, which is punctuated by rhythmic movements of his right hand. I had been working with Tomer and his classmates as a group, since he was five, while he was also seeing a teacher for Special Education. However, I began seeing Tomer privately a year ago when his teacher and ‘metapelet’ sought my help in response to increasing discipline problems and soiling.

Tomer entered my studio the first day talking a blue streak. He told me how his friends envied his coming and wanted to know if I gave out candy (like the other special teacher). I told him that what I hoped to give him were new ways of moving and of seeing things.

Tomer was very proud of his unusual ability to blow up balloons and liked to demonstrate his prowess on all the balloons in the studio. One day when he had inflated 18 he asked, “What would happen if I burst a balloon on purpose?” I said, “If you can do it with your body and not a pin, go ahead.” He countered, “But balloons are expensive. It’s a pity to waste money.”

I then explained that though I couldn’t let all students burst all our balloons, our lessons were special and allowed for the expression of our true feelings; we play with anything we want to and suspend the usual class rules. “You may burst a balloon, even if the noise makes me jump,” I concluded.

Tomer then continued his discourse about wasting money at some length and the subject was dropped.

The following week, Tomer came with a friend (I allow children to invite a visitor once every 4-5 sessions). Tomer immediately informed his friend that this was a place where balloons can be burst freely and after doing our opening exercises on the balance beam, the two boys quickly blew up 22 balloons. Tomer’s friend then asked my permission to burst one of them, sat on it hard and burst it with a bang. The boys laughed long and heartily, continuing to laugh as they played with other balls and let the air out of

Dance Movement Therapy

"All art is, by its very nature, therapeutic. But therapy is a by-product of art, not its essential substance. If the naturally therapeutic value of art is to be fully utilized, it must be approached for what it is."⁴

The dance movement therapist is a combination of leader, mediator, participant, teacher and counsellor. She/he enters this profession not only with dance and movement skills but with other sources of knowledge as well.

To help the participant, the therapist must know how to observe and understand body language. We cannot diagnose conditions and needs if we cannot read the body's messages. Even if the participant's words may be ABC, the body may say XYZ – his/her movements may contradict change or indicate a much stronger version of the verbal message.

The therapist must also understand emotional development and mental illness to support diagnostic abilities that are based on movement observation. An interpretation of behaviour is required in order to know how to approach the participant.

The dance movement therapist does not need to search for unusual new ideas to stimulate movement. "A first and basic attitude of the teacher toward the mover is starting (beginning) where the other person is."⁵ We begin by moving from the familiar, where the participant is most secure, gradually extending into and creating awareness of less familiar aspects of himself and the environment.

By making the participant more aware of his/her body and strengthening the ability to control movement, we can help the participant feel more positive about his/her own body image and whole self.

Through the body the participant can express fear, joy, anxiety, anger, suspicion and can release feelings long suppressed. We must not be afraid to rock the boat in order to allow these feelings to surface. We must take the risk of allowing feelings to be released for only when they are made manifest, can we help the participant understand his own process.

The dance movement therapist is both a leader and an active participant in each session. We have to know how to share, how to feel and respond kinesthetically and cognitively, and how to tune into the other's wave-length. Marian Chace sees the therapist's role 'as stimulating

interaction, as an emphatic catalyst in the process of integrating the body and mind."⁶ At the same time, the therapist is a leader in whom "the patient's trust . . . is a major determinant of his level of involvement. He needs constant reassurance of the leader's ability to handle any feelings or interactions which may arise, responding to the patient's immediate needs rather than to her own goals for the group."⁷

Each session must be structured and directed on the basis of a theoretical approach chosen to meet the needs of each patient. The theoretical approach provides a framework in which the therapist views the dynamics of behavior and must allow for enough flexibility to change according to the participant's specific needs.

Whereas creative dance is taught primarily in groups, dance movement therapy can be handled both individually and in groups. "Patients with specific body image problems which are related more to developmental lacks in movement exploration than to deficiencies in interpersonal experiencing, those who need a great deal of support to begin to move because of extreme insecurity and shame related to the body, and those who cannot yet relate to a group, all may need individual movement therapy."⁸

In creative dance, we often use music as a stimulant to creativity and therefore may seek sounds that serve as irritants, exciters. But in dance therapy we want to start with music that is familiar, pleasant and steady in rhythm. Familiar music adds security, and repetition makes for certainty. Letting the participants choose the records used makes them more a part of the session. At some times, however, we may want to use new and different sounds, but only when we are fully knowledgeable about the participants and feel it could be salutary to risk provoking unknown reactions.

In creative dance, we may spend many sessions on one theme, taking time for full development of a single idea. But a dance therapy session frequently contains many themes, and the therapist must be ready to make quick transitions from idea to idea.

In creative dance education, the external form produced is of primary importance, while in creative dance movement therapy we are concerned with movement forms only as a means to an end: the stimulation of internal images, of evolving feelings and of self-knowledge – all leading to changes within the participant's mind and body. In dance therapy, the audience is the self.

The product is not the dance which is being created, but

CREATIVE DANCE EDUCATION IN MOVEMENT THERAPY

By Ada Levitt and Nira Ne'eman

Both authors of this paper have worked for many years as educators, dancers, choreographers and movement therapists within a wide range of movement approaches. We both have found our greatest teachers in our students.

In our work with children and adults, our goals are: heightening of body awareness and creating a positive body image; developing sensitivity to one's own self and to others, while enlarging concepts in non verbal language and giving form to the impulse for self-expression.

Emphasis on such goals gives our classes therapeutic value in the widest sense. But we recognize that in specific therapeutic work, to which we have gravitated in the past 15 years, there are both similarities and differences between creative dance teaching and movement therapy. Since we are both working simultaneously in both forms, we find it more and more important to clarify for ourselves these similarities and differences and to define the process by which each may enhance the other.

Creative Dance

The creative dance teacher serves as a stimulator who initiates new ways of moving and expressing in dance; supplies stimuli in the form of imagery, objects, movement patterns, music, etc., which help develop self expression through improvisation. The ultimate purpose is to embrace an art form, to turn technique into a language, to provide an aesthetic experience.

As we discuss the many aspects of this work, it will be immediately apparent that much of the creative dance teacher's work inevitably includes matter of therapeutic value. However, it will also be seen that these aspects will not function as therapy *per se*, unless they are focused on the specific needs of the participant rather than on an aesthetic goal.

One of the aspects of creative dance is *play* - playing with ideas and objects. Playing helps us externalize our thoughts

and feelings. Exploring new ways of moving must be accompanied by the joy of play if we are to ascend to creativity through improvisation. 'It is in playing and only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self.'¹ "The creative activity of imagination frees man from his bondage to the 'nothing but' and raises him to the status of one who plays. As Schiller says, 'man is completely human only when he is at play'."²

Another aspect of creative dance is developing the use of *imagination*. "Imagination is a very powerful drive in a child's life and so we need to create an atmosphere in which children can give expression to their hidden inner world... We take great care not to suppress the child's inner drive but to create the atmosphere and the right attitude for the child to feel secure, and to present material to him (her) in a way in which he (she) will want to create; not dominating and giving orders, but steadily pointing out new directions in which to work."³

A third aspect is in increasing *awareness* of our body, its different paths and their relationship to each other, and in our body's relationship to others. The body becomes a fine instrument that produces different melodies through the use of weight, strength and shape. Communication through our bodies, using movement, touch and eye contact is enhanced. We become freer and more able to communicate feelings ideas and concepts. We become more open to and aware of each other.

A fourth aspect is provided by *music*, not just as a stimulus to movement, but as an introduction to other cultures. It helps us to join our inner rhythms to those of the outer world. It enlarges our capacity for self-expression. (In creative dance, music is not always required, but some rhythmic impulse is essential.)

In all our work with creative dance, we place heavy emphasis on improvisation as the springboard from which we dive into the creation of an original art product.