

Benefits of Dance/Movement Therapy



Loman, S. (2016). Judith S. Kestenberg's dance/movement therapy legacy: approaches with pregnancy, young, children, and caregivers. *American Journal of Dance Therapy*, 38 (2). Retrieved from:

<http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.memphis.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=d739ba3b-06cf-484a-afd3-4d5aac3b3877%40sessionmgr4009>

Antioch University New England study shows the benefits of Dance/Movement Therapy *approaches with pregnancy, young children, and caregivers*. This study looked at how Dance/Movement therapy can help prepare young families for the birth of their new child while also helping to engage with their child before their born and in early childhood. The purpose of this study was to also help demystify normal developmental patterns for children with parents, such as sleeping issues and tantrums, and helping parents find ways to direct bad behaviors into creative outlets. In the pregnancy phase, women are taught how to understand their baby's movement in the womb which can translate to movements and behaviors after the child is born, vocal and rhythmic outlets for labor, and how to incorporate rhythmic movements throughout formative years to help children development and work through frustrations and aggression that can be detrimental to a child-parent relationship.

Additionally follow-up studies would be beneficial for studying long-term affects of Dance/Movement Therapy with young families, however conclusions from this study show that teen mothers or mothers with substance abuse issues can greatly benefit from fetal movement notation. Incorporating Dance/Movement Therapy with new, young, and even adoptive parents can help to create a bond between parents and child and create healthy and creative ways to work through stressful developmental milestones.

Pierce, L. (2014). The integrative power of dance/movement therapy: implications for the treatment of dissociation and developmental trauma. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 417-415. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com.ezproxy.memphis.edu/science/article/pii/S0197455613001652>

Naropa University published a study on the effects of Dance/Movement Therapy on children experiencing a traumatic loss and in the grieving stage. This study incorporated dance and body movements into a therapeutic relationship with children, which broadly encompasses youth from 3-24 years old, while incorporating the grieving process into creative outlets such as telling their story of grief, memories of a person, or feelings through a dance. Dance/Movement Therapists apply interventions such as story telling through dance and movement, breath work, yoga and relaxation, and creative strategies that focus on the child's emotions while also emphasizing the therapist's awareness of their own emotions and body language.

This study showed that Dance/Movement Therapy is effective at helping to cultivate a safe emotional environment for grieving children, and can help them work through the death of a loved one through creative outlets that help them to understand, process, and work through their loss. Dance/Movement Therapy aims to combine a therapeutic approach to grief with addressing the effects that grief can have on the body.

Betty, A. (2013). Taming tidal waves: a dance/movement therapy approach to supporting emotion regulation in maltreated children. *American Dance Therapy Association*, 35, 39-59. Retrieved from:

<http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.memphis.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=7560f71c-8892-4fca-a839-84cd318fbe9d%40sessionmgr4008>

Naropa University also published a theoretical study on the effects of Dance/Movement Therapy on *emotional regulation with maltreated children, and how dance and movements can be incorporated into treatment models for residential care facilities*. Maltreated children, who may have difficulties expressing emotions and regulating their emotions, can benefit from DMT because of the right-brain based communication

strategies that can come from DMT. This study focused on the need for a safe and trusting therapeutic relationship when working on body movements, and that effective skills in mirroring emotions and body language are needed. As with other emotional regulation interventions, DMT would be used to help children understand their emotions and how to learn strategies for managing and working through them. An extensive literature review shows a need for interventions that combine mind and body in treatment, and helping children to work through the physical sensations that come from emotions.

This theoretical study shows the need for interventions that work with maltreated children, and ones that can be incorporated into a residential facility that combines mind and body for treatments. DMT has the ability to help children who were maltreated learn how to regulate their emotions and work through trauma from their pasts.

Cevasco, A., Kenney, R. & Generally, N. (2005) Comparison of movement-to-music, rhythm activities, and competitive games on depression, stress, anxiety, and anger of females in substance abuse rehabilitation. *Journal of Music Therapy*, 62 (2), 64-80.

University of Georgia published a study on the effectiveness of Dance/Movement Therapy on *decreasing depression, anger, stress and anxiety symptoms in women undergoing substance abuse treatment*. As substance abuse issues increase for women, especially younger teens and childbearing aged women, art and dance are becoming increasingly popular methods in the rehabilitation process to help individuals come to terms with their addiction in a nonverbal medium. The study combined the effects of music therapy with movement and dance, and aimed to look at how movement and music effected treatment in areas such as relaxation, emotional regulation, and acceptance of the disorder/substance abuse. Findings from this study showed that clients who completed the music therapy/movement therapy sessions had decreased reports of anxiety and depression.

This study also found implications that group settings for music and movement therapies can be effective. A group setting allows clients to have socialization, which for individuals with substance abuse can be beneficial because of increased isolation from drugs as well as the effects of depression and anxiety that co-exist. Clients who completed the study also recorded journals where their emotional responses were recorded, and most reported more positive moods following the effects of music and movement in the group therapy sessions.

Koolaem A., Sabzian, M., & Tagvae, D. (2014). Moving toward integration: group dance/movement therapy with children in anger and anxiety. *Middle East Journal of Nursing*, 8 (4). Retrieved from: <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.memphis.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=e0c91b0e-bbfc-40ff-b4ad-0740511a19b2%40sessionmgr102>

Islamic Azad University in Iran published a study on the effects of dance/movement therapy on young children ages 6-7 and how it affected their anxiety and anger symptoms. In the study, children in an experimental group attended 10 DMT sessions and performed different movements related to music and dance which focused on specific skills such as boundary reinforcement, reinforced memories, auditory recognition, and rhythms for relaxation. Children in the study did not have additional behavior issues or mental health diagnoses, and responded to two scales to measure anger and anxiety were are respectfully: ChIA and SCAS. The study found that children who participated in the DMT exercises found a decrease in symptoms of anxiety and anger, while also helping to socialize young children in these group settings. This study, combined with literature from additional studies done on children and DMT, showed that DMT can help improve communication and emotional regulation in children while decreasing negative symptoms of anger and anxiety.

This study also showed that DMT can help to improve bodily awareness for young children while strengthening coping skills, emotional regulation, and even help increase empathy and build healthy relationships with others.