



# **ABOVE BOARD ACTOR PATIENTS**

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## WHAT

We provide standardized patient/actors with a depth and complexity inspired by literature and culturally present fiction. Our services can play an important role in the training of psychotherapists.

## WHO

My name is Abbey Siegworth. I am an actor based in New York City. I've been a professional actor since 2003, with a BFA from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana and MFA from Southern Methodist University. I am a former member of the Brierley Resident Acting Company at the Dallas Theater Center. The actors I work with are similarly trained and have extensive experience in all facets of the industry.

A few months prior to moving to New York, Dr. Dale C. Godby, PhD PLLC invited me to work on an exciting project in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School that he and Dr. Adam Brenner, MD were organizing. They used me as an actor/patient to explore how CBT and Psychodynamic approaches would interview the same patient. Over the course of a number of meetings, I learned to meld the skills of dramatic improvisation with the needs of practicing therapists. To enhance authenticity, we chose to use Sherry from the play TIGERS BE STILL by Kim Rosenstock and have her interviewed 'in character'. I played Sherry for 10 weeks at the Dallas Theater Center so I was very comfortable in her skin. As Sherry, I participated in several practice intake interviews, took the MMPI, the YSQ, StrengthsFinder®, and received detailed feedback about patient-therapist interaction in order to make her as realistic as possible. The entire project including videos of the interviews and test results can be viewed at: <http://www.gapdallas.com/cbtpdt>.

After preparing Sherry, leading scholars Dr. Robin Jarrett PhD (CBT) and Dr. Gerald Melchiode MD (A psychoanalyst and psychodynamic therapist) from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School met her for the first time in front of a live audience and interviewed her as they would any new patient. The interviews were followed by a discussion with a panel and the audience.

# OFFERING

I've come to appreciate the fundamental value in using standardized patients for training students of psychotherapy. In studying the Gloria tapes, and the remake by Beck, Greenberg, and McWilliams, as well as the video casebook Steven Hyler did for the "Pass the Boards", the Symfona tapes by Kernberg, Linehan, and others, and Millon's personality disorder tapes, we have come to see how integrating our expertise as actors with the needs of those beginning to learn interviewing and psychotherapy can be a valuable tool in training. Our actors are committed to authentic in-depth performances of patients in all of their complexity. Above Board Actor Patients is uniquely positioned to provide actors to perform these services.

We use characters from some of the best writers in history (Shakespeare, Stoppard, Checkov, etc) as well as award-winning film writers of today. Freud commented that the poets and philosophers discovered the unconscious before he scientifically studied it. We update them to suit today's societal pressures such as familial relationships and personal stresses. We also curate works from innovative contemporary stage and screen writers who continue to question and challenge the many facets of our humanity. Playwrights and novelists have created worlds and relationships with inherent conflict; this is what makes great stories great. This allows us as actors to hone in on a central issue and creatively flesh out the lives from there.

The actor-patients coming to your offices are carefully considered and deeply skilled at long-form dramatic improvisation. Using our actors can inspire learning and will be a part of helping students become passionate and compassionate about facilitating change through a successful therapeutic alliance.

# MISSION

At Above Board Actor Patients, we provide the highest quality standardized patients as a testing ground for psychotherapy students. We believe in the importance of encouraging unequivocal excellence in the mental health profession. Each of our actors-patients are trained in this particular arena and seek and embrace feedback about how they may improve the service provided.

# REFERENCES

[Dr. Adam Brenner MD](#)

[Dr. Dale Godby PhD PLLC](#)

[Dr. Robin Jarrett PhD](#)

Dr. Gerald Melchiode MD

[Dr. Malcom Bonnheim PhD](#)

[Dr. Kristen M. Ohlenforst PhD](#)

# CHARACTERS

Full character menu also available.

## Hope (Herminone-Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*)

Hope and Leland shared a loving marriage. Out of nowhere, Leland feared his wife was unfaithful, and believed it so deeply that he threatened a vicious divorce. She was devastated, but fought to keep her family together. The stress caused her already high-risk pregnancy to terminate, and she moved away for a year. She moved back home after hearing of her husband's remorse. Is it possible to forgive? How can they move on after losing a child, for which she partially blames him? How do they begin again?

## Evelyn (Neil LeBute, *The Shape of Things*)

Evelyn to Adam: "so, tell me then. go ahead, you feel that way about me, you can tell me what i did wrong. if i did something wrong... i wanna know what you think i did... the exercising? or was it the new clothes that really bugged you? everything i did made you a more desirable person, adam. people began to notice you... take interest in you. i watched them... (beat) look, if you hadn't been here tonight, hadn't heard all this stuff...wouldn't you still be happy? waiting at home for me, hoping this went well, wanting to make love...all that stuff we did was real for you, therefore it was real. it wasn't for me, therefore it wasn't. it's all subjective, adam. everything."

Adam has filed a civil suit for criminal harassment. Evelyn is in a mandated court-appointed psychological evaluation. She is an artist; Adam was simply her medium. Although she has long-finished with the piece, this lawsuit won't allow her to move on. How did things get this far? In what ways can she navigate this treacherous road of self-awareness? How can one truly determine intent?

## Celia (Cordelia-Shakespeare, *King Lear*)

The youngest daughter of a wealthy family, Celia has always been the conservative father's ideal: obedient, patient, and loving. When one family meeting takes a turn, she has the rug pulled out from under her as she is black-balled from the family and shut off from all communication. How can she make her father see the situation more clearly? How can she move forward with a happy family of her own?

## Sherry (Kim Rosenstock, *Tigers Be Still*)

As a burgeoning young woman, with exciting new prospects, Sherry has run up against a wall. Still living at home with her ill mother who is bedroom-ridden, Sherry has taken on the daily maintenance of the home as well as the family's emotional well-being. Her father and sister have "opted out", so it is Sherry who must help her mother navigate the waters of this mysterious illness. She is stuck. With no moving pieces, when will the bow break? How does she launch her life and continue to be the responsible, devoted daughter and sister she wants to be?

## OTHER ROLES (Abbey)

Tartuffe	Mary	Three Day Hangover
Othello	Cassio	Titan Theatre Company
A Midsummer Night's Dream	Hippolyta/Titania	Clarence Brown Theatre
The Doctor's Dilemma	Jennifer Dubedat	American Players Theatre
The Two Gentlemen of Verona	Silvia	American Players Theatre
Much Ado About Nothing	Ursula	American Players Theatre
King Lear	Cordelia	Dallas Theater Center/Trinity Rep
Tigers Be Still	Sherry	Dallas Theater Center
The Tempest	Miranda	Dallas Theater Center
Arsenic & Old Lace	Elaine	Dallas Theater Center
A Christmas Carol	Belle	Dallas Theater Center
Henry IV	Lady Percy	Dallas Theater Center
The Shape of Things	Evelyn	Dallas Theater Center
reasons to be pretty	Carly	Dallas Theater Center
A Midsummer Night's Dream	Helena	Dallas Theater Center
All's Well That Ends Well	Helena	Montana Shakespeare in the Parks
Macbeth	Lady Macduff/Witch	Montana Shakespeare in the Parks
She Stoops to Conquer	Constance	Northlight Theatre
Heartbreak House	Ariadne	Montana Shakespeare in the Parks
Mercy of a Storm	Zanovia	Next Act Theatre
The Winter's Tale	Hermione	Montana Shakespeare in the Parks
The Merchant of Venice	Portia	Montana Shakespeare in the Schools
Cymbeline	Imogen	Montana Shakespeare in the Parks
Boswell's Dreams	Ensemble	Renaissance Theaterworks
Comedy of Errors	Adriana	Milwaukee Shakespeare
Titus Andronicus	Lavinia	Milwaukee Shakespeare
The Tempest	Miranda	Milwaukee Shakespeare

## READING

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