



Unveiling the Connections: Research in Psychodrama and Arts-Based Approaches

by FEPTO Research Committee



3-6 October 2024



Berlin, Germany




Location:

International Psychoanalytic University (IPU)

Alt-Moabit 91 B

10555 Berlin, Germany

See on the [map](#) 

First Day: Thursday 3rd October

16:00 – 16:30: Registration

Opening and Welcoming

16:30 – 17:00: FEPTO RC greetings and welcome sociometry - *Hannes Krall & Inanc Sumbuloglu*

17:00 – 18:00: Introduction to Psychodrama in Germany with Sociometric Plays – *Gabriele Stiegler*

Second Day: Friday 4th October

9:00 – 9:30: **Gathering**

9:30 – 10:00 **Warming-up** by Shoshi Keisari

10:00 – 11:15: **Panel 1 - Psychodrama Interventions and New Research Directions**

- Psychodrama-Oriented Variants of Wise Interventions: Effects on Well-Being and Relationship Quality - *Konrad Schnabel (15min)*
- Psychodrama Research: Milestones in 100 Years - *Michael Wieser (15min)*
- The State Spontaneity Scale - *Gianmarco Biancalani & Hod Orkibi (15min)*
- Caring Stories About the Work with Children and Families: The Use of Intermodal Method in Training and Research - *Marco Ius & Natascia Bobbo (15min)*
- Discussion (15min)

11:15 – 11:30: **Coffee Break**

11:30 – 12:45: **Panel 2 - Making Change with Creative and Arts-Based Approaches**

- The Use of Myths in the Arts Therapies - *Anita Bernāne & Kristīne Mārtinsone (15min)*
- Being and Becoming: Investigating Experiences of Black Creative Arts Therapists - *Andrea-May Oliver (15min)*
- Photographs to Explore the Body in Therapy with Older Women: Insights from Therapist - *Silvia Piol (15min)*
- The Use of Photography in Individual Psychodrama Sessions - *Pilar Gil-Herrera (15min)*
- Discussion (15min)

12:45 – 14:00: **Lunch Break**

14:00 – 16:00: **Skill-Building Session 1: The Unconscious on the Scene: The Oneiric Drawing Encounters Psychodrama** - *Lucia M. Moretto & Gianmarco Biancalani* (including a short break)

16:00 – 16:30: **Closing Reflection**

Third Day: Saturday 5th October

9:00 – 9:30: **Gathering**

9:30 – 10:00: **Warming-up** by *Marco Ius*

10:00 – 11:15: **Panel 3 - The Power of Dramatization and Action Methods**

- Client Experiences of Drama Therapy: A Systematic Review and Qualitative Meta-Analysis - *Tobias Constein (15min)*
- Improvised Playful Interactions with Older Adults: Effects on Cognitive and Social Performance - *Shoshi Keisari (15min)*
- Creating a Stage for Women with Intellectual Disability: a Drama-Based Inclusive Research on Romantic Relationships, Sexuality, and Motherhood - *Anat Geiger Shabtay (15min)*
- Advancing a Safe Learning Climate in Higher Education: An Examination of Sociometry, Action Methods, and Arts-Based Perspectives - *Siri Skar and Ingeborg Flagstad (15min)*
- Discussion (15min)

11:15 – 11:30: **Coffee Break**

11:30 – 12:45: **Panel 4 - Advancements in Psychodrama and Arts Therapies**

- Psychodrama and Third Age: Therapy in People with Dementia - *Andrés Rivero Fernández (15min)*
- Psychodanza: A Bridge Between Art and Neuroscience - *Concha Mercader (15min)*
- Emotions Through Art: A Therapeutic Journey - *Isabel Sánchez González (15min)*
- Theatre Based Research as a collaborative Arts and Practice-Based Research for Drama Therapy - *Anke Schäfer (15min)*
- Discussion (15min)

11:30 – 13:00: **Panel 5 (Parallel session): A Mosaic of Creative Approaches and Methods**

- Identity Theme and its Processing in the Intermediate Space of Bibliotherapy - *Sarit Ifrah (15min)*
- Morenian creative methods and changing values for a sustainable life - *Reijo Kauppila (15min)*
- Psychodrama and Art-Based Approaches: Poetry in the Service of Gender Empathy - *Edit Szathmári and Veronika Ferencz (15min)*
- Introduction to Thematic Analysis in Psychodrama Research - *Peter Haworth (15min)*
- Mirrors and Reflections in Psychodrama and Art - *Camellia Hancheva (15min)*
- Discussion (15min)

13:00 – 14:00: **Lunch Break**

14:00 – 16:00: **Skill-Building Session 2: “Arts for the Blues,” a Creative Psychotherapy for Depression Evidence Base and Experiential Workshop** - *Joanna Omylinska – Thurston, Scott Thurston, Claire Quigley, & Vicky Karkou* (including a short break)

16:00 – 16:45: **Reflective Closure and Looking Ahead for the Next Meeting**

Fourth Day: Sunday 6th October

Excursion:

A day together in Berlin!



Abstracts

First Day: Thursday 3rd October



Johannes Krall, ao. Univ.-Prof. Dr., Alpen-Adria-University of Klagenfurt, Educational Sciences and Research; psychologist, counsellor, psychotherapist, supervisor; trainer for supervision at the Austrian Society of Group Dynamics and Group Therapy and lecturer for psychodrama at the University of Innsbruck; director of the psychodrama training program at the Sigmund Freud Private University; former president of FEPTO and current chair of the FEPTO Research Committee. Recipient of an Excellence Award granted by FEPTO. Key activities: Research in psychodrama training, supervision, and psychodrama practice. Several publications about psychodrama, supervision, violence, and trauma of children and youth.

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İnanç Sümbüloğlu, PhD Candidate in medical education, clinical psychologist, psychodramatist, and dance therapist. She is also a Trainer in the Federation of Dr. Abdulkadir Ozbek Psychodrama Associations and the President of the Play Therapy Association, and Vice-President of the Community Mental Health Association in Turkey. She works with private practices and is a guest faculty member at Istanbul Medical Faculty. She is a clinical supervisor at İstanbul Bilgi University. İnanç's main interest is to adapt therapeutic tools to developing community mental health. She uses psychodrama and group therapy in organization, education, and civil society projects. She advocates mental health issues in all policies.



Gabriele Stiegler - **Psychodrama in Germany**

Founder and managing director of the [Psychodrama Forum Berlin](#). She is a graduate psychologist and a supervisor with training in coaching, psychodrama, conversational psychotherapy, and NLP.

Second Day: Friday 4th October

Panel 1 - Psychodrama Interventions and New Research Directions

Psychodrama-Oriented Variants of Wise Interventions: Effects on Well-Being and Relationship Quality



Prof. Dr. Konrad Schnabel

International Psychoanalytic University Berlin, Germany

Wise interventions focus on improving psychological functioning and well-being by the use of efficient self-reinforcing processes that help to overcome dysfunctional reactions (Walton & Crum, 2021). In two studies, we explore variants of wise interventions that are directly linked to action-oriented behaviors and that are based on psychodrama theory and practice. Study 1 uses a psychodramatic variant of established self-affirmation interventions with refugees and volunteers who work with refugees. Study 2 employs a newly developed best possible relationship intervention in order to explore how acting out a short scene as an ideal couple impacts self-reported and observer-judged measures of relationship quality in romantic couples.

The discussion focuses on how wise intervention techniques that were developed in social psychology may complement psychodramatic intervention approaches.



Psychodrama Research: Milestones in 100 years

Prof. Dr. Michael Wieser

Alpen-Adria-University Klagenfurt, Austria

Let us look into research during J. L. Moreno's lifetime and beyond. Along with psychodrama, we must include sociometry, sociodrama, and role-play. Action, (biblio-) drama, experiential, (expressive) art, group, and theatre therapies subsume psychodrama. As there are different kinds of research, we have to honor the action research approach. This also leads us to the non-clinical field.

The State Spontaneity Scale for Research and Practice



Gianmarco Biancalani & Prof. Hod Orkibi
University of Haifa, Israel

Spontaneity is a state of readiness that drives an individual toward an appropriate response to a new situation or a novel response to an old situation (Moreno, 1953). In psychodrama, spontaneity and creativity are crucial change factors. However, existing spontaneity measures often assess emotional states like those measured by standard emotion scales, questioning their content validity. We developed the State Spontaneity Scale (SSS) through a three-phase process to address this. In Phase 1, we distributed an online survey to 107 psychodrama trainers, practitioners, and researchers worldwide, asking for their definitions of spontaneity in psychodrama. We categorized 841 responses into 10 themes. In Phase 2, 16 expert trainers reviewed

these themes, identifying 26 items based on consensus and incorporating eight additional items and five adapted from existing scales. This process resulted in a 39-item SSS. In Phase 3, the SSS was administered online, alongside the State Anxiety Scale (Spielberger et al., 1983) and the Creative Adaptability Scale (Orkibi, 2021), to psychodrama students, trainers, practitioners, and researchers for psychometric evaluation. The findings detailing the resulting 12-item SSS's psychometric properties are presented, with recommendations for future research.

Caring Stories About the Work with Children and Families: The Use of Intermodal Method in Training and Research



*Prof. Dr. Marco Ius & Prof. Dr. Natascia Bobbo
University of Trieste / University of Padua, Italy*

The paper discusses a training and research project on professional well-being for 27 leaders of services working with vulnerable families in the Emilia-Romagna region in Italy, conducted from 2018 to 2020. This project utilized a quanti-qualitative research approach and a participative and transformative perspective in training. The focus is on the first group activity, which served as an introduction to collecting and reflecting on memories of well-being and malaise in participants' professional trajectories. Methodologically, the activity integrated narrative, artistic-symbolic, and sociodramatic Morenian techniques with the aim of: a) Allowing each participant to document the essential features of a professional memory of well-being and malaise,

performing an autobiographical exercise consistent with the project's theoretical framework. b) Enabling the group and trainers to understand which stories participants identify as experiences of well-being or malaise, highlighting people, contexts, actions, emotions, struggles, successes, satisfactions, and frustrations in the various professional trajectories collected. c) Promoting a listening context to uncover the "knowledge of feelings" and reflect on elements related to vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue/satisfaction, and burnout, while gathering "good stories" to promote "vicarious resilience." d) Facilitating the co-creation of a common story in which participants recognize themselves as a group and from which they can draw inspiration for the continuation of the journey. After presenting the context, the project's goal, and the participants, the theoretical and methodological framework and the activity's development will be outlined. Qualitative data collected will be shown to reflect on and discuss both the content (what emerged from the stories and the emotions experienced by the professionals) and the method (how and why the activity was proposed in such a way and the group work process).

Panel 2 - Making Change with Creative and Arts-Based Approaches

The Use of Myths in the Arts Therapies



*Anita Bernāne & Prof. Dr. Psych. Kristīne Mārtinsonē,
Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Arts therapies integrate the creative process, psychological theories, and human experience (American Art Therapy Association, 2022; Mārtinsonē and Duhovska, 2023). Myths help form connections with past experiences (Powell, 2012). The symbolic language of myth can aid in understanding difficulties and finding solutions (Podina, 2023). Development trends in arts therapies increasingly emphasize culturally attuned therapy (Corin, 2023). From this perspective, myths

are used to discover and change personal myths (Smartt, 2022). Research on the use of myths in arts therapies confirms their therapeutic value. In the first stage of research, articles from arts therapies journals (n=31) were analyzed, including theoretical approaches to understand how myths can promote therapeutic change. Based on these results and recommendations from expert art therapists (n=3), semi-structured interviews with Latvian art therapists (n=11) were conducted, creating three thematic parts: Experience, Therapeutic Process, and Methods/Techniques. Art therapists often emphasized mythic elements in the "Experience" theme. The "Therapeutic Process" theme reflects on theoretical concepts, highlighting that myths facilitate deep therapeutic processes while involving cultural contexts. Understanding the applied methods/techniques is also crucial for using myths in arts therapies. The results reflect art therapists' experiences with myths, emphasizing cultural

identity, which influences how a person sees the world (Koç & Kafa, 2019) and can be a resource for overcoming individual difficulties.

Being and Becoming: Investigating Experiences of Black Creative Arts Therapists



*Andrea-May Oliver
Edgehill University, UK*

In this lecture, I will discuss my study, which investigates the experiences of Black British creative arts therapists of African or Caribbean descent, focusing on their unique perspectives and experiences in their professional training and practice within the United Kingdom. Research on Black mental health in creative arts therapies has been limited, despite the growing recognition that Black populations and other ethnic minorities require culturally appropriate therapeutic interventions in a predominantly white industry. This study aims to uncover the challenges faced by this population, explore how these challenges can be overcome, identify opportunities in the industry, and inform future practice. A qualitative research approach is being adopted, as it is well-suited for understanding the nuances involved in capturing and analyzing the participants' experiences. A phenomenological methodology will provide the framework for understanding the lived experiences of the participants and their interpretations of their professional

journeys. Semi-structured interviews will be used to gather the majority of the research data, which will be transcribed and analyzed through thematic analysis. Further data will be generated by the researcher and the participants in the form of arts-based data and a video journal kept by the researcher. As part of the population of interest, the researcher will undertake a heuristic inquiry, which will support a dramatic performance to document her journey through the study and provide a novel way of disseminating the results. This study aims to provide insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by Black creative arts therapists in the UK and their clients and will explore ways to improve the industry to support Black mental health in the future.

Photographs to Explore the Body in Therapy with Older Women: Insights From Therapist



*Silvia Piol
University of Haifa, Israel*

Gendered ageism relates to the intersection of ageism and gender bias, which may account for the differences in the ageism experienced by women and men. As contemporary Western societies expect women to keep fit, young, and healthy, oppressive gendered ageist stereotypes can impact on how older women perceive their embodied selves. Thus, interventions tailored to women's needs are crucial for maintaining a positive identity amidst the dominant aging discourse. The main purpose of this qualitative research project is to create an arts-based intervention specifically adapted to the psychosocial needs of community-dwelling older Italian women. This intervention will focus on the embodied self-representations of older women from a life-course perspective, while also integrating narrative and phototherapy techniques. This abstract centers on the pre-intervention phase

of this research project, which took a pragmatic approach. The purpose of this phase is to probe the core processes and phototherapy techniques that therapists use with middle-aged and older women to address the body in therapy. The results of this phase will help develop a protocol for an arts-based intervention with older Italian women that will be implemented between 2024 and 2025 (i.e., the intervention phase). In the pre-intervention phase, the authors interviewed ten international therapists (i.e., creative arts therapists, psychotherapists, psychologists, and social workers) who work with middle-aged and older women through photography. The data were analyzed through reflexive thematic analysis. Four themes were generated: (a) the relationship between the photographed body and the sense of self and identity, (b) the photographed body as a platform for loss processing, (c) photographs as a means to explore the issue of illness, (d) the body of the older woman client encounters the body of the therapist. The findings suggest that using phototherapy techniques can provide valuable insights into therapy sessions with older women that focus on their embodied self-representation.

The Use of Photography in Individual Psychodrama Sessions



Pilar Gil-Herrera
Sychodrama, Sociodrama
and Psychodance School
by Concha Mercader, Spain

The practice of individual psychodrama adheres to the same method and theory conceptualized by Moreno and Rojas Bermúdez. The one-to-one session maintains the three phases, but challenges arise due to the single role player. The main limitations include the absence of the group's healing ability and an auxiliary ego to enact necessary roles. Consequently, all interventions must be made by the director (psychodrama therapist), intensifying the use of their emotional material. Photography in individual psychodrama mitigates the therapist's subjectivity, as the only material used is that of the protagonist: they, and their content, are the sole subjects photographed. They adopt postures and gestures to express emotions, abstract feelings, ways of bonding, or internal struggles. When the protagonist observes the picture, becoming their own audience, the outcome is a reflective self-portrait. The image often contrasts with their mental picture, challenging their self-perception and enhancing awareness of layers usually revealed in group sessions. I will share examples of portraits from my clinical practice during the presentation to further explore this topic.

Skill-Building Session 1

The Unconscious on the Scene: The Oneiric Drawing Encounters Psychodrama



Lucia Maria Moretto &
School of Psychodrama, Milan, Italy



Gianmarco Biancalani
University of Haifa, Israel

Oneiric drawing is a graphic-expressive method inspired by surrealist art, which activates creativity and spontaneity and brings out symbols belonging to the world of the unconscious. These symbols convey deep internal meanings, including personal truths, internal conflicts, resources, and facets that need balance within the individual's personality and history. This Skill-Building Session aims to raise awareness of the theoretical foundations of oneiric drawing and its application in the psychodramatic scene through a practical demonstration. The oneiric drawing can be effectively utilized

in an intermodal approach with psychodrama, as the images in the drawing facilitate the elicitation of unconscious contents that may remain undiscovered otherwise. Drawing brings latent knowledge to the surface, providing symbolic expression to life situations and enabling the discovery of creative solutions, infusing energy, and fostering hope for promoting change. Engaging with the symbolic content and revealing meanings through psychodramatic representation activates insights and enhances self-awareness. The oneiric drawing proves helpful for health professionals, offering a snapshot of the client's internal world during diagnostic phases and guiding the therapeutic journey. Moreover, during moments of stagnation, it can be used by professionals as a valuable "intermediary object" in the therapeutic process, promoting the client's clarity and resource recognition. Finally, it is a creative method for professionals in addressing educational issues, fostering divergent thinking, and stimulating individual and collective creativity in group co-creation processes.

Panel 3 - The Power of Dramatization and Action Methods

Client Experiences of Drama Therapy: A Systematic Review and Qualitative Meta-Analysis



*Tobias Constein
Institut für Forschung und Entwicklung
in den Künstlerischen Therapien,
HfWU Nürtingen – Geislingen, Germany*

Research within the arts therapies is growing, responding to calls for a substantial evidence base to support their practice and advocate for broader implementation. Specifically, mounting evidence from various studies indicates its effectiveness in drama therapy. Consequently, efforts within the research community have shifted from questioning if drama therapy is effective to understanding how it is effective. A growing momentum aims to identify mechanisms of change in drama therapy specifically and in arts therapies in general. However, these efforts have been limited in scope, often focusing more on therapists' observations than on processes within the client. Therefore, a comprehensive investigation into arts therapies processes that center the clients' perspectives is needed. This presentation will discuss the results of an analysis that aggregated, synthesized, and

presented clients' reports on their experiences to identify aspects and processes of drama therapy that clients perceive as supportive or obstructive in achieving their therapeutic goals. Following the procedures of a qualitative meta-analysis, this study sought to (1) identify qualitative studies reporting client experiences of drama therapy, (2) synthesize reports across studies, (3) present common supportive and obstructive aspects of drama therapy, and (4) encourage further research centering on clients' experiences. Ultimately, this presentation aims to stimulate discussion on how we center our clients and their experiences within our practice and research. It seeks to contribute to existing theories of change in drama therapy, psychodrama, and arts therapies. Moreover, it highlights how we can use qualitative research within our fields in a more systematic and generalizable fashion.

Improvised Playful Interactions with Older Adults: Effects on Cognitive and Social Performance



*Prof. Dr. Shoshi Keisari
University of Haifa, Israel*

Improvised spontaneous dramatic interactions are at the core of psychodrama and drama therapy interventions. Dramatic improvisation relies on embodied interaction, where participants spontaneously engage without predefined plans. Through continuous exchange and co-creation, individuals allocate attention, interpret events, and make decisions in real-time. Improvisation offers a unique avenue for cultivating curiosity, connection, and tolerance for uncertainty in an active, embodied manner. This presentation delves into recent research investigating the effects of brief, improvised interactions on older adults' cognitive and social functioning. Thus, 78 participants, aged 65–100, engaged in two 20-minute sessions: dramatic improvisation and a control activity involving personal conversation and physical activity. Pre- and post-assessments gauged cognitive, social, and mood outcomes. Results reveal a significant interaction effect, with improvised play significantly enhancing performance in cognitive

tasks such as forward and backward digit span and word fluency. Moreover, participants reported increased perceived partner responsiveness, elevated mood, and subjective arousal compared to the control activity. A multilinear regression analysis explored the impact of individual differences, including personality traits, attachment styles, social anxiety, and the sense of flow, on the observed outcomes. The study illuminates the transformative potential of dramatic improvisation for older adults while also investigating how individual traits shape playful interactions. Such insights hold practical implications for designing cost-effective, accessible interventions to bolster older populations' cognitive, social, and psychological well-being.

Creating a Stage for Women with Intellectual Disability: A Drama-Based Inclusive Research on Romantic Relationships, Sexuality and Motherhood



Anat Geiger Shabtay
University of Haifa, Israel

Women with intellectual disability (ID) are generally marginalized, experiencing a lack of autonomy and power in many areas of their lives, including the intimate spheres of romantic relationships, sexuality, and motherhood. However, research on the experiences of people with ID usually neglects the importance of gendered aspects in the lives of women with ID.

To address this gap, the current ongoing drama-based research project aims to explore: 1) How do women with ID experience romantic relationships, sexuality, and motherhood? 2) What other issues are significant to their experience as women? 3) How do women with ID use the dramatic medium to express themselves? Dramatic expression is the main data source in this research project, as it offers women with ID an engaging tool, diverse means of expression, and an opportunity to make their voices heard through performance. The researchers work with a group of 10 women with an ID that explores their experiences on sexuality, romantic relationships, and motherhood through a year-long drama therapy group and presents their findings through performance, following the model of Ethnodramatherapy (EDT). Other data includes interviews with the participants and the researcher's reflective journal. The study was conducted with Dr. Rinat Feniger-Shaal and Dr. Carmit-Noa Shpigelman.

Advancing a Safe Learning Climate in Higher Education: An Examination of Sociometry, Action Methods and Arts-Based Perspectives



Siri Skar & Dr. Ingeborg Flagstad
Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences (HiNN)



The purpose of this presentation is to explore the integration of sociometry and action methods in higher education to foster a safe learning climate, which is fundamental for motivation, knowledge acquisition, and well-being. Drawing on student evaluations, we examine how these techniques can establish new social connections, promote self-disclosure, trust, and cohesion, and facilitate a safe learning environment. Students reported that action methods enhanced safety and facilitated new relationships. Additionally, they experienced increased group cohesiveness and positive expectations for future events. While generally positive, some students noted challenges related to the relevance of sociometric

exercises and the potential for participation to be exhausting. This presentation aims to deepen our understanding and inspire the application of these methods in university settings. We will also draw on material from a chapter we co-authored in an upcoming book on applying psychodrama in educational contexts as we conclude. The potential contributions of art subjects, arts-based approaches, terminology, and theoretical concepts from related fields to understanding and disseminating sociometric and Morenian action methods will be highlighted.

Panel 4 - Advancements in Psychodrama and Arts Therapies

Psychodrama and Third Age: Therapy in People with Dementia



*Andrés Rivero Fernández
Sychodrama, Sociodrama
and Psychodance School
by Concha Mercader, Spain*

The human nervous system operates through different mechanisms. One involves consciousness, encompassing rational and linguistic reasoning, which is primarily mediated by the cerebral cortex. The other operates unconsciously, involving emotions and bodily functions, and is associated with subcortical brain regions. These two mechanisms are somewhat independent and self-directed, with their physiological correlates interconnecting to form the complete human experience, encompassing sensory, motor, emotional, and memory processes. Subcortical circuits, however, retain a degree of autonomy and can function independently without involving the conscious cortical areas. This independence becomes evident in patients with cortical damage, such as those with Alzheimer's disease. In such cases, impairments in conscious and voluntary perception, motor skills, emotional responses, and deliberate memory highlight the reliance on subcortical mechanisms. The workshop will explain the brain circuits involved in these dual processes, discuss the relevant psychodramatic techniques, and address strategies for managing situations where organic brain damage is present.

Psychodanza: A Bridge Between Art and Neuroscience



*Concha Mercader
Sychodrama, Sociodrama
and Psychodance School
by Concha Mercader, Spain*

Psychodanza is a technique within the Rojas-Bermúdez psychodrama model structured in terms of its implementation. It is organized around using body movement and music as communication tools (Rojas Bermúdez, 1997). By eschewing verbal communication, participants are encouraged to communicate through their bodies, increasing their awareness and activating bodily communication codes relevant to early bonding stages (0 to 2 years) between primary attachment figures and infants (as outlined in Rojas Bermúdez's "external and internal genetically programmed structures" and "ego core theory"). Psychodance integrates sensations, thoughts, and images through music and movement, thereby enhancing both practical and emotional experiences. On the one hand, psychodanza incorporates music, which research suggests aids in emotion regulation. Emotions triggered by music can influence activity in cortical and subcortical systems, mediated by cortical-subcortical networks crucial for generating and regulating

emotions (Jiancheng Hou et al., 2017). On the other hand, studies on professional dancers' brains indicate increased connectivity among distant brain regions. Additionally, dance stimulates bottom-up activation, beginning in subcortical areas (where music activates structures like the auditory and limbic systems, including the amygdala and nucleus accumbens, precuneus, insula, and vermis) and culminating in the parietal region where movements are integrated and coordinated. In summary, by incorporating body movement, space, and music, psychodanza activates nearly the entire brain, promoting neuroplasticity.

Emotions Through Art: A Therapeutic Journey



*Isabel Sánchez González
Sychodrama, Sociodrama
and Psychodance School
by Concha Mercader, Spain*

Presentation of a case study on an intervention for sexual abuse that integrates basic psychodramatic techniques with plastic and sensory elements such as clay, masks, painting, and music. We highlight the case of a patient who, as a professional musician, utilizes her instrument as an alternative means of expression to words. The incorporation of clay, masks, painting, and music enables the patient to explore her emotions deeply and symbolically. These elements provide alternative avenues of expression that complement and enrich verbal therapy. We underscore the pivotal role of music in the therapeutic process, allowing the patient to communicate and connect with her emotions more directly through her musical instrument. Music serves as a potent and meaningful channel of expression, facilitating smoother and more authentic communication.

Theatre Based Research as a collaborative Arts and Practice-Based Research for Drama Therapy



*Anke Schäfer, Germany
Managing director
Research Institute for
Theatre Therapy (R-ITT)*

I assume that theatre-based research, as a form of arts-based research, empowers drama therapists to realize collaborative, practice-based research with their clients that allows them to gain deeper insights into therapy processes and effects. Theatre Research in therapy can use existing drama therapy methods and drama therapy assessment methods as their own genuine research methodology. It can refer to a performative paradigm that takes aspects of cultural differences and power relations as well as ethical questions regarding social justice into account. Accordingly, can we define the notion of evidence within theatre-based research as an artistic notion of evidence, in which the measurable articulates itself within the process of creation and the embodied experiences?

Panel 5 (Parallel session) - A Mosaic of Creative Approaches and Methods

Identity Theme and its Processing in the Intermediate Space of Bibliotherapy



*Sarit Ifrah
Bar-Ilan University, Israel*

Bibliotherapy, a branch of art therapy, emphasizes reading and writing processes in therapy, facilitating indirect, mediated contact between the patient and literary texts that include figures, images, and symbols. These texts provide a foundational basis for fostering identification with literary themes, characters, or objections. For children, who often do not express emotions independently, lack mature self-awareness, and tend to avoid complex or charged topics in conversation (Livnat & Baram-Eshel, 2014), identifying with literary characters serves as a means to tap into unconscious contents and bring them to the forefront, either directly or indirectly, during therapy sessions. In this lecture, I will discuss two fundamental concepts in bibliotherapy. The first is the identity theme (Holland, 1975), a literary concept introduced by critic Norman Holland. He proposed that when readers engage with a literary work, they extract perceived central themes and identify one overarching theme around which others are organized. This process allows readers to uncover the underlying essence of the work, integrating it into their personal narrative and expressing their identity theme. The second concept is the transitional space (Winnicott, 2009),

introduced by British psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott. This term describes a metaphorical space of transitional

phenomena and objects, where elements from an individual's inner and external worlds coexist harmoniously, providing a pause without the pressure of immediate decisions (Winnicott, 2009). Berman (2003) further elaborated that the space created between the reader and the text constitutes a transitional space, influenced by both the text and the reader as the interpreting subject. It is within this transitional space that a unique interaction unfolds between the reader and the literary work. I will illustrate these concepts through a vignette of bibliotherapy involving a 4-year-old on the autistic spectrum.

Morenian creative methods and changing values for a sustainable life



*Reijo Kauppila
Helsinki Psychodrama Institute,
Finland*

Climate change and planetary boundaries are hot topics in present media and discussions. Morenian creative methods and processes—including psycho- and sociodrama, sociometry, and axiodrama—are based on a holistic humanistic perspective of individuals, groups, communities, and society. The professional use of these methods and processes offers transformational openings for the learning of individuals and groups. Together with Marjut Partanen-Hertell, we offer workshops (2 hours to 2 days) on climate change and planetary boundaries since 6-7 years. We are both psychodrama trainers TEP. In a workshop, we combine the latest scientific knowledge based on research on planetary boundaries (The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)) with an experiential, creative process. We use psycho-social education during the workshop, too, by presenting research-based models of adult learning and

development process and the change of values and belief systems. Our goals are 1) to raise awareness of the current planetary situation by researched facts, 2) to strengthen the motivation and volition of participants to consciously choose acts, activities, and social networks, and 3) to activate the agency of participants to take concrete actions – in everyday situations for more sustainable life on the planet. During the years, we have emphasized the exploration of values, beliefs, and belief systems in the workshops by using the axiomatic process in connection with psycho- and sociodrama. Even in shorter workshops, transformational experiences can be co-created in a Morenian process. My interests are especially: (1) What kind of theoretical basis of the methodology can be formed for the creative process we are using in our workshops? (2) How to co-create a shared sur-plus reality in a workshop that forms both locus and status nascendi for transformational experiences?

Psychodrama and Art-Based Approaches - Poetry in the Service of Gender Empathy



*Edít Szathmári & Veronika Ferencz
ELTE Eötvös Loránd University,
Institute of Psychology, Budapest, Hungary*

Gender identity is a central theme in most adult psychodrama groups. It appears in verbal check-in stories, relationship-themed game offers, and group members' free interactions. Nowadays, it is essential to include the social context regarding gender, often highlighting the defining and limiting role of a given country's culture at a given time. Similarly, some forms of poetry frequently appear in warm-up methodologies, such as shaping important keywords into poems, using the conciseness of haiku to form a theme, or expressing a common experience in smaller groups. In our presentation, we highlight the intersection of these two phenomena through a play in our previous group. The location is Hungary, with its Eastern European traditions and gender-restrictive policy. The misunderstanding between the

sexes that emerged as the group's theme, the resulting tension, and the helplessness experienced in the face of the broader social environment led us to the play, in which the sexes had to switch roles. Both groups were tasked with writing a poem about the everyday challenges and lifelong experiences of that gender and performing it on stage. We will also discuss the enormous empathetic impact on the group members and the leaders.

An Introduction to the Use of Thematic Analysis in Psychodrama Research



Peter Haworth, UK

In this workshop, participants will hear about the use of Thematic Analysis as a qualitative research methodology, which is 'relatively' easy to learn to use. Participants will be encouraged to think of a research question or topic they would like to explore, and the group will be taken through the process of conducting research using thematic analysis. Workshop leader is Peter Haworth, from Oxford, UK. He is registered as a senior trainer with the British Psychodrama Association, and he is a director of the Oxford School of Psychodrama and Integrative Psychotherapy. In 2015 he completed a research-based dissertation for an MSc in Psychodrama Psychotherapy in collaboration with the University of Worcester. He used thematic analysis in his research.

Mirrors and Reflections in Psychodrama and Art



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Mirrors and reflections have long fascinated human beings. Visual arts and psychological theories alike depict mirrors as powerful symbols, metaphors, and tools that create illusions and reveal more profound truths about reality and self-awareness. This presentation explores the multifaceted roles of mirrors and reflections in art, psychodrama, and psychoanalytic developmental theories. It integrates theoretical frameworks with empirical research, highlighting psychodrama, psychoanalysis, cognitive psychology, and developmental neuroscience contributions. The central focus is on the mirror technique in psychodrama, recognized as a potent therapeutic tool designed to foster self-awareness, insight, and personal growth. By reflecting a protagonist's behavior and emotions back to them, this technique

offers a unique perspective on their actions, facilitating deeper understanding. Jacob Moreno's concepts of the First, Second, and Third Universes, combined with the mirroring technique, provide a robust research and therapeutic framework. They enable individuals to explore and integrate their external behaviors, internal experiences, and awareness of transgenerational and relational phenomena, promoting a holistic approach, self-discovery, and social connectedness in psychodrama. Critical analyses of potential contraindications of the mirror technique are presented in light of recent developments in psychoanalysis, neuroscience, and mentalization theory. This analysis underscores that mirrors and reflections serve as potent metaphors and tools in both art and psychotherapy, offering profound insights into the human condition and the nature of social reality.

Skill-Building Session 2

“Arts for the Blues” - a Creative Psychotherapy for Depression: Evidence Base and Experiential Workshop



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According to the World Health Organization (2021), depression affects over 280 million people worldwide. In the UK, it is one of the main mental health problems, affecting 21% of adults (Office for National Statistics, 2022). Following the recommendations of the Medical Research Council (Skivington et al., 2021), we have developed a manualized creative psychotherapy for depression called "Arts for the Blues." This approach capitalizes on best practices from evidence-based therapies for depression. The model (Omylinska-Thurston et al., 2020) synthesizes evidence, incorporates public feedback, insights from National Health Service (NHS) Talking Therapies staff and users (Karkou et al., 2022), and creative input (Thurston et al., 2022). We have implemented the intervention with a group of adults at the mental health charity MIND (Omylinska-Thurston et al., in preparation), who found it helpful. Currently, we are implementing the model with adults, children, and healthcare staff in NHS and charity settings to build an evidence base for this approach. During the conference, we will briefly present the model, discuss its evidence base, and focus on the experiential component to enhance clinical skills related to this approach.