

Healing Trauma with Cultural and Creative Expression

American Psychological Association
Washington, DC
Aug. 4, 2017

Ilene A. Serlin, Ph.D, BC-DMT
iserlin@union-street-health-associates.com

Lillian Comas-Diaz, PhD
lilliancomasdiaz@gmail.com

Thema Bryant-Davis, PhD
tbryant@Pepperdine.edu

Ani Kalayjian, PhD
drkalayjian@meaningfulworld.com

Nadine J Kaslow, PhD
NKASLOW@emory.edu

Copyright Ilene Serlin 8/17

Dance Therapy to Work with Syrian Refugees in Jordan

- Dance Therapy:
 - Founded in 1966 as masters level creative arts therapy
 - Focus on nonverbal communication and expressive movement
 - Incorporate cultural forms (belly dance, debka dance, Hakka, Syrian music)

Copyright Ilene Serlin 8/17

What is Dance/Movement Therapy?

- Dance/Movement Therapy (DMT) is defined as the psychotherapeutic use of movement to further the emotional, cognitive, physical and social integration of the individual.
- Dance/movement therapy is focused on movement behavior as it emerges in the therapeutic relationship.
- Body movement, as the core component of dance, simultaneously provides the means of assessment and the mode of intervention for dance/movement therapy.
- Adta.org

Copyright Ilene Serlin 8/17

Dance/Movement Therapy: Clinical Application for Trauma

- Trauma is in the body: Speechless Terror—Need for nonverbal, symbolic approaches
- Trauma is a crisis of mortality, meaning and identity: Need for existential perspectives.
- Trauma is “stuckness” and “numbness”, inability to play: Need for creative, imaginal, movement, and emotional approaches
- Trauma is about fragmentation: Need for connection, integration, transitions

Copyright Ilene Serlin 8/17

Dance Movement Therapy and Trauma: a Posttraumatic Growth Approach

- Working with the body as well as the mind
- Build resilience and posttraumatic growth
- Reduce compassion fatigue
- Building strength, reducing anxiety and fear
- Increase connection to self, other, and environment

Copyright Ilene Serlin 8/17

Method: KinAesthetic Imagining

- Individual
- Couples
- Family
- Group
- Community
- Children
- Adults
- Senior

Copyright Ilene Serlin 8/17

Group Work

- 1) Warm Up
 - Create safe space—use of circle, outside/inside, boundaries
 - Privacy, wholeness, confidentiality, trust-building
 - Introductions
 - Body part warm-up, grounding, parts/integration
 - Picking up cues, empower individuals within group setting

Copyright Ilene Serlin 8/17

2) Development of the Theme

- Listening, mirroring, kinesthetic empathy
- Amplify theme, energy and emotion
- Individual stories
- Working Through

Copyright Ilene Serlin 8/17

- 3) Reflection

- Cool down
- Internalize
- Observe self
- Discovering Meaning

-

Copyright Ilene Serlin 8/17

Working with Individuals

- Start with strengths and structure
- Use group for support
- Discover own resources
- Moving from mirroring to authentic dialogue
- Use of creativity and improvisation

Copyright Ilene Serlin 8/17

Therapeutic Outcomes

- Heal body/mind split from dehumanizing terror
- Creative means for containing, discharging and rechanneling aggression
- Strengthen individual and community resilience and connections
- Bridge multicultural symbolic forms
- Symbolize traumatic losses and hopes for the future
-

Trauma Training in Jordan



Copyright Ilene Serlin 8/17

Women's Support Group

- Share experiences
- Develop support and strength
- Express emotions in safe space
- Experience joy and hope



Copyright Ilene Serlin 8/17

Staff training



Copyright Ilene Serlin 8/17

Opening and Closing Ceremonies

- Opening Ceremony with Haka
- Closing Ceremony with Debka



Copy



Copyright Ilene Serlin 8/17

Movement Choir and Spiral Dance

- Movement Choir



Copyright Ilene Serlin 8/17