

BLOG

Hi and welcome to my brand new blog! At last I have got around to setting it up. In the coming weeks I will be writing about and discussing Dance Movement Therapy/Movement Psychotherapy (DMP) and its place in the world today.

In this first post you'll learn:

- What Dance Movement Psychotherapy/Therapy actually is
- My journey from dancer and gymnast to mental health nursing and then therapy
- Mindfulness, Meditation and Movement - how they can help YOU to start living better - today!

So, the first question is what is Dance Movement Psychotherapy/Therapy?

In layman's terms, it's a creative way of using dance and movement to help people deal with emotional, psychological and physical issues.

The Association for Dance Movement Psychotherapy (ADMP) www.admt.co.uk gives a definition, stating that:

"Dance Movement Psychotherapy (DMP) recognises body movement as an implicit and expressive instrument of communication and expression. DMP is a relational process in which client/s and therapist engage in an empathic creative process using body movement and dance to assist integration of emotional, cognitive, physical, social and spiritual aspects of self."

However a definition alone cannot tell you how each individual Dance Movement Psychotherapist (DMP) works. There are as many approaches to it as there are clients and much has been written, either in scholarly articles, websites or indeed blogs.

MY JOURNEY

My intention is to make Dance and Movement and Therapy more accessible to people in all walks of life.

So how did I get involved? Maybe it is useful to break it down;

Dance - well Dance is universal and it is something I have always loved. It is in my blood. Over the years I have enjoyed dancing for fun, learning to dance, dancing Gabrielle Roth's 5 Rhythms, reading about dance, attending dance events and discovering more about the medium of dance as art and as therapy.

Movement - Movement is interchangeable with dance, I am happiest when I am moving whether that is through my regular Yoga practice or in my earlier years as a budding gymnast, or somatically when I am meditating - noticing the movement of my breath and the interaction with the body, noticing how it moves my chest and abdomen, bringing awareness to the diaphragm. Noticing how my heart beats and how it slows down to a steady beat.

Psychotherapy/Therapy - I have a long held fascination for how the psyche works. I care about humanity and how we as a race function within our many different cultures and how we construct society. I pondered (and walked) many different paths before deciding on a career in psychiatry.

Commented [HM1]: I would take this out. Even though it's truthful, it's a subtle hint of negativity. You could word the sentiment more positively like 'I'm new to blogging, and excited to bring you what I hope will be a useful resource for therapists, clients and indeed anyone interested in reconnecting with their body by exploring movement.'

Commented [HM2]: As it's a long post, this quickly summarises the content ahead, and allows us to break it into 3 distinct sections, making it more digestible to the reader.

Commented [HM3]: Deleting this might make this introductory sentence a bit more attention grabbing? Might help your SEO too, as "What is Dance Movement Psychotherapy?" could be a popular search term. Shortening the sentence to have this term closer to its beginning means it's easier for Google to find.

Commented [HM4]: I might add something short and in 'everyman' language. Helps keep people reading - ie those who may not fully understand (or be put off by) the ADMP's wordy definition. However COMPLETELY up to you.

Commented [HM5]: I'll show you how to turn this into a link in your post so you don't have to type out the web address if you don't want to.

Commented [HM6]: Links this section back to your bullet point breakdown.

Commented [HM7]: I would maybe link to an online article giving more detail for those unfamiliar with this - we can do this when I get the site set up. More links = better SEO too! ☺

Commented [HM8]: Could maybe link to a definition of the word for those who may be unfamiliar? Completely up to you and the level of understanding you believe your target reader will have. For more mass appeal, I find defining these words can be helpful.

Commented [HM9]: OR instead of linking to a definition, you could write "ie/in other words" here, so people know this is what you mean by 'somatically'.

I spent fifteen years as a mental health nurse learning about human behaviour, the effects of a fragile mind and the myriad treatments.

I very quickly realised that the "medical model" although it had its place, seemed to marginalise already vulnerable people, reducing the individual to a set of disembodied symptoms to be diagnosed and medicated. Curious about the 'talking therapies', I studied Group Therapy and Individual Therapy and became a nurse therapist working with a variety of clients, including people with addictions, eating disorders and those with acute mental health issues.

Finding a training that put all three things into a context that I could relate to led me to gaining a Master of Arts in Dance Movement Psychotherapy at Roehampton University.

I have worked in many different settings, with children and with adults and I have performed in DMP projects depicting bereavement and mental health issues.

(VIDEO)

(DOWN TO EARTH: MINDFULNESS, MEDITATION AND MOVEMENT)

I want to bring dance movement therapy to people who are going about their business, not particularly in need of in depth psychotherapy but needing something to help them sustain their sense of self. I think of mindfulness and how that has taken off over the years and I think: "Why not DMP too?"

Mindfulness, Meditation and Movement - what a great combination! What a team! So beginning with Mindfulness: being in the present moment, enhanced by meditation - what better way to bring your self into the present moment than meditation? This is why the two so often sit together. Meditation can cultivate Mindfulness. So there is a bringing of the body and mind together. Hmm... so what can we do to enhance it further? I know! Movement. Now we can really start to bring attention to the body - of course there are many structured ways in which we can do this (for example Yoga) but I am talking about unstructured ways; ways that do not teach technique as such but that encourage you to learn about your own individual body, its natural shape and movement patterns.

Stop for a moment.

Let me invite you to just check in with your body; just notice what is happening at this time.

- How are you sitting or standing?
- Do you feel centred or is there more weight on either the left or the right side?
- What is happening in the jaw area? Is there any tension in this area? (FYI this is one of the most common places to hold tension, leading to further tension in the forehead and eye area)

If you could change just one thing at the moment, what would it be? Transfer of weight from one side to the other or to the centre? Relaxing of the jaw muscle? Paying attention to just one area of your body to begin with is enough. Being aware of that aspect in the present moment is a building block to inhabiting your body/mind.

I believe we can really start to *live* in our bodies, listen to our bodies, pay attention and raise our sense of well being by combining the three M's - Mindfulness, Meditation and Movement.

Commented [HM10]: I would definitely post that great video you showed me of you participating in the bereavement project. Caption it with a brief explanation and let them know at what stage of the video you first appear (ie "You can skip to 2:34 for my performance - but I recommend watching the whole video for maximum impact!")

Commented [HM11]: I actually believe this section is strong enough to stand alone as a separate blog post in its own right. The content is great, it's easy to understand and would be very 'shareable'. I think it might also have more impact as a separate blog post. Again completely up to you, but my recommendation would be to have the first two sections as one post - the introductory post on your site. Then have this as a follow up post a week or two later (depending on how often you aim to post to the blog - if you plan to post something weekly, then we can schedule this to post to the blog a week later)

