

Embracing your Body: Yoga & Dance Movement Therapy Group Information for Referrers

What is Dance Movement Therapy (DMT)?

Trauma survivors often describe a disconnection from, and lack of safety within their bodies. The goal of body centred therapies is to assist clients in connecting with and making peace with their bodies. Dance/Movement therapy is both a creative art therapy and a somatic psychotherapy. It attends to bodily sensations and works on the principle that the body and mind are inseparable and that body movements reflect emotional states. Traumatic memories are often stored away, inaccessible to language – in sensory, motoric and image-based forms. DMT which integrates somatic sensations and movement as the main language can:

promote body awareness
↓
empowerment and self-care as reclaim own body

Our therapists use an embodied approach. The model is as follows (Grey, 2018¹):



1. Restore safety
 2. Stabilisation - Learn to understand and, to whatever extent possible, control/master physiological and biological stress reactions
 3. Restore attachment and connection
 4. Restore dignity and value
 5. Restore identity meaning and purpose
 6. Integrate skills into daily life
- (Grey, 2018)

What is Trauma Sensitive Yoga?

Trauma Sensitive Yoga is a form of yoga that employs the central tenets of hatha yoga focusing on physical movements (asanas), basic breath awareness (pranayama), and guided restoration that are modified to foster choice (mindfulness practises, dharana), mastery and a positive relationship to one's body. Rather than being given direct instruction, participants are invited to make choices about how they explore movement to develop a sense of agency and reclaim and befriend their body. Power rests with the participants rather than with the facilitator. To maximise safety, no hands-on assistance or physical adjustments are used.

Summary of rationale of using embodied therapies – DMT and TSY for trauma:

- Abuse and traumatic events are often experienced and remembered in the body.
- Implicit memories are hard to be accessed via talking.
- DMT works with the direct body experience.
- Helps to build resources in one's own body (safety, trust, emotion regulation).
- Abuse – often dissociate/disconnect from the body – help to reconnect with their own body, feel safer (in an unsafe environment), develop a healthy body/self-image.
- Trauma – growing container (of the body) to hold, contain, process, and release (increase tolerance for challenging feelings from past abuse).
- DMT can be very fun, playful, helps to grow tolerance for positive healthy nervous system arousal e.g., excitement, play, calm, relax, creativity, and spontaneity.
- Can help with interpersonal reconnection through non-verbal based relating in a shared and individually defined space.

¹ Grey, A. 2018, August. Working with Survivors of Sexual Trauma Dance Therapy New Zealand. Presented at Amber Grey Self Care Workshop, Onehunga.

· Client-centered approach where therapist provides options, promotes clients making choices and follows client's lead and their own pacing in recovery. This supports empowerment, strength, sense of self and sense of safety. · Increase sense of control through being able to regulate and control one's own body, as well as respecting each other's space and needs.

What are the aims and objectives of the Resourcing Rhythms DMT group?

Our group will focus on embodied resourcing for people with an ACC sensitive claim,

- Teaching skills and tools to managing anxiety
- Tending to window of tolerance (hypo and hyper arousal)
- Reconnecting with body sensations and interoception
- Fostering a sense of safety and self-control (in body and emotionally)
- Fostering trusting relationships within a safety promoting atmosphere
- Encouraging self-paced, authentic sharing and connection
- Provide a socially supportive experience to assist moving towards healthier function, in life and relationships.

Criteria for group

Inclusion:

- Individuals 18 and over with accepted ACC sensitive claim
- Goals may include: increasing body awareness, relationships with own body and others, boundaries, management of anxiety, management of hypoarousal/hyperarousal; increasing sense of safety in a group; fostering grounding & sense of stability (emotionally & psychologically)
- All genders and orientation welcome
- Open to group embodied approach for resourcing
- Readiness for group work - willing and able to engage in group discussion, comprehend and respect group agreements
- Able and willing to commit to attend full programme
- Able to practice some basic self-regulation skills

Exclusion

- Inability to tolerate group setting
- Unable to commit for all sessions
- Active suicidal ideation, plans or other high risk factors (e.g. unable to identify some triggers)
- Active aggressive behaviours towards others/self
- Children/Youth under the age of 16 years

Programme details

Housekeeping

The group is limited to 10 attendees. It runs over 8 weeks. Group will be closed for new participants after the 2nd session.

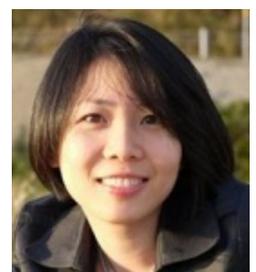
The next programme will be held:

Date: Thursdays, May 20 – July 8 (8 weeks)

Time: 7 – 8.30pm

Venue: Mt Albert Senior Citizen Hall, 3b Wairere Ave, Mt Albert (beside Rocket Park/Mt Albert YMCA). This venue has been chosen for its central location and availability of close/free parking.

The therapists: Verity Larraman and Jacquelyn Wan are experienced Professional Dance Movement Therapists (Dance Therapy Association of Australasia, DTAA) and supervisees and students of Dr Amber Gray (International trauma and movement psychotherapy specialist), completing Dr Grays' advanced clinical training in Restorative Movement Psychotherapy for Survivors of Trauma. Additionally, Verity is an experienced Yoga Teacher, who practises with a trauma informed lens.



Our programme

Content overview:

1. Establish- sense of safety, individual and group goals, orientate safely to accessible, comfortable and structured/expressive movement.
2. Body awareness (interoception - developing awareness of physiological state of the body, including emotional and mood state) mindfulness in movement, awareness and release of tension, befriending the body exercises.
3. Attention to window of tolerance (hypo and hyper arousal) –educating model of brain/ polyvagal system, exploring and facilitating self-regulation tools e.g. grounding, breathing techniques, rhythms, education, play
4. Social connection and enhancing trusting relationships e.g. relating through creative explorations, props, sound, movement, rhythms, games, and reflective verbal sharing.

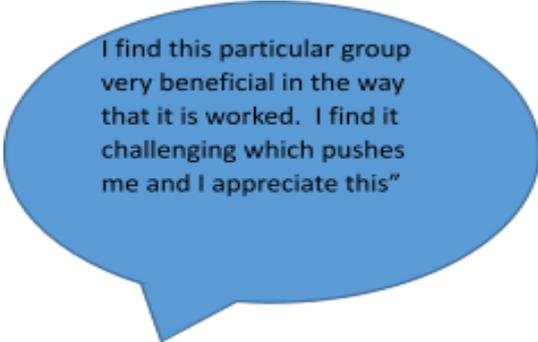
All sessions have a similar structure:

- Warm up – verbal check in and movement warm up
An introduction/pathway into the therapy itself (to get clients comfortable with moving in their own bodies; asking questions throughout that stimulates and encourages own creative movements; allows therapists to assess the movement qualities that are working with during session; establish rapport and trust)
- Release- guided physically modulate energy e.g. notice and release muscle tension; explore movements among the group, and potentially some level of empathy and interaction between group members.
- Explore themes – use of techniques as above, work with movement metaphors, invite images, symbolic movement, sound, stories, and movement associations. Explore feelings, sensations, and thoughts that surfaced through the direct experience of moving. Include solo, pair, and whole group format as appropriate. Move and explore both verbally and non-verbally, use of art and writing to explore movement meaning.
- Centering and Closure – art and/or verbal processing of the session. Prepare clients to integrate and close the process, ready to return to their daily life. May offer handouts and homeplay (to encourage extension of new skills into daily life).

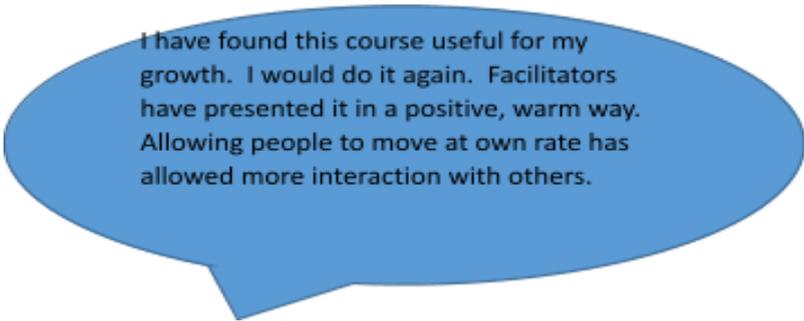
Our outcome measures

We use a number of measures to evaluate the groups effectiveness:

- At session 2 and 6 we use the Session Rating Scale (*Scott, et al. 2002. Institute for the Study of Therapeutic Change*) to gauge that the programme is meeting the client's needs.
- A pre and post self-group evaluation form is used (this is 6 questions relating to the goals of the group and measured using a likhert scale).
- The Personal Wellbeing Index (pre and post group).



I find this particular group very beneficial in the way that it is worked. I find it challenging which pushes me and I appreciate this"



I have found this course useful for my growth. I would do it again. Facilitators have presented it in a positive, warm way. Allowing people to move at own rate has allowed more interaction with others.

Clients are encouraged to discuss their own progress and reflections with their ACC primary provider. In addition, Verity or Jacquelyn will send an email at the conclusion of the group to outline the clients progress and summarise these measures.

What to do next

To get ACC funding for your client to attend the group you need to put the group details onto your clients Wellbeing Plan. Alternatively, (and sometimes to speed the process up), email the clients Recovery Partner the details and a justification of the addition of the group and this can be added directly.

Supplier name: Dance & Art Therapy NZ

Providers: Jacquelyn Wan (PAM481) and Verity Larraman

Group work requirement: 16 hours

Once we receive the purchase order we will send you a Group Screen form to fill out with your client at the next session. The main thing is to let us know of any risks/concerns, and any other matters we need to be aware and mindful of. We will also send a 'welcome' email to the client (which covers basic housekeeping and the information within the client handout). At this time, we ask for them to confirm attendance. Prior to the group Verity or Jacquelyn will be in touch with your client to organise a 30-minute meeting/korero to ensure the group is appropriate for them and to answer any questions they may have before the group.