

INDICATIONS FOR DANCE THERAPY IN SOCIAL WORK

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Abstract: The present study analyses the therapeutic use of dance in social work, particularly the possibilities of using Argentine tango. Through dance, contacts are made, communication happens, and feelings are shared. It is wrong to perceive dancing as fun rather than one of the vital human needs. Dance is one of the binding forces holding people together that, despite all the differences, can prevent society from falling apart. Dance has the power of overcoming what otherwise is difficult; even without using drugs, it can reduce anxiety. The rediscovery of dance, the use of dance movements, and music in social work brings new possibilities. However, these possibilities depend upon certain skills and the broader perspective of a dance therapist. The research aims to summarise and synthesise information from various sources, especially from the medical field. The study focuses on the possible indication of dance therapy, and its elements that could draw more attention to this hitherto unexplored therapy. It is also the pioneering research in this area.

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Introduction

The inhabitants of planet Earth are social beings, and, in the history of humankind, human survival has been possible due to mutual contact. Thus, interpersonal communication has become an irreplaceable basic tool of social interaction. Mass communication has transformed the world into a global world (Aronson, 2018). Whereas verbal communication is more or less dependent on the linguistic skills of individuals, dance and music do not know such boundaries at all.

Different types of communication are specific forms of social contact between people. It is an exchange of information. At first, it may be thought of as verbal communication. However, in everyday life, most information is exchanged at an unconscious level, which is very difficult to control. Therefore, it is hard to conceal actual feelings. People can stop talking, but their body movements, gestures, and facial expressions reveal everything. Humans are psychosomatic beings; for e.g., if a person lies, the lie-induced effects are manifested at the somatic level in the form of sweating, changes in breathing, heart rate, muscles tenseness, altered voice intonation, etc., which betrays him on the lie detector. The phantom pain of the patients long after amputation of the limbs speaks of the same effect.

Body language is diverse and important in everyday life because without body language, it is difficult to "read" in advance, e.g., the attitude of others, even before people express their opinion. In addition, it reveals true feelings and emotions, making it useful in the social field, especially in social therapy. As part of the development of social work, social therapy increasingly overlaps with various areas of psychology. Even psychotherapy influences the practice of social work and has the potential for application in areas like "pre-therapy" (a specific method used for people with the most severe disabilities).

According to Matoušek (2013), rehabilitation is not just an exclusively health care activity such as physiotherapy or only as physical exercise. However, it is also recognised as an interdisciplinary field, which includes not just the medical field but also socio-legal and pedagogical-therapeutic ones. Pfeiffer (1999) also emphasised that rehabilitation should not be regarded exclusively as an exercise.

Evolution of Dance Therapy in the Health and Social Fields

Dance and movement are not new in the history of humankind and their roots can be traced back to the primeval era. Dance was considered a specialised activity, which ensured the satisfaction of the psychological needs of the members. Everyone had their means at their disposal i.e., their body. People used to dance before they went hunting; they danced upon the return from hunting; they danced to induce rain, to have a good harvest, to heal, and so forth. Through dancing, they expressed not just their joys but sadness. Dance can be utilised to develop self-awareness, body awareness, transform traumatic experiences, bring change, heal oneself, develop creativity, and self-knowledge, and develop communication skills on a completely different level. Therapeutic use of dance is highly demanding,

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especially in terms of the qualities of the therapist, because it is impossible to perform this activity successfully without personal enthusiasm solely by following the textbooks.

In professional circles, dance therapy has long been dealt with deep psychology. It was termed "active imagination", and dance was considered a psychotherapeutic technique. Jung (1916) was the first to formally define dance. Whitehouse (1958) developed dance therapy. Today, this technique is one of the methods of dance therapy and, simultaneously a form of active imagination and analysis (Chodorow, 2006). The author Chodorow herself became a psychoanalyst and dance therapist in San Francisco. In her understanding, dance and movements generally focus on bodily experience, which was nothing new in deep psychology. After all, Jung's entire psychotherapy was based on and worked with emotions. Emotions were considered a link between the body and the psyche, which could be used to observe unconscious motor actions. It was acknowledged that expressive bodily movement explain how the unconscious can take concrete shapes (Chodorow, 2006).

Although there is nothing new in using as a therapy, dance as a psychotherapeutic method did not gain much interest. Dance therapy is based on the principles of psychotherapeutic use of body movements, provided that the senses and the body interact with each other (Schoop, 1974).

Potential of Using Dance Therapy in the Healthcare and Social Fields

According to Payne (1992), taking responsibility for movement means taking responsibility for one's *self* in motion and the feelings one experiences in the process. This can result in self-transformation. The use of dance therapy is still in its infancy, but it has already proven its effectiveness for many clients.

Currently, there are more possibilities for the world of dance therapy in the psychotherapeutic field. Even in Europe (and in the USA) there is the Dance Therapy Association (AEDT), Dosedlová (2012) defined dance therapy as:

1. The joy of functional activity: Finding contact with one's environment and awareness of contact with one's body. According to the findings, in the current times of minimal physical movements, the younger generation loses contact with themselves due to an inactive lifestyle. Neurologists describe it as alienation. At the same time, regular exercise gives the joy of movement, especially because one can control body; body movements become coordinated, easier, faster, and at the same time, health is also improved.
2. It can establish psychosomatic balance because dance is both a mental and physical activity. Even the observation of dance evokes positive emotions in people, which can positively affect the immune system, even reducing cortisol production. Dance synchronises the body as well as the psyche.
3. It fosters positive self-image or removes negative self-image due to negative socialization in childhood. To some extent, it depends upon the abilities of the dance therapist to break down the defense mechanisms.
4. Attributes like self-awareness, a sense of self-integrity, or the ability to accept oneself, can eventually help people become independent. "Dance conversation" offers opportunities to discover the different dance language of others and during the dance communication there is an awareness of one's own existence, which has significantly positive results even in psychotic individuals.
5. Body symbolism is unique because dance is a body language. It helps to express desires and thoughts, also fears and anxieties. Through a dance expression, the patient can even reach self-satisfaction, catharsis, feel relaxed and purification.
6. Sublimation. Dance therapy is also art therapy. It is not limited to gestures but *beautiful gestures*. It is a creative process where body movements are used to create a piece of art. Nevertheless, it does not require the regular practice of a dance technique, unlike bodybuilding, in which an ideal body shape is developed through exercise. The beauty of dance stems from its authenticity, reflecting the actual state of inner freedom and peace through movements. Besides artwork, dance is also therapy, it can help discover oneself. (Schott-Billmann, 1994).

Dance helps integrate the body with the mind, self-awareness, define personal boundaries, and express feelings in an acceptable way. In addition, it enriches dance movements and controls impulsive behavior.

Social-Therapeutic Aspects of Dance Therapy

At present, the method is divided into dance therapy and therapeutic dance. Dance therapy or dance-movement therapy is described by Kratochvíl (2006) as healing psychotherapy induced by psychological means, such as words, suggestions, learning, nonverbal behavior, incitement to experience emotions, interaction in a group, etc.

Is every dance a therapy? How is dance different from dance therapy? Does a dancer who practices choreography with a group of patients automatically become a therapist? Can a person be designated as a therapist just because he or she dances with patients rather than the general population?

The difference between a dance class and a dance therapy class lies in their respective goals.

For a dance educator, dance and expressions are the main goals. It is about improving dance technique and movements.

For a dance therapist, it is an intra-psychological process of deepening self-knowledge through movement (dance), improving self-acceptance, and practicing expressions and emotions that have not yet been verbalised. It is also about making social contacts. The dance therapist purposefully develops the psychomotor coordination, rhythm, and musical impressions. Dance movement brings a positive change in thinking, experience, and behaviour. Other verbal and non-verbal therapeutic means are also available for a dance therapist, according to the client's goal and needs (Dosedlová, 2012). At the end of this process, the individual's ability to apply these experiences in everyday life is visible. Dance movements are also used for disease prevention, as a large percentage of the Euro-American population suffers due to a sedentary lifestyle, leading to an increase in cardiovascular disease, obesity, depression, and anxiety. Regular dance activity uplifts the mood, improves well-being, increases the ability to cope with stress, and improves sleep. Dance as a physical activity offers flexibility, strength, and stability, joy, communication, creativity, emotional connection with self, self-esteem, and perseverance.

Movement and dance specialists may have different types of qualifications. They complement each other. They work with different age groups with different social, emotional, sensory, cognitive, and physical problems. Both work with individuals and with a group. The places of work can vary, such as psychiatric wards, social services facilities, and educational institutions. According to Payne (1992), the dance and movement therapist who graduated in the humanities focuses on the therapeutic use of dance and movement as a discipline to promote emotional growth and psychological and social integration of the personality. The therapist uses his or her extensive therapeutic, dance, movement, and observation skills to contact otherwise detached groups of clients. Dance therapy aims to induce various mental and behavioural changes in the individual and achieve more self-awareness and a clear perceptual orientation. (Kozubková, 2007). Research shows that movement with a partner and music has a striking effect on the emotional state than exercises without music and a partner.

Indication of Argentine Tango in Dance Therapy

Various types of dances, from contemporary solo ones to ballet, and all ballroom dances, have become a focus of attention in the past. Argentine tango and some other dance forms have one thing in common, i.e., both are partner dance forms. In ballroom dancing, the partners usually have synchronised and individual moves, and they learn certain variations and dance in a coordinated way. Argentine tango is as much a ballroom dance as other dances. It is a form of partner dance, but what makes Argentine tango special has long been understood even in medicine. No other ballroom dance offers as many potential benefits as Argentine tango. Different moves for males and females ensure a better understanding of the different psychobiological functions of both genders.

There are countless studies on this topic, especially neurological ones. Current research examines mainly the emotional and hormonal responses to tango dance and the specific effects of music and a partner on these responses. Kreutz et al. (2004) studied the effects of music and partner on subjective and neurohumoral parameters in partner dance.

Dance is a form of musical behaviour involving the coordination of intentional rhythmic movements stimulated by music.

There are many studies on the effects of Argentine tango; Leste and Rust (1984) analysed the impact of Argentine tango on promoting human health, clinical contexts, and benefits of dance in mental disorders were studied by Haboush et al. (2006), and physical contexts were studied by Hackney et al. (2007).

All these studies conclude that while dancing, there is a decrease in cortisol levels and an increase in testosterone levels, positively affecting immunity. While the cortisol level is reduced by music, the testosterone level is increased in the presence of a partner. Therefore, it seems likely that the presence of music and a partner is necessary for the psychophysiological efficacy of dance.

All these studies confirm the anti-stress effects of tango dance and psycho-physiological changes in the body. The presence of music and a partner affects the emotional and hormonal responses to dance. Health professionals consider an ideal exercise for the social, mental, and physical well-being of people in any age group.

In 1996, the American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA) recommended appropriate areas for applying dance therapy (DT). Their recommendations are in consensus with other experts. A wide range of possibilities for the application of DT in the field of rehabilitation were identified. For instance, after a brain injury, amputation, or for wheelchair confined patients, dance therapy can improve their physical, emotional, and cognitive abilities, as well as sensory and physical awareness. Dance can successfully change the body schema to release negative emotions, anxiety, helplessness, anger, and feeling of inferiority resulting from failures in the past. The person who quickly manages to be self-sufficient experiences great enthusiasm, which can speed up rehabilitation. New images of the future are being created, and self-confidence is gained (ADTA, 1996).

It can improve heart conditions or reduce chronic pain that impacts a person's quality of life by constantly occupying the amygdala. By supporting positive reactions, the prefrontal cortex is strengthened and attention is diverted from problematic body parts to pleasant emotions.

Attempts to stimulate patients with sensory disorders have also been successful. According to neurological research (Quiroga et al., 2009), emotional disorders are present in such people, affecting their locomotor system. For example, depressed patients tend to move sluggishly, and schizophrenic patients often use incoherent gestures. These studies analysed activities in different parts of the brain (MRI), as dance improves certain brain functions responsible for bringing positive changes. Success has also been achieved in eating disorders, where negative body perception plays an important role. (ADTA, 1996).

Dibbel-Hope (2000) studied psychological adaptation in patients after breast cancer diagnosis. According to Dosedlová (2005), positive results can be expected in problems related to social contacts, communication, pathological self-image disorders, and movements.

Dance-movement therapy can be used for individuals or groups, and for the most part, it adapts to the clients' individual needs by matching their energy levels.

Rehabilitation is another wide field of application for dance therapy. For instance, after a brain injury and cardiovascular diseases, it improves a patient's physical, emotional, and cognitive abilities and sensory and physical awareness. The DT helps patients regain their self-confidence, increases physical capacity. In addition, it eliminates anxiety and helps to create new images of one's future self.

For the aging population, besides treatment, dance therapy creates a positive, optimistic atmosphere where they can enjoy their lives, replenishes energy, improves motor skills, and, last but not least, helps to develop new social contacts. Dance therapy/rehabilitation for the elderly is most appreciated when other forms of exercise or sport are out of the question. The people dancing in pairs are even feeling safe. Moreover, dance can successfully maintain physical condition, which has a beneficial effect on the functioning of other organs, the immune system, and the musculoskeletal system.

Dance therapy is successfully used to treat eating disorders, where the perception of one's body plays an important role. In addition, this nonverbal communication also positively impacts the treatment of addictions to toxic substances (ADTA, 1996).

Vaysse (2006) says that only acute diseases, such as panic attacks, psychoses, and delirium are contraindicated to this therapy. Of course, with the help of psychotropic drugs, these acute diseases can be managed, and dance therapy can follow later. According to the study, dance therapy has no direct aggressive manifestations because it helps to release them in a symbolic form effectively.

Various studies confirm the effectiveness of dance therapy in the form of Argentine tango. For example, Ritter and Low (1996) published a meta-analysis to test the effectiveness of dance therapy. Despite the problems and methodological shortcomings, dance-movement therapy has proven beneficial for people of all ages. It helps maintain health and mobility and alleviates fear and anxiety, thus contributing to a better functioning immune system.

Dibbel-Hope (2000) conducted research on psychological adaptations after the diagnosis of breast cancer. The experimental group attended daily dance classes for six months. Compared to the control group, they had more vitality, reduced feeling of fatigue, and were generally more positive.

According to the research of Hong et al. (2005), dance-movement therapy improves the emotional response and adjusts the level of neurohormones in depression. At the program's end, the depressive manifestations in the experimental group were evidently reduced and that of the neurotransmitters serotonin and dopamine were balanced.

Bojner-Horwitz et al. (2003) studied the level of stress hormones in patients with fibromyalgia (a chronic syndrome that manifests as muscle pain, fatigue, and sleep disorders). After six months of therapy in the experimental group, the subjective manifestations were positive, but the values of the stress hormone cortisol were not different in both groups.

According to Dosedlová (2012), positive results can be expected in problems with social contacts, communication, pathological self-image, coordinated movement, attention span, and hyperactivity. But, most of all, in managing emotional disorders and psychosomatic problems.

Benefits of Argentine Tango in Dance-Movement Therapy

With advanced imaging technology, the benefits of this beautiful therapy are measurable, which is why it is considered an ideal exercise by health and social workers for the social, mental, and physical well-being of patients in every age group.

The dance focuses on various important areas for achieving a high quality of life and successful aging. Not just psychological, dance is also a physical exercise. Also, it promotes social satisfaction and deepens mindfulness and concentration. Tango is a meaningful activity which increases self-esteem and brings new knowledge. It is an emotional and educational activity at the same time. All types of dances provide some benefits, but the Argentine tango seems to bring all those benefits together.

Specific effects of Argentine tango based on a number of studies are as follows:

Interaction between people with similar interests increases social satisfaction. Partner tango is a very engaging couple activity. While different types of dances provide only some benefits, there is empirical evidence that the Argentine tango significantly improves satisfaction among all categories of the population. Hackney et al. (2007) go even further and states that the combination of movement and tango music increases the sense of success, and the attention required to match the partner's improvisational movements improves cognitive and physical health.

Argentine tango is a "walking" dance, and its basic steps are not difficult to learn, which initially motivates people to continue with therapy. Another benefit is that the community of dancers is welcomed around the world.

Individuals with different health issues expressed a sense of common goal that improved their mobility. Their sense of connection and understanding with others increased. This new activity reduced their tendency for social isolation due to the disease. The influence of Argentine tango has improved social satisfaction in healthy and unhealthy populations.

Dancing also improves receptivity. Argentine tango helps individuals focus on the present and their current role. The increased sensitivity while performing Argentine tango was reported to be greater than it was during meditation.

As indicated in McKinley et al. (2008) cognitive skills can be improved. Dancing seems to be an effective exercise for dementia. It is a meaningful activity that cultivates purposefulness. In addition to learning the steps, the dancers make a great effort to perform the steps elegantly and synchronously

with their partners. They meet new people along the way. Argentine tango can focus on a specific goal. In case of health problems, specific goals may be set on how the patients want to feel better, walk better, and lose the fear of falling.

Since tango is based on walking, people easily follow it and meet the goals. Moreover, it helps them gain new skills and develop the feeling that they can still do and learn new things.

Emotional reactions are facilitated by dancing the tango and listening to tango music. According to Brown et al. (2006), the MRI images highlighted specific brain activities related to sensory motor integration and pleasant emotions. Likewise, tango music stimulates the release of hormones like testosterone in males and females.

Various elements of dance therapy give enjoyment to the participants. Trained partners are suitable, because, with experienced partners, there is more enjoyment and a feeling of accomplishment. The choice of music is also important. A strong and clear rhythm is needed to engage a particular part of the brain. The space and size of the dance floor are equally important to facilitate navigation, especially for visually handicapped participants.

Conclusion

In the Slovak Republic, the issue of caring for people with different needs is still being practiced in traditional ways. Demographic data are also misleading, especially for the prolongation of human life. Over the last two hundred years, life expectancy has not increased, despite access to better health care, food availability, and a well-established network of healthcare facilities. Lifestyle diseases strike at an early age, often before the age of fifty. Care for maintaining good health or restoring a dignified life for those "already" stricken with such diseases cannot be achieved by a one-sided solution. The patient care system, trying to rehabilitate patients to an active life, is chaotic, unsystematic, and most importantly, not readily available due to long waiting lists. Generally, there is a tendency to neglect the goal, select appropriate measures and methods, develop an individual plan, and, later, the relevant impact assessment. Dance movement therapy can fill this gap without major material and personnel investments.

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