



Dance/Movement Therapy with Adults Techniques, Structures and Skills List

(Note: This is not an exhaustive list and you will add to this and develop your own ways of working too by following the creativity/ intuition of your client and yourself. This is how the field grows, with you in it! ☺)

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Honoring Diversity

Each client that comes to you for adult therapy is unique and will present with various needs and developmental tasks and challenges as well as creative interests. They will need choice in what they do with you, you will co-create a therapy process that pays attention to the body and the resource of movement. Your clients will present with different levels of fear of embodiment, fear of dancing, fear of sensing their body, fear of their own impulses, fear of relationship etc. You will need to tread gently. They will present with different qualities of mind, different gifts and each and every client will require a unique therapy from you, that can draw from the following techniques, structures and skills.

Foremost is your own embodiment practice. Why? Because if you are not connected to your body as an available resonator, responder, facilitator, dialoguer, creator, and collaborator, and are not able to sense, attune, match/mirror, shape, use Space to move into, have a repertoire to offer etc, the therapy will be greatly diminished potentially. This is not to bias able-bodied therapists, and recognizing the many different forms and practices of “embodiment”.

Considerations with your DMT clients:

- **Facing:** where are you in relationship to the client directionally

- **Spacing:** how much space is between you and the client, or props and client
- **Pacing:** how much space to create in verbal narrative, allowing time for movement to emerge and sensations to be registered. Yet clients may also need to feel you close.

Techniques, Methods, Structures:

Creating relationship/connection and felt sense of trust, safety:

- **Attuning:** matching the muscle tension of the client, resonating with a sensory channel such as making a sound to match the movement of your client, or matching the intensity of the movement or energy being expressed. Fulfills need to be felt and connected with.
- **Mirroring:** matching/reflecting more of the exact or close enough to shape-change, use of space, rhythm, energy, emotions expressed by client. Fulfills need to be seen deeply.
- Using your whole body expressively **to offer/express Kinesthetic Empathy.**
- **Oscillating** your awareness
- **Tracking** your client's body, energy, movement
- **Allowing** yourself as therapist to move and embody

Cultivating Body (Self) Awareness:

- Bringing awareness to sensations and helping a client stay focused in sensing the body as a whole or a part.
- Bringing awareness to where emotions are felt as sensations in the body.
- Bringing awareness to movement impulse and the impulse to make sound.
- Facilitating experiential anatomy explorations as helpful.
- Guiding body scans
- Guiding visualizations into the body or from the body
- Bringing awareness to dynamic alignment: posture is how we used to talk about this.
- Bringing awareness to and deepening a felt sense of connectivity in the body.
- Heightening body awareness can also come from getting the blood flowing, vitality increased with aerobic movement, movement that

- increases proprioception such as jumping, and other large motor movement and locomotion through space.
- Bringing awareness to repeating movement patterns or tics etc. (verbal supports for this, and reflecting back what is observed)
 - Exploring felt sense of boundaries, and setting up use of props and particular movements for sensing and setting “boundaries” : what is ok and not ok? as felt sense.
 - Using therapist or props to feel where the body begins and ends.
 - Encouraging self-touch to heighten awareness.
 - Encouraging breath support to support awareness.
 - Bringing awareness to Body Systems that each are resourcing.
 - Reflecting back a shape, gesture or movement either verbally and/or somatically.
 - Exploring somatic Relational Dynamics always.....with you the therapist in the room, with others in their life, sensing, feeling and naming how they experience these dynamics in their body.

Supporting Body Connectivity and access to Dynamic Movement:

This is useful for clients who are feeling disjointed, disconnected, unable to move gracefully as they may wish to, wanting to have access to more movement mastery for self-expression, in need of neurological integration etc.

- Practicing/teaching/facilitating the Developmental Movement Patterns (in pure form, or in other forms)
- Guiding clients into connections between Body Systems and inroads or portals into those systems (ideas in BMC and BMP)
- Guiding particular locomotion patterns and/or forms of dance that solicit particular movement qualities that ask a body to self-organize and by default simply strengthen connectivity.
- Tracing bony landmarks and helping a client anchor into them.
- Touch support for connectivity felt.
- Teaching about and facilitating movement process utilizing basic actions like Yielding, Pushing Reaching, Grasping-Pulling, etc.
- Engaging clients in partner dancing, and using another body with theirs to solicit more connectivity.
- Encouraging isolation of body parts as well as whole body, whole hearted movement.

Supporting Self-Regulation, Grounding, Centering:

- Using rhythm for regulation and a strong ‘container’ for feelings to express within.
- Using the tones of music or instruments to impact affect reg.
- Using swaying, shifting weight, Weight Sensing, to impact affect.
- Suggesting props to support regulation or centering or grounding.
- Suggesting grounding techniques or imagery, and teaching centering practices such as self-touch, connection to midline, to particular movements that support centering, etc.

Supporting Sequencing of Emotions through the body:

- Supporting sensations to breathe, move (shape or moving), sound, speak...express!
- Facilitating awareness of the expressive importance of EndPoints of the Skeleton and sensory neuron pathways in the nervous system, and encouraging connecting with these pathways.
- Working with “Developmental Edges” these are places in the body identified by client and/or therapist that are felt to be a boundary in the body, a place where energy is not flowing, sometimes can be visible to an observer, and require an inquiry using sensing, feeling, imagery, memory or thoughts that surface.
- Supporting a client’s understanding of expanding of their Energetic Limits learned earlier in life.
- Supporting breath awareness for transformation of breathing patterns.
- Supporting expression of feelings through symbolic movement actions or dance or speaking/sounding.
- Providing an imagined or real “container” for feelings.
- Directing feelings into space harmony configurations.
- Directing feelings into role plays etc.
- Possibly demonstrating different ways that the therapist moves their feelings through their body (ie opening the throat, mouth, organs to let the sound of crying/sadness move through).
- Using characters, animals, any kind of theatrical way of expressing feelings that provides a Shape and Form for feelings to express through.

Supporting Embodied Speaking, and connecting body and words

- Feeling the resonance of the voice in the body.
- Finding support for the voice and speaking from body.

- Supporting with languaging of bodily experience and vocab.
- Naming that sometimes a person's experience is simply not able to be put into words.
- Supporting self-knowing and clarity through embodied speech.

Supporting finding Meaning in a client's way of moving, or at least deepening their connection to their Movement as PERSONAL:

- Utilizing a form like the *Moving Cycle* which gives specific steps for the process of uncovering the meaning of movement, which draws on **Awareness, Exploring**/supporting sequencing, **deepening** of themes and **integration** etc.
- Drawing with art, or shifting sensory and processing channels in the brain, ie integrating other expressive arts too in order for new levels of meaning and understanding to emerge.
- Using inquiring questions: does this movement have any meaning for you that you are aware of? (as simple as that!)
- Generalizing a movement to whole body
- Specifying a movement to one body part or area
- Exploring a movement or gesture that we call a "TIC" something that keeps unconsciously expressing.
- Exploring shadow movements that the client may not be aware of: when they say one thing, but their body does another.
- Exploring contrasts in movement.
- Engaging a client in processes related to moving authentically.
- Providing ways for a client to observe and perceive their movement such as Sculpting a body form or shape, inviting the client to sculpt you as someone they know or are working with relationally.
- Reflecting and moving the movement of a client for them to see.
- Creating Dance Poems where the movement comes first, then words are added and performed and then moved in silence so only the resonance of the words is felt.
- Creating Life Lines, where a person's life story or narrative is marked spatially (on floor or paper for example) and movements or shapes created to tell that life story.
- Shaping of knowing, such as 'Shaping Past, Present, Future' or any other theme in their life that can be explored in movement.

Expanding Movement resources: "repertoire"

This can be both focused on functional movement as well as expressive, as they both interrelate and affect one another, its nice when both focus are brought together.

- Introducing new ways of Moving: using the correlates of Body, Effort (Time, Space, Weight, Flow), Shape change, moving through or into Space or sensing the use of their Kinesphere(as explored in the Kestenberg Movement Profile, Laban Movement Analysis and Body-Mind Centering).
- Engaging different body parts for new support for movement (ie Stability/Mobility relationship: support precedes movement).
- Engaging expressive movement through role-play, inviting characters out to play with different ways of moving and sounding.
- Creating role-plays with the therapist.
- Re-creating family system scenarios or scenarios with partners etc.

Supporting exploring Movement Creativity and Self-Expression:

- Encouraging the creation of expressive movement stories, sequences, and dance choreography (facilitating the process and clarity for choice-making: going back to the body for choices).
- Allowing the client to take you on an imaginary moving journey.
- Supporting opps for performance, if even for friends or family.
- Creating scores and structures for people to improvise within.
- Playing with opposite qualities in movement.
- Working with different parts of the room to represent different aspects of whatever challenge a client is processing.

Supporting Intimacy and Couples:

- Exploring what patterns are revealed through partner dancing.
- Exploring the sharing of support through body to body contact.
- Exploring the embodiment of each partner and learning how this affects their relationship.
- Supporting the exploration of sensuality, sexuality, intimacy, communication, needs, etc and how these resonate somatically.
- Supporting clients to learn more somatic-oriented self-reg skills.
- Allowing for spontaneous, authentic movement to reveal patterns in the relationship and reveal needs.

- Creating a dance together to express what is found and wanting to be remembered.

The roles you will play will shift moment to moment: Witness, Mover, Responder, Dialoguer (including Challenger, Provoker), Container, Integrator, CoRegulator etc.. You will guide, facilitate, teach, listen, reflect, paraphrase, ask open and closed questions, and sometimes express non-verbally other ways of connecting with a client. Remember that **70% of your communication is non-verbal** to your clients. Who you are as an embodied, creative being matters, and can bring great healing.

Dance/Movement Therapy is an **in the moment, spontaneous, creative, intuitive, changing form, that is updated with current cultural shifts too as needed, and also updated to honour new discoveries from NeuroBiology, Psychology, Dance, Spirituality and allied fields.**

There is much much more that can be written here in terms of a vast array of other ways of working, but I wanted to give you a sense of some of the breadth of the DMT work, goals, structures with adults.

Hana