

# e-motion



***Special Edition 2007***

**Association for Dance Movement Therapy (ADMT) U.K.**  
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## EDITORIAL

*It is with much gratitude and warmth that I have the opportunity to invite and "hand over" the responsibility to Marie Ware for this Special Edition of e-motion. I have thoroughly enjoyed reading each and every one of these articles, and it is my hope that you, our members, also take time to settle into, what is a vast amount of insightful and enjoyable articles.*

*Tracey French, editor*

This edition reflects on the journey that I embarked on in the very early days of pioneering dance movement therapy in psychiatric and 'mental handicap' institutions, the formation of a voluntary sector therapy centre and its presence now in the community where there is still contact with many former patients continuing to benefit from dance movement therapy, and nurses that are now managers of care homes taking up training in therapeutic skills on validated education courses devised and delivered by therapists at the centre.

It is significant that all members of the therapy team at Dance Voice Therapy and Education Centre started their own journey of enquiry into the value of dance movement therapy (DMT) working with me and then, following their grandparent route or postgraduate training, have returned to work in the person centred model that inspired their career choice. It is this way of working that attracts students on placement not only those training in DMT, but students from other related arts, care, psychology, counselling courses, some of whom have been awaiting the validation of our DMT postgraduate course which is its final stages of accreditation by Canterbury Christ Church University.

The authors of the articles reflect the joy of being caught up and swept along by DMT whether as therapist, administrator, present or past student, or Trustee of this unique centre. I thank all of them, knowing that their enthusiasm to share their experiences overrode any contemplation of not having time to commit to this in their busy schedules.

Ivor describes the value of dance and movement to his service user group and how it enables his staff team to work effectively with them. He also comments on the power of public performance to challenge common perceptions of disability.

Pam reflects on her experience as a presenter and participant at the ADTA Conference 2006 and asks how we in the UK might capture their spirit of supportive, generous dance to affirm each other in a similar way.

Lynda has discovered the healing elements of dance and has found a way of integrating her degree in Psychology with the therapeutic value of dance, so finding the "truth" of her own movement and the route into an MA in

"Managing Contemporary Global Issues" at Winchester University. Her dissertation will be based on the effectiveness of using symbolism in Dance Movement Therapy.

Nily writes that before starting her training to become a dance movement therapist she had prejudices and assumptions about the therapist-patient relationship believing that a patient is one that needs "fixing". She shares how this bubble of preconceptions was popped and that alongside clients that she started working with she felt unconditionally accepted, appreciated and valued in the person centred environment of her placement.

Liz records how years as a dance movement therapist provide her with skills and understanding that she puts to use in the sphere of human and spiritual accompaniment in her other work in the context of Emmaus House - a retreat and conference centre.

Lydney has shown students, teachers, retailers, professionals and all those who love to dance that we (dance movement therapists) exist - that dance exists beyond the studio, college, school, technique class. Dance movement therapy is alive in the far corners of our communities with those who might not be 'typical dancers' but who are dancing in their souls. Dance movement therapy has infiltrated the dance world. Look out for her at the Olympia 'Move It' exhibition 2008.

Julia shares notes (with permission) from her own process diary recording her learning on placement in an addiction recovery group and of being surprised and touched by the eloquence, creativity, self awareness and openness of a client.

Viv describes her reawakening as a dancer and choreographer through discovering techniques to really express herself with dance rather than stringing together learnt steps and trying to look good, and of her driving passion to introduce accessible dance to people of all ages and dispositions in her community.

Kate uses her background in Tae Kwon Do to teach the therapists a thing or two, and tells how the culmination of skills acquired over a number of years fits her for the role of administrator in our busy centre.

**Marie Ware SRDMT**  
**Guest Editor, Director of Dance Voice**



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## NEWS FROM ADMT-UK COUNCIL

### ASSOCIATION FOR DANCE MOVEMENT THERAPY UK Ltd.

#### Annual General Meeting

16th June 2007

Siobhan Davies Studios

85 St. Georges Road, London, SE1 6ER

#### Agenda

9.30 am	Coffee and registration	11.30am	The name of the Association
10.00am	Chair’s welcome	1.00pm	Lunch – <i>please bring something to share</i>
	Reports & Business	2.00pm	Council Meeting
	Apologies	2.00pm	Afternoon Workshop – Bonnie Meekums
	Minutes of 2006 AGM	4.30	Tea with workshop participants & Council
	Minutes of EGM 23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2006	5.00pm	Finish
	Presentation of Accounts		
	Reports		
	Election of Council members		
	Any other Business		
	Date and venue of AGM 2008		
11.00am	Tea/coffee break		



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## ADMT UK would like to announce it's newly Senior Registered Therapists for 2006/07

We welcome to our list of private practitioners and supervisors:

**Caroline Frizell**  
**Annette Schwalbe**  
**Alyson Nehren**  
**Athena Pikis**  
**Gerry Harrison**

Here are some words of introduction by the SrDMT's, and also *about* them:

### **Gerry Harrison SrDMT**

I have worked for the NHS for 28 years - including as a ward sister in acute psychiatry.

My training as a DMT was carried out at Roehampton – graduating in 1991.

I am influenced by Marcia Leventhal's approach and my contact with her continues to date.

I have experience working as a DMT in Mental Health facilities, often as a pioneer. Currently I work with inpatient groups - with specialist experience in the area of self harm. I also have continuous involvement on the DMT programme at Roehampton and currently teach the Psychotherapy module.

### **Caroline Frizell SrDMT**

When Tracey contacted me to introduce myself as a SrDMT in this edition of *e-motion* (I was granted senior status in June 2006), I had less than a week to gather my thoughts. The few days to the deadline coincided with a weekend trip to a Camphill Community in Wales. The inclusive community includes those with significant learning difficulties in an environment which provides work and study on a biodynamic farm. A young woman with Down's syndrome takes me around the workshops. I linger in the pottery, relishing the earthy smell and the cold resistant texture of the clay. In the weavery I am delighted to be offered a turn on the spinning wheel and watch as students meticulously and slowly manipulate the shuttles on the looms. In the farmhouse a student chops vegetables, picked that morning from the garden. The pigs need feeding, but my guide takes me first to the green woodwork lodge to show me her latest creation in the making. It is as if all my senses are brought alive, my body engages with the environment. The bizarre behaviour of some of the students takes on a meaningful expression, as each small connection is integral to the wider community. The air buzzes with a rich harvest of diverse experience. Body and mind become focused in connection with the dynamic nature of the environment in an atmosphere of acceptance, balance and interdependence. As I ponder on what to write about myself and my work I find myself in the midst of the principles which guide me; the principle that our identity is grounded in the physical and

sensory experience of the body, the principle that inclusive practice meets a universal need to belong and the principle that, in order to experience wholeness, we need to nurture a reciprocal relationship with the earth. I suddenly wish I could bring you all here to understand my words as an embodied experience.

I walked along the river, hoping to catch sight of one of the kingfishers said to inhabit these parts. I stood in a clearing by the rippling water, which dashed over the stones in an ever-flowing current. What would be useful to share with you all? I was absorbed in my thoughts, which obscured all desire to see a kingfisher. All at once they came into sight. Not just one, but two kingfishers, slicing through the air like blue arrows of light skimming above the surface of the water. I watched, entranced by the apparitions, seemingly conjured from the magic of my own thoughts, created by the open, available space in a moment of synchronicity. Then they were gone. It was as if the precious moments of my life had streaked past me in an instant, to disappear downstream. Perhaps it would be useful to share what brought me to this beautiful spot by the river....

I was handed the gift of dance half a century ago by my late mother. As soon as I could walk, I entered her dance studio and began to learn the language of classical ballet. Clear, rigid boundaries framed the pursuit of perfection. On the way I became a mother and my first daughter (now an adult) was born with a label of severe learning difficulties. Having already shifted from classical ballet to community dance, I was now inspired to explore a new language of disability and the rich soil of imperfection. With the birth of two more daughters, without labels of disability, my life combined meeting the diverse needs of the family with developing community dance as inclusive and accessible to all.

The decision to train as a dance movement therapist at Hatfield evolved as a natural step towards finding effective ways to build inclusive communities. Therapy seemed to offer opportunities to address the challenge of healing the splits that divide individuals and communities. DMT seemed to provide opportunities for those generally excluded from the voice of the mainstream to discover a sense of their own worth, to share their experience and to delve into the true gifts of their existence. It was also a medium through which those with the loudest mainstream voice could get in touch with their hidden vulnerabilities and reintegrate their imperfections into a richer wholeness. Whilst practising as a therapist, I have also been inspired by therapeutic practices which explore the essence of life in relation to the larger body of the universe; therapeutic practices which offer a space for the language of the body to find a voice in the rhythmic balance of the earth. It is within the extended community of life beyond our species that we can dance a spontaneous improvisation of reciprocity; that we can attempt to heal the splits between our lifestyles and the balance of the planet.



I am currently privileged to work as a dance movement therapist in special education with children who have a range of complex needs, including those on the autistic spectrum. My work evolves as a process of organic growth, continuously enriched by the extraordinary substance of each therapeutic encounter. Many of the children I work with have no words and employ physical and sensory communication to tell their stories. Some of you may have read one of my stories 'Climbing Mountains' in e-motion last year which is but one illustration of those encounters. As I work I am continuously influenced by life's ongoing flow of experience. I find my roots in my family as we grow and change together. I draw strength and sustenance from my supervisor, who shares my struggles with warmth and wisdom, and my therapist, who patiently follows me into the shady woods and facilitates my connection to the natural rhythms of life in the slow growing roots of the wood anemones.

As I work I encounter movement and dance as an expression of a physical, sensory and spiritual connection with ourselves, in all our imperfections, our communities and the earth as our shared home. I send these thoughts to you skimming downstream on the wings of a kingfisher, offering a brief glimpse of who I am and the ideas behind my work.

**Reference for Athena Pikis for SRDMT registration – Nina Papadopoulos**

I have known Athena Pikis since 1999, first as my student on the Roehampton DMT course and subsequently as my supervisee. I have been working with her on a fortnightly basis since she completed her course.

Athena returned to her home in Cyprus after her DMT training and is the only dance movement therapist in Cyprus. She has been a remarkable pioneer for the profession on the island and has worked in a variety of settings, promoting DMT and creating work for herself. Her work has covered areas as diverse as adult learning difficulties, drug addiction, special needs children and mental health issues within the normal population.

Our supervision sessions have been a combination of telephone sessions and face to face meetings (as I visit Cyprus regularly and she visits London occasionally). Athena is a competent and sensitive clinician. She has been able to formulate her clinical material clearly and

use the supervision sessions to reflect on complex intrapsychic and inter-personal dynamics and transference and counter/transference issues. She has enabled her clients to make considerable progress and the positive results she has facilitated attest to her continually developing and developed competence.

Athena is an innovator and has been applying DMT skills and techniques in creative ways. Of particular note is her work within an in-patient drug rehabilitation centre. In addition to providing regular DMT sessions she has involved the clients in extraordinary movement performances for family and friends. This work has enabled her clients to enact and express their journeys on the path to rehabilitation and has been widely recognised as an exceptional contribution to their progress.

Athena has opened a DMT studio within a Counselling, Psychotherapy and Psycho-pedagogical Centre. Here she sees adults and children. She is pro-active within the multi-disciplinary team contributing both to the client's treatment and the development of the Centre.

Athena has run many workshops and given educational lectures, presenting DMT to many different groups of people. She has recently been invited by a prestigious college in Cyprus to begin teaching DMT with a BA dance training programme.

I have no hesitation in supporting Athena's application for SRDMT. Her dedication, comprehensive understanding of clinical issues, clinical experience and ability to work within multi-disciplinary teams, her sensitivity and competence as well as her solid grounding in theory make her imminently suitable to undertake the responsibilities of an SRDMT. This will give her the freedom to further develop the profession of DMT within Cyprus.

Nina Papadopoulos SRDMT

When Tracey invited me to write something about myself, my supervisor sent me a copy of the reference she wrote for me and I felt this was the most appropriate piece of information to share with people as it reflects very well my work in Cyprus over the last six years. Here I want to grasp the opportunity and Thank Nina for all the support and insight she has given me over all of these years as I really feel I could not have done it on my own here in Cyprus without her! Thank you Nina!

Athena Pikis







# Dance Voice Therapy and Education centre

**A Voluntary Sector Organisation, unique in offering validated dance movement therapy courses from Introductory to Postgraduate levels alongside therapy sessions for clients from a wide age range with diverse needs.**

**Marie Ware. SRDMT**

## How did it begin?

My training in Physiotherapy, Remedial Gymnastics, Physical Education and Dance has been, and continues to be, a wonderful source of knowledge and skill that informs my work with clients and students. My passion has always been for dance and my earliest teaching in schools and colleges focussed on introducing creative dance across the age range from early years upwards. In 1972, I formed Bristol Contemporary Dance Company under the auspices of my local Community College. This gave adults that had no formal training but a love of dance a chance to develop their dance and performance skills. This opportunity was taken up by such professionals as nurses and school teachers who reported back that the populations that they cared for would gain from the therapeutic benefits that they themselves were experiencing. My next step was to devise dance movement therapy (DMT) training courses for those that wanted to introduce the work into their own settings. For the teachers this worked. For the nurses in long stay 'mental handicap' and psychiatric hospitals it was too difficult and the request followed for me to work with them in these institutions.

I was able to get small Arts Council grants to set up pilot projects on the understanding that I would be retained by the hospitals if dance therapy was seen to benefit the patients. This happened and the work grew. Alongside this I continued developing the training courses, and students accompanied me on placement in the hospitals. The work expanded and I brought in dance trained colleagues to develop work in other hospitals as the demand grew. One of these colleagues, Pat Morgan SRDMT, is still working with me and has been instrumental in the development of the organisation.

I owe much to the positive response from the multidisciplinary teams that I worked with in the institutions and in particular to the psychiatrists that recognised and affirmed the value of the work with the many clients that had previously been considered unable to access activities on account of their behavioural difficulties. This has, without question, underpinned the present strength of the organisation.

## The Next Step

The financial situation in the hospitals could not accommodate the demand for this expansion and I was encouraged to place my work under the auspices of a registered charity in order to seek alternative funding. This happened in 1989 and within a short space of time I had secured a grant over three years to employ a co-therapist to work alongside me,

to pay course fees and travel expenses of students and work towards national validation of training courses. The grant did not contribute towards my income which was still reliant on freelance fees.

As the founder director of a registered charity I had to form a management board and work with them to set up systems of accountability. The big risk at this point for me was to take on a part time administrator, pay the rent and all service bills. With my income still based on the sessional work that I was building up, there was very little to take home. My personal resources were truly stretched in all directions and only made possible with the encouragement of a very understanding husband who was setting up his own private architecture practice.

Two years later the closure of these institutions was in hand and my search began for a venue to transfer the work as people moved into the community. My enquiries led to me being offered the maintenance lease on a Quaker House in Bristol which we still occupy. In partnership with the Quakers we are developing a plan to extend the premises so that we can resolve waiting lists for therapy. As an interim measure we have just taken another risk in signing the lease and undertaking refurbishment of an adjacent building that will accommodate the postgraduate DMT training as from January 2008, subject to validation by Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU). This is proceeding smoothly, already having ADMT accreditation for the course.

I value the recognition of my pioneering work and contribution to the development of our profession by ADMT UK, and not least, the commitment of our therapy team all of whom started their training with me before going on to complete their postgraduate professional courses or make application through the grandparent route.

I am pleased to put something back into ADMT by way of sitting on the Executive Council and the Education Committee and to have been part of the process leading the profession towards state registration.

## The future

My aspiration for some years has been to gain university validation for the post-graduate dance movement therapy course that we will deliver in Bristol. This is now very close to validation and we begin interviewing in June. We will then have a training progression route from introductory,



through to degree and post graduate level courses resulting in the training of more dance movement therapists in the South West to meet our expansion needs.

This is concurrent with the development of our premises to accommodate new courses and client work. My organisation is unique in offering training that includes client centred work experience on site alongside the therapists that tutor on the courses, together with placement opportunities with schools and other services that contract with us.

### **Other connections**

I have written and continue to deliver DMT skills units for the masters play therapy course validated by CCCU. Students benefit from an introduction to Laban's movement observation and analysis, and the connection between developmental delay and ensuing difficulties such as attachment issues that they work with in the play therapy modality. Some are considering 'DMT in the context of Play' as the subject of their masters dissertation. Many of these students now come to us for clinical supervision and it is interesting to learn how much more observant they are of the child's moving during the sand play, painting, acting out or even entering the play room. Pam has written a module for validated counselling courses. These students are intrigued by the non-verbal element that they engage in and are becoming aware of their own posture and gesture during their work as well as observation of their client's demeanour.

### **How do I maintain mental clarity and focus?**

Professionally, I am good at time management and setting realistic targets. I can make informed decisions and am not afraid to challenge practice that I consider unethical or flawed in any way. My freelance experience has led to a good understanding of managing finance and keeping within budget. My expectation of self and others is professional and not excessive.

On the personal front, I take pleasure in looking at staying fit by maintaining the half-acre that surrounds our house that my late husband designed, and riding my horse as often as time and weather allows.

It has been important to me to balance managing the organisation while staying personally involved with staff, students and clients and I am now more than pleased to share the work with Pam Fisher as co-director, together with a full time administrator who manages contracts and invoices and the general running of the organisation and keeping a team of six therapists happy.

### **Survival tips**

- Stay passionate about the work
- There can be little growth without taking risks
- Small changes can make big differences
- Build secure and trusting relationships with employees, colleagues, clients
- Look after your own physical and emotional health







































