BEING IN COMMUNITY.

DANCE MOVEMENT THERAPY APPROACHES TO SOCIAL RECONCILIATION.

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January 2023.

Abstract

This paper explores how Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) could contribute to a social reconciliation process through a group process with migrant women living in Spain. The results of a small-scale pilot study suggest that the relationships developed between participants in the DMT group reflect some of the key elements underpinning theories of social reconciliation. The elements of trust, empathy, and a willingness to coexist with others can be understood as the return to a sense of community and belonging. Furthermore, working with migrant women appeared as an opportunity to explore the concept of social reconciliation beyond national borders as an initial step to understanding this phenomenon through DMT. In summary, it is proposed that Dance Movement Therapy, oriented towards the configuration of new forms of relationship, has the potential to contribute to the modification of polarization frameworks in group and community relationships, particularly in areas affected by conflict or social marginalization experienced by migrants and refugees.

Key Words

Social Reconciliation, Dance Movement Therapy DMT, Migration, Artistic Research.

Introduction

As human beings, we are in an ongoing relationship with our environment. Not only do we construct our subjective reality, but we also influence and are influenced by that reality which transcends our corporeality. It is in the human relationship that we define our cultural codes, construct our socio-political practices, and make sense of our lives. However, in contexts of violence, there is a violation of human rights that affects both individuals and collectives. These violations paralyse and cause suffering, silence socio-political and cultural practices, undermine communities' beliefs and ways of life, and generate mistrust, isolation, and low self-esteem (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica CNMH, 2014). Furthermore, a loss of power calls into question human agency, that is, the possibility of making decisions and acting intentionally, with purpose. In these scenarios, building peace, healing wounds, and rebuilding the social network become necessary and are essential issues that invite us to move forward, enabling new projects and motivations that fill life with meaning.

In response to this need, the concept of social reconciliation aimed at promoting and improving social relations rather than addressing traumatic experiences emerges (Rettberg & Ugarriza, 2016). Reconciliation, conceptualised as a collective process of deep transformation, implies a voluntary rapprochement of the parties previously in conflict, who seek to connect again (Bloomfield et al., 2015), re-establishing their social ties and maintaining stability in the territory (Alzate & Dono, 2017). Thus, reconciliation is a key process in creating a society with a shared vision of the future (Bloomfield, 2003).

Having an approach to this concept through a DMT group process with migrant women, enlightened the question of how we can understand a reconciliation process between people who

have never or no longer share the same territory and were prior to joining the group unknown to each other.

It could be said that reconciliation within migrant populations poses a two-way challenge. On the one hand, the necessity to heal wounds and re-establish relations with a social reality from which they have migrated, and on the other hand, the necessity to keep in mind the experience of arriving at a different place with little or no knowledge of the culture and no strong or even existing relationship. This situation involves the role of host societies and the importance of their perceptions of migrants. Social integration requires meaningful interaction between migrants as incomers and the receiving society, which means integration must be conceived as a two-way process. Such a process will not only change the migrant's perspective and way of life but also effect structural change in the receiving society (Rudiger & Spencer, 2003). Nevertheless, since the early 2000s, the EU's Global Approach to Migration and Mobility has been dominated by a security approach centred on a desire to contain migrants in the Global South (Ibid).

This project focuses on the experience of Latin-American women in Spain, who have migrated primarily for economic or personal reasons, for example, to join a family member, not for political reasons, or because their lives had been at risk in their countries of origin. However, on their arrival in Spain, they faced the difficulties of relating to a different culture, where they may be mistrusted and stigmatised, resulting in experiences of uprootedness and not-belonging in a context where it is not yet possible to speak of community. Working with them was an opportunity to broaden the perspective of social reconciliation beyond national borders and this research is considered an initial step in developing an approach to understanding the social reconciliation concept through Dance Movement Therapy.

Social Reconciliation: An Overview

Etymologically, the word reconciliation means -re: return, -Concilio: assembly or community, from the Latin root 'conciliatus' meaning 'to walk together' and the suffix–'tion', indicating action (Cano et al., 2022). In other words, to reconcile is to become part of a relationship again, to return to being a community, and to be together again.

An examination of the concept of reconciliation reveals that in transitional contexts, reconciliation is a term that is used to encompass a very broad range of peacebuilding activities ranging from providing aid to refugees and internally displaced populations, overcoming ethnic divisions, making reparations to victims, and reintegrating former combatants into (sometimes hostile) communities (Rettberg & Ugarriza, 2016, p.517). However, according to Rettberg & Ugarriza (2016), certain incentives and public discourses emphasising the need to involve all members of society in building lasting and sustainable peace have resulted in a marked tendency to label all sorts of activities as synonymous with or conducive to reconciliation thus depriving the term of any stable meaning or shared definition. Appropriation has resulted in the term being used diffusely, ranging from narrow and subjective to more expansive definitions and approaches. The findings of this small pilot study are based on the emphasis adopted by Enright & North (1998); and Maltby et al., (2005) on overall happiness, welfare, and productivity and is related to trust-building and the creation of virtuous social capital (Putnam, 1994). They can also be associated on how ordinary citizens are involved in bottom- up peace and how their expectations shape the end of conflict and the implementation of peace agreements (McGinty, 2014).

One of the most recurrent ideas in the literature links reconciliation with psychological and political processes but also considers individual and collective processes which involve a change

of attitudes. Examples might be a shift from denial and resentment to acceptance and trust, enabling communities to re-establish the social fabric, non-violent daily relationships, and the ability to work together (Cano et al., 2020). Reconciliation is thus conceived as an integrative process that involves multiple interdependent layers of interaction, from the individual and personal to the interpersonal through to the collective layer or strata, which encompasses social norms and representations.

This research focuses on the interpersonal dimension of reconciliation, oriented towards constructing and transforming human relationships. Reconciliation is relationship building. At the interpersonal level, this involves deep transitions of personal interaction that focus on emotions, acknowledgement, apologies, forgiveness, healing, and the creation of shared personal bonds (Bloomfield, 2015. p.23). According to Huyse (2003), there are three stages to making a reconciliation scenario possible. The first is non-violent coexistence, the second is trust building, and the third is mobilisation towards empathy:

Coexistence is seen as the possibility of peaceful connivance between antagonistic individuals and groups (ibid). A model based on coexistence emphasises interpersonal similarities and cultural commonalities, as well as supporting notions of unity and cooperation (Silbaq & Belinky, 2020). In a broader formulation, coexisting implies the right of each group to exist (Worchel & Coutant, 2008).

Trust can be defined as a psychological mechanism that aims to overcome uncertain social situations through benign assumptions about the behaviour of others (Kollock, 1994). Thus, the basis of mutual trust lies in believing that humanity is present in each person (Huyse, 2003). This element facilitates the modification of polarisation frameworks in interpersonal and group

relationships and is a recurring variable in various works on constructive conflict transformation (Cogollo et al., 2015; Jung et al., 2019; Albada et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2022). Polarisation can be described as the presence of separated groups in society with opposing attitudes (Jung et al., 2019). As Albada et al. (2021) point out, individual characteristics and group affiliations are key factors in attitudinal polarisation. How people perceive their position and that of their in-group in society can influence how accepting they are of out-groups, especially refugees and migrants (p. 628).

Empathy allows a person to take another's viewpoint to understand the intentions behind their actions more fully; in other words, 'feeling what they feel' (McGarry & Russo, 2011). It is the attempt to experience another person's inner life and resonate with what they are experiencing, living, and feeling; to have information about their situation and act accordingly (Fischman, 2013).

These three concepts are also key principles in a Dance Movement Therapy DMT process. That is why they are taken as central axes for the research, to enable a dialogue between the concept of social reconciliation and DMT as a discipline.

The relevance of Dance Movement Therapy

One possible way of promoting change and repairing damage is through the expression of the body in movement (Maralia, 2007) because the body reflects the most intimate part of the person. Furthermore, working with the body connects us with an emotional and symbolic level that makes it possible to give voice and express that which cannot be expressed through words (Rodríguez & Dueso, 2016). It also allows reinterpreting and deconstructing symbols, giving new readings, and transforming meanings. Therefore, increasingly, the focus has turned to listening to and understanding our body as a channel for self-expression, as a place of recognition and connection between thought and emotion (Rodríguez, 2011).

Defined as the 'psychotherapeutic use of movement to promote the emotional, social, cognitive and physical integration of the individual, with the purpose of improving their health and well-being' (ADTA (American Dance Therapy Association), n.d.), Dance Movement Therapy becomes a psychotherapeutic technique that is based on creative processes using the body, its non-verbal expressions and dance (Rodríguez, 2009). Its objectives revolve around allowing the exploration of new ways of relating, promoting greater integration of the self, increasing awareness, and enhancing the development of social skills that can lead, through movement, to changes in the psyche, thus promoting well-being and personal growth (Rodríguez & Dueso, 2016).

One of the main purposes of DMT is to strengthen people's mental health. The World Health Organisation (WHO) conceptualises mental health as a 'state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own capabilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community' (WHO (World Health Organization), n.d.). It is a concept that encompasses all dimensions of being human and is the basis for the well-being and effective functioning of individuals and societies. It is synonymous with emotional well-being and involves quality human interactions that favour dignified living conditions and humanization (Cano et al., 2020).

Therefore, mental health requires not only material factors such as employment, housing, or road infrastructure but also immaterial aspects such as equity, security, hope, respect for difference and strengthened social capital, i.e., peaceful possibilities for coexistence and social solidarity (Ibid). Consequently, all the daily dynamics of violence can have grave consequences on mental health, as they generate suffering, trauma, depression and anxiety in people and communities, breaking social bonds, destroying life projects, and sowing hopelessness, mistrust, indifference, and isolation (Ibid).

A reconciliation process implies talking about forgiveness and reparation and addressing actions and attitudes that help rebuild broken social ties caused by multiple factors. Therefore, promoting reconciliation, as 'working through' these issues in DMT, is a way to heal wounds and improve the mental health of those who have directly or indirectly experienced multiple forms of violence.

A significant association was evidenced between reconciliation and mental health. However, interpersonal reconciliation, the renewed capacity to interact again daily with former opponents, was associated with mental health. (…) which involves rebuilding trust and cooperation between citizens that contribute to societal well-being (Mukashema & Mullet, 2013).

Migration: I Am (Not) Here, and I Am (Not) There

Migration is understood as the movement of a person or a group of people from one place of residence to another, either within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for various reasons (International Organization for Migration IOM & UN, n.d.). It is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses economic, political, psychological, social, and cultural factors. It involves migrants and the receiving society (Cano et al., 2020). It implies a change of culture and, therefore, a change in social codes and ways of interacting with the environment.

While it is an opportunity to exchange cultural values, learn new customs and lose the fear of the unknown and difference; we see that migration is experienced as a traumatic process that highlights our vulnerability and challenges our mental health (ibid). Migration implies an identity crisis due to the loss of home, family, and friends on the one hand and the loss of a solid identity - of how one's existence had been configured up to that point - on the other hand (Romero, 2020).

Even by assuming the body as the home of identity, one could speak of a third loss in cases of dissociation, when there is a disconnection and an uprooting from one's body.

Wars, poverty, and political conflicts are some of the most important causes that push millions worldwide to leave their country, often in situations of danger (Garcia, 2018). In doing so, migrants face arriving in a society with different customs, norms, values, behaviours, rhythms, and relationships. This constitutes an attack on one's own cultural identity and will only cease to represent a problem to the extent which people integrate the new set of meanings (ibid). However, according to the Conference 'The economic and Social aspects of Migration' organised by The European Commission and the OECD in 2003, in the European Union many migrants suffer economic and social disadvantages, even some after decades of settlement. As a result, they are excluded from civic and political participation and face discrimination, racism, and xenophobia (Rudiger & Spencer, 2003). Their marginalisation makes them easy targets for scapegoating by far-right parties, which have gained increasing support throughout Europe by exploiting fears and inciting resentment (Ibid). Based on a report published by the European Council on Foreign Relations in 2019; In Spain there is evidence that electoral support for anti-immigration policies has grown lately even when the country has some of the fastest-growing immigration numbers globally (Fine & Torreblanca, 2019). The average annual net inflow of migrants was close to 500,000 people a year in the first decade of the 2000s, making Spain the second-largest recipient of immigrants in absolute terms among the OECD countries after the United States (Ibid).

Public attitudes tend to turn against migrants, especially when social welfare provisions are rolled back, and exclusion emerges as a real threat for many. The ensuing polarisation of population groups signals a process of social fragmentation. In the context of economic, social, and even

physical insecurities, appreciating diversity and learning to manage differences appear particularly challenging (Rudiger & Spencer, 2003).

With this said, integration is a two-way process that requires adaptation by migrants but also by the receiving society, involving change and different modes of interaction between both sides. In the process of recognising and integrating new practices and meanings, social reconciliation is important for migrants and the communities in which they arrive. Promoting reconciliation is a way to heal wounds, restore divisions, and improve the mental health of those who have directly or indirectly experienced multiple forms of violence.

Faced with this situation, Dance Movement Therapy can provide a temporary home. This safe space facilitates recovery and integration (Dieterich-Hartwell, & Koch, 2018), which improves the relationship of migrants with their unfamiliar environment and provides tools to face new challenges (Romero, 2020). Likewise, working with the metaphor of the body as a home in a DMT context could facilitate a person's sense of security, control, and well-being and foster healthy attachment, authenticity, and a better body image (Dieterich-Hartwell, & Koch, 2018).

Artistic research as a methodology

Given that the research is carried out with a group of migrant women, it is a scenario characterised by low regularity of attendance and complex, changing, and uncertain life situations. In response to this, the methodology must be highly reflexive, sensitive, and flexible enough to follow and elaborate on different themes as they emerge in previously unthinkable areas (Hills de Zárate, 2012).

Artistic research can contribute to knowledge generation by using artistic methods in collecting, analysing data and presenting results (Mateos, 2011). This research process is characterised by an inductive approach in which the researcher has an open mind, with as few preconceptions as possible, allowing the theory to emerge from the data and, thus, a dialectical and integral path is proposed, to understand human beings in their complexity (Wall, 2018). This holistic and dynamic view is present in artistic practice and qualitative research, as intuition and creativity are embraced in the research process (Rojas, 2016).

This methodology makes it possible to discover our inner landscape, making room for lived experiences and validating emotions as sources of information and knowledge of a process that is weaving itself. The artist-researcher allows herself to be touched by the subject to be studied from an awareness of self, respecting her values and ideas, and guided by her heart, intuition, impulse and passion for the topic studied, allowing her to continue searching for data that may help her to find answers, by making the research subject her own and including her own internal process in her account of it. (Ibid. p, 221).

In a DMT context, the objectives and methodology used in the psychotherapeutic process must be differentiated, for ethical reasons, from the questions and methodology applied for the research; even more so when they fall on the same person - therapist and researcher. In all cases, the therapeutic results take priority over the research objectives (Mateos, 2011). Consequently, the DMT group process' objectives were the priority. In contrast, the research process focused on an open and reflective approach, collecting data and information from diverse sources, including participants' experiences.

Design and participants:

A DMT group process is conducted by working with the intersubjective relationship of the group's collectivity. It is in the power of the group that the community is built. As García (2018) points out, the benefits of DMT can be applied to the general population, but if we think of people whose main problem is concentrated in the loss of roots and, therefore, focus, balance, personal identity, and community references; the framing that is built in the therapeutic relationship of DMT, especially in group sessions, can offer migrants a safe space to explore new referents and meanings. In addition, group sessions provide cohesion, promote trust, and help reduce prejudice (Ibid).

Thus, a group of participants was defined who voluntarily undertook a DMT psychotherapeutic process of 19 sessions, each of 90 minutes, from 03 February to 16 June. Three of them come from Ecuador, two of them from Peru, one from Brazil, and one from Venezuela. All of them are users of the socio-communitarian organization where I did my second-year internship (the name is reserved by a confidentiality agreement).

In the beginning, there were five women. After several sessions, two more women joined the group; seven people registered. However, in the middle of the process, three decided to withdraw for various reasons. Ultimately, the DMT sessions culminated with four women from Latin America, although not all of them participated in the first session.

Participant	age	nationality	Year of migration	Participation ratio	Reason for leaving (If applicable)
1-G	63	Ecuador	2000	13/19	NA
2-M	34	Ecuador	2002	11/19	NA
3-CA	26	Perú	2016	4/19	Found a job
4-A	24	Perú	2019	9/19	Unspecified

5-P	64	Ecuador	2003	10/19	Translated to a shelter for security reasons.
6-S	32	Brazil	2018	7/19	NA
7-ML	38	Venezuela	2005	7/19	NA

Data Collection:

To develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena and to test validity, it was decided to converge information from multiple data sources. Mixed qualitative data collection methods allowed for and facilitated the expression of different perspectives that may have been overlooked (Carter et al., 2014). Information was collected through:

1. An initial semi-structured interview conducted before commencing the DMT sessions to collect information about each participant's background, migration experience and expectations of the research process.

2. The researcher's reflexive diary

3. Movement videos of the researcher/therapist recorded after each session, based on her bodily experience of the session

4. Participants' drawings and writings recorded what they had worked on during the sessions.

5. A final semi-structured interview, which sought to delve more deeply into what was experienced during the research process and gather participants' final reflections.

Triangulation

This pilot study involves the use of multiple methods of data collection to explore the phenomenon. This type of triangulation, referred to as method triangulation, promotes using several data

collection methods and is frequently used in qualitative studies. For example, it may include interviews, observation, and field notes. The study also draws upon theory triangulation which encourages several theoretical schemes to enable the interpretation of phenomenon (Carter et al., 2014).

Reflexivity and Positionality

The concept of reflexivity in research refers to the thoughtful, self-aware analysis of the inter-subjective dynamics between the researcher and the researched (Finlay and Gough, 2003). Practising reflexivity requires an ongoing critical self-reflection of how the researcher's social background, personality, personal assumptions, position, and behaviour can impact the research process, particularly the collection and analysis of the data (Wall, 2018). In addition, it requires openness and an acceptance that the researcher is part of the research (Finlay 1998; Finlay & Gough 2003). It has also been proposed that 'reflexivity is a helpful conceptual tool for understanding both the nature of ethics in qualitative research and how ethical practice can be achieved' (Guillemin, & Gillam, 2004, p.262-263). With these considerations in mind, the researcher kept a reflexive diary, from which extracts are interspersed at key points in the account of the research process.

Positionality is related to reflexivity and describes one's worldview and the position one adopts about research and its social and political content (Holmes, 2020). Qualitative researchers consider the positionality of the researcher and the researched as core aspects of inquiry in understanding how 'knowledge and experience are situated, co-constructed, and historically and socially located. This methodological expectation for reflexivity allows for rich data. However, it requires

researchers to consider power within and around the research process to employ an ethic of care for their subjects and the process of qualitative research (Reich, 2021, p.575).

The Researcher's Positionality

The research represents a shared space shaped by both researcher and participants. The identities of the researcher and participants impact the research process and come into play via our perceptions of others and how we expect others to perceive us (Bourke, 2014). As a migrant woman from Latin America, I share many feelings with these women. As the observation began, I became aware of my identification in this context. I was genuinely excited to be able to carry out this research in an organisation that a group of Colombian and Latin American women created. I felt recognised and welcomed from the first day because my cultural and historical background connected me to this familiar place. I was seen as an equal, and this implied that I had to seek a balance, to assume a reflexive position to be seen as a Latin-American migrant woman without this affecting my role in the group as a dance-movement therapist. It was fundamental to cultivate my therapeutic presence even before the therapeutic process began to be able to perceive what was internal or external to me as a researcher-therapist.

The concept of therapeutic presence indicates an attitude of mind that combines two types of disposition: the readiness to adapt my approach in the encounter with the participant while avoiding the risk of fusion or symbiosis, thanks to the maintenance of a constant relationship with the capacity to think (Robbins, 1998). To achieve this therapeutic presence, I had to promote the maintenance of a lucid internal observer of my own experiences, which also allowed me to think and elaborate hypotheses about the therapeutic process (García, 2007).

The Research Process

During the observation process carried out over four months in the organisation where I did this research, I observed recurrent bodily expressions with closed postures in the women who arrived at this institution before starting the group process. Not only did they have a small kinesphere reflected in their gaze on the floor, their legs and arms crossed, and a soft, almost inaudible voice. They also appeared nervous, touching their fingers or with stereotypical leg movements, slow and hesitant or sudden and heavy movements. They verbalised feelings of helplessness. At these moments, they expressed indignation, frustration, and anger.

These bodily expressions reveal the states of anxiety, mistrust, insecurity, fear, and rejection experienced by the service users and reflect how the migration experience is embodied in their daily lives. These experiences include not being recognised as citizens, not having the same rights, not feeling in a safe place, and being at constant risk of exclusion. In short of carrying the system's weight on their shoulders and trying to survive in an asymmetrical reality of power, in which they lose out.

Migrants often have higher levels of stress, anxiety, irritability, depression, isolation, poor concentration, or a deterioration of the immune system than non-migrants (Dokter cited in Sepulveda & Panhofer, 2019. p. 101). To be a migrant is to live daily with significant vulnerability and uncertainty about the present and the future. There is a sense of anguish connected to the lack of a sense of belonging, of not finding a home anywhere, feeling disconnected from both the past and the present, and not knowing what will become of the future (Aranda & Hills de Zárate, 2018). Therefore, migrants often accept precarious jobs and are willing to take risks to fit into the new social reality. According to a report on the social integration of the immigrant population in Spain

in 2020, 73 out of every 100 employed migrants fall outside the Social Employment Standard (ESS). Moreover, migrant women suffer more intensely than men from job insecurity and devaluation. This greater precariousness is related to asymmetrical gender patterns that have a decisive influence on the institutional organisation of the labour market in Spain, producing worse working conditions for women in general, and for immigrant women, in particular (Iglesias et al., 2020).

> *A Peruvian woman in her 70s enters. I think of my grandmother. How complex it must be to be a migrant at that age. Writing everything down on paper, not understanding how things work now with technology. The anguish that being alone must generate... I think of my grandmother and how she gets anxious when she cannot find a piece of paper, cannot remember information, and the confusion about dates, data, and messages... if she suffers this in the comfort of her own home, what would it be like in another country?* (Extract from researcher's reflective diary. 04/10/2021).

The Dance Movement Therapy Sessions

First approach

Of the seven women who participated in the DMT group, three had left their country for economic reasons, two to reunite with family, and the youngest two, to change their lives. Currently, most of them live with a relative (daughter, sister, mother); however, the two youngest live in rooms in shared flats, and another in a foundation for women with HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus).

As migrants, they commented that the greatest difficulties they face are finding a job that meets their basic needs, especially for those who do not have documents or are students. They also

mentioned racism as a problem that increases the difficulties of living together in a community with a different culture and even language. During the DMT process, there was also evidence of the grief and a sense of loss at being separated from relatives, home, and everything familiar. This sense of being uprooted is reflected in the drawings made by participants, in which they represented themselves without feet, with light and almost imperceptible strokes. 'Emigrating involves the elaboration of mourning, migratory mourning, understood as the process of reorganisation of the personality that occurs when something significant for the subject is lost: their origin' (Aranda, Hills de Zárate & Panhofer, 2020. p. 12). Thus, the issue of identity appears, expressed as belonging to more than one place or not fitting into any of them. Despite this, participants have identified resources to cope with their difficulties. First, there are support networks; when they need advice and companionship, they turn to their family and friends. There is resilience, understood as all the tools each of us has, to overcome difficulties and continue. Resilience is connected to those motivations that give meaning to their existence and keep hope alive, be it belief in God, nature, or themselves. Resilience is linked to cultural traditions, values, spirituality, and community ties. These aspects help to find meaning in life and its challenges (Wengrower, 2015).

The participants' expectations in the DMT process focus on having a good relationship with the group, creating companionship, and feeling in a space of empathy and mutual respect. They also stated that they wanted to learn something new, meet people, change their routines, distract themselves, achieve greater well-being, more peace of mind, autonomy and deepen their self-knowledge. These expectations of the DMT group reveal their desires, fantasies, and needs, what they want to find both here and in the wider context.

Group process

A small kinesphere[1] group was evident during the sessions, inhabiting the middle level, which means that participants' feet were on the ground, their knees were extended, and their gaze was forward. The participants hesitantly explored the limits of space and their bodies, preferred not to close their eyes. Their expressions were shy and superficial, with contained flow and reduced movements. There was stillness and difficulty in expressing themselves both in words and movement. A sense of restraint predominated, related to the previously mentioned closed-body expressions. Participants expressed feelings of confinement and constraint. In the somatic countertransference, this translates into a feeling of insecurity that presses on my body and contains energy that wants to get out but cannot find its way.

> *I felt a contained flow very present. I do not know if it is because of the group's small size, which makes them more exposed to their companions. I do not know if it is because of the lack of confidence or the lack of habit of expressing, letting it flow, of bringing it out... I do not know, but I felt this restricted flow, with these limits/weights/enclosures that suffocate, that immobilise, that do not allow the free exploration of the emotion and the visceral, of the most animal thing that we carry with us. Even in me, many times, compressed air in my sternum does not push the diaphragm that does not reach my centre.* (Extract Researcher's Reflective Diary. 24/03/2022).

I refer here to bounded and free flow and the framework of flow efforts as outlined by Laban (1984), who defines efforts as the inner impulses that are the origin of movement. These efforts

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[1] The kinesphere is the imaginary bubble that surrounds our body and our movements. It is the space used around the body by the limbs, whether standing still or moving (Ros, 2008). Is the sum of all the points and forms a volumetric area inside which the body moves (Queyquep, 2013). In this case, it is a group kinesphere.

are the external expression of the dancer's inner vital energy, which can inspire the moods that accompany the movement, which is fundamental in the experience and expression of emotions. For example, a contained or bounded flow corresponds to inhibition, discontinuity, and danger-related emotions (anxiety). In contrast, free flow corresponds to impulse facilitation, continuity and emotions related to a sense of freedom and safety (Loman & Sossin, 2013. pp. 269).

Furthermore, there was an instability in attendance, and three participants dropped out of the group process. This uncertain dynamic made it difficult to consolidate the group and sustain each session, not knowing who would arrive and who would not[2]. Nevertheless, certain roles were configured that made it possible to exchange opinions, promoting conversations about grief, loss, dependency, and fear of attachment. At a slow pace, the group was coming to life.

As the process progressed, participants' explicit needs emerged, such as strengthening their support networks, relating to other women, changing routines, moving, and expressing emotions, being cared for, and feeling affection. In their non-verbal expressions, I also perceived a need to heal and soothe, be listened to, be held, have safe spaces to release their flow, and allow themselves to open and let go.

In response to this, the group worked each session with a Chace structure: warm-up, theme development and closure (Levy, 1988), creating a routine that allowed for greater trust in the space. After each session, they expressed feelings of well-being (relaxation, joy, relief, gratitude, peace, harmony, fullness) and, above all, felt listened to, welcomed and able to share in a safe

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[2] The difficulty to consolidate a DMT group with migrant people is common, due to the struggles for creating routines, having a structure, holding, and feeling rooted. In a wide sense, being part of a community. See more in: Romero (2020), Sepúlveda & Panhofer (2019), Aranda, Hills de Zárate y Panhofer (2020), García-Medrano & Panhofer (2020), Panhofer et al., (2018).

environment. In other words, they felt recognised as who they were. Recognition is linked to coexistence because when they see themselves and their companions and accept themselves as they are, it is possible to create a shared scenario of bonds based on unity and cooperation. In the group, this recognition was expressed through being attentive to what they needed and how they could solve it by themselves.

Thus, over the sessions, I perceived changes in their range of movement as they became more open, and they made subtle but new proposals to expand their bodies in different directions. There was also greater autonomy in the relationship and moments of integration of the experience. For example, one participant who used to draw her body as incomplete started to paint a full and more organic body. The relationship between participants was also strengthened as they perceived understanding and companionship based on inclusion and recognition. The role of social interaction is crucial in the process of integration. It is through social contacts and the climate created by the possibility of such contacts that people develop a sense of belonging in a particular social space (Rudiger & Spencer, 2003)

Towards the end of the process, the participants expressed feeling happy, comfortable, conscious, stronger, and calmer. In general, they described the experience as positive. They concluded that they learned to relax, to be more open, to get to know each other and themselves better, to cooperate and realised that it is possible to learn and grow in a group, in a supportive environment. They also recognised how, through movement, it is easier to process and integrate emotions. In addition, I can also see how they released the flow, allowing them to trust and relate to each other safely.

I learned to relax 'because that is what I was finding difficult and to be more open because it has been difficult for me lately because of the illness or, I do not know, I felt a bit overwhelmed and self-conscious, but that has changed (Interview 1.2-G).

The experience of coexistence, trust, and empathy

As the participants interacted with each other, relationships based on complicity, respect and affection were created. They also did constant teamwork during the proposals, being aware of their differences and accepting them. They defined coexistence as the possibility of living together, knowing that everything is linked and that they are part of the same diverse unit.

Regarding trust, participants associated it with a feeling of security. For them, trust is a feeling of confidence in themselves and all the people around them. It is the conviction that everything is as it should be, being certain that there will be respect and confidentiality in human relations. In the group, trust was achieved through constant interaction and getting to know each other increasingly. Repeating the structure, creating routines, and proposing games in which the women felt they could trust each other. This trust-building was also made possible by establishing the space as a safe place to express themselves and share their experiences with people in similar circumstances. Thus, participating in this DMT process enabled them, through movement, drawing and speaking, to establish a secure basis of trust (Hills de Zárate, 2012) from which a respectful and caring bonding process could take place.

As for empathy, the participants see it as the ability to put oneself through what another person is going through. It is seeing the other person as part of us and trying to feel what the other person feels. In that way, it also offers comfort and trust. As one of the participants commented: 'the best

thing about the activity is the togetherness and understanding of each of the people in the group as they looked a lot (being attentive) for the other person' (Participant Mo. 10 /02/2022).

When asked about their experience regarding these three concepts, the participants agreed that they felt both trust and empathy and therefore felt that they were in a safe place where they could live with each other. In their words, they empathised with each other, got along well, were together, and created the group. They shared pleasant moments, knew their limitations, and yet motivated each other. They did what they could and expressed their feelings through music, dance, play and walking with different people.

Trust, empathy, and coexistence have been part of the group since day #1. There has been, or rather, a space created and maintained where we can share what we want because we feel trust. The way we interact is empathetic (we listen, we smile), and we have been coexisting every day of the meeting. (Interview 7.2 MA).

Discussion

Reconciliation is a key element in creating societies with better mental health (Alzate & Dono, 2017), just as Dance Movement Therapy is presented as a useful working tool to promote human well-being among migrants, prioritising mental health by reducing symptoms such as depression, isolation, and anxiety (Sepulveda & Panhofer, 2019). Furthermore, working from DMT with people and communities whose ties have been disrupted by some circumstance implies restoring relationships and promoting a process of reconciliation both internally and interpersonally.

With this, it becomes evident how the key aspects of social reconciliation, which are mutual recognition, acceptance and the development of peaceful relationships, trust, empathic experience,

sensitivity and respect for the needs and interests of the other party (Alzate et al., 2015), are at the same time the basic principles of a DMT process, in which the emphasis is on the interpersonal and subjective connotations of emotions; sharing the objective of removing the barriers that block the way to rebuild a community.

This contribution of DMT to social reconciliation could be evidenced, among other things, in the participants' liberation of the flow effort. This hypothesis arises from what was experienced during the DMT group process, where the contained flow of the participants reflected a restricted, controlled, restrained and tense image of movement. According to Rudolph Laban, there are four motion factors -efforts- common in each movement: Space, Time, Weight, and Flow. This last one is connected to continuity, emotions, control, and breathing (Laban, 1987); so, we could say that this effort of contained flow is the bodily expression of the participant's emotional state and how the migration phenomenon is embedded in their realities. Therefore, releasing the flow was possible as we worked on the consolidation of a safe space, trusting relationships, empathic communication, and respect. In other words, the movement and presence of the participants were more fluid and lighter when working on the aspects of a reconciliation process. This phenomenon raises new questions and research interests around the premise that a free/released flow effort becomes possible when people feel reconciled with themselves, the space, and the people around them. Furthermore, this hypothesis arises from the observation of bodies and non-verbal language, which ratifies the importance of facilitating expression through alternative languages that stimulate the different senses because when the body participates in the process, the narrative is complemented and enriched, giving rise to new dimensions of the experience (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica CNMH & Fundación Prolongar, 2017).

A link between reconciliation principles and Yalom' therapeutic factors was also seen. This DMT group experience was a psychotherapeutic process in which Group Cohesiveness, Universality, Catharsis, Self-Understanding, Interpersonal Learning Inputs and Outputs, among others (Yalom, 2005) were developed. These factors imply the creation of relationships based on co-existence, trust, and empathy. This reinforces the purpose of developing DMT interventions oriented to social reconciliation processes, with a practical but also theoretical basis about linkages between these concepts.

Another reflection is the necessity to build our work with an intersectional perspective. For example, working with women from Spain or Latin America is different. There are substantial differences between a 24-year-old woman who came here looking for better life options and a 64-year-old woman who migrated to take care of her grandchildren. So, even when there are rich gains in a female gender multi-aged experience, there is also a big responsibility to have a differential framework that recognises each reality and allows an accompaniment without causing damage, re-victimisation, or invisibility with our actions.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that building any human relationship takes time, work and patience, and the question arises of how to bring the DMT experience into the realm of their daily lives. This question also arose from comments made during the process, in which they stated that outside of this space, they would not meet and share as they did here. Therefore, although the question will not be answered in this article, I want to make visible the figure of the *space* that arises from the participants' non-attendance at the sessions.

The space connects with feelings of abandonment and sadness. Absences become visible, silence reigns, stillness -eternal- waiting. Questions arise, and at the same time, there is an understanding of the situation.

> *I ask them how they feel with so many empty chairs. We talk about the emptiness that produces sadness but also understanding because, at some point, they have been the ones to leave the chairs empty ... one of the women comments how in breathing exercises, it is more difficult for her to hold when she is without air and empty- than when she has air and full*. (Extract Researcher's Reflective Diary. 12/05/2022).

The interesting thing that emerges with this image is the conclusion reached by the participants. Holding a group and engaging is more difficult when there are empty chairs, and the absence is more tangible than when people are present. Holding 'emptiness' is more difficult than holding' fullness.' In other words, we need the group, the community. Thus, we return to the beginning of this text. As human beings, we are in constant relationship with our environment, constructing our subjective reality but also influencing and being influenced by that reality that transcends our corporeality.

Limitations

During the research process, certain practical conditions in terms of time, viability and methodology defined the study's parameters. This research took place in Barcelona during a specific period, the second year's internship, and limited participation to migrant women who were users of the host organisation. Future research would ideally focus on Dance-Movement Therapy experiences with heterogeneous groups that include migrants and non-migrants to explore how the trust, empathy and coexistence processes are built and extended to other contexts such as

Colombia, where social reconciliation is now a priority in the socio-political and communitarian scenario.

Conclusions

Following Lederach's invitation, in this research, we want to assume the construction of peace as the opening of spaces to recompose human relationships (Leredach, 1997). This, added to the potentially transformative capacity of the body, leads to a work proposal in which one's own embodied experiences can be communicated and become known through creative processes and psychosocial accompaniment as offered by Dance Movement Therapy. Therefore, once the experience of the group process is over, the present research reaffirms DMT as a constructive approach in support of migrants and, in a more general way, it could be concluded that the work from Dance Movement Therapy is intimately connected with the constant revision and construction of our relational intersubjective reality; DMT in itself is a proposal for the configuration of a form of citizenship based on trust, empathy and human coexistence, which contributes its grain of sand to the creation of presents and futures where life becomes possible.

Acknowledgements

Ethics

The basic principles that govern this research are freedom, honesty, and responsibility, in accordance with the Code of Good Research Practices (CBPR) of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona UAB. Therefore, I have designed a protocol that describes the objectives of the research, the characteristics of its development and the process of collecting, storing, and protecting data of people who have voluntarily decided to participate. With this, I express my commitment to keep data in confidentiality, in accordance with what is established by the protection of personal data's regulations. Likewise, I promise to safeguard the products created during the DMT sessions, by guaranteeing their integrity, traceability, and adequate conservation (Código de buenas prácticas en la investigación (CBPR), 2020). That said, I present a model for informed consent and data protection (Annex 1) and a risk assessment protocol (Annex 2), both signed by all participants, the witness, and the researcher-therapist. Finally, I present the pre and post semi-structured interviews models that I created as one of the methodological resources to collect data (Annexes 3 & 4).

Annex 1. Informed consent and data protection

Yo, _____ declaro que:

1. He sido informada e invitada a participar de las sesiones de Danza Movimiento Terapia que se realizarán del 27 de enero al 16 de junio de 2022, en el marco del convenio de cooperación educativa para la realización de prácticas académicas entre la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona y la Asociación Mujeres Pa'Lante.
2. Soy consciente que se realizará una sesión por semana, con una duración de 90 minutos. Las sesiones se llevarán a cabo en La Casita, sede de la asociación ubicada en L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, en la calle Cruz Roja, 8. Asimismo, reconozco a Catherine Sophia Castellanos Montenegro como la terapeuta/investigadora responsable del proceso.

3. Entiendo que la Danza Movimiento Terapia es un tipo de psicoterapia creativa que tiene como propósito contribuir a mi bienestar físico, mental, emocional y social. Es, por tanto, un espacio de respeto, en el que puedo expresarme libremente y manifestar mis opiniones, emociones, sensaciones y percepciones.

4. Tengo pleno conocimiento que la danza-movimiento terapeuta en formación que llevará a cabo las sesiones, tiene el interés investigativo de *explorar la Danza Movimiento Terapia DMT como una estrategia de intervención psicosocial que puede contribuir a un proceso de reconciliación social*. Es por ello que propone llevar a cabo una recolección de datos que abarca lo siguiente:

- Entrevista antes de iniciar el proceso
- Entrevista una vez terminado el proceso
- Registro de la experiencia, tanto escrita como audiovisual

5. Acepto compartir el material creado por mí durante las sesiones. Al finalizar, la investigadora podrá registrar mediante video, fotografía y/o escaneado, todo el material surgido durante las sesiones, que podrá servir como insumo para la investigación.

6. Se me ha asegurado que se mantendrá la confidencialidad de mis datos y que mi nombre será asociado a un número de serie, lo cual significa que las respuestas no podrán ser conocidas por otras personas ni tampoco ser identificadas en la fase de publicación de resultados.

7. Los datos y material recolectado se guardarán vía electrónica por un tiempo de cinco (5) años desde la fecha de publicación, de manera que se garantice la integridad y la seguridad, evitando también las modificaciones no autorizadas.

8. Estoy en conocimiento que no habrá retribución económica por la participación en este estudio, pero sí podré acceder y divulgar el producto final, una vez sea aceptado y publicado por la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

9. Frente a cualquier inquietud que surja durante el proceso, puedo comunicarme con la investigadora/terapeuta a su correo electrónico csophiacm28@gmail.com. En caso de querer comunicarme con otra persona, puedo contactar libremente a Belén y Catalina, coordinadoras de Primera Acogida de la Asociación Mujeres Pa'Lante.

10. Si en algún momento siento necesito algún tipo de acompañamiento psicológico y/o emocional fuera del proceso de DMT, puedo recurrir a la Asociación Mujeres Pa'Lante para recibir el seguimiento necesario.

11. Sé que puedo negar mi participación o retirarme en cualquier etapa de la investigación, sin expresión de causa ni consecuencias negativas para mí.

12. Se me ha entregado una copia del presente Consentimiento Informado, fechado y firmado por la terapeuta/investigadora. Se me han explicado las características y el objetivo del proceso.

13. He contado con el tiempo y la oportunidad para realizar preguntas y plantear las dudas necesarias. Todas las preguntas fueron respondidas a mi entera satisfacción.

14. La terapeuta/investigadora se compromete a no traspasar mis datos a otros proyectos o personas investigadoras sin mi autorización y sin previa revisión del comité de ética de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

15. He tenido la oportunidad de que una persona de confianza me apoye en la comprensión de los 14 puntos señalados antes de firmar este documento.

Con base en lo anterior, acepto voluntariamente participar de este proceso de creación e investigación.

_____   _____

Firma de la participante   Firma de la investigadora/terapeuta

Fecha: Fecha:

Ciudad: Ciudad:

_____

Firma de la testigo

Fecha:

Ciudad:

Annex 2: Risks evaluation.

Dado que la presente investigación se ha planteado con una metodología de investigación artística; se parte de la premisa que el producto final será resultado de un proceso colectivo de creación. Es por ello que se quiso identificar y evaluar los posibles riesgos que puedan presentarse durante el proceso, para así establecer unos acuerdos mutuos y un plan de trabajo que priorice la seguridad y tranquilidad de las participantes.

Una vez sopesado los posibles riesgos, se proponen los siguientes acuerdos:

1. En caso de realizar videos y/o fotografías, no se mostrarán las caras de las participantes, a excepción de que expresen lo contrario.

2. No se registrará físicamente el estado legal de las participantes.

3. A cada sesión se llegará con ropa cómoda, medias antideslizantes e hidratación.

4. En caso de no poder asistir, la participante informará previamente tanto a la terapeuta como al grupo.

5. Habrá confidencialidad en el grupo y no se divulgará lo compartido fuera de la sesión de DMT.

6. Las sesiones iniciarán y finalizarán puntualmente a la hora acordada.

7. Se hablará en primera persona y no nos referiremos a otra participante del grupo en tercera persona.

8. Si alguna integrante del grupo se siente removida, expuesta y/o sensible; el espacio estará disponible unos minutos después de terminada la sesión, por si quiere permanecer allí. Asimismo, podrán comunicarse con alguien de confianza en cualquier momento y habrá un kit de "primeros auxilios" a disposición de quien lo necesite.

En caso de que considere otros acuerdos necesarios para prevenir algún tipo de riesgo, durante la primera sesión serán puestos en común acuerdo:

_____   _____

Firma de la participante   Firma de la investigadora/terapeuta

Fecha: Fecha:

Ciudad: Ciudad

_____

Firma de la testigo

Fecha:

Ciudad:

Annex 3: Semi-structured Interview 1 – Before the start of DMT group process.

Datos generales:

Fecha:

Identidad de género:

Edad:

Lugar de origen:

Año de salida:

Motivo de salida del lugar de origen:

Personas con quien vive (relación que tienen):

Trayectoria de vida como migrante:

¿Qué experiencias más difíciles recuerdas como migrante?

¿Qué aspectos te han ayudado en los momentos difíciles?

¿Cómo es tu relación con vecinos y comunidad en la que vives?

¿Qué similitudes existen entre tu y la sociedad en la que vives?

¿Qué diferencias existen entre tu y la sociedad en la que vives?

Cuando tienes algún problema o dificultad, ¿En quién buscarías ayuda?

¿Qué haces para solucionar tus problemas y dificultades?

¿Qué cosas te han dificultado vivir tranquilamente?

Cuando alguien está pasando por un mal momento, ¿qué haces?

Con respecto al proceso de DMT:

¿Qué esperas de estos encuentros?

¿Qué quisieras vivenciar, aprender o desarrollar durante este proceso de DMT?

¿Qué te gustaría encontrar durante las sesiones?

¿Qué te asusta o puede que no te vaya a gustar?

¿Qué normas o acuerdos consideras primordiales para iniciar este proceso?

Annex 4: Semi-structured Interview 2 – After the DMT group process.

Datos generales:

Fecha:

Identidad de género:

Edad:

Lugar de origen:

Año de salida:

Con respecto al proceso de DMT:

¿Cómo te han sentido durante el proceso?

¿Qué es lo que más te ha gustado?

¿Qué es lo que menos te ha gustado?

¿Qué aspectos positivos encontraste en este proceso de Danza Movimiento Terapia?

¿Qué cambios podrían identificar durante estos meses de encuentros en este espacio?

¿Cómo has sentido al grupo durante el proceso?

¿Qué cambios has identificado en el grupo?

¿Cómo se han sentido con estos cambios?

¿Qué aprendizajes podrían sacar de esta experiencia?

¿En qué les gustaría seguir profundizando?

Elegir hasta 10 palabras que puedan describir la experiencia vivida.

¿Cómo podrían definir la confianza?

¿Cómo podrían definir la empatía?

¿Cómo podrían definir la coexistencia?

¿De qué manera se ha expresado la confianza, la empatía y/o la coexistencia?

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