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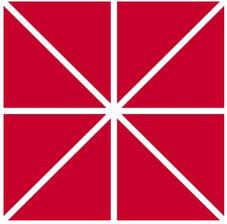
Healing Through Creativity and Creation: Drama Therapy as Treatment for Individuals with Eating Disorders

Hayley Werner

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Healing Through Creativity and Creation: Drama Therapy as Treatment for Individuals with Eating Disorders

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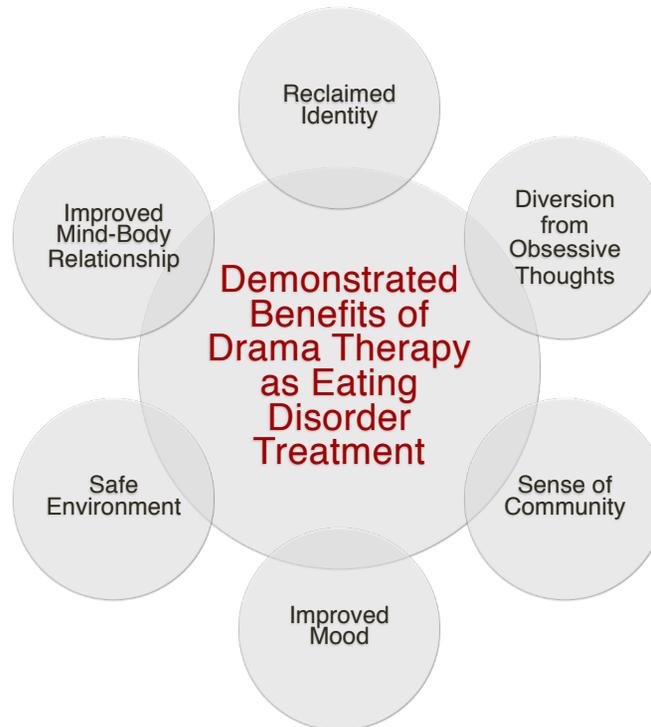
Thesis: Drama therapy is a valid psychotherapeutic option for individuals with eating disorders given the therapy's indirectly targeted methods of treatment through support and community, scientifically beneficial physical activities, and a creative, emotional outlet beneficial to improving the wellbeing and mind-body relationship of those with eating disorders.

Main Arguments:

Drama therapy has been demonstrated as an effective method of treatment for individuals with eating disorders in European countries and in Canada. When conducted appropriately, incorporating the full physical body, identifying role profiles, and performing and creating theatrical pieces assists in the psychological mending of the mind and the body and promotes healthy perspective of one's body image. Drama therapy also provides a productive emotional and creative outlet.

Feminism in DT ED Treatment:

Given the high proportion of women vs men receiving eating disorder diagnoses, it is important to acknowledge this gender bias in treatment. All-female treatment groups and media literacy teachings can aid in ED treatment as a means of dismantling potential causes of the disordered eating behaviors. Future programs should see how the concepts of feminism can be further integrated beyond hosting sex-specific treatment groups.



Benefit results from: Pellicciari, Alessandro, et al. "Drama Therapy and Eating Disorders: A Historical Perspective and an Overview of a Bolognese Project for Adolescents."
Biancolini, Renée. *Her Body Becomes Her(s): A Drama Therapy Program for Female Adolescents*.
Mora, Marisol, et al. "Assessment of Two School-Based Programs to Prevent Universal Eating Disorders: Media Literacy and Theatre-Based Methodology in Spanish Adolescent Boys and Girls."

Methodology:

For this paper, I completed comprehensive research on DSM-V ED criteria and other symptoms and experiences as well as common drama therapy practices to create a foundation. Then, I analyzed several existing eating disorder drama therapy programs in Europe and Canada. These programs were compared with psychological literature on eating disorders, and I located common themes and evident treatment advantages based on participant testimony.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Given the demonstrated benefits of the treatment abroad, further research and implementation of DT as ED treatment in America should be the next step. Incorporating drama therapy into the public eye would make viable treatment available to more high-risk individuals, potentially saving young lives and increasing the wellbeing of the patient population.

*"Eating disorders represent an attempt to maintain control over the body and perceive it as a part of the person's entire being." (Justine Reel, *Eating Disorders: An Encyclopedia of Causes, Treatment and Prevention*)*