

# Exploring the use of Creative Arts Therapy in treating traumatised children



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# Drama and Movement Therapy



*potential  
Space*

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## Speech & Drama

- Designed to develop creativity, confidence and communication.
- This is a teaching aid.

## Dramatherapy

- Dramatherapy primarily focuses on emotional well-being and healing.
- “Dramatherapists recognise that dramatherapy is a unique form of psychotherapy in which creativity, play, movement, voice, storytelling, dramatisation and the performance arts have a central position within the therapeutic relationship” From HPC Standards of proficiency.

# Creative Arts Therapy

- The arts therapies (music, art and drama) can be defined as action therapies in that they are not talking therapies: instead, clients explore issues and experiences through the medium of an art form.

The application of drama and movement therapy can support people in the following:

- Creative expression
- Social skills
- Movement with touch
- Use of drama, play and stories



How can stories help?

# Use of drama, play and stories

Taking on a role in a story or within a play context is a way to experiment with issues affecting your life or development.

Children who have difficulty playing are supported in developing this skill through the session process.

# Example case study

Lee

9 yrs old

Vibrant, inquisitive nature

→ Traumatic incident (car accident) death of father

Lee stopped using words to communicate, disengaged and out of reach.

Lee made a link that being expressive and talkative was dangerous.

Referred for creative arts therapy.

# Safety the first key

- **Most theorists (Adler 1979; Clarkson 1995) agree that the working alliance is the basic requirement for therapy to proceed and that it therefore, must be present in any therapeutic relationship. Simply stated, it refers to the negotiation of boundaries and ground rules.**

- What made Tiddalik laugh?
- How did Lee find his voice?

**Theme of story:**  
**it is safe and healthy to express yourself**

# Enactment of the story

Lee takes on the role of Tiddalik

Metaphor allows an indirect approach or access to a difficulty. It allows a way of dealing problems that can't be faced directly head on or in a confrontational manner.

From a door that is a bridge. (The sesame approach to drama and movement therapy.) By Kharris Decker

## Difficulty revealed through the metaphor

<b>Tiddalik</b>	<b>Lee</b>
Tiddalik drank all the water – the land had dried up.	Emptiness, difficulty for Lee since loss of father.
Animals tried various ways to make Tiddalik laugh.	Adults were very preoccupied with getting Lee to talk.
Tiddalik would not laugh. He held on to the water.	Lee would not speak, he held everything inside.
Platypus awoke and grumbled “ I was trying to get some sleep”	Although Lee shut down, there was something moving inside him.
Tiddalik laughed and water poured out of his mouth. The grass & flowers grew.	Lee connected with Tiddalik and felt he had permission to speak. The opportunity for resolution began.

‘It is in playing that the individual – child or adult- uses his whole personality in creative activity, and it is in the creative activity he discovers his self’  
Sutherland 1980

# Information about drama and movement therapy;

## **Singapore**

Kaleidoscope therapy centre has a multidisciplinary team of therapists working with children experiencing various difficulties; it incorporates drama and movement therapy as part of its holistic approach [www.kaleidoscope.com.sg/](http://www.kaleidoscope.com.sg/)

## **Worldwide**

The Sesame Institute is a registered charity. It promotes and oversees the use of Drama and Movement Therapy, working to preserve and develop the ethical standards of its approach. <http://www.sesameinstitute.org/>