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The Integration of Hip-Hop Culture and Cyphering in Dance/Movement Therapy

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The Integration of Hip-Hop Culture and Cyphering in

Dance/Movement Therapy

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Abstract

This thesis explores the benefits of using hip-hop culture and cyphering within

dance/movement therapy. Beginning with a discussion of hip-hop culture, the thesis

describes how break dancing and the cypher developed in New York City in response to

violence and environmental uncertainty. These forms continue to provide a crucial element

of communication and non-verbal expression among at-risk youth. The thesis suggests that

hip-hop may be used as a culturally sensitive form of therapy for adolescents, and examines

the benefits of the integration of the cypher into dance/movement therapy practice.

Keywords: hip-hop, hip-hop culture, cypher, break-dancing, dance/movement therapy, inner

city, adolescents

I did not start out as a hip-hop dancer. Throughout my child hood I focused on modern dance and ballet training. However, it was not until I became an adult and discovered hip-hop dance that I found my true passion. There was something about the music, in combination with the movement quality of hip-hop, which drew me in. It resonated in my body and helped me with my emotional regulation. My natural and authentic movement patterns flourished with my training in hip-hop, and it was the catalyst for who I am as a mover today. I was able to create expression from something that was familiar to me and felt good in my body. Hip-hop dance became my therapy and has allowed me to create meaningful connections with others. I feel empowered through hip-hop; it helped me to capture the true essence of who I am and gave me a yearning to help others achieve that same sense of self. As a dance teacher, it became important to me to provide my students with the chance to use hip-hop as a coping skill. This is what they loved and gravitated towards. I saw the same response to hip-hop in them that I experienced when I was young. I used hip-hop as an ally in my teaching instead of ignoring it because of its rough reputation. I saw its benefits and I wondered how else hip-hop could be used to promote health and healing.

Hip-hop was born in the South Bronx in the 1970s (Driver, 2000). Since then, hip-hop has been an ever growing and developing cultural aspect of New York City and cities around the world. Founder Clive Campbell, known in the community as DJ Kool Herc, used a combination

of hard funk, Latin percussion and rhyming lyrics to develop a new style of music called hip-hop. Pioneering DJs, such as Kool Herc, Grandmaster Flash, and Afrika Bambaataa, changed the music scene, giving their individual twists on sound qualities and mixes with turntables and vinyl, thus codifying hip- hop music (Driver, 2000).

Hip-hop culture consists of three categories (Schloss, 2009). The first category is the art forms that were prevalent in African- American, Afro-Caribbean, and Latino communities during the 1970s in New York City. These art forms include fashion, visual arts, customs, and mass media. (Schloss, 2009). The second category refers to popular music, rap, and hip-hop. The third category refers to the racial demographic of urban communities which were primarily African American and Latino. This generation developed the phrasing of the hip-hop attitude to make reference to the behavior of the African American youth. (Schloss, 2009). The elements within the hip-hop culture represent an artistic statement or depict a philosophy of an individual. Hip-hop is described as "a shared idea, behavior, a shared way of viewing the world" (Lefebvre, H.S., 2011). These include a linguistic code for communication, deejaying, beat boxing, break dancing, graffiti, MCing (rapping), and street knowledge (Viega, 2015). Hip-hop was built on the foundation of rebellion and socioeconomic oppression (Williams, D., 2009). Hip-hop was a gateway for people of color to cope with the oppressed and marginalized lives prevalent in urban communities (Viega, 2015).

Hip-hop is defined as "a youth arts movement that engages 'cultural revisioning'- the foregrounding (both consciously and unconsciously) of African-centered concepts in response to cultural takeovers, ruptures, and appropriations…an expression that embodies those attitudes, languages, dress, and gestures affiliated with street cultures" (Page 42, Hadley, S., Yancy., 2012). Hip-hop developed as a creative outlet for urban communities to cope with their circumstances and form identity (Hadley, S., Yancy, 2012). It is a vehicle to discuss deep history and valuable elements of culture that the public might not speak about (Hadley, S., 2012). The youth culture is interrelated with the hip-hop culture. Adolescents in urban communities use elements of hip-hop in their everyday lives as a means of expression, release, and communication. Youth assimilated break dancing and hip-hop dancing because it was "designed not only for teenagers, but by teenagers" (Page 11, Schloss, 2009). Hip-hop culture gives youth a greater sense of control over their circumstances and power over adversity (Schloss, 2009). It also gives youth the ability to cope with their environment by channeling their energy (Hadley, S., Yancy, 2012). The hip-hop culture encompasses things youths are interested in, such as music, dancing, identity formation, sexuality, art, and fashion (Schloss, 2009). However, it is viewed negatively because of its ability to form rebellion, non-conformity to social norms, and its graphic and violent nature (Schloss, 2009). Youth cultures in urban communities primarily encounter hostile and unsafe

environments due to the high levels of violence, poverty and abuse

(Daniel, S., Scott-Moncrieff, S., Camilleri. 2007).

Youth in urban communities are often described as being at-risk.

The term "at-risk" is defined as, "being in danger for negative future

events" (Page 17, Daniel, S., Scott-Moncrieff, S., Camilleri. 2007). Youth

are exposed to various risk factors in their communities that may have a

negative impact on their lives. Some of these risk factors include low

socioeconomic status, reduced access to adequate services such as health

care, lack of insurance, poor schools, substance abuse, violence, and

unstable home lives (Daniel, S., Scott-Moncrieff, S., Camilleri. 2007).

These factors can increase rates of "depression, educational failure,

addiction, unemployment, incarceration, poverty, and death" (Page 23,

Daniel, S., Scott-Moncrieff, S., Camilleri. 2007).   There is a lack of

resources in these dense cities. Not every young person has access to

support groups that could help improve their quality of life. Youth are

exposed to stressors that effect their school lives, family dynamics, and

psychosocial development (Daniel, S., Scott-Moncrieff, S., Camilleri.

2007).   Fifty percent of all at-risk children and young adults live in larger

cities. This exposure to stressors can correlate to negative behaviors such

as aggression, anxiety, learning difficulties, delinquency, and poor social

skills (Daniel, S., Scott-Moncrieff, S., Camilleri. 2007). The majority of

inner city adolescents identify with ghetto culture. This encompasses a

configuration of norms, values, and habits that are disturbingly rooted in

mainstream values such as hyper masculinity, the aggressive assertion and defense of respect, extreme individualism, and materialism (Patterson, O., 2015).

This population is in need of an outlet to promote connection, community, identity, creativity, and to release tension (Schloss, 2009). Hip-hop has been this outlet for many since the 1970s (Schloss, 2009). The hip-hop culture has helped at-risk youth to develop resiliency despite their challenging circumstances. It has been a way for people to struggle against neglect and poor living conditions. It is rarely acknowledged that these bad conditions did not only provide a general emotional inspiration for hip hop; they also provided specific opportunities that creative youths exploited to create their art and their lives (Schloss, 2009).

In the 1970s, New York City streets were consumed by gang related violence (Schloss, 2009). The youth began to throw rebel parties, as an escape from this violence and to bring people together (Schloss, 2009). Breaking dancing, also called B-boying, was developed as a form of expression in response to the daily violence. B-boying is a repertoire of movements that consist of rocking, top-rocking, grooving, tricks, spinning, and holds (Driver, 2000). Both males and females can be B-boys, although some women prefer to be called B-girls (Driver, 2000). B-boys move during the break of a song in which all vocals and non-percussion instruments fall silent, hence the name break dancing. Break dancing includes a combination of fast footwork, body spins, and robotic freezing

(Driver, 2000). Power moves refer to acrobatic tricks that require physical strength and endurance to execute. (Driver, 2000). Break dancing allows youth to cope and channel their emotions and energy into their movements. They translate external experiences, stress, fear, and other negative emotions into various styles of hip-hop dance including krumping, clowning, and popping and locking. Break dancers train in various styles of hip-hop to expand their movement repertoire. All of these styles of hip-hop dance have some elements of strong and aggressive movements. Many of the movements reflect or mimic an aggressive or violent nature because the youth imitate the violence that they witness in their everyday lives. All of the stressors that youths experience in their environment affect their cognitive health. When they seek an outlet such as dance, their mental attitudes and stress are released through their movements (Daniel, S., Scott-Moncrieff, S., Camilleri. 2007). The creation of break dancing was inevitable because "dance and movement are heavily imbedded in the hip-hop culture. Hip-hop culture uses many forms of physical movement for non-verbal expression" (Schloss, 2009, page 9).

B-boys and B-girls create crews, groups of breakers who dance, perform, battle, and tour together. A crew functions like a family, supporting each other in the midst of adversity (Cooper, M., Kramer, N., Rokafella, 2005). The crew encourages members to grow physically and mentally, as individuals, and especially as a team. They push each other to

prevail over obstacles, gain more knowledge of their craft, and to become

stronger. (Cooper, M., Kramer, N., Rokafella, 2005). Women have joined

together to create their own crews. Many of these women come from

different parts of the world and have bonded through their love of break-

dancing. They use break dancing as a tool for female empowerment and

self-love in this male dominated field. Many women are taught that they

cannot do what the men do in break dancing. They are told that they do

not have the physical strength to do tricks, flips, or holds. However,

women have surpassed these stereotypes time and again by demonstrating

their ability to do exactly what the men do in male crews. Women have

acquired the physical and mental endurance it takes to learn, train, and

later perfect their break dancing skills (Lefebvre, H.S., 2011). Breaking

dancing also entails a level of aggression and competitiveness, which does

not fit in the gender role of how women "should" behave (Lefebvre, H.S.,

2011). However, everyone that break dances is on the same playing field

when they battle and compete (Lefebvre, H.S., 2011). Women can gain

just as much respect as men, solely by their skills and abilities. Female

crews break all boundaries and limits that have been set on women by

societal norms. B-girl crews provide the opportunity for expression, to

relate to other women, and to boost confidence without the pressure of

conforming to gender roles. These women have overcome obstacles such

as homelessness, poor socialization, poverty, lack of family, lack of self-

love, low self-esteem, and lack of encouragement (Cooper, M., Kramer,

N., Rokafella, 2005). Through the formation of crews, break-dancers find a community and a support system which otherwise may be missing (Cooper, M., Kramer, N., Rokafella, 2005).

Break dancing developed what is known in the hip-hop culture as the cypher. The cypher has many definitions, but it is typically a circle of people who collectivity support each other as they display their break dancing moves. Cyphering is when the break-dancer uses movement, space, and their internal connection to one another as "a collective enterprise that mixes improvisation, competition, and mutual support" (Schloss p.99). The dancer pulls from their knowledge base and shows their unique style as a break-dancer. The dancer has thirty seconds to showcase their combinations. During cyphers, there is a strong emphasis on competition and performance (Schloss, 2009). The cypher can last as long as the group permits. It is solely based off of the energy reciprocated between dancers and observers. The power of the cypher comes from its ability to be informal yet possess non-verbal energy that generates connectivity (Schloss, 2009).

Cyphering brings people together from various ethnic, racial, cultural, and occupational backgrounds (Johnson, K.I., 2009). A cypher is a dance circle and an exchange of energy and passion. (B-boy Budda-LCSW, Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 2012). The beauty of the cypher is witnessing artistry and cultures mixing together. The break dancers must maintain a high level of energy to hold and carry the cypher. The force the

cypher holds is unseen but profound. It is a "meeting of souls, getting together as one" (Page 3, Johnson, K.I., 2009). It is filled with energy, emotion, spiritually, self-awareness, self-release, challenges, insecurities and embodiment (Johnson, K.I., 2009). Cyphers entail a strong connection to music and the ability to have musicality. It requires an attitude of rawness; however, one must have respect for everyone within the cypher. Love accompanies everything that is performed or witnessed in the cypher. (Johnson, K.I., 2009).

The following quotes are from two participants' personal experiences in a cypher.

It's a moment for that person or people, whoever is in that circle to shine and be as expressive as they want to be without being judged. I've seen people go in the center, eyes closed, and they are focused on what they are hearing and letting their body just flow and go off. The way I see it, the reason why the people are in a circle is because everything is full circle, you give support and you show support. When you're in the circle, everyone is clapping or shouting 'Yes!' and showing that person love and support. There are moments of anxiety, anticipation and "hypeness" when thinking about entering the cypher and it brings people together. I like to use cyphers when I teach or run auditions to show that we are all connected we are all dancers and that there is still love. Showing love full circle in the cypher. Love is

therapeutic. Love is full circle. I think the cypher is very effective and I've seen it (Cruz, C., March 12th , 2017, personal interview).

Everybody in a cypher should be welcoming, they should be clapping and encouraging people to express themselves. Nobody is going to look the same in a cypher. Everybody just does their own thing because we're all individuals. I think seeing everybody's take on what they do in a cypher also enhances someone else's creativity. Actually going in the cypher takes the most courage. Someone who is petrified to speak in public may be able to go into the cypher and just go off. Everyone shows who they are in the cypher. Whatever it is I'm doing in the cypher, that is who I am. The cypher builds confidence, enhances individually and makes its okay to be different. I think the cypher also relaxes people too. The cypher forms a sense of community. The cypher is great for physical fitness. The cypher builds relationships and positive experiences. I feel like for someone who has had so many bad experiences in their life, when you have something that is positive like the cypher it creates a sense that this feeling is normal and its okay to feel and it validates their feelings" (Cruz,C. Waldie, A. 2017, March 12th. Personal Interview).

Within a cypher, the dancer can never be wrong (Cooper, M., Kramer, N., Rokafella, 2005). When the dancer becomes connected to oneself and the movement, all instincts are valid (Schloss, 2009). Whether one is a spectator or breaking in the center, they are a part of the cypher. As a participant, there

is non-verbal support that occurs when the circle is developing. There are rules of the cypher and one must learn these through observation and participation. When two people are battling in the cypher they should have respect for the space and time use of the other breakers. The worst thing is for dancers to invade each other's space and time. There is a high level of respect and courtesy during a cypher, despite the element of competition (Cooper, M., Kramer, N., Rokafella, 2005). The respect for one another in the cypher builds connections. It promotes creativity, socialization, connection, encourages ambition, determination, self-expression, and creates community (B-boy Budda-LCSW, Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 2012) (Johnson, K.I., 2009). There is always mutual support in the form of clapping and chanting for both dancers during the cypher as a sign of respect. The cypher is a force that captivates its audience (B-boy Budda-LCSW, Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 2012). It does this through the collective process in which the movers and the witnesses foster connection from learning and creating with each other. Cyphers have the ability to create new knowledge through socialization, externalization, and interaction (Lefebvre, H.S., 2011). Everyone within the cypher is reading and observing one another to expand their own knowledge and build their skill sets (Lefebvre, H.S., 2011). Witnessing and observing the soloist is captivating when the soloist displays their raw feelings, talents, and skills through their dance. Raw describes a real feeling from the core that is seen in the break-dancer's expression (Lefebvre, H.S., 2011).

Hip-hop culture is being integrated into psychotherapy and education (Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 2012, Schloss, 2009). There are many clinicians, educators, social workers, and therapists using hip hop, break dancing, and hip-hop music in their interventions with adolescents. Issues of relationships, loss, death and betrayal are frequent themes in rap, rock, and pop music. These issues correlate to what adolescents are enduring as they begin to take responsibility for their own lives and decisions (Mcferran-Skewes, 2004, p. 145, Malekoff, 2014). Using music, poetry, rap, and hip-hop promotes therapeutic self-disclosure and interpersonal connections. These expressive art forms allow a state of consciousness to promote open discussions of feelings, the revelation of serious issues, and the identification of solutions (Malekoff, 2014). The use of hip-hop and cyphering supports the therapeutic relationship because it fosters non-verbal connections. The therapist can build rapport and competence working with an adolescent population by using cyphers to meet the youth where they are. The cypher allows the therapist to see the youth in an element that they relate to and create a safe and interactive environment with each other. For youth, hip-hop is a universal language (Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 2012). Various creative arts modalities are attempting to use hip-hop with youth in their settings as a tool to relate to urban populations. Hip-hop is used to "protect children from the possibility of debilitating stressors that they face (Page 50, Daniel, S., Scott-Moncrieff, S., Camilleri. 2007). It can be a vessel to help adolescents manage and cope

with their environment living in urban communities (Daniel, S., Scott-

Moncrieff, S., Camilleri. 2007).

Hip-hop music and cyphering are being used as interventions by

music therapists. It is important for clinicians to be culturally competent,

and have an understanding of the needs and cultures of the populations

with which they work. Despite the rise of cultural competency, there is

skepticism about integrating rap and hip-hop into the therapeutic process.

Rap music often contains violent, provocative, and hostile themes. This

can make it difficult to integrate rap and hip-hop into therapeutic settings

based on institutional rules and regulations. However, musical expression

of rap music has "made an indelible mark on global culture" (Page 40,

Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 2012). Clinicians can increase their level of

competency by expanding their knowledge on what expressive outlets

clientele use to cope with their environments. The use of hip-hop music

has allowed adolescents who have experienced trauma and abuse to have a

creative outlet for emotional expression (Viega, 2015). The musical

decisions and choices that the adolescents make reflect their psychological

and developmental states. Music therapists have gained a deeper

understanding of rap and hip-hop not solely for their entertainment

purposes, but for the "musical, cultural, experiential, and relational

dynamics that occur for people who deeply identify with" this style of

music (Viega, 2015). In terms of the therapeutic relationship, using hip-

hop is an "essential link to their cultural and individual identities" (Viega,

2015). The integration of rap and hip-hop for music therapists helps builds rapport with their clientele and is essential in working with a family or child that identifies as coming from a ghetto culture (Viega, 2015). How is a clinician supposed to create an empathic connection without using what is familiar and enjoyable to their clients? There is a therapeutic benefit to learning and integrating aspects of a client's culture as a tool, instead of disregarding it. It is important for clinicians to be able to understand their clients' world experiences, views, norms, cultures, and beliefs in order to assess and determine a course of treatment that will benefit their overall health.   (Viega, 2005).

In the field of social work, interventions using break dancing and cyphering have been integrated into schools with troubled youth (Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 2012). Youth have expressed that, "Hip-hop was there for us to use, to express who we were and to use the dance cypher as a staging ground to explore our own identities" (Page 132, Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 2012). Social workers have used what was relatable and interesting to this population to address the issues in their communities such as high suicide rates, drug and alcohol use, sexual abuse, family violence, and loss of culture and cultural pride (Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 2012). Despite all of the adversities in these youths' lives, they were eager to try new things. "Hip-hop is adaptable and flexible in a way that speaks to creating a sense of self and culture in the modern world" (Page 133, Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 201). It is a culture with which many urban communities identify. Hip-hop

can manifest negative emotions, and provide an opportunity to tell one's story (Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 2012). It is a way to experience the deep seeded history of one's culture (Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 2012). Studies have shown that youth feel an empowered desire to continue break dancing and cyphering because of their personal experiences integrating hip-hop in their learning environments (Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 2012). These interventions within the social work field have allowed for positive results to occur because "the honesty and passion being shared between real people is what gets the work done and creates an internal spark of change" (Page 136, Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 2012).

Using hip-hop and cyphering as a therapeutic intervention for troubled youth can encourage emotional expression and develop resiliency. In social work studies, youth were encouraged to take elements that they acquired from dancing in the cypher and translate their new knowledge to real world experiences (Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 2012. For example, they were taught to mutually support one another when someone was dancing in the center of the cypher. The idea of mutual aid translates into their daily lives as a way to build healthy relationships with others (Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 2012). Through the use of cypher workshops, youth were able to reach a higher potential for themselves and improve their academic lives, coping skills, self-esteem, improve self-regulation, develop their strengths, and gained skills to provide social encouragement and support. Dancing in the cypher is a form of positive risk taking that

builds confidence and encouragement to try again and not set one's self up

for failure (Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 2012). Essentially, there is a shared fear

and anxiety when entering a cypher amongst the youth. Jumping into the

middle of the cypher is the hardest part when participating in one.

However, when there is overall mutual support, youth will be compelled

to take more of these positive risks in the center of the cypher. The

experience becomes less about competition and instead enhances the

cypher's therapeutic qualities (Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 2012). Overall, risk-

taking skills are hardly ever positive in youth culture because they usually

involve succumbing to negative reactions and consequences. Creating this

safe space within the cypher for mutual support helps youths take a risk

that will not lead to negative consequences, but connect them to others and

to themselves (Hadley, S., Yancy, G., 2012). Cyphering helps youth

externalize their positive or negative internal experiences and allows them

to cope with their environments. Cyphering and hip-hop culture offers

youth a way to know that they are not alone in pain and suffering but that

they can have support from their community and peers (Hadley, S.,

Yancy, G., 2012).

Youth in inner-city communities are faced with many more

obstacles than those outside of these communities (McCracken, D.,

Barcinas, J.D.T., 1991). Four million children within the ages of three

to17 experience violence in their every day lives (Jordan, J.V., Walker, J.,

Hartling, L.M., 2004). Inner city youth are in need of resources that

increase their quality of life. They need services that will positively impact

their social, cognitive and physical health. If at-risk youth are continuously

exposed to negative stressors and do not find a way to release emotions

and energy, how can they be successful in their education, careers, or have

healthy family dynamics? How can these youth build healthy relationships

with others if all they experience is violence and unstable relationships?

Adolescents are shaped by their environments and will continuously

repeat behavioral and relational patterns that they are exposed to (Daniel,

S., Scott-Moncrieff, S., Camilleri. 2007). At-risk youth see what is

constantly around them, and this is all they will ever know if they do not

have some form of protective factors in their lives. It is important to

provide an outlet for inner city youth to release stress and tension, promote

empathic connections, boost creativity, and promote healthy socialization.

The combination of the hip-hop culture with therapeutic interventions

provides adolescents with this outlet. The integration of cyphering into

dance/movement therapy (DMT) can be the outlet that inner city youth

need.

Dance/movement therapy aids in the overall well-being of a person

by addressing all aspects of health including physical, cognitive, and

social dimensions. DMT gives individuals the opportunity to explore their

inner selves and bring awareness to their conscious minds. This fosters the

ability to create positive connections with others and the therapist. DMT

integrates intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences for overall health,

and allows for a range of emotions and feeling to emerge (Bernstein P.L., 1986). Movement patterns involve emotional overtones that have deeper meanings. (Chaiklin, S., Wengrower, H., 2009). DMT can help in the processing of the emotional tonalities that emerge during a session. Dance therapists are equipped to assess emotional modulations within sessions. Dance therapists can then formulate interventions to help with emotional regulation and awareness. Processing of emotional tonalities through the body gives an individual an alternate felt experience other than mental processing. This can help an individual create new muscle memory and help them to become more present in the moment. Processing in the body can promote regulation, modulation, awareness, self-acceptance, and authenticity. DMT allows one to have a healthy release of emotion through movement. This release is always validated within the realm of DMT. Validation of ideas, thoughts or behaviors is not something inner city youth receive in their lives. They tend to experience a paradox of being rebellious but internally craving attention at the same time (Malekoff, A., 2014). A dance therapist can provide validation of the adolescent's inner feelings, provide interventions to address therapeutic goals, and guide youth to build a positive outlet for expression. It is important for youth to have an emergence of their intrapersonal self because their young years are where they experience self-discovery, self-exploration, and identity formation (Schloss, 2009). In the following

interview, a question was posed about the emotional content in hip-hop and if it is therapeutic to release these emotions.

> Sometimes I can separate personal and character but this was so real. I used this piece to help aid my way of thinking and how I approached my personal situation. My character, she is resilient, she is strong, she is all these things and I can be that too. Situations like this are therapeutic for me because I have to look within myself and reflect on why certain things are happening in my life. Dance is definitely a way for me to get through certain situation and go through emotions and be able to artistically express myself. Dance is impactful. Even viewing dance is therapeutic for me (Waldie, A., March 12, 2017, personal interview)

> When I choreograph, I always try to relate it to something I have experienced because if it is something that you are familiar with and it is something that you are passionate about and when you perform it, you will be able to exude it like no other. It's in you, it is in your mind, it is in your past. It is also a way to express yourself, which you may not be able to do verbally. There are things I've never told anyone before, however I could put a piece together and be able to express that and at least feel better that I expressed and got it out. Hip-hop is a form to express yourself in a way that you can do non-verbally. It is a different form of communication to help relieve stress, tension, and what you are holding onto inside. We should make more of an effort to

utilize hip-hop for expression (Cruz. C., Waldie, A. 2017, March, 12th. Personal interview).

As reflected in the participant's responses, emotional expression is an important aspect of hip-hop and the stories told through the choreographic experience. Their responses show that, even with structured dance, there is room for emotional processing through movement and storytelling. They were able to convey an emotion through their dances and process their interpersonal selves.

DMT builds a bridge from the unconscious mind to the conscious state of being (Bernstein P.L., 1986). DMT can help inner city youth manage their unconscious feelings about their life circumstances and promote physical embodiment of these feelings. Within a therapeutic setting, youth will be able to channel their energy and let it manifest in movement without judgment. DMT is highly effective with adolescents because it uses the body to assess nonverbal behavior and uses movement as treatment (Loman, 1998).

DMT can also become a protective factor for inner city youth. Protective factors are considered to be any type of support system that an individual has in their lives, which includes anything from family to cultural beliefs (Malekoff, A., 2014). Just one protective factor in a youth's life can aid and promote resiliency (Daniel, S., Scott-Moncrieff, S., Camilleri. 2007). Having a source, like DMT, can allow inner city youth to gain back a sense of control over their lives by taking control

over their physical body and their body movements. Body movement is the main source for communication (Homann, K.B., 2010). Inner city youth need a vessel to help them to communicate and DMT can be that tool.

DMT is an outlet for individuals to express intrapersonal experiences. It allows group participants to externalize their experiences through movement (Anderson, A. N., Kennedy, H., Dewitt, P., Anderson, E., & Wamboldt, M. Z., 2014). Cyphering can help facilitate the externalization of internal feelings by using a bodily felt experience to have a sense of release and evoke connection (Anderson, A. N., Kennedy, H., Dewitt, P., Anderson, E., & Wamboldt, M. Z., 2014). Youth often display their energy and emotions with negative behaviors because they have no other means in which they can translate their emotions (Daniel, S., Scott-Moncrieff, S., Camilleri. 2007). Hip-hop was created as a way to translate non-verbal experiences and externalize them into rap, hip-hop dance, fashion, language, and art (Viega, 2015). The merging of hip-hop and a therapeutic environment can help externalize youths' inner negative feelings and emotions in a safe environment. In a therapeutic environment, the opportunity to create positive change occurs through interventions that are a popular aspect of youth culture. Using what is familiar for youth can assist in rerouting their mindsets to use a therapeutic outlet so that they can express themselves through a familiar art form (Viega, 2015). Hip-

hop can become a form of positive relief from stressors that inner city youth face in their violent and harmful environments.

Using hip-hop and cyphering in DMT can address many therapeutic goals for inner city youth. Hip-hop culture is the lens through which youth seek meaning, acceptance, and belonging, which makes hip-hop an important tool for therapists to further develop competence (Williams, D., 2009). Hip-hop strengthens its audience, promotes resiliency, and creates a sense of community based on commonalties (Kobin, C., Tyson, E., 2006). Integration of hip-hop culture and hip-hip music that adolescents can relate to can help dance therapists meet the youth where they are so they can understand their overall cognitive and social states. The integration of hip-hop can help the therapist to see how inner city youth cope, manage emotions, and see their point of view of their environment. Integration of what is familiar to the youth will give the dance therapist a lens through which to assess and formulate effective interventions. Hip-hop can be used as an assessment tool in gaining a deeper understanding of the youth's experience. Within the DMT cypher, participants can use whichever style of hip-hop dance they desire and can incorporate other dance styles as well. The DMT cypher does not only have to include B-boying but can include various other hip-hop dance styles and/or improvised movements. The DMT cypher will allow for an individual's full movement repertoire to be explored instead of limiting what movements they can execute. This is the prominent difference

between a street cypher, which is more focused on B-boying movement

and tricks, and the DMT cypher. Unlike a street cypher, the DMT cypher

will not focus on competition and battling, but on the exploration of

movement and enjoying, supporting, and celebrating the movement of

others. Participants are encouraged to hold the space physically and

energetically so that everyone has the opportunity to be a mover and a

witness. The youth need an opportunity to be seen and be validated

through their movement. This is important to foster mutual aid,

socialization, and increase positive regard for one another (Rogers, C.,

1980). When youth learn these skills within the DMT cypher, it allows

them to create more positive and healthy relationships in their lives

outside of the therapeutic setting. Much like the street cypher, the DMT

cypher will hold the energy from its participants as a way to foster mutual

aid and empathic connection. Participants will be encouraged to support

others in a way that feels comfortable for them. This can be through

clapping, chanting, verbal affirmations, physical touch, or any other

energetic form of encouragement. The mutuality of the youth's experience

in the cypher allows for them to feel accepted and understood (Jordan,

J.V., Walker, J., Hartling, L.M., 2004). The dance/movement therapist will

create mutuality and a sense of belonging (Hadley, S., Yancy, 2012).

When everyone in the cypher is on an equal playing field, and the youth

know that everyone is there to highlight his or her strengths, it can remove

the anxiety about entering the cypher as a soloist. Participants will feel like a cohesive unit in whichever role they hold within the DMT cypher.

DMT is highly effective with social engagement on a biological level (Homann, K.B., 2010). The body's nervous system is essential to one having a sense of being and belonging. The mind and body relax when there is a mutual understanding through an embodied experience and one can access emotions and release through creativity (Homann, K.B., 2010). The cypher is a safe environment in which interactive embodied experiences help youth feel safe. They can create new insights and access emotions (Homann, K.B., 2010). The DMT cypher allows youth to feel physically and emotionally safe. Participants will have a sense of mutuality and connection through hip-hop dance because they can relate to the hip-hop culture. This will allow not only their minds to relax but their bodies and nervous systems as well. Thus, they will achieve embodied emotional expression due to biological reactions to the safe environment of the cypher (Homann, K.B., 2010).

There are many therapeutic goals that the DMT cypher can address. The first is to increase empathic connection, which is severely lacking in inner city youth. (Daniel, S., Scott-Moncrieff, S., Camilleri. 2007). Empathic connection, through interpersonal connections during a DMT session, can help build healthier and more fulfilling relationships (Elliot, R., Bohart, A.C., Watson, J.C., Greenberg, L.S., 2011). Empathy also addresses a goal of building rapport through the therapeutic relationship. It

is important for the therapist to build empathy and rapport with youth to gain a greater understanding of their needs and experiences (Elliot, R., Bohart, A.C., Watson, J.C., Greenberg, L.S., 2011, Viega, 2005). Building the therapeutic relationship increases cultural competency and helps meet the clients where they are (Viega, 2005).

The DMT cypher is an effective tool for creative expression, storytelling, and as a way to give youth the ability to experience joy and spontaneity (Viega, 2005). Joy is an effective source for play and imagination, and has the power to transform emotional states in the midst of crisis (Chaiklin, S., Wengrower, H., 2009). Play and imagination is expressed through curiosity and exploration (Chaiklin, S., Wengrower, H., 2009). Encountering something new, like the DMT cypher, will allow youth to experience joy in their movement. DMT allows for new muscular, social, and emotional activities, which paves the way for bodily emotional expression (Chaiklin, S., Wengrower, H., 2009). DMT operates on the idea that every bodily sensation has meaning. It strives to link movement and meaning to develop the connection between mind and body (Chaiklin, S., Wengrower, H., 2009). The dance therapist has the ability to welcome a client's movement qualities and open up space for movement spontaneity (Chaiklin, S., Wengrower, H., 2009). The DMT cypher will allow for play, imagination, joy and will enhance emotional expression (Chaiklin, S., Wengrower, H., 2009).

Within the DMT cypher, participants will be free to use improvisational movement and dance to express themselves. They can use various movement qualities that resonate with how they move naturally and observe different movement qualities in their peers. The participants' movements can be symbolic of how they are coping with their high-risk environments. Mirroring movements (sharing body shape) and attunement (sharing muscle tension changes) with clients can promote kinesthetic empathy and increase socialization within the cypher (Elliot, R., Bohart, A.C., Watson, J.C., Greenberg, L.S., 2011, Loman, 1998). Kinesthetic empathy is the ability of a person to be open with oneself, to mirror or echo another's movement or body shape (Chaiklin, S., Wengrower, H., 2009). It is a form of non-verbal communication that allows the client to feel that the therapist is interested in his or her feelings, movements, and thoughts (Chaiklin, S., Wengrower, H., 2009). These techniques can be used to overcome obstacles, establish relationships, and aid the treatment of the psyche (Loman, 1998). This can be used in any form of human interaction, such as a verbal conversation or in a DMT session. By using kinesthetic empathy, the dance therapist can guide the self-development of the youth which has been limited or blocked (Chaiklin, S., Wengrower, H., 2009). Both verbal and nonverbal empathy allows the participants to see that the therapist is just as involved in the therapeutic process as they are (Jordan, J.V., Walker, J., Hartling, L.M., 2004). The ability for the therapist to show their authenticity and vulnerability will convey to the

will translate in how they cope with the environment outside of the therapeutic setting. Youth thrive when given a safe and trusting environment, especially if there is a felt sense of mutual understanding (Loman, S., 1998).

Through their involvement in the DMT cypher, youth will build a greater resilience for their life circumstances. Building a resilient mindset is important for youth to thrive in several aspects of their lives such as education, family hardships, and future career endeavors (Maleokoff, A., 2014). Building resilience will help youth to react positively and make better decisions when more risk factors affect their lives (Jordan, J.V., Walker, J., Hartling, L.M., 2004). Studies show that youth with at least one form of a protective factor in their lives display more resilience, are able to achieve long-term goals, and have better coping skills (Werner, E., 2000). Being in relation with others as part of the DMT cypher, youth will be able to move away from disconnection and increase their ability to relate to others (Jordan, J.V., Walker, J., Hartling, L.M., 2004). Disconnection from self, their environment, and from others hinders emotional and cognitive growth (Jordan, J.V., Walker, J., Hartling, L.M., 2004). Youth in inner cities experience harsh and unsafe environments in which disconnection from peers, education and family is very prevalent. Youth often engage in endeavors that are not beneficial to their overall well-being. They need to build resiliency by moving in connection to others. Joining in mutual connection with other through the DMT cypher

will build meaningful relationships and move the youth away from
isolation (Jordan, J.V., Walker, J., Hartling, L.M., 2004).

In terms of psychotherapy, there is a severe lack of research on
the effects of hip-hop as a therapeutic tool. The hope is to hone in on the
integrative qualities of dance/movement therapy and hip-hop culture to
promote the healthy functioning of youth. Implementing hip-hop culture
into dance/movement therapy can be an essential tool to achieving positive
goals for adolescents. Using what is familiar to adolescents in a
therapeutic environment can help create positive change in their lives.
Cyphering within DMT can further the development of adolescents
cognitively, socially, and emotionally. Youth in inner cities can build
resiliency, increase socialization, create positive emotional release and
regulation, and build life skills through the use of hip-hop in therapy.
Cyphering can help in coping with all the stressors that inner city youth
encounter because it can promote positive expression and allow each
individual to be seen. When given a safe space for expression, youth will
flourish in their relationships and move away from isolation. DMT has the
potential to take what is familiar to an individual and use it to increase
their quality of life. The use of hip-hop culture and the cypher can provide
greater insight to clinicians working in cultural diverse communities.

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