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Abstract

This article introduces dance/movement therapy as a unique psychotherapeutic modality in treating Chinese clients facing depression, isolation, and other mental health issues in the 21st century. The article shows how dance/movement therapy can help Chinese clients reduce psychological difficulties produced by the conflict of needing to individuate in a modern society but not having enough social and cultural support for this individuation. It also discusses how Kestenberg Movement Profile and its developmental movement concepts can support Chinese clients to reintegrate developmental rhythms that help with individuation. Lastly, the article gives examples of how group therapy can help Chinese clients overcome the barrier of expressing themselves authentically in front of others.

Keywords: dance/movement therapy, creative arts therapy, Chinese, China, mental health, depression, individuation

After almost two thousand years of collectivist living and communist political infrastructure, a recent major force towards individuation in modern China has been occurring due to the change in economic structure. For thousands of years, families in China grew crops and raised livestock (Zhou, 2006). Members of a family collaborated around agricultural production and depended on the family for security and support. Values attributed to the Confucian culture, such as filial piety and familial collectivism, were taught to children and held the economic structure in place (Worden et al., 1988, Hansen & Pang, 2014, Sun, 2004). After the country embarked on modernization in 1978, the percentage of total employment in the industry and service sectors steadily grew while that in the agriculture sector greatly reduced (Valli & Saccone, 2009). Factors of the new economy made being able to make individualized choices increasingly desirable. However, the Confucian values that benefitted family collectivism still existed and held people back from individuating from families, which contributed to mental illness among modern day Chinese, such as isolation and depression (Sun, 2004, Wu, 2016).

Four main factors contributed to increased individualization in China after 1978. The first factor is the growing commercialization in the urban area as a result of the opening of the free market that was previously state-controlled under Mao. Research has shown that agency-related values such as independence, autonomy, competitiveness, and uniqueness are endorsed in places with more commercialized activities, because people learn to compare and choose what is best for them when they engage in purchasing (Cai, Kwan, & Sedikides, 2012).

The second factor is reduced family size. After China opened its market in 1978, cities grew in size as new businesses bloomed. In the meantime, previous means of production controlled by the state were decollectivized. People became responsible for finding jobs for

themselves and many left their villages. Research shows that more than 300 million people had

departed from the countryside between the years 1978 and 2007 (Worden et al., 1988). In the

same period, population of cities has grown from 17.92% to 44.94% (National Bureau of

Statistics of China, 2008c). As a result, rural families started to have fewer working-age adults at

home. Meanwhile, in the trend of commercialization, families no longer needed to have as many

children as before to help out with farming activities. Moreover, the Chinese government

endorsed the one-child-per-family policy in 1980 in order to release national economic growth

from the burden of a fast-growing population. The decrease in the need for children and the

implementation of the one-child-per-family policy resulted in Chinese families having fewer

children. Statistics show that between 1978 and 2009, the number of live births per thousand of

population (birth rate) in China reduced from 18.25 to 12.13. The natural growth rate (the crude

birth rate minus the crude death rate), in the meantime, reduced from 12 in 1978 to 5.5 in 2009

(National Bureau of Statistics, 2009). The reduced family size puts the individual, along with

his/her anguish and ambitions, increasingly to the center (Jones & Poleman, 1962, Hansen &

Pang, 2014, Haag, 2014, Worden et al., 1988).

The third factor that contributed to increased individualization in modern China is the

increased personal disposable income that enabled the individual to better fulfill his/her personal

needs (Cai, Kwan, & Sedikides, 2012). After China enforced policies to reform the economy in

1978, its gross national product (GDP) increased from Ren Min Bi (RMB) 364.5 billion ($57.68

billion) in 1978 to RMB 24.95 trillion ($3.95 trillion) in 2007 (National Bureau of Statistics,

2008). Although traditionally the Chinese culture stresses the importance of the collective and

downplays the needs of the individual, studies suggest that as the average Chinese gains more

spending power, he/she is less likely to be concerned with the wellbeing of others in society and

more likely to value the importance of the self (Cai, Kwan, & Sedikides, 2012), that of the

immediate family (Hansen & Pang, 2014), or the property or merchandize itself (Haag, 2014).

Awareness of personal rights and freedom has also increased as more and more Chinese people

rose from poverty to affluence (Haag, 2014).

The fourth factor that led to increased individuality in modern China, according to Cai,

Kwan, & Sedikides (2012), is that when democratic and individualistic ideas were introduced to

China as the country recovered from results of wars and tumultuous reforms, people were drawn

to these ideas. Young people quickly picked up the concepts of freedom and democracy, which

helped them learn about themselves and navigate a fast-changing society (Cai, Kwan, &

Sedikides, 2012, Hansen & Pang, 2014).

The challenge of this individuation process comes from the lack of social structure to

support people to become independent. In less than a hundred years, China shifted from an

agriculture-based economy where family members shared farming obligations, to communist

collective production units where private livestock and food were banned, and at last to the

everyone-for-him/herself market economy. Customs tend to change slowly over time. Some

Chinese customs that do not support the individualism of the free market continue to be passed

on through generations and create conflicts for the younger generations that seek individuation

(Haag, 2014). One of these customs is family collectivism.

The Chinese culture is collectivist, with the family playing an important role (Haag,

2014). After the Communist Party came into office in 1949 and until today, the government

played a role in the country similar to that of the leadership in the family. Often, what the central

government said, the provincial governments followed. In the early 1950s, in order to mobilize

the under-employed labor force of the countryside and to direct it into useful agricultural and

industrial tasks, Mao Zedong envisioned that the Chinese people would organize "industry,

agriculture, commerce, education, [and the militia] into a big commune [which should form the]

basic unit of the society" (Jones & Poleman, 1962, p. 7). Following the directives from the

central government, mutual aid teams of six to eight households were formed in the countryside

to pool farming tools, animals, and land. In the beginning of 1955, the mutual aid teams grew

into cooperatives that contained twenty to thirty households each. By mid-1956, the cooperatives

contained as many as 150 households (Chinn, 1980, Jones & Poleman, 1962).

Finally, in the summer of 1958, some 26,000 communes were formed in China, the

biggest of which had as many as 8,000 households each. 98% of peasant families were reported

to be involved in these communes (Chinn, 1980, Jones & Poleman, 1962). The communes

exercised tight control over all aspects of their members' lives. Private property disappeared as

gardens and animals were confiscated. In some cases, even living spaces were taken over. In

return, the communes provided free food and health care to all members (Zhou, 2012, Jones &

Poleman, 1962).

The totalitarian control of the communes suddenly ended in the early 1960s when the

Party realized that the communes could not sustain themselves, as the experimental farming was

failing. The peasant families had to manage their own food supplies again and, in the

countryside, tens of millions of people were dying of famine. Over the next 5 years, China

slowly rebuilt its economy, and was able to recover its annual growth rates in industry and

agriculture. However, this recovery was halted in 1966, when the Cultural Revolution took place.

In the next two years, the Chinese Communist Party broke into different factions as Mao led a

purging of the Party against "capitalist and counterrevolutionary elements" (Worden, 1988, p. 1).

There was major unrest throughout the country as youth followers of Mao clashed with each

other, and as virtually all engineers, managers, scientists, technicians, and other professional

personnel were criticized, demoted, sent down to the countryside to participate in labor, or even

jailed. The economy slowed down again as agricultural production stagnated and industrial

activities reduced. The Cultural Revolution lasted from 1966-1976, and when China pursued

modernization in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, its internal affairs were in disarray

(Jones & Poleman, 1962, Zhou, 2012, Worden et al., 1988).

To summarize, since 1949 China has been heavily focused on economic development,

and indeed, the pace and scale of China's economic transformation have no historical precedent.

China grew from one of the poorest countries in the world in 1978 to the second largest economy

in 2012 (Zhu, 2012). However, China's recent economic development was not accompanied by

the growth of non-governmental organizations, welfare systems, and wide access to education,

which would help people develop a stronger self-concept through social involvement, in order to

navigate an individual-focused market economy. As a result, many cultural customs persisted,

and in some cases, they held people back from individualization. The customs in the practice of

child-rearing, gender roles, and spirituality were the most prominent in creating internal conflict

for Chinese people who pursued independence (Haag, 2014, Sun, 2004, Gorman, 1998).

The Chinese Culture and Codependency

Culturally, the upbringing of many Chinese people gears them towards adapting to the

collective and authoritarian environment instead of developing an independent sense of self.

Several studies show that Chinese parents do not encourage their children to be independent

(Haag, 2014, Wu, 2016, Sun, 2004). Gorman (1998) found that Chinese mothers use nonverbal

subtle and indirect ways to influence their children to honor their wishes. Through monitoring

their children's daily schedule and education, asking them to spend more time at home,

discouraging dating, and reiterating the importance of cultural values such as filial piety and familial collectivism, these mothers (albeit unconsciously) make their children dependent on the family for a sense of self-worth. Because conflicts in the family are often repressed for the sake of maintaining harmony and avoiding embarrassment, children learn to read nonverbal cues from their parents or messages hidden between the parents' words, therefore becoming more dependent on the needs, wishes, hopes, and fears of the family. It is not surprising that in Gorman's interview with Chinese mothers, the mothers reported that their children intuitively understood what scores they were expected to get on tests and what friends they were expected to associate with (Gorman, 1998).

Codependency is defined as "the pattern of dependency on compulsive behaviors and approval-seeking in an attempt to gain safety, identity, and self-worth" (Lawlor, 1995, p. 109-110). A person with codependency issues, called a codependent, is born into a family where his/her caretakers are emotionally distant because of a major dysfunction that dominates the lives of the caretakers. The dysfunction can be an addiction, trauma, or mental illness that keeps the caretakers from emotionally engaging in child-rearing. As a result, the codependent survives his/her unmet dependency needs by trying to nurture others so as to ameliorate the problems of other family members. In order to do so, the codependent denies his/her own needs and develops a personality that is shaped codependently (Lawlor, 1995).

As traditional Chinese values such as filial piety and familial collectivism ask children to deny their own needs for the sake of the family, many Chinese children grow up emotionally and psychologically codependent with their parents (Sun, 2004, Wu, 2016). Lawlor (1995) maintains that because codependents grow up adapting to other people's needs, they are often out of touch with their real feelings. Chinese psychotherapist Wu (2016) describes many of his patients who

suffer from repressing authentic emotions, similar to the symptom of codependents whose parents could not empathize with their emotions as children. An example that Wu gives is his own parents. Because of the abusive behaviors of his grandparents, Wu's parents became suicidal in their 30s. Wu's mother was depressed. Wu's father lost all his teeth. Wu attributed his parents' mental illness to repressed anger. Ironically, Wu remembered that his parents were criticized through a radio announcement broadcast throughout the village for not showing enough filial piety (Wu, 2016).

Wu's story was agonizing but not atypical. Growing up in a collectivist environment, many Chinese people's life choices, behavior, and personal narratives of freedom, free love, and autonomy are entangled with their perception of the family as an entity of indisputable economic, social, and emotional importance. As a result of adapting to the collective, these Chinese people's sense of personal boundary is weak (Sun, 2004, Haag, 2014). Sun (2004) discussed how in the Chinese culture, friends and family often feel the need to make sure that each one is warm, fed, and happy. But this is sometimes done in an intrusive way, disregarding the real needs of the ones being cared for. Haag (2014) shares that relatives of her Chinese clients sometimes came to her with pieces of information about the clients, believing that they were being helpful (Haag, 2014). In China, professional boundaries between employers and employees, and teachers and students, are often compromised through personal favors and gifts, making it hard to separate the personal from the professional (Sun, 2004). Zhong (2014) reveals how the boss of one of his clients could ask for overtime without an explanation, and how the client felt utterly unable to say no (Zhong, 2014).

Gender Roles and Spirituality

Besides traditional values, gender roles and spirituality also complicate the individuation process in China. Gender roles contribute to the differences in people's experience of responsibility. While men can feel tremendous pressure to uplift the whole family and change its fate, women sometimes give up their dreams for the sake of others in the family. As an example, Yang (2014) talked about a suicidal Chinese man who was burdened by his inability to fulfill the parental expectation to rescue the family from poverty. This man harbored a lot of anger towards his parents and yet was unable to express it because he saw it as his failure to not provide his parents the wealth he thought they deserved for raising him. Hansen & Pang (2014) mentioned a female worker who spent most of her income to support the education of her younger brother because "a daughter is responsible for giving money to her family" (p.14), as she said in an interview. The researchers also presented numerous examples of women who gave up dating romantic partners from another province in favor of marrying someone closer to their parents in order to take care of them in old age (Hansen & Pang, 2014).

Spiritually, Confucianism, Daoism, and Chinese Buddhism all have teachings that call for people to accept their fate in the face of difficulties. These teachings are sometimes used as a defense mechanism to refuse change. Confucianism teaches that people must learn or understand their capacities. Once a person learns his/her capacities, he/she will know that there are a lot of limitations to what he/she can do. To know the limitations of one's capacities is believed to help an individual cultivate his/her character (Chan, 2000). In Daoism, it is oftentimes believed that achieving harmony is more important than being right. Daoist philosophy advises that in order to achieve physical health and mental clarity, one should balance his/her *qi*, the foundation of all motions in life. In the act of arguing, one can risk disturbing his/her *qi*. Therefore, it is wiser to allow things to take their natural cause (Zhang & Rose, 2001, Chan, 2000). Buddhism teaches

people the law of cause and effect, also known as the law of *karma.* Karma means that the

circumstances that one faces are the result of prior actions. According to the law of karma, one

encounters adversity because of what he/she did in the past, even before this life time. Taking the

suffering now means suffering less in the future. Because of the belief in karma, suffering

through a stressful event is sometimes believed to show one's strength in facing the unescapable

(Cohen & Teiser, 2007, Chan, 2000).

Therefore, while changes in the economy invite many Chinese people to become more

independent from different collectives in their lives, culturally they are not given permission and

support to do so (Haag, 2014). Researchers have discussed psychological problems that arise

because of this conflict around individuation. For example, because they cannot express the

anger about not being able to leave their parents, many Chinese clients experience isolation,

depression, and self-hatred (Yang, 2014, Sun, 2004, Wu, 2016).

Psychoanalysis in China

Psychoanalysis was first introduced to China in 1927 but was suppressed along with all

things Western during Mao's governance. After Mao's death in late 1970s, psychoanalysis was

met with growing interest from the Chinese. In the 1980s, German psychoanalysts started to

offer training in behavioral therapies, systems family therapy, and psychoanalysis in Shanghai,

China. During these trainings, cultural differences between East and West started to be noticed

(Scharf & Varvin, 2014).

Psychoanalysis has achieved mixed results in helping Chinese patients deal with the

challenges in individuation. One difficulty that psychoanalysts encountered working with

Chinese patients seems to be rooted in Chinese culture's fundamentally different way of

understanding psychological health. Based on her 20 years of teaching psychoanalysis in China,

German psychoanalyst Antje Haag suggested that, unlike the culture of psychotherapy that values independence as a sign of mental health, successful psychic development in China is defined by the ability to adapt to different circumstances easily and to react flexibly according to the context (Haag, 2014). Because the Chinese culture raises people to adapt to situations where authority is unconditionally obeyed, many Chinese people develop defenses to suppress anger against authority, and psychoanalysts often feel that it is culturally-inappropriate to challenge these defenses (Zhong, 2014). Therefore, there is a need for psychotherapists who work with Chinese clients to continue to modify their therapeutic methods, and devise therapeutic goals that meet local needs. The author suggests that the body can be a site of entry for the Chinese client to be introduced to the world of psychotherapy.

Body-Orientation in the Chinese Culture

A reason why psychoanalysis encountered difficulties in China might be that it does not address the body. Li (2014) suggests that because traditional healing methods in China are based in the connection of body and mind, it might be necessary to consider the body when working within the Chinese culture. Mental health, as it is emphasized in traditional Chinese medicine, is never addressed independent of the body or of the environment. The earliest Chinese medicine theory, Inner Cannon of the Yellow Emperor 黄帝内经 of the second century BCE, already connected diseases to emotional states and movement of energy in the body. In this verse attributed to the Yellow Emperor, it is illustrated how diseases, emotion and energy (qi) interact within the body:

I know that the hundred diseases are generated by the qi.

When one is angry, then the qi rises.

When one is happy, then the qi relaxes.

When one is sad, then the qi dissipates.

When one is in fear, then the qi moves down.

In case of cold the qi collects;

In case of heat, the qi flows out.

When one is frightened, then the qi is in disorder.

When one is exhausted, then the qi is wasted.

When one is pensive, then the qi lumps together (quoted in Li, 2014, p. 69).

Because of the Chinese culture's long held belief in the connection between qi and emotional and physical health, many Chinese people believe that health is achieved through eating healthy and nutritious food, exercising in particular ways, and wearing clothes in a way to regulate heat in the body. Sun suggested that it is as if Chinese people do not distinguish mental health from physical health (Sun, 2004). Therefore, it is culturally appropriate to work with the body when treating mental issues of Chinese clients. Since dance/movement therapy is a form of psychotherapy that works with the body, it can connect with Chinese clients in ways that verbal therapy alone cannot.

Dance/Movement Therapy

Dance/movement therapy is a form of psychotherapy that uses creative movement and dance as its major mode of intervention. It facilitates integration of the physiological, cognitive, emotional, and sociocultural aspects of human beings. Dance/movement therapy is rooted in the idea that body and mind are inseparable. Body movement reflects inner emotional states, and changes in movement behavior can lead to changes in the psyche. Dance/movement therapists believe that dance and movement fulfill a basic human need to communicate. Movement is also used in dance/movement therapy to help clients organize their emotions. Through moving and

dancing, human beings can be in touch with their feelings and be able to interact with the environment in a more meaningful way (Levy, 1988, Chaiklin, 2009, Wengrower, 2009, Hawkins, 1991).

Dance/movement therapy groups allow members to experiment with different ways to interact with each other. In a dance/movement therapy group, an individual can both relate to the community and express individuality and needs. A group can validate one's personal worth and recognize his/her personal struggles at the same time. The anxiety and projections about relating to others can be addressed in the group. Isolation is lessened as group members realize that others share similar struggles and excitements and that they are not alone in feeling these emotions. The dance/movement therapist acknowledges and accepts everyone in their own way of participating in the group. The energy of a supportive community enables the individual to go beyond personal limitations and concerns (Chaiklin, 2009).

The structure of dance/movement therapy allows clients to safely explore, organize, and release thoughts and emotions. A typical dance/movement therapy group has a beginning, middle, and end. The group begins with the warm-up, which serves to orient the members to the group, to establish the initial patient-therapist contact, and to prepare the body and mind for more intense therapeutic experiences. During the warm-up, a circle may form under the dance/movement therapist's guidance to prepare the members for group rapport and to build trust and openness. The dance/movement therapist uses his/her sensitivity, intuition, and experience with the group to assess when the group has finished warming up (Levy, 1988).

During the middle phase of the group, different dance/movement therapy techniques, such as mirroring, expanding expressive movement potential, improvisation, using imagery and symbolism, and group rhythmic action can be used with increased clarity to deepen the

exploration of the affects, themes, and conflicts that came up during the warm-up. The need of

the group members in the present moment decides which technique is used (Levy, 1988).

One of the most commonly used dance/movement techniques is *mirroring*. According to

Levy (1988), mirroring is a technique to "kinesthetically and visually experience that which the

patient [is] experiencing and trying to communicate" (p.27). In actuality, this is done by the

dance/movement therapist "mirroring" or reflecting back through movement and words what

he/she has seen and experienced in the body action and the body of the patient (Levy, 1988).

Being mirrored often leads a client to expand his/her expressive movement potential.

Expanding expressive movement potential is a technique that the therapist uses to help a

movement expression of the client to evolve into a more complete movement statement, thus

"enhancing the [client's] identification and commitment to his/her own personal expressions and

communications" (Levy, 1988, p. 28). Establishing a greater sense of self is particularly

important in working with Chinese clients struggling with co-dependency. The basic concept of

expanding expressive movement potential is to lead the client into experiencing more varied

movement configurations and to focus or exaggerate initial movement patterns (Levy, 1988).

After a client has expanded his/her movement potential, he/she is more prepared to

engage in *improvisation*. Dance/movement therapy pioneer Blanche Evan defines improvisation

as "the spontaneous creation of form". She further explains dance improvisation as "the complete

wielding of yourself, as you are at the moment, with your theme, in terms of Dance" (Levy,

1988, p. 40). Sometimes, the dance/movement therapist will use more structured improvisation

exercises such as "moving out an animal" or "becoming an inanimate object" to elicit the

fantasies of the client to prepare him/her for less structured, more in-depth and complex

improvisational work that is sometimes likened to the free association process in psychoanalysis: psychomotor association (Levy, 1988).

Using *imagery and symbolism* can help deepen a client's improvisation experience. To use imagery and symbolism during a dance/movement therapy session is to invite the clients to move out their experiences and emotions in metaphoric ways (Hawkins, 1991). Feelings that would otherwise be too painful to withstand can be tolerated if they can be presented in a symbolic form. Wengrower (1999) gives an example where a group of adults in a day treatment center expressed their anger in a way that does not cause them anguish by "stepping on ants" rhythmically in a circle (Wengrower, 1999, p. 19). The symbolic use of movement is not only a means of expression but also a way to gain new insight about oneself and the self-world relationship (Hawkins, 1991).

Like the use of imagery and symbolism, *group rhythmic action* is a dance/movement therapy technique used for organizing the inner experience of clients during groups and to promote group cohesion. Specifically, group rhythmic action is used to "facilitate and support the expression of thoughts and feelings in an organized and controlled manner" (Levy, 1988, p. 26). The repetition of movement and words in a rhythmic way helps to enhance clients' awareness of their body action and its symbolic meaning. Extreme behaviors, such as withdrawal and hyperactivity, can be neutralized through group rhythmic action. In some cases, underlying conflicts can come into awareness during the application of this technique. Moving together creates a feeling of being together (Levy, 1988).

When the group experience has naturally a sense of clarity or when it is time for closure, the therapist can find some way to acknowledge each group member, the time that the group spent together, and to transition the group out of the therapeutic experience. A supportive closure

can allow clients to leave with a sense of satisfaction and resolve. This can be done through communal movement such as holding hands and swinging together or walking to the center of the circle together while raising hands high above the head. Verbal sharing can give each member a voice and a chance to share his/her insight and unique contribution to the group experience (Levy, 1988).

Dance/Movement Therapy and Co-dependency

Existing dance/movement therapy research shows that dance/movement therapy can be used to help clients with co-dependency issues (Lawlor, 1995). For example, mirroring can make clients feel seen on the bodily level. For many Chinese people who had denied their own needs in order to meet the needs of those that they depended on, being seen for who and what they really are can be an especially empowering experience (Lawlor, 1995). Mirroring can also lead to self-awareness of the body and in turn expand the clients' movement action, which can help clients better understand the feelings carried by this movement action. The use of imagery can also help clients clarify their feelings. Feelings stored as imagery in a client's subconscious can spontaneously come up during dance/movement therapy. An experienced dance/movement therapist can observe, assess, and make interventions where she invites a client to play with an imagery that connects with deeper emotions that the client is working through, so as to make the client aware of these emotions. The Kestenberg Movement Profile is often incorporated into the work of dance/movement therapists to help clients work on early childhood issues (Loman, 1998). The Kestenberg Movement Profile provides theoretical explanation of the development of codependency in early childhood and possible ways of intervention.

The Kestenberg Movement Profile (KMP) is a complex instrument for describing, assessing, and interpreting nonverbal behavior developed by child psychologist and movement

analyst, Judith Kestenberg, and her colleagues, during more than 30 years of research on infants, children, and adults. The KMP is used by dance/movement therapists for the evaluation of movement patterns and treatment planning when working in different settings and with a wide range of diagnoses (Loman & Sossin, 2009). The KMP concept that can be used to explain and work on codependency issues is *tension flow rhythms*.

The Kestenberg Movement Profile sees infancy and childhood development as going through a sequence of five developmental phases, each phase corresponding with two tension flow rhythms, totaling ten rhythms. These five developmental phases are: oral, anal, urethral, inner-genital, and outer genital phases (Loman & Sossin, 2009). Five of the tension flow rhythms have an indulging, accommodating, and mobilizing quality to them: sucking, twisting, running/drifting, swaying, and jumping rhythms. The remaining five are more aggressive and differentiating: biting, strain/release, starting/stopping, surging/birthing, and spurting/ramming rhythms. Each rhythm helps the youngster achieve a specific developmental task and is present throughout a person's life to satisfy different needs. The development of codependency is explained by KMP as not having enough separation in the oral stage (Kestenberg, 1999).

The oral stage is the first stage after birth. The indulging rhythm of the oral stage, the sucking rhythm, originates from the mouth of the infant and spreads to the rest of its body. The sucking rhythm is steady, smooth, and calming. While feeding, the infant sucks on the mother's nipples using this rhythm. The child also pats on its mother in the same rhythm. The milk flows from the mother's breast in waves that resemble the sucking rhythm while the mother rocks the baby using a longer, but similarly gentle and calming rhythm. The infant and the mother form a reciprocal unit, attuning to each other using the sucking rhythm. Thus, the sucking rhythm helps the infant achieve the developmental task of attaching to its mother. Later in life, individuals

demonstrating much sucking rhythm in their movement profile tend to be more dependent and feel comfortable joining with others as opposed to holding themselves apart (Kestenberg, 1999).

While the sucking rhythm promotes attachment, the fighting rhythm of the oral stage, the biting rhythm, promotes separation and individuation. The biting rhythm originates from the teeth and spreads to the rest of the body. It is a tapping-like rhythm with sharp transitions. Babies use the biting rhythm in patting and clapping. While patting one's body with this rhythm, one can experience him/herself as a separate and distinct being with boundaries. Thus, the biting rhythm helps the infant achieve the developmental task of initially separating from the caregiver and beginning to explore the world on its own. Later in life, the biting rhythm promotes differentiation between self and other (Kestenberg, 1999).

While researching the interactions of mothers and infants from different cultures, Kestenberg noted that in Eastern culture such as Japan, mothers and babies have such a high amount of physical contact and not so much separation that intuitive understanding of nonverbal cues was developed. Kestenberg sensitively commented that, from a Western perspective, she wondered how separation could develop with this high degree of attachment and lack of individuality in the relationship. Focusing on balance, the KMP suggests that in all cultures, successful parenting would involve attunement between infant and the mother counterbalanced by some separation (Kestenberg, 1999). For someone who has an imbalance of developmental patterns in his/her movement profile, the Kestenberg Movement Profile and its developmental concepts provide that a developmental pattern can be incorporated into one's movement profile even when he/she is chronologically older than when the pattern typically emerges. This is done by bringing the person through movement back to the phase when the pattern is first developed,

and, in this movement realm, reworking the incomplete developmental and psychological

processes (Loman, 1998).

Loman (1998) gives an example of a dance/movement therapist helping a three-year-old

boy re-incorporating a movement pattern that usually develops at an earlier age. This boy had

evenly-held tension in his body and rarely adjusted his body to accommodate to changes in the

environment. A treatment goal for this boy was to be able to use flexibility in his joints to

promote more choices for movement expression and for adaptability in relationships. In a few

sessions, the dance/movement therapist provided the boy with two big mats in the hopes of

leading him to explore movement on the floor. The boy started to crawl on the mat, which

stimulated him to use the twisting rhythm, a rhythm that usually appears in two year olds. The

twisting rhythm originates in the anal sphincter and spread throughout the body via the spine.

The twisting rhythm helps with flexibility and adjusting to different situations. Knowing this, the

dance/movement therapist reinforced this motion in the boy by mirroring his crawling motion.

As a result of the sessions, the boy continued to use twisting patterns, which led him to become

more playful and adaptable in relationships (Loman, 1998).

Dance/Movement Therapy in China

Back in 1993, dance/movement therapist Jane Ganet Sigel did one of the first

dance/movement therapy workshops in Beijing, China. The response that she received from

students was, "We have many foreign visiting professors lecture, but we never had such feelings

like we experienced with Jane, she moved together with us, smiled together with us and shared

together with us, we felt so close with her" (Sigel, 1994, p.56). As explained before, because

traditional healing methods in China are based on the connection of body and mind,

dance/movement therapy could have appealed to these Chinese students with its body-based treatment method, which made them feel familiar and "close" to the therapist.

Since Sigel's visit, dance/movement therapy has been growing in the country. There are now at least two established organizations that annually bring dance/movement therapy instructors from the United States and Europe to China. After receiving their education, Chinese dance/movement therapists then bring this psychotherapy modality to different parts of the country (Inspiree, 2017, Apollo, 2012). As a form of psychotherapy, dance/movement therapy is uniquely suited for the Chinese population because it simultaneously addresses the mind and the body. Using creative movement as a way to facilitate physiological, cognitive, emotional, and sociocultural integration, dance/movement therapy does not require the Chinese client to individuate entirely from his/her family, which may be culturally impossible. There is limited research on applying dance/movement therapy with Chinese people that face the challenge of individuation in China today. More research is therefore needed on how to apply dance/movement therapy with this population.

Discussion

Wu (2014) and Sun (2004) described many modern day Chinese people that experience depression and tremendous isolation as a result of the conflict between wanting more individuality in an increasingly individual-oriented market economy, and the lack of social support for their individuation. Depression and isolation manifest as an inability to express anger, especially towards authority, because this is considered culturally inappropriate. When this anger is repressed, it becomes depression and self-hatred. Because one has to repress his/her feelings in the presence of others, he/she feels an inability to authentically be with others and ends up feeling tremendously isolated even in the presence of other people.

The root cause of the inability of the Chinese client to express anger is lack of separation from the primary caretaker in early childhood (Sun, 2004, Wu 2016). In other words, the client is dealing with issues of codependency. Many Chinese mothers keep their babies physically very close to themselves when it is developmentally a time for the babies to experience separation. As a result, these babies grow up with limited individuality, and are quite emotionally codependent with their parents (Kestenberg, 1999). For these emotionally-codependent adults, being angry at their parents feels like being angry at themselves, and they have difficulty separating the two. This codependency is reinforced by cultural values such as respecting parents and authority. Therefore, to work on the psychological difficulties around individuation faced by Chinese clients, the therapist must work on their root cause of lack of separation in early childhood as well as their later development of repressing emotions. As addressed thus far, dance/movement therapy can reach preverbal issues through working with the body, foster healthy boundaries, and encourage expression of repressed emotions through movement. Therefore, the author proposes that dance/movement therapy is especially suitable when working with Chinese clients who, as mentioned above, may feel more comfortable working on psychological issues through the body.

In dance/movement therapy, the therapist can help the client gain awareness into early childhood issues using a wide variety of dance/movement therapy techniques. A strong and embodied therapeutic relationship between the therapist and the client is important for supporting the client when the he/she begins to explore early childhood issues. Because many early childhood issues precede the development of language, the body becomes the instrument for self-awareness, therapeutic interventions, and change when working on these issues. Lawlor (1995) writes that the codependent clients that she worked with often expressed a wish to be seen for who and what they truly were (Lawlor, 1995). This wish to be accepted authentically is

manifested in the Chinese clients who feel scared to move in front of others but still come to dance/movement therapy. Chinese dance/movement therapist, Xiao Zhi, leads dance/movement therapy groups in the southwestern Chinese city of Chengdu. She shared that,

> [Many of my clients] live in other people's standards and forget that they are beautiful in themselves. A majority of them try to hide their shame about expressing through the body. [In dance/movement therapy groups], many move in a bound and slow way. When they begin to express through the body, a lot of emotions can appear…Many people spend their whole lives not having treated their bodies seriously, nor have they ever been seen (Xiao, 2018).

Xiao's observation that her Chinese clients live in other people's standards is closely related to her discovery that they have never been seen. Because many codependent clients were not accepted for who they were as children, they constantly seek for validations from others. Therefore, being seen on the bodily level may be an experience the Chinese clients have not previously had, which may have led to their shame. The boundedness and slowness in their movement can be a physical defense around being seen. Guiding these Chinese clients to bring awareness back into their bodies can help them see themselves and begin to treat their bodies and themselves seriously. Over a few dance/movement therapy sessions, the therapist may help the Chinese client re-tune into his/her body by beginning with breathing exercises, connecting movement to breathing, bringing awareness to the body's natural tendency to move, moving to the rhythm of the music, etc. Developing better awareness of his/her body also prepares the Chinese client for moving his/her body more expansively.

When incorporated into the dance/movement therapy sessions, Kestenberg Movement Profile and its developmental concepts can be used to help the Chinese client bring awareness

and insight into his/her early childhood issues. After a trusting therapeutic relationship with the

client has been established, the dance/movement therapist can begin to use interventions

informed by Kestenberg Movement Profile. During the sessions, the Chinese client and the

dance/movement therapist can freely associate with each other using movement, but the

dance/movement therapist will especially pay attention to the predominant rhythms used by the

client in their nonverbal communication. The dance/movement therapist can mirror these

rhythms to bring the Chinese client's awareness to them and invite the embodiment of the

rhythms in different parts of the client's body. As the dance/movement therapist moves,

observes, and assesses, he/she can intervene using the counterparts of the KMP rhythms that the

Chinese client uses. This may bring up repressed emotions and insight. For example, during a

group dance/movement therapy session led by Xiao Zhi in Chengdu, China, the clients were

invited to move around a circle as if they were back to their childhood. The clients moved in a

running/drifting rhythm. Then, the dance/movement therapist introduced the starting/stopping

rhythm by pushing and redirecting the clients using her hands and saying, "You must grow up

and follow a set schedule now!" One client resisted by burying her hands into her palms and

maintaining her own pace. Another client seemed to have lost her sense of time and bumped into

the wall. She started crying uncontrollably, which led to another client to tear up. Later, the client

that cried shared that she realized that she had been procrastinating at her job because she could

not stand up for herself and choose to do the things that she liked (Xiao, 2018). This example

showed that interventions carried out on the bodily level can bring out buried emotions in the

Chinese client, which may lead to realizations into the conflicts in other areas of the client's life.

After the experience, conversations can be had to deepen the Chinese client's understanding of

the emotions that surface. Some discussion topics might be, "How did it feel when the therapist

did what she did?" "When was the last time that you felt this way outside of therapy and who were you with?" "When was the first time that you felt this way and what was the situation?" "If you were to go back in time, what do you wish could have taken place?" When the Chinese client begins to develop an awareness into the root cause of the issues, healing can take place.

When creatively used, the KMP rhythms can lead to exploration of imagery, more complex emotions, and deeper issues. For example, in a movement experiential of the biting rhythm, the biting movement could morph into grinding the teeth and snarling. The imagery of wild animals snarling with teeth showing to protect their territory can appear. Emotions related to the imagery of self-defense, such as suspicion, doubt, fear, anger, and guilt could be triggered. Issues related to boundaries can also show up. In the creative and accepting dance/movement therapy space, the client can be guided to move out the emotions and issues that come up during the experience of each KMP rhythm. The dance/movement therapist can be a witness that holds a safe space for the client to move creatively. The dance/movement therapist can also be a co-creator of the client's story or imagery, challenging the client to face his/her difficult emotions and to explore creative solutions. Marian Chace believed that problems could be worked through on the symbolic level alone and that interpretation and analysis was not always necessary for conflicts to be resolved. Through movement and imagery, repressed emotions can be released (Levy, 1988).

Wu (2016) talks about a Chinese woman that came to him for talk therapy. He writes that this woman has a recurring dream where she is in a room with a gigantic fly the size of an aircraft carrier. The fly stares at the woman as she hides under a blanket, too scared to move, because she fears that if she budges, the fly will bite off her head. Wu shares that when the client was a baby, she experienced powerlessness. Even though her mother and her grandmother were

around, she did not feel she could get her needs met. In her adult life, the client continued to experience powerlessness when she wanted to influence her surroundings.

This Chinese woman's powerlessness about her surroundings might have roots in preverbal childhood, when she felt powerless to the influence of a fly. Because the body is the main way of communication during the preverbal stage of human development, dance/movement therapy is especially suited to work with the preverbal issues that this Chinese woman faced. A dance/movement therapist can use movement and imagery to tap into the origin of the woman's powerlessness. After a trusting therapeutic alliance is established, a dance/movement therapist might suggest moving out the imagery of hiding from the attack of a fly. A prop such as a scarf or a blanket can be used to recreate the scene where the imagery takes place and to stimulate movement quality. The therapist can creatively play the role of the intimidating fly or a support to the client in her fight against the fly. If there is any KMP rhythm present, the therapist can use other KMP rhythms of similar or opposing qualities in the role-play with the client. After the movement naturally ends, the therapist can offer a space for the client to reflect on the experience. Journaling or drawing could help with bringing awareness to the thoughts and emotions that take place during the movement session.

Imagery and movement not only help draw attention to preverbal issues, they also help the Chinese client express emotions that are repressed because they are considered culturally inappropriate. These emotions that are repressed can include anger, sadness, hopelessness, etc., which are sometimes regarded as not conducive to building a peaceful society. Because emotions are connected to the body, simply moving out the emotions is a way to express them and to release them. Zhong's (2014) example of working with forty-six-year-old Chinese woman Ms. B shows how imagery and movement could be useful in working with Chinese clients with

repressed emotions. When she was born, Ms. B's biological parents sent her to another family because she was a girl. Ms. B did not receive much parental care growing up. After she got married, Ms. B's husband seldom came home, and she had to raise their daughter alone. Ms. B had a lot of repressed anger towards her husband and her mother. One day, Ms. B came to therapy to describe a dream where a tiger chased her husband and her down a hill and they got separated. Ms. B and Zhong discussed the possibility that the tiger represented Zhong and that Ms. B feared that therapy would destroy her marriage, which she considered very important.

After the discussion, Ms. B did not return to therapy. Zhong wrote that this case made her question how to better apply psychoanalysis to Chinese clients. Zhong realized that the reason why Ms. B left was because of unbearable hatred towards her original mother, but she wondered whether helping Ms. B understand this hatred actually benefitted her. Dance/movement therapy can address the issues of repressed emotions through the body without confronting the cognitive defenses that Chinese clients have around having these emotions. For example, a dance/movement therapist could ask Ms. B to move with the imagery of the tiger by prompting, "Move in the space as if you are being chased by the tiger right now". During the embodiment, the therapist might play the role of the tiger, which can allow Ms. B to project her hatred towards her mother onto the therapist and express it using her body. The therapist might play the role of a helping hand in combating the tiger, symbolizing the support that the client could have in her life. The therapist might mirror Ms. B to bring the client's awareness to how she moves out the imagery. Seeing her own movement on the body of another person could provide Ms. B with another option to make meaning of the movement and the imagery. Awareness of the emotions associated with the tiger imagery could lead to greater understanding of Ms. B's situation and conversations on how to change it in a way that feels culturally appropriate.

Group dance/movement therapy can be another way for clients to practice expressing themselves through movement in a supportive environment. As mentioned earlier, for Chinese clients who are used to suppressing emotions in front of others, moving in a group might be very uncomfortable in the beginning. They simply might not know how to move in the presence of others without any directions from the therapist. One dance/movement therapy technique that can be used to help Chinese clients overcome fear of moving their bodies in front of others is mirroring. Mirroring can be done in pairs, which pacifies the Chinese client's anxiety of moving in front of the whole group but expands the world of the client to include another person. In dance/movement therapy, mirroring another person requires total awareness of oneself as well as the other person. Being seen in this way can help the Chinese client see him/herself through others, foster acceptance, and build confidence and empathic attunement. Many believe that this total awareness, resembling the loving and acceptive awareness of a mother, is healing on its own (Thich, 2018). As the follower mirrors the leader, he/she pays attention to movement of the leader in its totality. The leader also takes in the movement of the follower in its totality and becomes aware of the differences in the ways they move. Both may become aware of how speed and the quality of the movement affect the dynamic of the mirroring. They may also notice their judgement of themselves and the other person. Talking about this judgement might bring awareness to how one suppresses the expression of emotions in the body and if this suppression renders the movement inauthentic. Another discussion topic is one's preference of either being the leader or the follower, which might or might not be the way one interacts with others outside of the dance/movement therapy group. The mirroring exercise can naturally lead to a discussion on empathy, attunement, and transference.

Joining in dance/movement therapy groups can be especially beneficial for the Chinese clients in their individuation processes. Relationships formed with other Chinese clients in the group can often bring up memories of other significant relationships in life. Therefore, interactions among group members often stir up unresolved conflicts with significant others, including those with attachment figures. The dance/movement therapist, being the leader of the group, can easily be projected as a parent figure or the authority. Therefore, dance/movement therapy groups can become a space for the Chinese clients to experiment with freely expressing their emotions in front of authority and to be seen as the unique individuals they seek to be. This experience of being accepted by the authority for who one is can be especially healing for the Chinese client, who may not have felt this acceptance in his/her childhood. The dance/movement therapy group, then, can become a place where the Chinese client continues his/her individuation and be supported on this journey.

Moreover, the dance/movement therapist also moves with the Chinese clients, which can help the clients see themselves as unique individuals who are equal to the leader of the group. The safety that the Chinese clients feel in dance/movement therapy groups can help them express the needs that many have suppressed because of their codependent tendency to take care of others' needs over their own. In Janet Sigel's workshop in Beijing, an observing dance/movement therapist wrote,

> I can't forget how a young girl several times put herself into Jane's arms and hugged Jane tightly, even though she didn't know her. The child's body was telling us she needed emotional nurturing so much (Sigel, 1991, p. 56).

It is possible that the young girl saw Sigel as an accepting authority figure because Sigel was expressing herself and connecting to the group members through movement. The young girl

was therefore encouraged to express her need to be embraced by Sigel. When this need was fulfilled, it was a powerful moment for the young girl, who may have not experienced the acceptance for whom she was from other authorities in her life.

Chinese dance/movement therapist Feng Yuxi observed that after her Chinese clients had known each other for some time, some were able to express their need to be held or hugged by another client in the group. Feng said that these were moving moments for many members in the group (Feng, 2018). Touching publicly is traditionally considered inappropriate in the Chinese culture. Yet, inside the therapeutic structure of dance/movement therapy, it is appropriate to discuss the need to be touched. When it is therapeutic and mutually agreed upon, the need can be fulfilled. When this happens, it can be a powerful therapeutic experience for all that are present. Once the Chinese clients can understand themselves better through understanding the parts of them that were previously suppressed, they can make the changes in their interpersonal relationships that are needed to live a fulfilling life. This is one of many ways that dance/movement therapy can touch the deeply buried emotions of Chinese clients through the body and help improve their mental health.

Summary and Future Study

This research paper has discussed using dance/movement therapy to help improve the mental health of Chinese clients during their individuation processes in an increasingly globalizing world. It has shown that the body-oriented dance/movement therapy is uniquely suited for Chinese clients because the Chinese culture emphasizes healing mental health problems through the body and that the mental health problems that many Chinese people have are rooted in issues in the preverbal stage. The research has shown how to systematically use dance/movement therapy knowledge and techniques to help Chinese clients resolve early

childhood issues and their later manifestation as repressed emotions in adulthood. Kestenberg

Movement Profile and its developmental movement concepts can support Chinese clients to

reintegrate developmental rhythms that help with individuation and creative expression.

Dance/movement therapy techniques such as mirroring and creating imagery can be used to

foster body-awareness and self-awareness. Group dance/movement therapy helps Chinese clients

express emotions in front of others that they have previously suppressed.

In order to truly understand the effectiveness of dance/movement therapy on helping

Chinese clients in their individuation process in the modern world, further case studies are

needed where the dance/movement therapy knowledge and techniques are used with clients from

this population. Such research not only informs dance/movement therapists working with

Chinese clients in mainland China, but also those who work with clients with Chinese cultural

background living around the world.

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