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# Dance, Movement, and Performance with Israeli and Palestinian Children Living in War Conflict

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DANCE, MOVEMENT, AND PERFORMANCE WITH ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN  
CHILDREN LIVING IN WAR CONFLICT

Maria Ninos

Thesis submitted to the faculty of Columbia College Chicago

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

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in

Dance/Movement Therapy & Counseling

Department of Creative Arts Therapies

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Committee:

Susan Imus, MA, BC-DMT, LCPC, GL-CMA  
Chair, Department of Creative Arts Therapies

Laura Downey, MA, BC-DMT, LPC, GL-CMA  
Research Coordinator

Jessica Young, MA, BC-DMT, LCPC, GL-CMA  
Thesis Advisor

Yasmin Dalton, MA, R-DMT  
Reader

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this research was to unite Palestinian and Israeli children who are living in war conflict through movement. This research took place at a kibbutz in Israel, where I worked with an interfaith peace education organization whose mission was to motivate understanding, tolerance, and respect among Israeli and Palestinian children. Using a methodology rooted in performance ethnography, I studied the culture of 11 children in the camp as they engaged in four movement sessions. The focus of each session was to enhance their social and team building skills. Using the experience from the sessions, I facilitated the development of a final performance. I hoped to answer the question: How can Israeli and Palestinian children develop social skills and supportive team building skills through dance, movement, and commitment to a performance? I used inductive theme analysis to analyze my data. Results showed that through reclaiming childlike fun, connection, freedom of self-expression, and focus through positive energy, children effectively communicated with one another, viewed their peers without preconceived judgments, and collectively created and performed a dance, which improved their social and team building skills.

## Acknowledgements

At the beginning of this thesis journey, a special woman believed in my ideas, and she sparked this new thought in my mind: that my ideas could become reality. Laura Downey is this special woman who continues to believe in and inspire her students. Thank you. Jessica Young, thank you for showing me that with dedication and hard work anything is possible. Thank you for guiding me through this process, supporting me every step of the way, and laboriously helping me polish this work. Bethany Brownholtz, Sondra Malling, Eva Glazer, and Katie Bellamy—all I can say is you possess many amazing talents; I was blessed to have worked with you throughout my adventure writing this thesis. Yasmin Dalton, it has been a blessing to have you as my reader as well as my friend. I look up to you in so many ways. Thank you. Kim Rothwell, thank you for telling me that peace is possible if I just believe and continue to work for it. Natasha, I love you. Mom and dad, I could not have done this without your love and support. Aby and Aleco, you too have always been my inspiration; I would love to one day inspire you as well, so here is my attempt. Dimitri, you have always been an inspiration to me as well, and I hope you have found peace in heaven. Connor, thank you for being by my side, for teaching me the meaning of “focus,” and for always believing in me; I love you. David Harris, thank you for continuing to inspire our community to work for human rights, equality, love, and empathy. Marcia Leventhal, thank you for giving me hope when I needed it the most. All the staff from the peace camp, and all the children of the camp, thank you for this amazing experience; I hope we can find peace in the near future together. *Acceptance, love, peace, belief*: everyone I have mentioned above represents these words. Thank you for being in my life and showing me that anything is possible.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

The children of Israel and Palestine are born into a country that has been in conflict for over 60 years (Al Jundi, & Marlowe, 2011; Eshel, 2013; Gelvin, 2005; Golan, 2007; Reinhart, 2005; Salem, 2005). On a day-to-day basis children are segregated and even discriminated against because of their national identities; they are burdened both by the current conflict and the past traumatic experiences of their families and friends (Feldman & Vengroberg, 1987). Israeli and Palestinian children are separated not only by the political borders, but also by the stigma that this political conflict has created. While growing up, they are not given many opportunities to interact (Pundak, Ben-Nun, & Finkel, 2012). This lack of interaction can cause the children to develop very negative perceptions of each other, informed by the media, that portrays each side in a negative view. These negative perceptions lead many to grow up to become political enemies.

Growing up in Jerusalem, I observed this conflict firsthand. I am a Greek/Palestinian girl, and I never understood or agreed with the war and terror that was happening around me. I always felt others' fear because the tensions between the Israelis and the Palestinians were incredibly strong, and those times were violent and unpredictable. As a teenager, I participated in two peace camps that allowed me to learn more about the conflict and to be more involved with organizations working for peace. Due, in part, to these camps, I have always known that I wanted to work with the children of Israel and Palestine.

Meanwhile, I always felt that dance and movement healed me from any stress, tension, or frustration. Only when I danced did I feel free because I was no longer afraid; I had complete freedom to move with no fear within or outside of me. As I studied *dance/movement therapy* (DMT, see Appendix A), my interest in how this work could impact the Palestinian and Israeli

children grew deeper. I wanted to share the gift of creative movement with the children of Israel and Palestine who lacked the chance to experience the power of movement *together* due to limits the political conflict puts upon the people, which restricts their access to integrated creative outlets.

I believed that dance would not only bring them joy and relief but initiate other processes necessary for peaceful reconciliation. In my personal experience, I observed how creative movement served as a foundation for trust, growth, and community; I felt that movement might serve the same purpose in uniting these children and promoting mutual trust. Could dance, within a safe setting, promote children's empathic understanding of each other and develop bonds stronger than the political forces separating them? Thus, the purpose of my thesis research emerged: How can Israeli and Palestinian children develop *social skills* (see Appendix A) and supportive team building skills through dance, movement, and commitment to a performance? I envisioned this occurring through a peace camp, like the ones I had experienced, using a series of creative movement classes geared towards a final performance.

First, I believed that the honesty of the body might provide a pathway to openness, vulnerability, and—ultimately—connection. Dance/movement therapists believe that the truth is revealed through the body, and the body does not lie: “Who we are is reflected and manifested in our bodies” (Levy, 2005, p. 67). This DMT belief aligns with my experience with children whom I have witnessed openly reveal their thoughts, feelings, and sensations through their bodies. Because of the transparency of the body, movement could help Palestinian and Israeli children experience an open nonverbal dialogue, sparking honest connection on the body level.

Dance and movement also stimulate creative skills, leading to creative problem solving and new ways of perceiving the world (Arai, 2009; Metz, 2009). The movement activities that I

hoped to create would encourage the development of the children's confidence in their movement, which could eventually lead them to experience new ways of interacting based on the here and now. Focusing on the present moment, and creative possibility (the future), are skills that dance naturally encourages. Dance engages children to center their attention on the experiences in the workshops—to move forward rather than stay stagnant on past inherited conflict, which can come in the way of progress. Could the collaborative creation of a performance widen the children's horizons and imaginations and grow their hope for future peace? Though the emotional distress of the conflict could arise and create tensions between the children during the creation process, working supportively in a group setting might foster healthy coping skills. Perhaps the children could move towards a more hopeful future by developing their ability to cope and maintain integrity through this creative process.

I aimed to foster a safe space where these children could independently develop their movement repertoire and body awareness to build confidence and trust in themselves, their bodies, and within the group. In order to create a trusting, collaborative, creative environment, I approached the study with an existential-humanistic theoretical framework. According to Ivey, D'Andrea, and Ivey (2012), this framework is based on positive self-regard and necessitates the development of empathy within the therapeutic relationship. I desired that the children feel positive self-regard (Ivey, D'Andrea, & Ivey, 2012) and believe in their abilities of being creative movers. I felt that with unconditional positive regard, the children connected with me and felt appreciated and respected. I encouraged building trust during the workshops so that the children could feel more at ease with themselves and with everyone in the group by giving the children space to move together in a safe environment. I facilitated group growth and trust by attending to all the children with a positive attitude and believing that they had the potential of



creating and developing performance. I also felt that it was important for the children to know that I was not their teacher but was there to learn with them from this experience and therefore we were equals. These choices helped me connect with the children on a level where they felt comfortable to be themselves in the workshops and work from a personal and authentic place.

The workshops of this study were based in the methodologies of dance/movement therapists, Marian Chace and Trudi Schoop, whose DMT methodologies developed from a humanistic approach (Levy, 2005; Shelley, 1993). As a clinician and researcher, I facilitated dance and movement workshops by following and intuitively responding to my clients' needs. For each workshop, I used an initial daily plan with movement activities that complimented the development of the children's social and team building skills; then I used my kinesthetic response to the children's reactions to the movement workshops and adjusted the activities to what I was sensing the children needed.

Likewise, Chace, known as the mother of DMT, developed her sessions in the moment as she attuned and adapted to her clients' needs, developing movement themes that emerged from their bodies and movements. Chace worked with four core concepts (Chaiklin, 1993). The first concept was body action, the second was symbolism, the third was the therapeutic relationship with the client, and the fourth was rhythmic group activity (Levy, 2005). As I approached my workshops for the study, I was influenced by the four core concepts (Chaiklin, 1993). The reason for my interest in these concepts was that they allowed a harmonious development in a group session by inviting the group to engage with their bodies and discover the symbolism that related to the body movement. In this study, the third core concept was particularly significant; I felt that it was important for the children to trust me. By taking the time to build the therapeutic

relationship, I hoped that the children would feel safe to break down barriers between them and move authentically together.

In my experience, the fourth core concept, rhythmic group activity (Sandel, Chaiklin, & Lohn, 1993), enabled the children to find a common ground while staying true to their own voice. Children commonly connect with rhythmic group activity; thus, it serves as a unifying tool that works quickly and effectively to bring the children to the same level of engagement in the groups. Similarly to Chace's fourth core concept, Schoop used rhythm with her patients to inspire connection to themselves and the group. Once they could physically express their emotions, she encouraged "rhythmic release" (Levy, 2005, p.66). She also used rhythm to help release any held emotions or feelings that patients needed to express. Through rhythmic movement children could release their energy. This release could also stimulate the children's focus in the movement session.

For this study, I facilitated body action by teaching Irmgard Bartenieff's six *developmental patterns of total body connectivity* (See Appendix A) (Hackney, 2002) as a way to help the children more clearly organize their movement, which can become disorganized or underdeveloped when living in a state of conflict. The practice of the connectivities could eventually lead to more effective functionality and expressivity. Finally, the use of symbolism can assist with telling one's story and working through conflict in a safe manner by building metaphors and helping the children see the conflict in new ways.

Children growing up in conflict often have little opportunity to identify, express, and process their feelings including fear, confusion, anger, and hate. Using Schoop's educational approach, I provided the children with a way to acknowledge their emotions and discover how to use their emotions in a creative and expressive manner. Her use of humor and exaggeration are

conducive to working with children, stimulating their playfulness and allowing them to externalize how they are feeling, which Chace's use of symbolism can also foster. While Chace developed thematic material from the client's movement, Schoop used improvisation as a means for choreographic development. Through repetition and reproduction, movement themes were discovered and performed. Lastly, Schoop used fantasy and play to connect with her patients (Levy, 2005). For this study, I used a combination of Chace and Schoop's techniques to develop the workshops. I used Chace's approach of developing the thematic materials from the children's movements and experiences in the workshops as well as Schoop's use of repetition and reproduction of the movement to develop the performance and choreography.

Chace and Schoop's methodologies also inspired me to explore how the children could connect through body awareness, emotional awareness, fantasy, play, and rhythm. I suspected that using fantasy and play to bring these two groups of children together could be a key factor in moving past war conflict. Fantasy could help children look at a situation from a different perspective to start working towards a positive and peaceful change. As the children of this study discover their fantasy and play, they could discover the creativity needed to move beyond the misconceptions they may have about one another.

Palestinian and Israeli children have grown up in a region where conflict is normalized (Salem, 2005). As a result of living with over six decades of war in Israel and Palestine, human empathy can easily be lost and forgotten. However, moving and dancing together could encourage the needed humanity that can be lost between people when two nations are at war. By providing children with access to comfort and openness through group movement, and encouraging them to explore their expressivity, children have a chance to experience each other not as enemies or victims of war, but as children and survivors who can support each other

through this painful reality. Performance can become a bridge on which children discover a new sense of freedom in interacting with one another as a way towards a positive change and a more peaceful future.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

This literature review begins with research and history about the conflict since 1948. Next, the current situation in Israel and Palestine and its effects on the children is discussed. The possibilities for peace and the different peace strategies are explored. The peace discussion leads into an analysis of how Israeli and Palestinian people have used creativity to cope with the conflict, with an emphasis on the way dance is used in conflict.

The literature review presents the biopsychosocial effects of the war on the Israeli and Palestinian people, particularly how children living in conflict cope with the situation. It continues with the generational effects of the conflict and the way it has impacted the children living in Israel and Palestine. Then, literature that discusses how these children express their emotions and frustrations is reviewed. It concludes with DMT studies on children who have experienced trauma and war conflict. Research showed that DMT is actively present in Israel; however, no literature proposed DMT as a way to unite Israeli and Palestinian children.

### **Brief History of the Israeli and Palestinian Conflict**

The conflict in Israel and Palestine has been an ongoing struggle for centuries. People have gotten used to the aggression and persistence of the violence between the two opposing sides, and in time, a lot of people have lost hope for future peace (Pundak et al., 2012). The War of 1948 marks a significant demarcation between Palestine and Israel. To the Palestinians, 1948 marks the tragic date known as the “*Nakba*,” meaning catastrophe in Arabic (Al Jundi, & Marlowe, 2011; Reinhart, 2005). To the Israelis it is known as the “War of Independence” (Reinhart, 2005, p.7). This contrast in meaning reflects how the opposing views experienced the war. To be more specific, 1948 marks the date when “1,380,000 [Palestinian] people—were driven off their homeland by the Israeli army” (p.7), resulting in the establishment of the Israeli

state and nearly three-quarters of a million Palestinian refugees (Gelvin, 2005; Middle East Research Information Project (MERIP), 2001). The Palestinians who stayed in Israel lived under Marshall law until 1966; they were subject to curfews, needed travel permits, and were subject to expulsions that were dictated by Israel. As a result, many Palestinians decided to immigrate to different countries.

In 1964, Nasser, the Egyptian president, established the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), whose mission was to work towards an independent Palestinian state. In 1987, the first Palestinian uprising occurred against Israel, known to the Palestinians as the Intifada. The Intifada resulted in 2,000 Palestinian and 400 Israelis killed (B'Tselem, n.d., table 2 and 4) and highlighted how the Palestinian people resisted and protested against the Israeli occupation that was denying the Palestinians their human rights (Golan, 2007).

The Oslo Accords (I and II) took place from 1993 to 1999. Oslo I was a plan of the temporary agreements meant to help Palestinians gain autonomy and Israelis gain security (Golan, 2007). For Oslo II, Israel had promised to stop building settlements and promised the withdrawal of the Israeli army in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. They specified agreements dividing the authority between Israel and Palestine. In addition, Israel promised the release of Palestinian prisoners held captive with no charges. Ultimately, both sides failed to hold true to their agreements. The Palestinians found themselves with less freedom and less land. Israel experienced increased violence by non-PLO Islamist groups (Golan, 2007; Vick, 2013).

Israelis and Palestinians were living day to day with increasing tensions, which lead to the second intifada beginning in the year 2000. In 2002, Israel built a wall between Israel and Palestine. This fence, the wall, divides what Israel considers to be the borders between Israel and Palestine (Abdallah & Swaileh, 2011; Ramdani, 2013).

Ten years later, people are still suffering, and there seems to be no progress (Vick, 2013). Palestinian President Abbas recently discussed his concern about the thinning chance for peace in Israel and Palestine. He specifically identified the increased need for resistance against the Israeli settlements, due to the alarming numbers of Palestinian citizens wounded and killed by “bullets of the occupation” (“Current talks”, 2013, para. 11).

Currently, there are thousands of Palestinian refugees living in terrible conditions, hoping for the right to go back to their homes. The Christian and Muslim citizens of Israel are “not treated as equals, but are living as second class citizens” (CNI, 2011, para 16). Israel continues to build illegal settlements beyond the agreed upon borders, which raises tensions between Israelis and Palestinians, and the circumstances in the Palestinian territories are intolerable. This suffering influences the suffering of Israelis from Palestinian resistance.

### **Current Situation and its Effects on the People**

Pundak, Ben-Nun, and Finkel (2012) talked about the present interactions between Israeli and Palestinian children. Although in the past there were minimal interactions between Israelis and Palestinians, the separation has increased given the long-term conflict and “the new generation [of Palestinians] has never met Israelis other than soldiers or settlers” (p. 49). According to the authors, it is difficult for the people to meet in peaceful ways because any connection with Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank require special permits from Israel, which are challenging to receive. They also stated that the physical interactions between the people have been limited because of the separation wall/security fence and the need for permits. The Palestinians are influenced by the negative experiences and interactions with the Israeli soldiers and the consequences of the Israeli occupation, resulting in a lack of regular interactions between the two peoples. The Israelis are influenced by the fear of the Palestinian suicide

bombers and violence. Each believes that the other is there to hurt them. They have started to “lose faith in the motives and aspirations of the other, thus believing that they do not have a partner for peace” (p. 50). The physical barriers are posing obstacles for the people working for peace, making it impossible to find a solution. Pundak, Ben-Nun, and Finkel discussed the increasing frustration in the occupied Palestinian territories: “This distance increases psychological barriers to peace, prevents the possibility of coming up with joint creative solutions to the conflict and eventually keeps Palestinian frustration and anger inside Palestine” (p. 52).

### **Possibilities for Peace**

Klug (2007) discussed how this conflict has deceived the people of both nations countless times. He argued that the political leaders must make a change and prove to the citizens that peace is politically realistic before any citizen could begin to believe in a peaceful change in the future. Klug also encouraged involvement at the non-official (citizens’) level because the general public has to be motivated to make a change and allow the peace process to begin. Klug was one of the first to suggest a two-state solution in 1973: the two cultures living adjacently but separately, with two independent states of Palestine and Israel. Similarly, Golan (2007) discussed the importance of both sides being realistic and recognizing that the peace talks will not completely meet either side’s needs; however, through the use of compromise, they could find a solution that is acceptable for both sides and eventually build trust amongst each other. Frykberg (2013) discussed the concerns with the opportunity for a two-state solution because of “the growing number of Israeli settlements and the expropriation of Palestinian land and resources in the occupied West Bank” (p. 28).



The other solution that has been proposed is the one-state solution where Israelis and Palestinians share the land and live side by side (Al Jundi, & Marlowe, 2011; Farsakh, 2011). However, most research shows less enthusiasm about a one-state solution due to the complex history that both have undergone (Ben Ami, 2013; Musleh, 2013; Schleifer, 2013). Ben Ami (2013) believes that for Jews the importance of having their own state is having a state where Jews are the majority of the people, where they can celebrate their religious holidays, and where the national language is Hebrew. On the other hand, the Palestinians are hoping to regain their land after living in exile and feeling like strangers or refugees on other people's land for decades. With each country having these contrasting intentions for the land, creating a one-state solution would be a challenge. Ben Ami (2013) then brings us back to the initial solution offered by Klug (2007), the two-state solution: "The two-state solution offers a way to avoid more war and more conflict between Israelis and Palestinians" (Para. 15).

### **Peace Strategies**

Peace talks are familiar to the Israeli and Palestinian conflict (Al Jundi, & Marlowe, 2011; Golan, 2007; Reinhart, 2005; "Current talks", 2013). Although the situation and peace talks have not always been successful in Israel and Palestine, there are numerous organizations inside and outside the country that work towards finding a common ground between the two people. Approaches to peace varied within the literature.

Nghiem (2004), a Vietnamese monk, talked about the experience of working with Israeli and Palestinian people at the meditation retreat in Plum village, a Vietnamese meditation center in the south of France. In this retreat, Israelis and Palestinians came together along with people from other countries to practice meditation and understanding between the two communities. She stated that the international community was a big part of the healing process through their

witnessing and attentive listening as well as practicing with them. Nghiem discussed the importance of finding peace within oneself to prepare towards working for peace with the community. She discussed her thoughts on the importance of finding collective healing and practicing peace in an environment other than the conflict zone. When people return to the conflict zone, those peaceful practices have been rehearsed and can be accessed and incorporated into life there. She made an important observation about how humans perceive their enemies to be the people of the opposing nation; however, in reality the real opposing forces are “hate, fear, despair, and especially wrong perception” (p. 16). During war or long-term conflict, people easily lose their ability to see and accept others because of the fear created and built up throughout the history of the conflict. Fear can lead people to adopt protective layers because they start to accept the wrong perceptions of the other as their reality. These protective layers can be very difficult to uncover, as people may refuse to acknowledge that the fear is the true reason for their beliefs.

There are many peace organizations in Israel and Palestine whose missions are to work with children and help them grow to become leaders of peace. Some well recognized peace organizations include Peres Center For Peace, Kids4Peace (K4P), Peace Camp, Peace and Sport, Seeds of Peace, and the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions, (ICAHD), (Al Jundi, & Marlowe, 2011; Bohmer-Laufer, 2006; "Israeli committee against"; K4P, n.d.; Peres Center for Peace, 2009). While each organization has its distinct mission, they appear to share some core values grounded in shared humanity and relationship building. The use of play, sports, and creativity facilitate recognizing and embracing similarities and differences; developing empathy, respect, and understanding; and acknowledging the possibility of peace through hard work,

persistence, and working together (Barghouti, 2006a; Khalidi, 2012; “Ramallah contemporary dance,” 2011; Rowe, 2010).

While many of the peace organizations are working greatly towards developing solidarity between the children, teens, and adults living in the conflict, there is a lack of commitment, support, and exposure that prevents them from impacting the situation to make a true change towards peace. The peace organizations have certainly impacted many people’s lives, but people are less likely to want to join a peace camp in a time of war, especially people who do not have easy access to them. This is one reason why a lot of organizations fail to keep children in the same organization, impeding their potential to fully grow as peace leaders (Pundak et al., 2012).

### **Dance, Theater, and Conflict**

Although the conflict can limit access to peace camps, peace organizations still strive to find ways of promoting and building peace. Many of the peace organizations incorporate creativity to provide children with fun ways to come together and build trusting relationships (Al Jundi, & Marlowe, 2011; Bohmer-Laufer, 2006; K4P, n.d.; Peres Center for Peace, 2009). Historically, conflict has stirred creative minds to produce art works. Dance, art, and theater have all been used to portray the conflict in unique ways (Khalidi, 2012; Rossen, 2011). There is an undeniable need for creativity for the people living in the midst of the Palestinian and Israeli conflict. The community builds stronger connections and relationships as people come together to create art, dance, and theater (Barghouti, 2006a; Kalidi, 2012). Newton (2013) explored the importance of performing arts and the impact it can have on Palestinian people. She discussed the way performing arts have been used therapeutically in the Palestinian territories to help alleviate the pain of the occupation. She stated that “the sharing of personal stories” could help people feel more connected to the community and could lead them to release held emotional pain

(para. 10). This success can be seen in audience responses to the performances and the deep meaning and potential healing gleaned through these performances.

Newton (2013) discussed the annual Ramallah Contemporary Dance Festival (RCDF) that takes place every year. This festival holds workshops, film showings, dialogues, and performances all over the city of Ramallah, attracting 120 international dance companies and offering performance and creative opportunities to Palestinian youth. Newton expressed her experience and feelings on the benefits of the festival for Palestinian society stating, “Through this expression, dance and theatre are giving an increasingly idle and frustrated demographic of Palestinian society an artistic outlet and offers them fellowship. Dance and theatre are forms of art that almost always require group participation” (Newton, 2013, para, 17). These performances not only provide emotional benefits to the people as they perform, the performers are also empowered through the connection with their audience. These performances provide opportunities for the people to work towards a meaningful and an enjoyable cause in times of struggle.

Rowe (2010) wrote about dance being a guide for change, a way of starting discussions, and a method of communicating untraditional ideas and taboo topics. The movie *War Dance* (Hecht, 2007) was filmed in Uganda showing how powerful dance can be. It includes children’s testimonies about how feeling the rhythm in the music brings freedom in their movement and they start to feel happy, safe, and at peace. This film showed that children easily relate to dance rhythm, and music and can be a great outlet for them to release emotions; it gives them the opportunity to be creative through positive means.

Mary Lee Hardenberg (2013) is known for creating live outdoor movement choirs where numerous people come together to move together to express themselves. Movement choirs are

accessible to dancers and non-dancers (Green, n.d.). Hardenberg covered huge spaces, for example, the banks of the Mississippi river. In her works, dancers are costumed and props with lively colors are included in the natural setting. People saw this space from a new perspective, as the movement choir left an imprint on the audience's imagination. Creativity and dance can challenge how people look at the world. Hardenberg's live outdoor movement choirs exhibit how dance can impact the way people interpret different sites.

In Palestine, there is limited access and availability for artistic creation because of the restraints of the occupation (Barghouti, 2006a; Eronese, Castiglioni, Tombolani, & Said, 2012; Rowe, 2010). People find ways to be creative even though dance and theater can be a struggle to accomplish in the Palestinian Occupied Territories (POT) (Barghouti, 2006a; Kalidi, 2012). There are organizations in the POT that are dedicated to the arts, such as Sarreyet, the International Academy of Art Palestine ("Ramallah contemporary dance," 2011), and projects like the "harakat" project meaning "movement" in Arabic that is organized at the Center for Creative Arts (CCA).

### **Creativity, Art, and Dance for Conflict Resolution**

People have found the power that art can provide to communities in conflict. Barron (1969) described creativity as the ability to craft something new. He wrote that human beings cannot create something new out of nothing; creativity usually involves the reshaping of something that is already in existence. Therefore, using creativity in conflict resolution can ultimately open new doors for people to experience what would have otherwise been unthinkable resolutions (Arai, 2009). Arai (2009) argues that unconventional ways of working towards conflict resolution can redirect the people involved to find alternate solutions. Metz (2009) implemented a study on how the survivors of hurricane Katrina connected to creativity as a

means of finding resilience through the catastrophe. Metzl found that art, specifically art making, supports originality, which can facilitate problem solving and enhance motivation and, in turn, improve resiliency. He discussed the significance of understanding the meaning of the art and processing the art making through art therapy as beneficial to the survivors of hurricane Katrina.

Studies also showed that creativity and dance enhanced the lives of people involved in conflict resolution. Alexander and Lebaron (2012) discussed how the use of dance and movement activities could enhance the use of role-play activities in conflict resolution. They came to the conclusion that movement and dance improved the role-player's ability to be more self-aware and increased their level of authenticity. The participants' participation in the dance and movement activities correlated with an increased in skill level in the role-playing activities. Alexander and Lebaron (2012) reported that dance has the unique ability of helping conflict interveners and negotiation trainers "connect with others and build empathy and trust" (p. 326).

Beadle (2006) wrote of Al-Rowwad Theatre Community that teaches drama to children surviving in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; he discussed the benefits of using imagery in plays as a way to help the audience connect to the child performers. Beadle wrote that connecting the imagery to the performance "validates the performers' and victims' emotional pain" (p. 98). This helped the children feel that they were not alone and they had a sense of support (Beadle, 2006). Beadle also recognized Al-Rowwar Theater as providing a safe space for the children to deal with the occupation in a non-violent way. Beadle stated "the performers take ownership of the Palestinian narrative, and thus, they open up the possibility for current and future generations to find alternative solutions to the cyclical violence" (p. 100).

Approaching conflict with creativity and art has opened many minds by helping people see the conflict in different ways, to eventually possibly even unlock the problems and discover

creative solutions and resolutions. Dance for conflict resolution is distinctly powerful because movement puts into action what needs to change. Using dance and movement for social justice can be the first step towards change (“Ramallah contemporary dance,” 2011; Alexander & Lebaron, 2012, Hardenberg, 2013). Creativity and art have influenced both Palestinian and Israeli culture, and it is important to look at the role that art has played in each culture.

### **Dance and Theater in Palestine**

The national dance of Palestine is known as the *dabkeh* (Rowe, 2010). Throughout history traditional Palestinian dance has evolved, and it has been used for different purposes. At first, traditional Palestinian dance was used as a celebratory tool in weddings, parties, and for entertainment for travelers visiting Palestine. However, when the Palestinian and Israeli conflict began, the dance started to become more nationalistic in nature (Adra, 2011). Barghouti (2006a, 2006b) discussed how Palestinian folk dance could limit and restrict the full expressivity of a dancer. He went on to describe how such dances, while they have cultural value in the celebration of festivities, have familiar and stable movement qualities, which can promote stagnation. Although folk dancing can limit expressivity, it can also suggest the peoples need for stability in a constantly changing and rapidly evolving conflict. Also, these folk dances can provide a means for the people to reconnect to their traditions while they remain in occupied territories after being stripped of their home (2006a).

Barghouti (2006a) recognized and endorsed the development of incorporating contemporary movement qualities into traditional dances, which appeals to the younger generation and takes the art to another level of emotional and physical expressivity. For example, contemporary dance can help dancers experience movement articulations that lead to a greater sense of freedom that sequenced folk does not offer. He hoped that this type of movement

development would be promoted in the schools because he witnessed how the youth found pride in their traditional dances again once contemporary movement was introduced. He further stated that dance does more than simply bring pride to the youth, but it “involves the coordinated and expressive movement of the entire body [and] has [a] unique, critically needed, therapeutic effect on a community deeply traumatized by Israel’s relentless crimes...designed to induce gradual ethnic cleansing” (para. 5).

Barghouti (2006a) described the importance of the use of dance as an expressive art form in Palestine:

We may indeed be incarcerated in the world’s largest open-air prisons, surrounded by the world’s most barbaric concrete walls, but our minds can still be free, and so can our ability to express ourselves in movement, music, poetry, or any other form of artistic articulation. It is time we told the world our whole story, not as victims, not as heroes either, but as human beings who aspire to live in dignity, in freedom, and who struggle to realize their fullest humanity. (para. 6)

This quote describes the ability to find freedom through movement and the power of using movement as an expression that cannot be taken away or denied by oppressors.

Another Palestinian dance company in the Dheishe Refugee Camp, Ibdaa dance, has had international recognition. Murphy (2003) described the dance troop and the meaning of “Ibdaa” in Arabic: “to create something out of nothing...[Ibdaa dances] communicate the reality of Palestinians, using a traditional dance form to express contemporary struggles, as well as customary themes like agrarian culture” (para 2). This dance company is dedicated to performing for their audience and their country. They are not merely dancing to impress, “they



are here to compel foreign audiences to call upon their governments to hold Israel accountable for the policies that squelch their freedom, quality of life, and future” (para. 3).

In Palestine, Khalidi (2012) discussed the freedom theater developed by Mer Khamis, originally founded in the 1980s by his mother Arna to help the children suffering from the trauma of the occupation. In a theatrical comedy, the story portrays what Palestinians “do while waiting for their freedom, while waiting for a state: how they treat each other, and how they fill their time with endless acts of creativity in order to survive” (p. 31). In times of conflict and pain, theater can be used the therapeutic benefits of empowerment as actors are witnessed by an audience. Freedom Theater in Palestine has included a program named the Trauma Response Project led by mental health professionals, who spend one and a half years in training in psychodrama and trauma response (Khalidi, 2012, p. 30). As the theater evolved, many exciting new programs have incorporated the use of therapy interrelated. They have started to incorporate techniques of Playback Theatre, during which professional actors act out the audience’s stories with audience participation. Watching one’s own story be acted out through someone else can help one see their story through another lens, and can help others develop empathy for this person. This technique is known as Drama for Conflict Transformation (Khalidi, 2012).

The theater struggles to maintain its actors because many of them are severely affected by the occupation. Palestinian’s accessibility to the creative outlets is limited because of restrictions, such as curfews and checkpoints, which restricting them from leaving their towns and even their homes. Access to arts is more difficult in Palestine, whereas, in Israel there is a more developed arts scene since the occupation does not restrict them.

## **Dance and Theater in Israel**

In ancient times, Jewish dance distinguished the soul from the body. The soul was represented as pure, and the body was tainted by its “carnal appetites” (Brin Ingber, 2011, p. 9). When Israel was establishing its post-war culture in 1948, “authentic Israeli dance was part of the process, resulting in a unique Israeli cultural character combining Western Europe with Middle East” (Brin Ingber, 2011, p. 73). These have been described with having angular movement influenced by Hebrew letters.

Milka Yellin (2011) described Israeli dance as “known for its vibrant and wide range of creative activity in the making and performing of dance works” (p. 158). Dance in Israel is common and has become a ritual in celebrations. Israeli dancers are known for their ability to stand out because of their unique movement repertoire and qualities as well as their dedication and focus. For example, their intricate and direct movement is as strong as their pliable flow (Rottenberg, 2013). These dancers embody the movement by displaying its quality in their whole bodies.

Dance in Israel is popular and there are many internationally recognized dance companies, such as the Batcheva Dance Company (Eichelberger, 2012). The styles of dance in Israel have an influence from the traditional Jewish dances, characterized as very energetic. The Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company (KCDC) is recognized and celebrated in an International Dance Village whose goal is providing motivation “love, fulfillment, artistic creation and excellence” (Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company, 2014, para. 1). The KCDC is a place for coming together in harmony, where people are generous and giving, and where creativity and emotion are reflected in movement.

Israeli choreographers have also created works representing the sensitive nature of the current situation in Israel. Lerman and Smiarowski choreographed the dances, “Fifty Modest Reflections on Turning Fifty” and “Attempts.” Both are about Israel and Palestine. Rossen (2011) discussed how these dances impacted their audiences. She explained that these dances could “inspire vigorous research and critical analysis, providing a forum for asking questions and not simply giving answers, offer an opportunity to tangle with complexities and ambiguities, and represent shifting, unstable, and multiple points of view” (p 48). As the audience witnesses the dances they can start to ask questions about the stories represented by the dances. These questions can lead to discussions and increased understanding of the stories told through movement. Rossen (2011) discussed the impact dance can have on society by moving people and inspiring people to make a change. Smiarowski and Young choreographed “Uneasy Duets” (p. 46-47). These duets demonstrate how difficult and challenging it is to embody the conflict and move in ways that depict it. These choreographers successfully portrayed the strong impact the conflict has by physically taking a step out of the dance and saying out loud in front of the audience that the movement does not look real. Many people can attempt to represent the violence of the conflict through movement; however, this can only be a representation—the reality of the situation is too traumatic to be reenacted in dance and movement (Rossen, 2011). Although dance can be a useful tool for increased self-expression and increased understanding, it is solely symbolic and cannot represent real suffering and conflict.

Israeli culture has also developed theater groups that support coexistence of Israeli and Palestinian youth. Peace Child Israel (2011) teaches coexistence through “tolerance and mutual respect to youth through the means of theater and the arts” (para. 1). They perform plays in three languages—English, Arabic, and Hebrew—to promote coexistence.

Dance for social justice can bring people together and induce creativity in people who are living in conflict. While creativity can be a powerful means of addressing conflict, for some, the creative process can unearth feelings and emotional challenges from the conflict. Furthermore, such consistent exposure to war and conflict can result in symptoms of trauma, which requires professional therapy to process and heal. Dance and movement can arouse emotions held within the body, and without being processed; these emotions can be harmful to a mover and actually retrigger negative psychological reactions to the traumatic experiences. Dance/movement therapy is one way to address this trauma while still using dance and movement.

Dance/movement therapists are mental health professionals who address the biopsychosocial needs of people, and they are equipped to handle clients' emotions in reaction to conflict (ADTA, 2009). Dance/movement therapy allows for the processing of emotional responses that are held in the body and develops coping skills to encourage healing and growth.

Dance/movement therapy and trauma will be discussed after the subject of trauma is covered in depth.

### **Exposure to Trauma**

Trauma is defined by the American Psychological Association (APA) (2008) as an event “that threatens injury, death, or the physical integrity of self or others”(para. 3); the victim of trauma will react with “horror, terror, or helplessness at the time it occurs” (APA, 2008 para. 3). Unfortunately, the range of people who are affected by psychological trauma have become more common than not. Therefore, “traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptation to life” (Herman, 1992, p. 33).

Traumatic exposure affects the physical and psychological development of children, often manifested in disorganized and agitated behaviors as a result of both shock trauma and

developmental trauma (Baker et al., 2005; Eckberg, 2000). Eckberg (2000) compared shock trauma to developmental trauma: shock trauma is characterized by a person being “overwhelmed beyond [his/her] capacity to cope and enters into a state of shock” (p.2). Their natural development is being disrupted by a shock to their system, which is “interwoven” in the body (p. 2). Developmental trauma occurs when the individual’s normal development is interrupted “which results in characterological patterns that impair healthy functioning” (p.1). Eckberg discussed the significance of the trauma forming the character of a child, compared to when the trauma is experienced later in adult life. For example, in adults the trauma will be layered and developed on top of the adults’ already existing character. Eckberg realized adults’ mature character structure formed prior to the trauma would help their potential recovery.

### **Children Affected by Trauma**

Siegel (1999) discussed when a child experienced trauma while the brain was maturing, normal development could be interrupted. Siegel (1999) discussed trauma’s effects in the beginning of a child’s life and reported that trauma affects “the deeper structures of the brain, which are responsible for basic regulatory capacities and enable the mind to respond later to stress” (p. 12). As a result, these children are at risk of having more stress hormones that lead to extra anxiety in traumatic situations. Being exposed to a long time of stress and trauma would have lasting effects on the child’s development. The child can develop a state of constant fear. Rothschild (2000) further explained, as the child grows up, the trauma might be experienced “only as highly charged emotions and body sensations” (p. 24). Husain, Nair, Wolcomb, Reid, Vargas, and Nair (1998) found children reacted to trauma by demonstrating “avoidant behaviors, re-experiencing symptoms, and hypervigilance” (p. 1719).

Children growing up in a war conflict are exposed to trauma on a regular basis: trauma can be defined as experiencing a threat to one's life or serious injury (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Trauma can also happen to someone who witnessed or heard about a family or friend's threat of life or serious injury. The UN organization for human rights discussed symptoms of trauma in the case of children living in areas of conflict as: difficulty trusting others, increased separation anxiety, nightmares, trouble sleeping, cessation of play and laughter, loss of appetite, withdrawn behaviors, poor concentration in younger children, and depression, anxiety, aggressive behaviors, and discouragement in adolescents. Children have also shown difficulty trusting others when exposed to war trauma. However, the UN presented ways that foster children's resilience: helping children have a stable routine, having caring and responsible adults to mentor and lead them, incorporating aspects of the children's normative culture to build trust, and teaching them their human rights (APA, 2008; MERIP, 2001). Many children can adapt to and overcome difficult situations, depending on factors such as age, developmental maturity, prior experiences, social support, and other resiliency assets (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2005).

### **Trauma Experienced by Israeli and Palestinian Children**

Research studies showed that children's reaction to the Palestinian and Israeli conflict was correlated with the amount of direct exposure to traumatic events. Thabet et al. (2002) analyzed Palestinian children living in a war zone. Children who witnessed the war experiences first-hand had a greater risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In particular, a higher rate of PTSD was found in children who had experienced bombardments and demolished homes. In more recent research, while comparing Israeli and Palestinian adolescents, Al-Krenawi, Graham, and Kanat-Maymon (2009) found that in both the Palestinians and Israelis,

exposure to political violence was notably related with most of the mental health symptoms, with all of the PTSD measures, and with aggression measures. These researchers' findings showed that the Palestinian youth displayed considerably higher levels of emotional problems, although they were significant among all members. Furthermore, Nguyen-Gillham, Giacaman, Nasser, and Boyce (2008) reported, "The dehumanization of life under military occupation emerges as a powerful theme in the stories of Palestinian youth" (p. 293). Some say that there is no measure to the pain of trauma; however, these studies measured that the frequency and direct exposure to trauma affected the survivors' level of functioning.

Altawil, Nel, Asker, Samara, and Harrolds (2008) discussed the prevalence of chronic traumatic experiences during the second intifada, the type of traumatic events, and the psychological and social suffering among Palestinian children living in the Gaza Strip. They had a sample of 1137 children from Gaza, and every child in this sample had experienced at least three traumatic events. Most children had experienced 14-16 traumas, and some had experienced up to 34 traumas. The authors also mapped out the type of traumas that were most frequent: exposed to humiliation by occupying forces (99%) and exposure to explosions (97%). This study found the prevalence of PTSD through direct and indirect exposure to trauma. The authors further discussed that children who are affected by war trauma can experience disconnection from their families. Children need their parents to be protective figures, yet the parents are not always capable of protecting their children from the consequences of the conflict.

Although much research showed that Palestinian children suffer from the struggles of the occupation (Nguyen-Gillham, Giacaman, Nasser, & Boyce, 2008), these children have proven to be resilient while living in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. Although the children lived in conditions of war, they developed adaptive qualities that allowed them to strive in the hardest

moments. The children described their lives positively, stating that their community surrounded them and supported them through the suffering (Eronese et al., 2012).

Literature shows that trauma is present on both sides: Israeli and Palestinian children have experienced suffering from the war conflict (Eshel, 2013; Salem, 2005; Zakrison, Shahen, Mortaja, & Hamel, 2004). Eshel (2013) discussed the ongoing suffering and ongoing violence that adults and children are experiencing in the settlement Sderot, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. Specifically, on the Palestinian side a research study showed that the children living in the West Bank have significantly higher psychological morbidity than the children living in the Gaza strip (Zakrison et al., 2004). Eshel (2013) discussed the lack of resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to help the children who are suffering from these traumas. On the Israeli side, Eshel discussed that people are afraid of leaving their homes for psychological help because of the fear of Palestinian suicide bombings.

### **The Body's Response to Trauma**

Trauma is expressed and experienced through the body, which impacts the physical functioning of the body. The body that is in a constant fight or flight state is filled with anxiety and is ready to protect itself at any time against another attack (Rothschild, 2000). Eckberg (2000) wrote, "one's history is structured in one's body; all one has lived through is embodied" (p. 36) while recognizing the importance of body centered therapy. Van der Kolk (1996) recognized the impact trauma can have on the body; "[the body] often becomes the battleground through which the trauma gets reenacted...the fight flight response, freezing, self-mutilating, self-injurious behavior, addictions, disassociations, and fragmentations, all of which can be observed in the body" (p. 145). Thus, the stress on the body will be directly reflected in the survivor's psychology and mind (Bremner, 2005; Rothschild, 2000; Van der Kolk, 1996).



McFarlane and Yehuda (1996), Bremner (2005), and Eckberg (2000) described the physical effects of trauma in the body, which included the impact of increased hormonal release on the body's functioning, restricted breathing, increased muscle tension, and an overall shrinking of the body. In addition, Rothschild (2000) described experiencing detachment of the body, numbing of emotions, recurrent irrational behaviors, and unrealistic emotions, resulting in anxiety, loss of energy, and trouble with concentration and sleep. Thus, the traumatic stress that the body holds will impact the survivor's mental and physical health (Bremner, 2005; Rothschild, 2000; Van Der Kolk, 1996).

### **Parental Past Trauma and Children**

In addition to direct exposure to trauma, children can also be affected by the trauma instilled in them from their parent's unhealed past trauma (Feldman & Vengroberg, 1987). Feldman and Vengroberg found that mothers with symptoms of PTSD, depression, and anxiety had more children who developed PTSD than mothers who showed no signs of such symptoms. Moroz (1992) reported a parent's trauma has the potential to disrupt the development of a *secure attachment* (see Appendix A) with their child. They may transfer their feelings to the child. The child could inherently learn through the parents how to feel and act with similar anxieties in the world. Siegel (1999) reported children who have grown up in a *disorganized attachment* (see Appendix A) are unable to rely fully on their parents. Therefore, they grow up unable to find comfort and orientation since their parents are the main source of the fear, perplexity, and confusion. This disruption and unreliability in the attachment relationship can impact the development of these children's minds and "the sudden shifts in these children's states of mind yield incoherence in their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functioning" (p. 109). Their social and peer interactions can also be affected. If children continue to grow up in the

disorganized/insecure attachment, they can be constantly exposed to this sort of distrust and eventually be severely “internally disorganized” (p. 109). Kamen (2013) discussed that the veterans’ spouses and children also experienced the veterans’ response to trauma. Kamen (2013) referred to this experience as second hand trauma.

Again, those in Israel and Palestine have lived in conflict for generations. Ayalon (1998) discussed the cycle of victimization and how people, families, and loved ones of the person that is hurt during a terrorist attack are all victims as well; they experience vicarious trauma, creating a large ripple affect that spans generations. Regardless of children’s familiarity with the conflict, they are living with the wounds of their own childhood and their parents’ experiences. This could negatively impact the development into adulthood. He said that because children have yet to develop coping systems, they are dependent on adults to help them understand the traumatic events.

Some recommend normalization to induce a clean slate, for example, building relations between Israel and Palestine including political, financial, socio-cultural, and legal relation (Salem, 2005). According to Salem (2005), they believe that normalization is inevitable and could be a start to developing normal lives in the conflict area. However, others believe that normalization of the situation is harmful because it erases the fact that there is a conflict and makes the situation seem normal even though Palestine is still under occupation and there has not been a stop in the “expansion of Israeli settlements” (para. 21). Salem also discussed that, overall, Palestinian people are more prepared to begin normalization than Israeli people.

### **Traditional Psychotherapy for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma**

Much research has been done analyzing the different forms of traditional therapy to help the healing of children who have experienced trauma. The APA (2008) discussed the positive

effects that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has had on children who have experienced trauma. Specifically, Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) was the most researched therapy that resulted in great improvements with children who have experienced trauma (Cohen, & Mannarino, 1997; Cohen, et al., 2005; Cohen, et al., 2004; Deliber, et al., 1996; King, et. al., 2000).

Focusing specifically on children growing up in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, therapist Ayalon (1998) examined the work done in Israel to support children who have been affected by the war. Ayalon discussed the benefits of the Belief, Affect, Social interaction, Imagination, Cognition, and Physiology (BASIC- PH) multi-channel model for coping resources, which is inspired by multi-modal therapy. BASIC-PH approach supports holistic therapeutic methods that can reach each child with all the different BASIC-PH channels to cope through and develop their best-suited coping mechanisms. The use of the BASIC-PH approach allows for the therapist to analyze through which channels the patient is responding to best and which channel he/she could benefit from developing further and improving connection to. This gives the therapist tools to improve the child's healing in a holistic approach.

Ayalon (1998) also described the Community Oriented Preventive Education COPE project, which emphasized the integration of the community to assist the children with healing from trauma. The COPE project philosophy involved first developing an understanding of the children's trauma and then preparing the community to help and respond to the children's needs. They followed a three stage treatment model: "anticipatory, buffering, and recuperation" (p. 229) and then presented an "open ended trauma recovery curriculum" using expressivity, non-verbal processes, and "cognitive and social reconstruction" (p. 229). Similarly, Danev (1998) discussed the benefits of a multi-therapy approach that provided the children with different

qualities from more than one form of therapy, allowing the children to grow through many dimensions.

### **Dance/Movement Therapy (DMT) with Children who have Experienced Trauma**

Dance/movement therapy is a practice used to process, cope with, and heal from the emotions, feelings, and sensations that are held in the body, such as when people experience stress and trauma from war conflict (ADTA, 2009). Traditional therapy helps the healing of trauma on a verbal and cognitive level; however, DMT can go further to address the trauma at a body level. DMT “is the psychotherapeutic use of movement to further the emotional, cognitive, physical and social integration of the individual” (ADTA, 2009, para. 1).

Alexander and LeBaron (2012) stated that dance and movement have transformative therapeutic benefits. They discussed the benefits of using dance therapy “to help people deal with the aftermath of violent conflict... the mind-body connection is nurtured and the ruptured threads in those areas may be healed” (p. 547). They explained these benefits by adding that movement and dance could assist in the processing of the traumatic and violent memories that are kept in the body. This could guide to a more conscious awareness of these body felt emotions and traumas. Finding the link from the mind to the body can allow deeper understanding of these emotions with the hope to eventually find healing of the emotional and physical scars.

More specifically, Children are still developing in their bodies and need to be given a safe place where they can grow into healthy adults. Giving children the safe space for self-expression and therapeutic intervention by a professional dance/movement therapist can potentially heal the trauma that children have experienced (Harris, 2007a; Kornblum & Halsten, 2006).

Harris (2007a), a dance/movement therapist, created a qualitative ethnographic research of boy soldiers in Sierra Leon. The objective of this study was to meet physiological as well as

psychological goals through the use of improvisational dancing to recordings of popular Sierra Leonian music. These boy soldiers were faced with a lot of guilt and shame in reaction to the way their people rejected their reintegration into the community in the aftermath of the war. Harris worked with the children on having open peer interaction, finding meaningful connections with others, and discovering empathy.

Harris (2007a) found a positive shift in the children of Sierra Leon after they experienced the DMT sessions. The boys were empowered, started to process their feelings, and no longer felt isolated. At the end of the DMT sessions with Harris, the children decided to perform the dance in front of their community. This act allowed the community to accept the boys as children again; they started to relate to the children through the performance. Harris proved the deep impact dance/movement therapy had on these children. The children continued to grow with their skills in the community, even after Harris left Sierra Leon, as evidenced by their continuing improvement in re-socialization, overall “well-being,” and “few mental health problems” (p.8). Harris stated that DMT with child soldiers cultivates a means to cope with their trauma. He stated, “bonds invest the human species with the talents to survive even the most unthinkable of ruptures and, sometimes in the face of speechless terror itself, to divine symbolic means for expressing them” (p. 103). Harris described the power of human nature to grow from the painful traumatic experiences while harnessing the power from each person’s talents. In order for the children to learn how to deal with emotions that are held within the body and to learn how to freely express these emotions when needed through safe, creative, and positive means.

Kornblum is a dance/movement therapist who is known for her work in schools with children who have experienced violence (Kornblum, & Halsten, 2006). She described four case studies about children who were dealing with trauma. There was a case of a hyper aroused child,

a child who had attachment issues, a child with depression, and a child with angry outbursts. The child who experienced trauma and was hyper-aroused came to the therapy sessions with little control over his movements. Kornblum led the patient to push with all his energy into a wall and make sure to ground himself on the floor by also pressing his feet down. This helped the child “funnel his energy, feel empowered, and in control” (p. 151). The child who was experiencing anger lacked self-control when first starting the DMT sessions. Kornblum taught the child the 4 B’s of self-control. According to Kornblum the first step of the 4 B’s is Brakes, Breath, Brain, Body: at first the child trapped his own energy, then, he slowed his breath, and used self talk to calm his brain, then, self-touch to calm his body. After completing the 4 B’s, the child was calmer and gained more control over his body and emotions.

Kornblum and Halsten (2006) stated that the general goals of trauma based DMT groups with children who have experienced violence are to increase a sense of safety and control, to create a feeling of pleasure, to establish empathy with self and others, to increase awareness of others, and to develop self-soothing skills. Other goals include building empowerment, expanding movement repertoire, improving ability to modulate feelings, developing group synchrony, and linking internal experiences to verbal expression. Kornblum guided the children to bring more awareness, connection, and safety to their bodies and their surroundings.

### **Therapeutic Relationship within DMT**

One of DMT’s assumptions is that the therapeutic relationship can help the psychological development of the client (Chaklin & Schmais, 1993). By developing trust and joining the clients in their bodies with kinesthetic empathy, the clients could move forward to meet their psychological goals. Therefore, it is important for the therapist to be sensitive to the child’s culture to develop a strong bond that can lead to healing. Harris (2002) created a review of

literature providing an extensive analysis of many programs created to help children affected by war trauma. Harris focused on the importance of immersing children into a safe environment by respecting and acknowledging their traumatic experiences. He found that a therapist must be open to a child's culture in order to understand and help.

Kornblum and Halsten (2006) learned that having clear goals could help children find a direction in the group and establish a trusting relationship with the therapist. In the case of the depressed child, Kornblum saw a dramatic shift in the child's affect by simply creating a therapeutic relationship. The child was regressing back to the fetal position and crawling on the floor, while all the other children were dancing energetically in the room. The therapist intervened by mirroring the child's movements. The child was then connecting to the therapist through the movement, breath, and energy. Kornblum described the shift in this child as "the turtle disappeared and a feisty, energized girl emerged" (p. 152). This reveals how a body based approach can facilitate the strengthening of a therapeutic relationship, which can assist the client in the healing process.

### **Self-Expression Through Symbolism**

A body-based approach also encourages feelings to manifest outwardly in symbolic movement, which the therapist can use to address the emotions beneath the symbol. Quensen-Diaz (2002) witnessed this in her work with refugee children. Monique, a participant in Quensen-Diaz's study, stated that she felt better after letting out, through symbolic movement, the feelings that she was unable to express verbally. Harris (2009) expressed the benefits of DMT with survivors of trauma, specifically using symbolic expression to release their feelings. Harris (2009) recognized the importance of symbols to express painful traumatic experiences.

Harris (2007b) stated that through this symbolic expression of trauma, one can discover the “personal or collective strengths available for recovering from its pain” (p.141), thus facilitating the reintegration of the body/mind connection. The importance of physicalization of emotions to help heal trauma was also recognized by Beadle (2006). She observed that Palestinian children’s experiences in the Al-Rawwar Theater potentially lessened trauma’s effects “through the elaboration of historical events of national trauma, an ideology that embraces a peaceful resistance, and finally, through the release of pent–up energy in the physicalization of events in the form of dance and stylized movement” (p. 101).

Thus, the literature highlights the importance of providing children who have experienced trauma an opportunity to reconnect with the community through creative means. In particular, the literature emphasizes the effectiveness of DMT to facilitate sessions for children to reconnect with their bodies, process their emotional experiences, and initiate the healing of their traumatic experiences through freedom in movement.

## **Conclusion**

Though therapeutic dance exists on both sides of the conflict, at the time of this literature review, DMT was more prevalent in, and perhaps exclusive to, Israel. Berrol (1989) mentioned multiple sites in Israel that incorporate DMT in their therapeutic practice to aid children in need. Berrol (1989) discussed how DMT was used with children with developmental disorders including those diagnosed along the autism spectrum. She stated that DMT is valued in Israel to help the children who are autistic to develop their functional and expressive qualities. In Palestine, to my knowledge, there is no practice of DMT, although the use of therapeutic dance is present, appreciated, and beneficial for the people. I also have not found any research about DMT with Israeli and Palestinian children together. Hallward (2009) discussed the risk involved



in working collaboratively for Israeli's and Palestinian's, stating "anyone participating in 'joint' effort sometimes runs the risk of being seen as a 'traitor' to one's national cause or as a 'collaborator' with the enemy" (p 542). This highlights the separation between the two nations and how difficult it can be for people from both sides to work together towards a peaceful future.

However, literature has shown that creativity, art, and dance can initiate positive change in both Israel and Palestine. Research needs to confirm whether dance, movement, and/or performance could be used as a tool to connect Israeli and Palestinian children and create empathetic bonds among them. This study may be a start to extending DMT literature, trauma therapy literature, and peace literature. By initiating dance and movement with both Palestinian and Israeli children, and providing a safe space for them to connect on a new body based level, I hope to answer the following question: how can dance, movement, and a performance enhance the social and team building skills of Israeli and Palestinian children living in war conflict? For this study, I desired to unite this group of Palestinian and Israeli children through dance and movement, creating movement and expressions of positive interaction and movement towards peace.

## Chapter Three: Methods

### Methodology

**Performance ethnography.** Performance ethnography is, like an ethnographic study, the study of a culture. Performance ethnography goes further to create a performance from the data that is obtained during the research to embody the culture that the researcher has researched (Pelias, 2007). Performance ethnography is a methodology associated with the constructivist paradigm. Mertens (2005) stated that the constructivist paradigm was developed from “the philosophy of Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology” (p.12) and hermeneutics, the study of meaning. The constructivist paradigm expresses that “reality is socially constructed” (p.14). According to the constructivist paradigm, the people engaged in research development create knowledge. Mertens (2005) further discussed that the research results are connected and related to the values of the researcher, and that these two cannot be separated.

McCall (2000) reported that the performance ethnography methodology was developed from theater and performance art. In the 70s and 80s, as the artists began experimenting with performances, they started using the performances to express a message to the audience. In the 80s and 90s sociologists began to incorporate the data of their ethnographic research to create performances. Usually the messages were scripts that the performers conveyed to the audience. The scripts were developed from the data that the researchers collected. Some of the statements would encourage maximum participation and engagement from the audience.

This methodology supported the investigation of my study’s question: How can Israeli and Palestinian children develop social skills and supportive team building skills through dance, movement, and commitment to a performance? Using performance ethnography seemed natural

for my study: I used dance and performance as a means of connecting Israeli and Palestinian children; this performance happened within the context of a peace camp, after the children had worked together in three guided, two-hour movement sessions.

This study also served to explore the involvement of movement, dance, and creativity in the peace process. It was meant to purposefully make a statement about how developing the communication and creativity of children, from two opposing parts of the Palestinian and Israeli conflict, could develop their social and team building skills. My goal was to discover how this process would benefit the children and aid them in their hopes for peace. In this study, my goal was to be realistic and not neglect or omit the conflict from the children. I did not intend to pretend that movement and dance would solve the conflict or be the answer for peace. This encouraged me to stay true to the natural development of the performance, while including and acknowledging any conflict that emerged.

This performance was intended to “present the results in a more engaging manner” (Mertens, 2005, p. 434). Jones and Olomo (2008) recognized that in performance ethnography, the artists delved further into the research question by using the data to create a performance. She succinctly stated, “Each performance is a step in the development of an idea rather than a definitive resolution” (p. 206). The Palestinian and Israeli conflict has been the reality of people’s lives for generations. People have started to see the conflict as a normal part of life in the region; people are accepting the consequences as mere day to day obstacles of each one’s daily living. This study was not created to find a “resolution” for the conflict; through performance it was meant to raise questions and invite the audience to see the progress of Israeli and Palestinian children: working together, developing material, learning new skills, connecting through art, and creatively engaging in the performance process. Jones and Olomo (2008) also

described performance ethnography as inviting further progression of the dance that is celebrated in each performance whereby each performance can bring life to a new idea. Celebrating the progress of the Israeli and Palestinian children was a goal for this study. The performance was meant to be a celebration of the children's development as a group that actively engaged in the exploration of their creativity, despite the political circumstances.

I designed the study in such a way that the children participated in the creation of the performance. Based on their participation, energy, and input, I facilitated the development of the performance during the three movement workshops at the camp by supporting and guiding the children through their creative process. Oberg (2008) suggested that performance "brings the research alive" (p. 3). The performance of this study was meant to tell a story on stage and enliven the story to bring the idea of Palestinian and Israeli children moving and dancing together peacefully to a different level where the audience could witness and potentially participate in the performance. As the performers are witnessed by the audience, they can sense and experience the story differently and can invite the audience to their performance. The audience members are witnessing the performance for the first time, and they contribute their own interpretations and input to the performance. As I was designing the study, I realized that giving the children a means to communicate their creation to an audience would allow their process to be witnessed. This allowed the opportunity for the children to feel empowered and respected for their work. The study was also an opportunity for the children to build strong and supportive relationships that were needed to perform at their most efficient and proactive level. By using dance and movement, I wanted to bring life to this study and bring life to the possibility for change in the Israeli and Palestinian conflict.

Oberg (2008) further talked about performance ethnographies “as a catalyst to critical thinking and reflection” (p. 2). She discussed how research can be used in a new way and revealed through theater and dance. She stated that “performance ethnography acts as a social conscience and tool of liberation gravitating away from the academic notion of research grounded in facts and science and toward research situated in the midst of human experience” (p. 2.). In this study, the performance was meant to show the true experience of Palestinian and Israeli children’s development over the course of three movement sessions.

Bauman and Briggs (2002) explained, “Performance-based studies...stress the cultural organization of communicative processes”(p. 61). They have shifted the analysis of words and texts to the analysis of the “emergence of texts in contexts” (Bauman & Briggs, 2002, p.66). Therefore, this study gave the children a chance to perform the dance, which was choreographed from the data developed during the movement workshops. The mission of the peace camp, where these workshops were held, was to develop friendships of the children and their families that grow beyond the political conflict that separates them in order to promote peace. The children who participated in this study developed their own narratives that evolved during the movement workshops at the camp, and were ultimately communicated to a larger audience, which was in turn invited to respond. Bauman and Briggs (2002) stated, “Performance ... invites critical reflections on the communicative process” (p.66). If the Palestinian and Israeli children communicated through dance in an environment of harmony and positivity during workshops and the performance, then on the social level, the children’s communication and development would also be positively affected. Ideally, their work in the workshops would be reflected in their social life outside the camp experience, ultimately, creating a chance for peaceful interaction within these two communities.

## **Procedure**

For this study, I collaborated with a peace organization based in Jerusalem. The peace organization hosts camps around the world each year for Palestinian and Israeli children. They accept research interns from all over the world who conduct workshops for the camp children. It was prearranged that I would be facilitating the dance and movement group at this camp.

**Ethical concerns.** It was important for me to actively be aware of any bias that could come in the way of my study. Since I am Palestinian and I grew up relating to the Palestinian culture in east Jerusalem, I took into consideration that a bias might be present in the workshops. It was important for me to be aware of this. I found that staying true to the humanistic approach, which focuses on acceptance and unconditional positive regard towards the children, helped maintain the level of trust, acceptance, and respect for each child in the workshops. Coming from a humanistic approach guided me to see each child as individuals who deserve unconditional positive regard. It was important that I treated children equally in order for them to feel comfortable in the workshops.

Each child's safety was another concern. In the beginning of each workshop, I made sure to include in the group check-in the importance of the children to be open about how they felt, and if they felt unsafe in any way. In the group check-in, I included the rules to make sure that everyone knew the norms of the group and keep the room safe for everyone to move and dance.

**Setting.** Before the camp started, there was an introductory staff meeting in Jerusalem, and later, an informational meeting with the parents of the children. The five-day camp took place in a kibbutz in the Israeli desert. The camp programming included three movement workshops. During these movement workshops, a staff member from the peace organization was

in the room to assist with translation if needed. He signed the translator's agreement that is attached in Appendix B.

**Recruitment.** I initially contacted the director of the peace camp through a mutual connection. We spoke through Skype, and eventually, I met with one of the original directors who lived in Chicago. They recruited children for this summer camp that had been part of the organization for at least one year. The director confirmed that all the children of the camp met the following criteria that I developed:

- The child feels safe to participate in peaceful activities with Israelis and Palestinians.
- The child knows about the Israeli and Palestinian conflict.
- The child is not a threat to anyone involved in the camp and does not feel threatened by participation in my thesis study.
- The child is not affiliated with a political party that could be a threat to the safety of anyone involved in the camp.
- The child respects the others in the group regardless of their ethnicity, country of origin, gender, and nationality.

I summarized the plan for the three movement workshops and the performance in an organized parents' meeting in Jerusalem prior to the camp. The parents were very excited to hear about the study and willing to sign the consent form (see Appendix C). After the meeting with the parents, the children joined the meeting and had a chance to talk to their parents and me about the movement workshops and ask any questions they had. I then handed the children the assent forms to sign (see Appendix D).

On the first day of the camp, in order to best assess the placement of each child in the workshops, activity leaders had a chance to meet the children and spend time with them to

ensure the best match between children and activity group. I spent time with each of them during the first day of arriving at the desert, taking a bus tour of the kibbutz, and exploring the sand dunes. My observations of the children were very positive ones. The children were respectful of one another. I noticed that although many of them were naturally separating themselves based on their ethnicity, this did not interfere with the level of respect they had for one another. The children were knowledgeable about the conflict in Israel and Palestine. They had all expressed that they were in this camp because they wanted to work towards peace, and they enjoyed the change from the day-to-day struggles of the conflict to enjoying each other's company. Many children expressed interest in the dance and movement workshops and expressed the desire to be part of the workshop. Based on my observations from the first day at the camp, it was clear to me that they were all eligible to take part in the dance and movement workshop. During the staff meeting, we balanced the groups and placed the children in the workshop that was most fitting for them: the dance and movement workshop or the interfaith cooking workshop. The decisions were based on my encounters with the children and the direction of the director.

**Participants.** There were two groups of children in the camp, separated by age: in the older group the children were 13-16 years old, and in the younger group the children were 11-12 years old. The younger group of children was divided into two groups; half of the students participated in the interfaith cooking workshop, and the other half participated in my dance/movement workshop. There were 11 children who participated in the dance and movement workshop: six Palestinian and five Israeli. There were three Palestinian girls, three Israeli girls, three Palestinians boys, and two Israeli boys. All the children in this study had participated in bimonthly meetings for a year at the peace organization's location in Jerusalem.



**Camp structure.** The camp followed an organized structure. After beginning each day with a community breakfast, we walked to the camp's *mirkas*, meaning meeting place in both Arabic and Hebrew, where the dance and movement workshop took place. Then, all the children were gathered for another group activity. Right after the group activities, everyone ate lunch together. Lunch would be followed by more activities, including, swimming, soccer, and hiking, meant for the children and the staff to have fun and connect. Every activity ended with a discussion. In these discussions, the children were asked to talk about their experiences and their feelings. Every night the children had a structured bedtime.

The camp's participants followed specific rituals. For example, for every meal, everyone met in the community room. We waited for everyone to have his or her food on the table. When we were all sitting at the tables the kibbutz had reserved for us, each religious (Christian, Muslim, or Jewish) group would rotate the task of blessing the meal. The children were always respectful of each other during these rituals. Whenever a different religious group blessed the food, the rest of the children listened and were respectful of the blessing.

**Camp workshops.** After the recruitment process and the signing of the consent and assent forms, my intention was to have a 15 minute interview with each child to have an initial understanding of the children's dance experience, where they were from, and if they had both Israeli and Palestinian friends. However, due to a revised schedule by the camp, I verbally asked the children as a group questions number 2, 4, and 5, see Appendix E. They had 15 minutes to contemplate and discuss their answers with the group. They did not have the opportunity to write them down as originally planned until after the performance, because we did not have the writing supplies until the last day of the camp.

Every workshop was two hours long. We started the workshops with a verbal check-in during which we discussed their experiences at camp, how they felt, their body sensations, and energy levels. We then transitioned into a body warm-up based on Bartenieff's six developmental patterns of total body connectivity (Hackney, 2002). The progression through these connectivities offers one the ability to be interconnected in a way that allows for improved functionality and expressivity of the human body. Bartenieff theorized that by engaging with one's inner connectivity, one increases their outward expressivity (Hackney, 2002). From the warm-up, we developed themes and transitioned into our workshop activities inspired by Kornblum's and McCutchan (2002) pro social skills and violence prevention curriculum developed for use in the schools. One specific exercise I used to help the children refocus was the 4 B's activity from Kornblum's and McCutchan (2002) curriculum. This activity requires the children to connect to their breath and then use this breath energy to establish a calm body and mind to continue in the explorations of the day. This was used four times throughout the sessions, and each time the children demonstrated their ability to feel their bodies relax and refocus their energy to the group.

Emerging out of the Bartenieff and Kornblum based movement activities, we developed the choreography and script for the final performance following a Performance as Therapy framework developed by Goldman and Larsen (2011), which includes four distinct stages of creation: "request, claim, promise, execute"(p. 1). Following this framework, the performers maintain the essence of the initial instinct and "impulse to perform" while engaging in a "more explicit connection" (p. 1). This approach helped the dancers create concrete choreography inspired and developed from their initial instinct and impulse to move, which they would ultimately perform as a group (Goldman & Larsen, 2011).

After the check in, the first workshop included a ten-minute movement activity inspired by Kornblum's (2002) curriculum, which included running in the room and developing a group rhythm. This activity was meant to elevate the energy of the group and to discover a shared rhythm, thereby creating new group energy. As we transitioned into working with the first developmental pattern of total body connectivity, I asked the children to bring awareness to their breath (Hackney, 2002). After about 20 minutes of movement that was developed from the breath exploration, I observed the natural movement qualities that the children displayed, which involved indulging and stretching qualities. This observation led me to facilitate a 15-minute stretch and strengthening activity, which led into learning a movement phrase that was based on Bartenieff's six developmental patterns of total body connectivity. This movement phrase was meant to help the children increase awareness to their body connections. I took 15 minutes to discuss the performance as therapy (PAT) stages and talked about starting to move from an inner impulse in the request stage (Goldman & Larsen, 2011). I introduced this concept to the children to help them begin connecting the movement we had started to create from this first workshop into the culmination of a final performance. Therefore, I encouraged the children to start moving from a place that was inspired by their inner impulse to move in relationship with one another rather than just copying recognizable dance movements. I used prompting questions: How can you move differently now that you are moving with a partner or in a group? How can your movements become a new creation, which combines both of your ideas and movement qualities?

Next, in order for me to get to know the children's names, and for the children to start creating movement on their own, we transitioned to an activity developed by Kornblum and McCutchan (2002), which involved using our names to inspire movement, and we shared this movement with the group in a circle. As a means of inspiring creativity with other children in the

group, the children found movement partners. They were asked to move towards other children who moved in ways that intrigued them without allowing the children to group themselves by ethnicity. After finding their movement partners, the children were asked to create a movement phrase together that incorporated a beginning, middle, and end with recuperation. They had the option of using the movement that they used to represent their name and develop it further or create a new phrase together. The children had 10 minutes to create their movement phrases.

Next, we explored the core distal connectivity (Hackney, 2002) for 25 minutes as a means of allowing the children to continue building connections to themselves and the group. They then developed their dyads' or triads' phrase using core-distal movement. At the end of this exploration, the children had the option of performing their new movement phrase that they created. After the short performances of the dyads' or triads' movement phrases, we ended the workshop with a brief discussion about their experience in this workshop and identified emerging themes from the experience of moving together. The children started critically thinking about how movement was affecting them physically and emotionally.

In the second workshop, we warmed up with movement activities that brought awareness to the head-tail connectivity for 20 minutes. Working on the head tail connectivity aids in the discovery of one's own identity and creativity (Hackney, 2002). Hackney stated that the spinal mobility facilitates experiencing the flexibility that helps with finding a stronger sense of self (Hackney, 2002). Through exploring movement conversations between the head and tail for another 20 minutes, a theme developed of being in an imaginary world. We enacted this new world as the children role-played and moved through many scenes. For example, they were Sponge Bob©™, sharks, robots, and zombies in the sea, and later humans at a pool party.

After engaging their imaginations for 25 minutes, each child discovered that he/she had several ideas for the performance, and brainstormed for 15 minutes. I asked the children to list all the different scenes that they liked acting out and wanted to incorporate in the performance. Each person chose a role that they wanted to perform as we improvised through the different stories. Everyone in the group chose a role for the performance and a scene that they wanted to act out. They created an imaginary world: first they were sea creatures under the sea and eventually came to shore to have a beach party as humans. Next, some of the group members turned into sharks that attacked the humans at the beach party. The workshop continued with a 15-minute discussion about the claim stage of the PAT model (Goldman & Larsen, 2011), identifying developed repeatable material that would be used in the performance. So we started developing the repeatable movement phrases that could be used in our performance for 25 minutes.

The focus of the third workshop was choreographing and finalizing the dance performance from the movement generated in the two previous workshops. The group had naturally come to the promise stage of the PAT model. During the promise stage, the movers begin to feel a strong commitment. They commit to their claim and to the other movers participating in the creation (Goldman & Larsen, 2011). As part of the warm up, we started with the first movement phrase we learned together that was inspired from the set movement sequence based on the Bartenieff patterns of total body connectivity. We continued with reviewing the partner phrase from the first workshop that the children created in dyads. Then, we integrated all the material that was generated during the second workshop, which developed into a theatrical story that showed unique movement qualities of each child. I choreographed the ending of the piece, bringing the group into synchronous movement. After rehearsing the piece, I introduced recuperation by inviting the group to sit in a circle as we gave each other back massages. We

discussed the themes that developed this day from the workshop and the experiences of moving together.

The performance day was on the final day of camp. We had an hour to practice the material in the performance space, a big room at the kibbutz previously used for the sports workshop. The children had to adjust the performance to this new space, because it was carpeted. After an hour, the children had a short break before it was time to perform. For the costumes, the children wore comfortable clothing of their choice. The other children of the camp, the staff of the camp, and the staff of the kibbutz were our audience. The staff member who worked with me during the workshops and I introduced the work, and then we started the performance.

In the beginning of the performance, the children embodied sea creatures, such as starfish, sawfish, and large fish. Then the children journeyed ashore to have a beach party. They became humans, playing limbo and beach volleyball. While some of the group remained human, others morphed into sharks that attacked the beach party. The sharks ran towards the humans, biting them with their jaws, comprised of the children's arms opening and closing. Upon realizing that they no longer wanted to attack their friends and wanted to be a part of the group, the sharks became friendly sharks that joined their human friends in a synchronous dance to Michael Jackson's "Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough." The performance lasted about 20 minutes.

### **Data Collection**

To collect data, I kept an organized journal to process the dance and movement workshops. The data led me to know the specific needs of the children. I looked at their areas of development in each session and where they needed my guidance to further this development of their social and team building skills. The areas where they needed further growth developed into

the objectives for the next session. I documented any progress the children experienced with movement and social skills, including how their interactions with others progressed after each creative movement workshop.

In my journal, I first noted my observations during the workshops and my reflections after the workshops. For instance, I wrote about themes that developed from the movement workshops, specific interactions between the children, and the way the children reacted to the movement activities and the development of the performance. I would spend 30 minutes after every workshop journaling somewhere in the perimeters of the camp, either in my room, or outside in the kibbutz. Finally, I included the movement-script that narrated the final choreography.

In my journal, I recorded my observations and responses to the performance, the responses the children had to the performance, and the audience's physical and emotional responses to the performance. I was interested in writing about how the children connected with the audience and vice versa. Due to a lack of time, I did not have the chance to give the audience members the post performance questionnaire right after the performance as originally planned. Therefore, I created an informed consent to receive consent from the audience about allowing me to use their responses to the post-performance; they replied through e-mail (see Appendix F). After the camp was over, I sent an e-mail to the audience members with a short questionnaire about the performance, and I collected their responses (see Appendix G). A total of eight of the audience members responded to the questionnaire.

### **Data Analysis**

I reviewed the data from my journal entries as the study evolved using inductive theme analysis (Thomas, 2003). According to Thomas (2003), the five steps of Inductive theme

Analysis are as follows: (a) Collecting the “raw data files”, (b) Analyzing the files by reading them carefully, (c) Classifying the files, (d) Recovering any coinciding information from all the collected data, and (e) Adjustment and refinement of the categories. I followed this schema for my analysis of the data. I used my study’s question: How can dance and movement develop the social and team building skills of Israeli and Palestinian children? I also used my guiding question: How will engaging in dance and movement help develop empathic bonds between Israeli and Palestinian children? These questions served as a guide to direct the data analysis process. Firstly, I captured the raw data through collecting my journal entries and the post-performance questionnaires. Secondly, I took the time to carefully read through all the data. Thirdly, I classified the data in the following four data categories:

1. The children’s and my responses to the movement activities.
2. The children’s interactions.
3. My body sensations that resulted from the workshops.
4. Significant memories that I had from the movement activities and experiences in the workshop.

Fourthly, I highlighted the themes that emerged from the data. I separated each theme into four paper files by placing all the relevant data in their appropriate files. For the fifth and final step, I adjusted and refined the categories as I identified subthemes that emerged. I eventually created diagrams showing the connections between the four themes and their subthemes that evolved (see Results and Discussion).

Validity was measured in this performance ethnography through triangulation (Mertens, 2005). Triangulation is a validity measure; by collecting at least three sources of data, one can analyze how each source supports the rest of the data. In this study, validity was addressed by



triangulation of the data of the three sources: (a) my journal entries of the workshops (b) the audience's reactions to the performance and their responses to the questionnaire, and (c) the discussions with the children throughout the workshops and performance that I wrote about in my journal. I wrote down the ways the children's reactions, the audience's reaction, and my ideas interrelated.

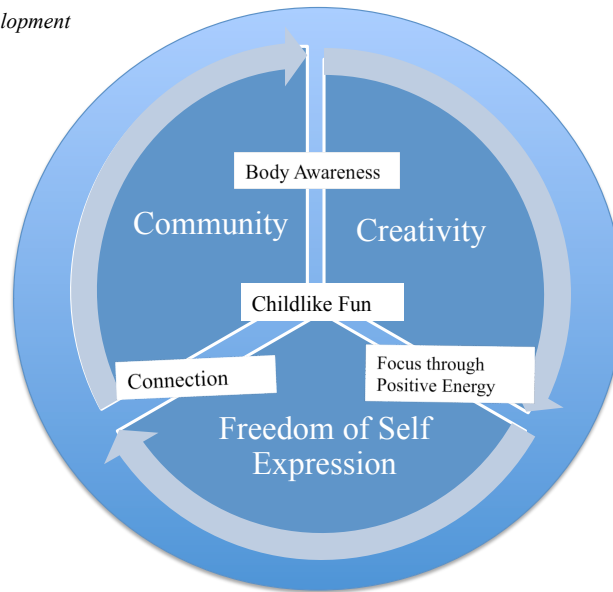
## **Chapter Four: Results**

For this study, I was interested in the development of the Palestinian and Israeli children's social interactions and their development as a cohesive group as they participated in dance and movement workshops culminating in a performance. I balanced my role as a facilitator, instructor, and director, while also allowing the children to take ownership of the workshops and be strong developers of the choreography. I gave the children artistic freedom in order for them to make their own creative choices for the performance. I guided them through the creative process with the tools I have discussed, such as the patterns of total body connectivity (Hackney, 2002), the steps of the performance as therapy (PAT) model (Goldman & Larsen, 2012), and the activities inspired by Kornblum's (2002) curriculum. I received and accepted anything the children wanted to share with the group and incorporated a variety of movement styles, qualities, and stories.

The primary question of this study was: How can dance, movement and a performance develop the social and team building skills of Israeli and Palestinian children living in war conflict? The secondary guiding question was: How will engaging in dance and movement help develop empathic bonds between Israeli and Palestinian children? Following inductive theme analysis, I found four overarching themes: Reclaiming Childlike Fun, Connection, Body Awareness, and Focus and Energy Level (see Diagram 1). Three major sub themes arose from these four themes: community, creativity, and freedom of self-expression (see Diagram 1). These results indicated that bonds were created and that social and team building skills emerged as a result of the movement groups and performance.

Diagram 1.

*Workshop Theme Development*



*Diagram 1.* This represents the four themes (in white) and the three sub themes (in blue). The theme of childlike fun allowed for connection, body awareness, and focus through positive energy to develop in the workshops. Further, there was a sense of community in the movement workshops, which led to increased creativity and freedom of self-expression.

**Reclaiming childlike fun.** This theme arose as I witnessed the children's movement experiences during the workshops, which conveyed that they were having fun. The children expressed that they were enjoying the activities through smiling, laughing, and being silly. I felt an energetic response from the children, and in my body I experienced a strong sense of gratitude. My heartbeat rose, and I felt an overwhelming sense of joy witnessing the children delve into moments of creative expression. I witnessed the children release any self-conscious

attitudes and immerse themselves in the movement activities. For example, one child was initially too embarrassed to perform in front of the group; however, with the support of the children he was encouraged and finally decided to perform. I witnessed the child start to move more comfortably with more flow in his body and less tension. Another example was when one participant stated, “I feel that the movement frees me from the outside world’s problems.” By releasing stress and having fun through movement, the children experienced a sense of freedom. This experience helped the children leave the conflict and problems outside of the workshop space, and they were enjoying the present moment. They expressed in the discussions that the movement workshops and the performance helped them act like children again through indirect movement with few boundaries.

This theme arose numerous times throughout the workshops and branched out into the sub-themes of freedom of self-expression and community. The children discussed feeling freedom and feeling more connected in their community; these were fostered in the workshops while having fun and moving together. Their connection to one another in their community and *positive energy* (see Appendix A) resulted in greater cohesion in the group, as evidenced by their ability to work together in groups and support one another without regard to their ethnicities. They were more focused on their abilities and strengths as movers rather than focusing on their differences.

From the responses of the post-performance questionnaire, the audience also recognized this theme in the performance. They recognized the importance of expressive movement for these children. In the post performance questionnaire, they stated that the performance was a great way for the children to get together and have fun. One response said that the children looked like they had fun performing, and this work will have a positive impact on the children as

they continue to work together in the future. I also witnessed all the audience members take part in the fun as they physically stood up and joined the performance. The positive affect everyone displayed was one indicator of the joyful experience.

***Freedom of self-expression.*** During the workshops, I encouraged the children to allow their movement to grow from an authentic and natural place. They were given minimal instruction in order to help them find the creativity within themselves. However, I provided structure within the freedom of the sessions by giving the children choices. The children were given guidelines for the activities; at the same time, they were given the freedom to interpret the guidelines however they chose. This helped them to stay focused and present in the movement activities. It was important to find a balance between giving the children freedom as well as guidance to sustain the workshops' progression towards the performance.

An example of structured freedom would be the use of music. Music supported their free movement by giving them a structured rhythm to move to. When given space to move freely, at first the children looked hesitant. Once the children realized that they could simply enjoy the newfound freedom in movement, they felt more comfortable and confident, as suggested by the quality of strength in their movements. They felt comfortable using increasing pressure and extending into far reach space. The children displayed increased fluidity in their movement. They exhibited more energy, as demonstrated by their enthusiasm through continuous dancing, creativity in movement, and increased stamina throughout the two hours of the workshops.

***Community.*** This shared experience of fun, freedom, and creative risk taking also bonded the children. More positive interactions took place between the participants, such as increased interactions between the Israelis and the Palestinians in the workshop. This resulted in more positive affect among all of the participants, as evidenced by a significant increase in smiles and

more consistent willingness to participate without complaints. This was a change from the beginning of the workshops when some children appeared apathetic and reluctant to participate.

The children connected through having fun, and they developed a new community that was accepting and motivating, shown by their awareness of each other in the group and the supportive energy that each child had towards the group. In this community, all the children wanted to have a successful and fun experience. The fun experiences increased positive peer interactions in the group and led the children to bond through the movement experiences. For example, when the children were developing their group movement phrases, some children were more actively engaged in the activity, and some children were following the direction of those children. They made the choreographic choices and the main decisions; however, when the other children started to give their ideas and showed their personal movement skills, all the children learned that they could move together, and they could all learn from each other.

The performance became a fun experience during which the children channeled their nervous energy, which they discussed during the rehearsal right before the performance. As the children became more aware of it, they were better able to effectively manage it. They demonstrated their nervous energy throughout their interactions with me and through their body language. Some of the children were retreating back in their chest, which made them appear less confident about performing. The children were talking amongst each other and asking me questions about the performance. Some children told their peers that they were too nervous to perform; however, the more confident children gave them support, with comments such as “Come on; we can do this,” which motivated the children to let go of their nervous feelings. I encouraged the children to use their nervousness as excitement and to remember the goal of having fun. I invited the children to remember that no matter what happens in the performance,

what was most important was for them to enjoy themselves and have fun as they performed. By creating a supportive, accepting, and empathic environment in the group, the children turned their nervous energy into excitement towards the performances. As a result, the group's sense of community, connections, and relationships were strengthened.

Community was also evidenced by the responses of the audience in the questionnaire; they recognized that dance and expressive movement helped the children connect and improve interaction. For example, when the children performed, they showed great support for each other, which aided the children to have fun. Additionally, it appeared that the audience members felt welcomed to join the dance as they joined the dance performance with the group. This is one example of the power that movement, music, and dance can have to bring people together and experience something new in a community.

**Connection.** The children in this study were from either side of the Palestinian and Israeli conflict, and through creative movement they found different ways to connect. The children discussed movement being a common language that helped each of the participants and myself understand each other better and develop inter and intrapersonal connections. The children were given a new perspective on communication; they were given new tools, for example, the patterns of total body connectivity (Hackney, 2002), and a safe space to develop connections and create movement. While they were dedicating their energy to creating and learning new movement phrases, they learned new ways to express themselves and be in relationship with one another. For example, through the use of the movement activities based on Kornblum's (2002) work, the children felt comfortable to communicate what their needs are to move safely in the space. As the workshops progressed, the children also demonstrated more confidence in their movement, which made them more clearly communicate through their

movement. This was evidenced through their body movements; at first the children moved with smaller gestures, and eventually, as the children became more confident, they used their entire bodies to move, as they moved through more posture like movement. Furthermore, once the children started connecting to the movement, they showed more care for it. They demonstrated increased concentration, spoke more clearly with more descriptive movement language, and articulated their ideas with more enthusiasm. When creating the performance the children started showing more interest and taking more ownership over what they wanted to perform. As their sense of empowerment increased, their social skills of working together as a team and taking responsibility for the performance improved.

The comfort level of the children progressed positively throughout the workshops. In the beginning of the study, the Palestinian and Israeli children tended to sit next to peers from their same country. I invited the children to group themselves as they moved, and I verbally guided them to respond to the movements of others that they admired. This helped facilitate relationship building through movement. However, eventually they became more unified as one group. By the end of the workshops, they moved in synchrony with one another and created movement collaboratively grouping together without regard to nationality.

Movement served as a new way of communication through which the children connected. For example, an introverted Israeli and an extroverted Palestinian girl, who had not interacted much before, danced together and bonded as they developed a movement phrase. For this movement phrase, they connected as they collaborated to create their choreography. They showed each other their movement skills and ideas. They discovered that they could both perform cartwheels, so they took turns to perform cartwheels across the room. The audience



feedback validated the theme of connection as they recognized that the children worked together in an innocent and peaceful way.

In the workshops, while exploring the patterns of total body connectivity (connectivities) (Hackney, 2002), the children developed more connections within their bodies and with the other children. The three connectivities explored were breath, core distal, and head tail. The focus on connecting to one's own breath, core, and spine appeared to have helped to facilitate connection to one another. The children connected to these connectivities in unique ways, which are explained in the following paragraphs. They demonstrated their understanding of the connectivities through their ability to recognize them in their movement and in other children's movement. The children also used the connectivities for recuperation; for example, they connected to their breath when they needed to relax their bodies, or when they needed to recuperate from more intense movement activities, which required more cardiovascular strength.

***Breath.*** While bringing awareness to breath, I led the children in inhaling more energy and oxygen from the outside and releasing any held tensions. The children demonstrated an improved ability to connect to their breath; this was evidenced by their ability to more fully relax into their bodies resulting in increased focus and attention. In addition to connecting to their own bodies, their connection to their peers was strengthened. Through increasing the children's awareness to their breath connection, they found themselves more centered in their bodies and open to the group. When the children engaged in breathing exercises and allowed their breath to guide them, they were more present in the workshop, as evidenced by their level of attentiveness to the group and their level of engagement in their bodies. In a discussion about connecting to their breath, the children stated that they felt more connected to themselves, calmer, relaxed, and ready to move and dance.

The power that breath had in helping the children connect with themselves and one another was shown in more than one example. First, one child said that after connecting to breath, he felt “less stressed about what [he] looked like while moving.” Later during the workshop, one Israeli girl and one Palestinian girl used breath to initiate a synchronized movement phrase. They showed the ability to use breath as a cue to simultaneously start the movement and stay in unison as they completed their movement phrase. Also, when I noticed the children start to lose focus, I asked them to take a deep breath in unison. The children connected to a calm and relaxed state in their bodies and refocused their energy to the movement activity.

***Core-distal.*** In exploring connection to the core, the children demonstrated more control, mobility, and balance. In one core-distal exercise, the children talked about feeling more mobile and secure with their movement when they remained connected to their core. Executing core-initiated movement rather than distal-initiated movement helped the group come back together when it had started to dissolve, and it re-enlivened those who were starting to show decreased energy. This connection increased the children’s connection to their ability to find stability and mobility as they moved through the dance exercises, see Appendix A.

In a circle activity that was improvised during one of the workshops, each person was connected by an imaginary center of the circle, which served as the core of the group. Each person moved in relationship to the center of the circle while remaining connected to his/her core. The circle grew and shrank as everyone moved in proximity to the core center of the circle, revealing relationships between individuals and the group.

The connection to the core also enabled more mobility and fluidity of movement. I observed the children discover ways to move their limbs in and out of control while staying

connected to their centers. Bringing more awareness to the core increased the children's ability to stay safe and balanced while moving in unfamiliar ways.

***Head-tail.*** While working on the connection between the head and tail, the children demonstrated more flexibility, creativity, and were more comfortable moving as a group. For example, after experiencing the movement explorations focused on the head tail, the children easily connected to their imaginations, which initiated the development of the performance. Some activities were very comical for the children. They laughed at themselves and each other while exploring and exaggerating different postures with their spine. The children were exploring the meaning in the postures, which developed into the children's intention as they moved.

The children discovered that their intentionality could be displayed through their bodies. During a movement activity, the children were invited to move with different intentions as they walked towards each other. When the children were walking towards each other with long and tall spines, they demonstrated increased intention as they walked with a purpose. The children identified that walking with a tall and long spine made them feel more confident, whereas, walking less tall and more casually gave them a greater level of comfort. In order for the children to become more aware of the way they presented themselves, I asked: What do you notice when you meet someone for the first time? Some of their responses were their hair, their eyes, their lips, and their energy. We discussed how we get a sense of the person, even though we do not know the individual. We discussed how we could be aware of our spine as we walked in the space. Then, we discussed how being intentional with our postures can convey different meanings in this workshop and in their outside experiences. We also explored the ways in which we approached people and whether or not our bodies demonstrated our intentions. When the

children discussed their experience, one child expressed his experience of being stopped at the checkpoint and feeling very small compared to the soldier. The discussion continued with the group as we tried embodying different body postures allowing the child to communicate that he was equal to the soldier. As the children started setting intentions when they moved, their participation in the workshop became more meaningful. They demonstrated a sense of pride and valued their interactions during the workshop. The children were now taking care of each other through offering supportive comments to one another, which helped to foster connection. This reflects an improvement in social skills as related to building peer relationships and the development of trust.

*Connection through creativity.* The children connected on the body level and also through engaging in creativity. Through creative movement the children found new ways to get to know each other; this new movement language connected the group. The children connected through mirroring, observing, and supporting each other. From the first day of the workshops, the children easily engaged in creative activities, which sparked more support for each other. If one child was feeling nervous or scared, another more confident child supported him/her. It did not matter who the child was nor his/her faith or nationality.

The children were challenged to be the most creative during the second workshop when they developed the majority of the story and the movement phrases for the performance. There was a noticeable shift in the children; they appeared recognizably more excited and engaged. The children displayed their creativity as they entered into an imaginary world. They developed most of the performance choreography and scenes from this imaginary world. Then collaboratively, they organized the choreography to develop a story for the performance. The children were very open to each other's responses, and they were respectful of each other's suggestions.

Through the responses of the post performance questionnaire, the audience recognized the value of the children engaging with one another in creative and non-violent ways. One audience member stated that this performance provided an avenue for the children to express aspects of the conflict in ways that permitted growth of the group. Throughout the workshops there was an emerging connection between the Palestinian and Israeli children.

The children developed connections as the movement workshops progressed. They were connecting through their body connectivities, through relationships, and through creativity. They were connected and worked together cohesively in order to find more expressivity through movement.

**Body awareness.** The workshops elicited more body awareness through the patterns of total body connectivity (Hackney, 2002), as well as, increased awareness of fatigue and physical pain. The theme of body awareness that emerged through the workshop activities guided the children to be connected intra and interpersonally during the workshops and the performance. Introducing each workshop with a running activity increased the children's awareness of their heartbeat and their energy level, which would ultimately rise in response to the running. The running activity helped the children bring awareness to their performance energy level and how they react when they are put in a situation of motivating another to run at their speed. Because running is a natural activity, the children were warming up their bodies without having to think about it. They were directing their attention to their bodies, letting go of the pattern of using their minds to direct their bodies. They were letting their bodies express their energy naturally without blocking their flow with their thoughts.

The development of body awareness was displayed as the children moved with more fluidity, confidence, and excitement. This helped them fully engage in the movement activities,

enabling increased skill level as the workshops progressed. Because the children were enjoying the activities and they were connecting to them, they revealed through their bodies that they wanted to continue exploring the movement. The children appeared much more invested and actively engaged in the workshops. The children were more confident to perform in front of the group. When it was time for the final performance, in front of the staff of the kibbutz and the staff of the peace camp, the children expressed feeling ready and excited to share their creation with the audience.

**Focus through energy level.** The children participated and were attentive during all of the workshops, even when they were tired. They showed their fatigue by moving at a slower pace, which at times lowered the energy of the group. In order to maintain the energy of the group, I incorporated small recuperative breaks to drink water or sit down, which helped them come back into the group with greater and more focused energy. One way the children showed progression in maintaining an increased focus and energy level was their development in the verbal check-in. There was a noticeable difference between the first day of the verbal check-in and the last day. At first, the children showed little interest in the verbal check-in; they appeared disengaged in their body posture by showing little engagement in their bodies, and their focus was indirect. It was evident that the children were easily distracted from the check-in at first. As they acclimated to the process, they showed much more energy and excitement during the check-in. For the last verbal check-in, the children surprised me with a lot of energy. They were ready for the group check-in and communicated a focused energy. They demonstrated a more active posture that made them appear more engaged in the check-in and ready to start the movement sessions. They stated that they were ready and committed to finalizing the performance. They

were listening to what I was saying, and they were ready to start moving as soon as we started the warm-up.

While engaging in a running activity, the children demonstrated increased energy through connection and relationship. They had the task of motivating someone to run at their pace, and eventually, they expressed that this experience made them feel tired. When the children ran at a faster pace and more energetic level, they stated that they had found a new ability to run faster. I noticed that each child took a different role; some children took the leadership role by motivating others, and others were following these leaders. Some children had trouble keeping up with the speed of the group, although they were still trying their best to run as fast as possible. At the end of the activity, the group ran together as fast as possible, which united the group energy. The children were connecting to the energy of the group as they challenged themselves to keep up with the speed. At this moment, the energy in the room was so dynamic and unified; everyone appeared to be on the same level. When we took some time to recuperate from this intense activity, the group displayed a new and calm energy, as evidenced by softer and more relaxed movement qualities.

I felt the power of the children working together, developing movement phrases as they worked in dyads and triads. The children were easily influenced by each other. When one person in the group was not motivated, the whole group's energy would be affected by this child's energy. It was important for me to acknowledge each child's feelings and energy. It was necessary that the group sustained their energy because we only had three workshops to complete the performance. Yet, at times the children were not fully focused on all the activities. The way the children directed their focus helped me identify what I needed to adjust in the facilitation of the workshop. In this sense, I was developing awareness of the children's needs by

recognizing where their focus and energy level was. I frequently asked the children what they needed to recuperate. In continually bringing more awareness to their needs throughout the workshop, the children were more capable of sustaining their energy throughout the workshops. They showed increased awareness of their needs as the movement workshops progressed with their ability to point out what they needed to stay connected and engaged with the group. For example, the children acknowledged their need to rest for a few minutes and drink water before coming back into the movement sessions. They also started to identify in their verbal check-in at the beginning of the workshop that they needed time to warm-up and stretch before dancing in the workshops and for the performance.

When the children were not having fun or when they were tired, they were easily distracted. The importance of recuperation was crucial because this allowed them to rejuvenate their energy and stay connected to the workshop without losing focus. The children seemed refreshed as we increased the recuperative breaks during the workshops. Even though some children continued to show low energy, the rest of the group kept on motivating the children with less energy to create a quality performance.

## **Summary**

For this study, my research question was: How can dance, movement, and the development of a performance increase the social and team building skills of Israeli and Palestinian children living in war conflict? The themes that emerged from the data confirm that by giving the children a safe space and creative means to connect, they successfully found the freedom of expression through reclaiming childlike fun, building connection, increasing body awareness, and producing a collaborative performance. As the children connected on the body level, they were more attuned to their body connectivities (Hackney, 2002), guiding them to be



more open and flexible with the rest of the group. The children connected through movement as they were having fun in the workshops and collaboratively planning the performance, indicating increased team building skills and social skills in the areas of positive problem solving (Kornblum, 2002). Because the children were having fun, they developed focus, through positive energy, throughout the movement sessions. They also maintained focus as they developed body awareness. Focus and body awareness are social skills, as both skills contribute to “the ability to resist peer pressure, positive problem solving, empowerment, and ... [are] resources to utilize in difficult [social] situations” (Kornblum, 2002, p. 10).

Kornblum and McCutchan (2002) discussed that social skills could enhance the children’s problem solving abilities and awareness of safe environments. As the children developed increased awareness of their bodies’ needs, they effectively maintained a good focus and positive energy throughout the two-hour workshops. For example, as they took recuperative breaks, they stayed present and energized throughout the two-hour workshops. As the children increased interconnection through the body connectivities, they concurrently increased movement repertoire and skill level. As the children’s skill level increased, so did their confidence in themselves and their trust in the group. The children started to trust each other more, and they felt more connected in the group leading to more encouragement, motivation, and respect towards each other. They adapted to the conflicts that arose during the workshops and found creative solutions for these conflicts. Ultimately, this led to the successful group creation of the performance.

A question I used as a guiding question for this study was: How will engaging in dance and movement help develop empathic bonds between Israeli and Palestinian children? The children’s experience led them to be more empathic towards each other. The children related to

each other; they stated that they felt like they were connected as one group, so if one person did not feel well, this affected the whole group. Furthermore, it was important for them to all feel confident in order for the whole group to progress together. If one child's confidence level was declining this would influence the dynamics of the group. The group as a whole appeared to respond more powerfully when everyone shared similar feelings in relation to confidence level and self-efficacy. When one child appeared to display self-doubt or appeared to be less committed to the workshops and performance, the other children reacted to this child by trying to raise his/her confidence level to attain positive group energy through the use of encouraging statements and motivation.

In experiencing fun and a sense of freedom through engaging in movement activities, empathic bonds were created. The children found ways of connecting through movement activities; for example, when creating the scenes during the second workshop, the children naturally shared their ideas. They felt comfortable enough with the group to talk and move amongst each other and allow their imagination to flow and create a new imaginary world. Specifically, one child gave his ideas for the scenes, and as he was moving through his ideas in the imaginary world, the other children began to follow along in his ideas and collaboratively connect to this child's ideas. The rest of the children gave their ideas, resulting in each child openly participating in the exploration of the different scenes. The children started to engage in the free flow of ideas, which eventually developed into repeatable choreography, which the group used for the performance.

Another example of the children's empathic understanding was that they motivated and helped each other develop their movement skills, which led the children to bond. They had fun through movement and this helped them connect to the other children through *kinesthetic*

*empathy* (see Appendix A) with their partners and eventually with the rest of the group. Through the theme of connection, there was increased level of body connectivity as well as the development of close peer interactions, which enabled the children to be more supportive and empathic towards each other. Using movement as a means of connection provided a unique way for the children to relate to one another through a shared challenge that transcended their ethnic differences.

They all wanted to feel more comfortable in the movement sessions, which encouraged them to become friendlier and more accepting of each other. The children cared about each other and the dance, as evidenced by their shift in attitude as the sessions progressed, and more active engagement in the workshops. The children appeared more focused through their active body posture as they were practicing their movement phrases they created and focused their attention on the sequences that I was showing the entire group. They connected through movement, through rhythm and music, and through the development of the choreography, which allowed them to discover deeper creative freedom of expression. The children expressed through movement that they were connected to each other. As the children developed the choreography and stories together, they appeared to be a team moving together. Their quality of movement was more open and less enclosed, which made them appear more accepting of each other and more open to integrating everyone's ideas in the creation of the performance. Eventually, the children were expressing concern that everyone was okay. They wanted to make sure that everyone felt confident about the performance so that they could give the audience a good performance.

At first the children were separated, which inhibited the group development. As the movement sessions developed, the children successfully abandoned preconceived notions about each other. In the beginning of the workshops some children were left out by the group because

they had strong attitudes and beliefs about the Israeli and Palestinian conflict. However, as the movement sessions progressed, the children connected through movement and respected each other's differences so that they could move together and create the performance. This was evidenced by more active engagement in the workshops as they took ownership of the performance and choreography. There was an increased level of interaction during the movement sessions between the children of different ethnicities. As they moved together, they discovered new common skills, such as their ability to run at a faster pace, mirror each other's movement, and perform cartwheels. They tried out more controlled and interconnected movement and learned how to modulate though different movement qualities. They worked with a strong concentrated focus towards the further development of these skills, which fostered a greater sense of freedom of creativity and expression, and ultimately enhanced the positive development of the performance. They were now connecting because of a new experience, which they discovered together. They were able to temporarily put aside preconceived notions about one another due to generational, ongoing, ethnic conflict as they worked toward a common goal of creating a dance performance. The cultural understanding in this group dramatically increased as the workshops developed, showing an interesting correlation: increased tolerance, respect, and group empathy, seemed directly related to their increased productivity, self-confidence, trust in the group, and peer interaction.

## Chapter Five: Discussion

Dance and theater companies in Israel and Palestine have developed methods to give children the space to find artistic freedom and creative expression (Barghouti, 2006a; Murphy, 2003; Khalidi, 2012; Newton, 2013; Rossen, 2011; Rowe, 2010). In this study, I set out to find how providing Israeli and Palestinian children a safe space for open creative expression through dance and movement could develop their social and team building skills. I explored this question in a peace camp in Israel, where I facilitated three creative movement workshops that led to a final performance. During the research process, I observed themes and subthemes (see Diagram 2), which supported my hypothesis that dance, movement, and performance would develop the social and team building skills of Israeli and Palestinian children living in conflict.

The four themes that arose from the data collected in the workshops, the performance, and the post-performance questionnaire are found at the center of Diagram 2 (in white). Reclaiming childlike fun encouraged the children to reconnect to themselves and the group (Connection). When the children were reclaiming childlike fun, the atmosphere in the workshops was distinctly more positive, which resulted in increased productivity, reflecting the theme of focus through positive energy. This positive energy and focus translated to a greater body awareness. The children created their own community where they engaged in intuitive creativity and freedom of expression.

As the children progressed through the workshops, they increased inter-group connections, which facilitated the development of empathic bonds and again nurtured stronger focus in the group. This also built more positive energy in the movement workshops. As they discovered mobility and stability in their bodies and their ability to flow through more mobile

and more stable states, they found creative ways to play and create the performance. As they started to feel more confident and intentional through their movement expression, they developed more opportunities for the performance development. The children were more accustomed to the creation process and were more comfortable in their bodies; this helped guide their choreographic choices. Finally, through connection, empathy, focus, positive energy, mobilizing and stabilizing their bodies, and the creation of the performance, the children built and developed their social and team building skills.

The outer yellow layer of Diagram 2 identifies the fundamental principles that I used to contain and facilitate the workshops. The workshops were contained to maintain a safe and accepting environment for the children. Safety and peace were emphasized through the dance and movement activities. The children were approached with acceptance and love. Facilitation of the workshops was guided by the principle of unconditional positive regard from a humanistic approach. This outer layer is important in that dance, movement, and performance may not have been an effective tool for team building and social skills if the environment had not promoted safety and acceptance.

Diagram 2.  
Dance and Movement Workshop Overview

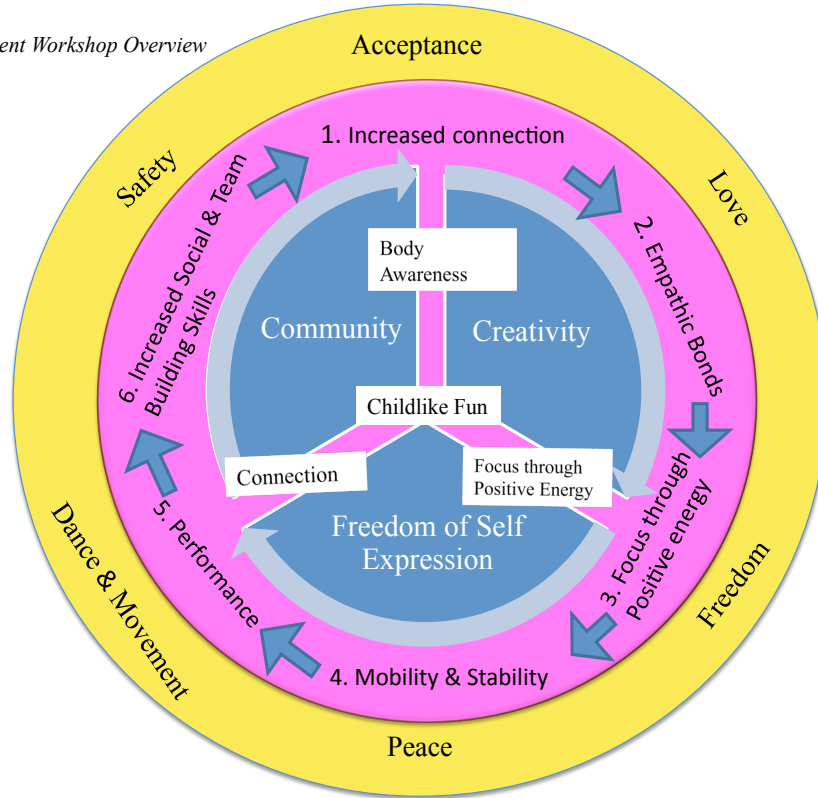


Diagram 2. Diagram 2 expands the themes presented in Diagram 1. The middle circle of Diagram 2 (in pink) shows the five steps towards the development of the children’s social and team building skills: (1) increased connection, (2) empathic bonds, (3) focus through positive energy, (4) mobility and stability, and (5) performance. The outer yellow circle presents aspects of the environment that supported the results and adhered to the humanistic framework.

### Implications of Themes

Reclaiming childlike fun is shown in the center of Diagrams 1 and 2, and it was one of the overarching themes in this study from which other themes grew. This foundation was important for this particular group of children. The experiences the children have lived through while growing up in war conflict have limited their access and ability to act like and be children. Hart and Tyrer (2006) stated, “In conflict-affected settings, children are commonly obliged to take on additional responsibilities as caregivers, breadwinners and as providers of emotional

support, even to adults” (p 8). These responsibilities can lead children to feel deprived of their natural development as children. They are faced with aspects of the conflict that matures them developmentally faster, which is why reclaiming their ability to have fun was so significant to them. Additionally, Osofsky (2012) stated that children who have experienced trauma could demonstrate withdrawn behaviors and repressed emotions. It is possible that the children in this study had withheld emotions because of experiences related to the conflict. These children have grown up by the rules and the norms of the conflict culture (Eshel, 2013; Salem, 2005). They had adapted to the situation, and perhaps did not recognize that as children it is natural to have innocent fun and live with the freedom of expression.

Harris (2007a) explained that, in his work with child soldiers, the children reconnected to repressed emotions through symbolism, dance, and movement. In this study, dance and movement served as the tool to tap into this childlike fun and provided an opportunity for these children to connect to their freedom of expression, curiosity, and each other. The children asserted that they felt a feeling of freedom, like anything was possible. The freedom the children found through movement enabled them to connect to a new form of creative expression. They were no longer limited to words to describe what they were feeling, but they could also use symbolism with their bodies to move and express themselves.

Through their desire to have fun, the children connected to each other in the movement sessions. The children connected through movement, creativity, and rhythm. As group trust emerged, the children felt more comfortable to further develop their freedom of self-expression. I incorporated Hackney’s (2002) developmental patterns of total body connectivity as well as Kornblum’s (2006) movement activities, which allowed the children to develop internal connections as well as increased body awareness. For example, the core distal connectivity



required the children to move with more stability while maintaining support and balance. Also, while exploring the head and tail connectivity, the children were more aware of their body postures as they moved. This awareness was evidenced by their ability to move with intention within their body posture.

Through participating in fun movement based activities, their body awareness improved as the children began to recognize how their postures relayed messages. This led to the development of social skills as the children expressed themselves through movement with greater intentionality, resulting in improved communication skills. For example, the children were clearly articulating their discoveries in the workshops. They were identifying how the activities in the workshops affected them and what their bodies' reactions were. Specifically, in an activity that required the children to find a way of stopping abruptly in a balanced pose of their choice after hearing a clapping sound, the children identified that they had to engage their core to help with their balance. Thus, they developed social skills by creatively approaching difficult situations during the workshops and developing problem-solving skills as they dealt with the problems that arose in the workshops. This reflects the third stage of the performance as therapy framework (Goldman & Larsen, 2011), commitment, in which the group finds ways to solve problems that arise. Similarly, Kornblum (2006) experienced children's ability to creatively find solutions to problems that arise after engaging in movement activities. The children's ability to engage in the creative process as a trusting and supportive group helped them to creatively solve conflicts and eventually led them to organize and create the performance as a cohesive group. They also demonstrated empathy by giving and receiving ideas, attentively listening to others, and being supportive towards each other.

The literature suggested that dance could lead to change, inspire questions, and motivate people to get involved in the process of change (Jones & Olomo, 2008; McCall, 2000; Rossen, 2011). The children demonstrated change by developing personal skills, moving cohesively as a group, and discovering their ability to find their fun creative freedom, which allowed for the development of the performance. Furthermore, the audience, which was comprised of Israeli and Palestinian children and adults from many different areas of the country, participated in this process of change by standing up and joining the dance with the children in support of Israeli and Palestinian children moving in peace.

### **Application to Dance/Movement Therapy (DMT) Concepts**

For this study, I analyzed the workshops through a DMT lens, focusing on Chace's four core concepts in relation to Schoop's methodologies. In the workshops, I used movement as a form of communication and expression, and the children developed an increased body, mind, and spirit connection. Movement served as a means of connecting to self and others and coping with the environment.

The first DMT concept that I experienced was the therapeutic relationship through acceptance and love of the children (Chaiklin & Schmais, 1993). Literature has shown that the therapeutic relationship in therapy can enhance clients' ability to reach their goals and find healing (Chaiklin & Schmais, 1993; Harris, 2002; Hecker, Lettenberger, Nedela, and Kristy, 2010; Kornbulm, 2006). Although I was not engaging in therapy with the children, I felt a deep sense of empathy towards them. I had strong rapport with them, as evidenced by the children's development and growth in the workshop and level of confidence in me as their facilitator. Within the workshops I developed meaningful connections and a sense of trust. A specific example of trust was when one girl recognized the pain of a splinter in her toe. She felt

comfortable enough to show me the splinter. When we could not take the splinter out of her toe, she told me that she could still move and she would take care of this splinter after the workshop. This was a significant finding because she trusted me to be open with me and let me know about the splinter in her toe. She made the clear choice to stay connected to the group and to tolerate her discomfort in her toe.

Through the development of trust, the children started to have fun with everyone in the group, which led to an increased level of positive energy in the group. As I developed the therapeutic relationship with the children, I noticed how important it was to maintain a flow in the workshops and to limit distractions. The children started to disconnect as soon as there was an interruption in the flow of the workshops. What helped the children keep focus was reminding them of the overall goal, which was developing a fun and exciting performance.

I used Schoop's educational approach (Levy, 2005) to support the children to refocus their energy by connecting to themselves through the exploration of breath, core-distal, and head-tail connections (Hackney, 2002). In addition to strengthening connections within their own bodies, the children showed their ability to connect to each other through movement, rhythm, and empathy, highlighting one of Chace's core concepts of rhythmic group activity (Levy, 2005). For example, the children developed (a) their abilities to self identify the body connectivities as the workshops progressed, (b) their abilities to focus their energy through shared group rhythms, and (c) their abilities to work as a team as they created the performance.

Schoop and Chace's use of shared rhythm proved to be very useful with the children in these workshops. The children developed their unique rhythm, which ultimately led to the development of a group rhythm. This allowed the group to connect on a new level through a shared rhythm. Each child contributed to the rhythm, and everyone was supporting one another

in order to stay connected to this group rhythm. Then, the children's positive energy grew as we moved across the room using a rhythmic phrase. Through rhythmic group activity (Chaiklin & Schmais, 1993), the children displayed empathic bonding and cohesion. The children stated that when they felt connected to the rhythm, they felt joyful and appreciative of each other. They discussed that connecting through rhythm was an uplifting experience that relieved stress and helped them feel happy.

In the workshops, I observed the children connect intra and interpersonally to each other and to their bodies through the DMT concept of body action (Chaiklin & Schmais, 1993). The children participated together through the movement activities inspired by Kornblum's (2002) curriculum and explorations of body connectivities (Hackney, 2002). Activating the body aided in increasing body awareness, which in turn facilitated the development of the children's confidence in their abilities to move and perform. Engaging in body action through mirroring activities also supported the development of interpersonal connections. For example, an Israeli boy and a Palestinian boy, who paired themselves together, used mirroring to create a movement phrase that they elaborated on and incorporated in the final performance. Witnessing the children mirror each other was powerful because they were connected through each other's movement; they showed a cohesive quality in their interactions. During the discussion with the group, the children stated that they felt connected through mirroring their movements. They discussed feeling as though they were not leading or following each other but that the movement was naturally developing through their connection.

The concept of symbolism (Sandel, 1993) was also an important part of this study; the children used symbolism to create the performance. Once the children connected to their creativity and allowed for the release of self-expression, they started to engage in the symbolism

and intention of the movement, which brought meaning to the dance. Everyone in the group chose a role for the performance and a scene that they wanted to act out. They used symbolism that had emerged during the workshops by creating an imaginary world. First they were sea creatures under the sea and eventually came to shore to have a beach party as humans. Next, some of the group members turned into sharks that attacked the humans at the beach party. They embodied and connected to these sea creatures using symbolism. They described the movement dynamics of each creature, which helped them truly embody the nature of the creatures.

The performance contained an interesting symbolic metaphor of the conflict in Israel and Palestine in that the children wanted to create a scene with a shark attack. These sharks interrupted the imaginary, happy world and caused scary reactions within the imaginary space. Eventually, the children wanted to be friendly sharks and they joined the human pool party. This change happened when the group transitioned into synchronous movement. The sharks were invaders, and they chose to become friendly sharks, because they wanted to be with their friends and they were tired of attacking the group. Although it was not deliberate, through the use of symbolism (Sandel, 1993), fantasy, and play (Levy, 2005), the performance reflected a metaphor of the Palestinian and Israeli conflict. While the children acted out conflict, eventually they did not feel good about sharks invading and attacking the playful and imaginative world. They wanted to join their friends, resume playing harmoniously and joyfully, and stay connected to the group. They also wanted to become humans again and reconnect to the group.

Through Schoop's (Levy, 2005) use of fantasy and play and Chace's use of symbolism, in an imaginary and symbolic world, the solution was simple: the "sharks" would reveal that they were actually friendly human sharks, and they were given the power to become human again. The children accepted the now friendly sharks back into their party. In reality, the conflict is

more complicated. However, the solution might be as simple as the acceptance that these children found when they allowed the transformed friendly human sharks back into their party. The literature shows that peace strategies and peace agreements have not reached successful solutions (Al Jundi, & Marlowe, 2011; Ben Ami, 2013; Klug, 2007; Reinhart, 2005), and the debate between the one state and two-state solution has been in question (Ben Ami, 2013; Klug, 2007). These children showed that through acceptance, imagination, and play, the group of “sharks” was capable of reintegrating into the community and moving in synchrony with the other children. Eventually, the children used Schoop’s (Levy, 2005) use of repetition and reproduction to rehearse the choreographed movement for the performance.

Arai (2009) discussed that creativity can lead to paths for alternate solution in conflict resolution. The author discussed that art can bring light to problems that at first could seem difficult or even impossible to solve. The creative movement that was developed in the workshops was an example of this type of conflict resolution. As part of the choreography, the children who moved like sharks and tried to ruin the dance party decided that they were friendly sharks. At the end, everyone danced in synchrony, demonstrating acceptance of one another, which enabled them to have fun all together. This acceptance led to a successful performance, which spread positive energy throughout the room, resulting in the audience accepting the invitation to join the children at the end of the performance. The children recognized, as they created this performance, that even though there were conflicts in the imaginary world, they found the seemingly simple solution of acceptance.

### **Letting the Children Lead the Way and Take Ownership**

The results also showed that there was an increase in confidence and risk taking in the children as the workshops progressed. The children appeared less inhibited and were more

freely engaging in the movement workshop activities. Eventually, they began strategizing for the performance. One generally shy child spoke confidently at the end of the performance about how he learned that by simply trying and taking risks, he could accomplish more than he believed was possible. He experienced growth during the workshops as he started to take risks. He expressed that from this experience, he had learned not to hold back. Most of the children in the workshops were more actively participating in the movement activities, which suggests that their confidence level increased. Initially the children looked to me to be more of a leader, however, they eventually started to take ownership of the creative process and become leaders themselves.

These themes reflect the importance of giving the children the opportunity to feel empowerment through making decisions. Following the humanistic approach, as well as Chace's and Schoop's methodologies, the children were encouraged to be their authentic selves during the movement workshops. These approaches dictate that the facilitator accept each individual the way they are with unconditional positive regard. In the workshops, the children were equal to the facilitator of the workshops, and they were both learning from each other and the experience.

Lansdown (2011) expressed the power of children by believing they can create change:

Adults are cynical and wary of change because of their conditioning through experience of the 'real world,' whereas children still have hope and the belief that they can change the world. Their efforts, when they bear fruit, also serve as a role model for adults, who once again begin to have hope. Children also grow up, and if they have a positive experience of participation in governance, they will carry that with them into adulthood.

(p. 11)

In this study, it was important for the children to feel that they were strongly leading the

choreography. I was there as a facilitator, giving them guidance as they developed their ideas to create the performance. Not by simply choreographing movements for the children to learn, but by giving them the tools they could use to develop choreography and express themselves through their freedom to create. These tools included the body connectivities (Hackney, 2002), the performance as therapy model (Goldman, & Larsen, 2002), and the activities from Kornblum's (2002) curriculum. The group responded by increased focus, body awareness, confidence in their abilities, and empathy towards each other.

The children initiated movement phrases by following their inner impulse to move in relationship to one another. As I prompted them to come into their dyads and triads I asked them to respond to how their personal movement can shift or be reorganized to morph into a dyadic or triadic movement phrase. Then, they set and finalized the movement to create the final movement phrases and choreography. Their efforts towards working together, compromising, sharing movement, adjusting movement, and negotiating differences of opinion culminated in a performance, which illustrated their ability to move together peacefully in front of an audience that included members of both sides of the conflict. This was a strong image because of the current situation in Israel and Palestine that is starting to feel stagnant and hopeless (Barghouti, 2006a). Witnessing the children perform demonstrated how movement can naturally bring fluidity and mobility to a stagnant situation. There were times during the workshop when challenges arose and the children responded with a loss of interest. This made the workshops feel stagnant, and even led me to question the success of the performance. However, the children seemed to naturally reconnect through the goal of creating the performance. As they were reminded of this goal, they became very motivated and supportive of each other, as evidenced by their increased interaction amongst each other. The children's increased interactions helped them



feel safe and supported throughout the creative process. They were building trust and acceptance through the common goal of being committed to creating the performance.

### **Limitations**

One limitation of this study was the language barrier that existed during the workshops. Not everyone spoke all three languages: English, Arabic, and Hebrew. Even though I had a translator with me in the room at all times, and the children did connect through the language of movement, there were language disconnections that interrupted the flow of the workshops because the children did not feel completely understood by everyone in the group. It took the group longer to make sure that everyone was heard and understood. Although this was a limitation, this also created a beautiful and supportive environment where the children tried to translate for each other and help each other be heard. Having this language barrier also pushed the children to be more expressive through movement because movement allowed everyone to speak the same language.

Other limitations included the lack of supplies and materials, and the time limits of workshops. For example, I was initially planning to interview the children before the workshop started, but we did not have enough time because of other camp procedures. When I wanted the children to write down the interview questions before we started the workshops, there were no pens or paper to do so. At the end of the performance, we finally had access to pens and paper, and I used that opportunity to ask the children to write out the answers to the interview questions. Although in the end I did receive the children's responses, the children were tired, and they did not take the time to fully answer all the questions. This made the answers difficult to read and use in my data analysis.

The final limitation of this study was that, though I did witness the children bond in the workshops, I did not see these connections develop further as they interacted outside of the workshops. The children usually reconnected with their friends from the same ethnicity outside of the group. Unfortunately, I cannot say that the dance and movement groups created lasting friendships because I have not yet had the chance to reconnect with the children. However, I do plan on working with this organization again in the future, and I hope to continue working towards creating change through movement.

### **Challenges to Creative Expression and Freedom**

Although not a limitation per se, the children's focus posed an interesting challenge, which led me to consider how their creative development might be suppressed by their environment. In Jerusalem, after the camp was over, in a meeting with the camp director, we discussed the topic of the children's focus. The children had a surprising ability to focus when they were given instructions; however, when they were given more space to be creative, they easily lost their focus. The children expressed the desire to have more freedom, but once they were given this freedom, they looked uncertain and unsure of how to utilize it. They would lose their seriousness and focus. One reason for their apprehension to this freedom may be because of the organization of the school system. The school systems focus greatly on the academic and scholarly perspective on learning, which leaves little space for creativity and offers the children limited access to creative outlets. This could limit the children's experience in creative expression, and affect their confidence to trust in their innate ability to express themselves. Potentially, this could lead to the children lacking trust and confidence in their choices when given freedom.

These children have also dealt with, and continue to deal with, the challenges of the war

conflict, which could potentially impact their development and create personal challenges. Coping with physical and psychological effects of war can make it difficult to trust in the world to hold and witness one's creativity (Harris, 2006; Lansdon, 2011; Osofsky, 2013). Children affected by war can have difficulty with natural creative expression because of repressed emotions; therefore, it is crucial that programs and organizations engage children in connecting to their creative abilities and releasing their negative experiences in positive ways.

The child soldiers that Harris (2007a) worked with in Sierra Lion experienced expressive release as they developed connection to their emotions in the dance and movement workshops. Harris (2007a) observed that the child soldiers first had to develop trust with each other, then reconnect to the emotions they had shut out as a result of their exposure to war. In the workshops, the children developed group rituals, dance, and movement. Through the development of trust and reconnection, the children began to develop empathy within the group.

The children in Harris' study (2007a) also decided to perform for their community. They expressed their tragic experiences in the war through the performance, which led them to feel re-integrated in the community. As I worked with the group of Israeli and Palestinian children, I observed that they first had to develop trust within themselves and the group to be confident in their abilities and skills to freely express themselves. At first, the children were reliant on my guidance in the movement activities; however, as they started to become more comfortable with the movement, they quickly became more capable in actively engaging in their creative process. There was a cultural shift that needed to happen in order for the children to trust in the power of yielding to the creative process. The children found this challenging at first; however, by the second workshop, as the children developed more comfort with expressive movement, they showed their creativity and trust in themselves as well as the group. Finally, by the end of the

workshops, they were more capable of trusting and following their own intuition. For example, they started to engage in more authentic movement that emerged naturally.

### **Future Research**

Research has shown that DMT has helped children who have experienced trauma by guiding them to reconnect to their emotions and find creative ways of expressing their feelings (Harris, 2007a; Kornblum, 2000; Quensen-Diaz, 2002). This study showed that dance, movement, and working towards a performance with children from both sides of war conflict can help them develop close bonds to support each other through the creative process. For this study, I was not engaging in DMT; rather I was conducting dance and movement workshops. Therefore, I did not intend to further the therapeutic experience for the children. Future research could incorporate more direct therapy interventions by processing the children's movement on a deeper level where emotional content can be further explored and processed within a therapeutic relationship. Researchers could explore the following question: What DMT interventions can foster healing and acceptance among Israeli and Palestinian children, and can these interventions facilitate a deeper understanding of the conflict and the opposing side?

In conducting future research, it might be beneficial to study a therapist's facilitation of more open movement explorations during which the children feel the freedom to move from their inner impulses. This could potentially allow for healing as the children process the movement through therapeutic interventions with the therapist. From this experience, the children showed the ability to connect to the meaning of their movement. How could these connections be further explored through future research?

In addition, for future work with children living in war conflict, it could be useful to address how the conflict manifests in various ways in their daily lives. By working with the

origin of an issue, one can understand and find compassion for oneself as part of the healing process in therapy or otherwise. Eventually, one can find coping skills to help deal with all aspects of his/her life that have been affected by this suffering. It can be difficult to access the deeply rooted problems, especially when working with children who have experienced trauma. The trauma can be covered by many protective layers that serve to help the child survive in their everyday life (Lansdown, 2011; Najavits, 2002; Osofsky, 2013), and it would be helpful for future research to address trauma-focused treatment for Israeli and Palestinian children. A question to breach this topic might be, how would trauma focused treatment for Palestinian and Israeli children further the healing of the past and ongoing suffering? Related, how can DMT specifically address children's trauma in this setting, and what specific interventions would prove most effective?

I have found from my experiences with children who have experienced trauma, that there is a rediscovering process that needs to occur in order for the children to know that the traumatic experience was not their fault. They can find control as they reconnect to themselves and their emotions. The children in this study were given the chance to rediscover themselves and each other through empowerment of being witnessed by an audience as they moved together peacefully and openly. The children felt empowered as the audience witnessed their dance through the freedom of creativity. Empowerment is a crucial aspect of trauma informed care (Fallot & Harris, 2002). I observed the children allow their creativity to initiate the movement and the stories of this imaginary world. They were no longer thinking about what to do next; instead, they were engaging in their own vibrancy, and allowing their body and spirit to lead the way. This allowed the audience to connect with the children on a more authentic level. Future

research could draw from these findings and emphasize the impact of empowering children to believe in their strengths as they move and develop their individuality.

The children created an imaginary world, and they were not in war; however, in a real sense, these were Palestinians and Israelis who found a way to move towards joy, peace, and freedom of expression. Children are the future; therefore, through future research, I hope to facilitate peace within the children by guiding them to believe that they have the power to accept each other and live in peace together. Could dance enhance social skills and relationships between Palestinian and Israeli children that surpass the political and inherited conflict between the two countries?

In future research, I strongly encourage DMT research to be conducted with children of Israel and Palestine. I question what are specific interventions that could lead to furthering these children's connections and social skills? I also wonder how a movement language could be developed as means of communication in times of conflict, and if the children could use this language to communicate through their bodies that they are present, non-violent, and ready to actively move towards peace building. Finally, I ask if a movement language could be a strong communicative tool to establish peaceful and non-violent action for peace? And if so, what would this movement language look like?

## **Summary**

My study began with the main question: How can dance, movement, and performance develop the social and team building skills of Israeli and Palestinian children? I also used a secondary guiding question: How will engaging in dance and movement help develop empathic bonds between Israeli and Palestinian children? This study showed the development of 11 Palestinian and Israeli children over the course of three dance and movement workshops and a

final performance. This study demonstrated that the children found connections together in greater and more meaningful ways over the course of the workshops. In these workshops the following themes developed: reclaiming childlike fun, connection, body awareness, and focus through positive energy. These themes answered my research questions by identifying the ways in which the children connected, developed social and team building skills, and established empathic bonds. As the children grew together through the progression of the workshops, separateness was replaced with bonding and judgment was replaced with acceptance.

Movement is a powerful form of nonverbal communication (Chaiklin, Lohn, & Sandel 1993; Kornblum & Halsten, 2006; Levy, 2005). Movement served as a key factor in the development of bonds and growth of the children. It also helped the children gain comfort in connecting and trusting those who were not in their ethnic group. Movement gave these children new ways to relate to one another. They removed their protective shells, perhaps because they were already diversifying their experience by trying new movements. Through this new form of expression, the children created their own community in which they were accepting and open to each other. The children were no longer separated by cultural norms, but instead by quality of movement, energy level, or skill level, and they were now trying to learn and create a new language together. New physical and group connections were developed through the challenges of the workshops and the final performance.

Once these new groups were brought together, they all moved and supported each other; they were motivated by a common goal to create the performance together and have fun. Once they got to know each other on a new movement level, they let go of their preconceived notions of “the other.” Palestinian and Israeli children created an imaginary world together where peace was possible. The performance empowered this group of children as they moved, danced, and

had fun together. Additionally, the audience, who stood up at the end of the performance and accompanied the children in their dance party, witnessed the children's growth as they saw the children express themselves and share their stories.

Even though the performance was not meant to reflect the conflict of Israel and Palestine, a reflection of it developed. The children created the scenes, and although they originally made the decision to be sharks, they eventually realized that they wanted to change and become friendly sharks. I question, in the real political conflict, what would occur if people were open to changing their minds and considering acceptance of one another? These seem to be important factors in moving toward peaceful coexistence and are not considered often enough in political peace negotiations.

The results present implications for the field of DMT. I witnessed the power of movement in quickly cutting through the children's defense mechanisms and affecting change in a short amount of time, which speaks to the potential efficacy of DMT in conflict mediation. Though this was not a DMT program, a non-verbal approach seemed an effective inroad to working with children in war conflict. Dance was a common language that allowed them to interact with and connect with each other safely. I was particularly interested in how social and team-building skills might be developed through movement. Kornblum's (2002) definition of social skills included "positive problem solving" (p. 10). In this study the children displayed their ability to move towards problem solving through acceptance of each other. They dealt with the conflicts that arose during the workshops and sensibly handled situations that could have appeared difficult to resolve. In these workshops, the children found ways to connect and get along, and this was reflected as they developed the performance. Kornblum's definition also consisted of "empowerment" (p.10). Through the performance, the children felt empowered as



they developed more confidence and trust in themselves and the group; in turn, they also empowered the audience as the audience stood up and joined the performance. Literature shows that as children feel more empowered they start to believe in their own abilities to make a change (Fallot & Harris, 2002). I witnessed how much movement offered the children as they established connections through rhythms, and body action, found ways to fully express themselves, learned not to be afraid, to take risks, and to follow their intuition. Empowerment is an important aspect of helping children living in war conflict. As children learn that they hold the power to make change, those beliefs are more likely to stay with them as they grow into adulthood (Landson, 2011).

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## **Appendix A: Glossary of Terms**

### **Dance/Movement Therapy**

Dance/movement therapy (DMT) uses movement to further the emotional, cognitive, physical and social integration of the individual. Through movement, DMT can help individuals with a wide range of psychological disorders achieve greater self-expression. (ADTA, 2009, Para. 1)

### **Developmental Patterns of Total Body Connectivity**

The connectivities (breath, core distal, head tail, upper lower, body half, and cross lateral) are meant to empower the human body to find increased meaning by engaging with their inner connection and thereby increase their outward expressivity. There are also psychological implications that are correlated with each connectivity (Hackney, 2002).

### **Kinesthetic Empathy**

Kinesthetic empathy describes feeling connected to somebody on an empathic level by simply witnessing him or her move (Reynolds & Reason, 2012).

### **Positive Energy**

For this study, I have created the operational definition for positive energy: encouraging the group to stay connected to the goal of having fun throughout the movement sessions and seeing each conflict or obstacle as a challenge and opportunity that can foster positive change and growth.

### **Secure Attachment/Disorganized Attachment**

“Experiences throughout life shape the functioning of the mind. Those that occur in the early years may set the stage for continued transactions with the world, which then reinforce

those mental functions” (Siegel, 1999, p. 83). Children with secure attachments “seek proximity after separation, are quickly soothed, and return rapidly return to play”(Siegel, 1999, p. 87).

These parents are tuned into their infants’ emotional state. Children with disorganized attachment relationships suffer from “affect regulation problems, social difficulties, attentional problems, and dissociative symptomatology... this type of attachment appears to involve significant problems of a coherent mind” (Siegel, 1999, p. 109).

### **Social Skills**

Kornblum (2002) defined social skills as “the ability to resist peer pressure, positive problem solving, empowerment, and being able to deal with isolation and give children resources to utilize in difficult situations”(p. 10). For the purpose of this study, I want to emphasize the children’s social skills development in a supportive environment despite the war circumstances that have separated them.

Other skills that were discovered in this study were confidence, independent thinking, risk taking, cooperation, a feeling of connection to the group, and working towards the best for the whole group through compromise.

### **Stability/Mobility**

Hackney (2002) defined stability and mobility as “stabilizing elements and mobilizing elements interact continuously to produce effective movement... for both stability and mobility, Fundamentals concentrates on finding the active connection from the core of the body to the outer limbs. These connections are then either activated for grounding (stability) or activated to move the body part (mobility)” (p.46).



## Appendix B: Translator Agreement

I will use a translator for the informed consent process, the interview prior to the start of the camp, and the post-performance questionnaire, and anytime that this research will need a translator. This is the confidentiality agreement they will sign.

### Confidentiality Agreement for Transcription and/or Translation Services

(Adapted From Purdue University, 2011)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, transcriptionist and/or translator, hereby agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all oral or written documentation received from Maria Ninos related to her research study titled Dance and performance with children who have experienced living in war conflict. Furthermore, I agree:

- To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of the audio-taped or live oral interviews, or in any associated documents
- To not disclose any information received for profit, gain, or otherwise
- To not make copies of any audiotapes or computerized files of the transcribed interview texts, unless specifically requested to do so by Maria Ninos.
- To store all study-related materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession;
- To return study-related documents to Maria Ninos in a complete and timely manner.
- To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any backup devices.

Please provide the following contact information for the researcher and the transcriber.  
and/or translator:

For Transcriber/Translator:

For Researcher:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes, videotapes and/or paper files to which I will have access. I am further aware that if any breach of confidentiality occurs, I will be fully subject to the laws of the State of Illinois, USA.

Transcriber/ Translator's

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Transcriber/Translator's signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Transcriber/Translator's Name of Business and Title (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix C: Informed Consent Form**

### Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study

**Title of Research Project:** Dance, movement, and performance with Israeli and Palestinian children living in war conflict.

**Principal Investigator:** Maria Ninos, mariaalexandraninos@gmail.com

**Faculty Advisor:** Jessica Young, jyoung@colum.edu

**Chair of Thesis Committee:** Laura Downey, ldowney@colum.edu

#### INTRODUCTION

Your child is invited to participate in a research study to examine the effects of dance and movement with children living in Israel and Palestine. This consent form will give you the information you will need to understand why this study is being done and why your child is being invited to participate. It will also describe what you will need to do to participate and any known risks, inconveniences, or discomforts that you or your child may have while participating. You are encouraged to take some time to think this over. You are also encouraged to ask questions now and at any time. If you decide to allow your child to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and it will be a record of your agreement to participate. This process is called ‘informed consent.’ You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

#### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study will be to discover how dance and performance can develop the social skills of Israeli and Palestinian children. This study will give insight towards creating understanding and peace for the children who live in an area of conflict.

#### PROCEDURES

The study will be taking place from August 18<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> in Israel, with an optional final performance.

If you agree to your child's participation in this study, your child will be asked to do the following:

- Participate in a 15 minute interview prior to the summer camp.
- Participate in five to seven creative dance and movement sessions (2 hours each) during the camp. These sessions will be part of the daily activities of the camp, concurrent with other sessions such as sports or interfaith cooking.
- (Optional) Participate in a final dance performance at the end of camp for camp attendees and staff.
- (Optional) Participate in a dance performance on August 27, 2013.
- (Optional) Participate in a discussion session with the audience after each performance.

#### POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS

If for any reason you think that this research will create any legal, social, or cultural safety risks for your child, I ask that you do not allow the participation of your child in this research.

Making and performing the dance may bring up physical or emotional discomfort before, during, or after the study. The following options are available:

- There are staff at the camp trained to help the children if they experience unexpected psychological, emotional, or physical reactions to the work.

- Your child can choose what he/she does or does not want to share, and can stop the interview, the making of the dance, and performing the dance or take breaks, as needed with no penalty.
- A list of therapists and counseling centers will be provided to you if your child needs to talk about any upsetting emotions that he/she feels.

Possible inconveniences include the time it takes to complete the interviews (15 minutes) and performances. The optional final two performances and post-performance discussions will take about two hours each. Your child will not be contacted after the study is finished.

#### POSSIBLE BENEFITS

The possible benefits of being in this study include:

- Contribution to the increased acknowledgement, and understanding of the trauma in conflict zones.
- Contribution to the increased knowledge of the role of the body and narrative process in the experience of trauma in conflict zones.
- Contribution to future research and programming related to addressing trauma for children, including possible dance/movement therapy methods, programming, and research.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality means that I will keep the names and other identifying information of the research participants private. I will change the names and identifying information of research participants when writing about them or when talking about them with others, such as my supervisors.

The following procedures will be used to protect the confidentiality of your child's information:

- Interview data will be secured with a password-protected iPad. Backup files will be stored in a password-protected “cloud” and in a locked home office safe when they are not in my presence.
- The iPad will be kept in a locked and secure location when not in my presence.
- Study records will be kept for five years in a locked office safe in my home, with access available only to myself. And after five years they will be destroyed.
- Personal study notes may be kept with the data. These will not contain any information on you or your child’s identity.
- When study data is released, it will be given to my Faculty Advisor, and to the Columbia College Chicago Dance/Movement Therapy and Counseling Thesis Committee.  
Information will include selected interview narrative data, direct interview quotes, body observations, and findings. The purpose of this disclosure is to represent and share, as truly and accurately as possible, the experiences and stories provided by your child. The confidentiality of each individual will be honored and I will not use your child’s real name or any of the people they talk about at any time during the research.
- All the forms that are related to this study (informed consent, Assent, Surveys and Journals) will not have any real names of you or your child to protect their privacy and safety.
- At the end of this study, I may publish my findings. Your privacy, as indicated on this consent form, will be respected in any future publication or presentations.
- In the situations of reports of child abuse and neglect, or harm to self or others, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

## RIGHTS

Being a research participant in this study is voluntary. Your child may choose to leave or to participate in the study at any time without penalty. If they decide that they want to stop participating they can tell any staff member, including myself. They will then join another group at camp. You may also refuse your child's participation in this study. If your child's behavior is inappropriate or harmful to his/herself or others, they may be asked to discontinue participation in the study.

If you would like your child to participate in this study, you have 10 days to return this consent form.

We will be happy to answer any question(s) you have about this study. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact me, Maria Ninos at (001) 310 5035327, 0528620433, or [Maria.ninos@loop.colum.edu](mailto:Maria.ninos@loop.colum.edu). You may also contact the faculty advisor, Jessica Young, [Jyoung@colum.com](mailto:Jyoung@colum.com) (001-312-369-6897). If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Columbia College Chicago Institutional Review Board staff (IRB) at 001-312-369-7384.

#### COST OR COMMITMENT

You may incur minimal fees from your involvement in this research study, such as parking fees or public transit costs.

There will be no payment in this study.

The time commitment includes the participation:

- 5-7 movement sessions, two hours long for a total of 10-14 hours.
- Two (optional) performances of the choreography created during this study (2 hours each).

PARTICIPANT STATEMENT

This study has been explained to me. I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had opportunity to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research or my rights as a research participant, I can ask one of the contacts listed above. I understand that I may withdraw from the study or refuse to participate at any time without penalty. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant/Parent/                      Print Name                      Date:

Guardian Signature:

Relationship (only if not participant): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Assent of Minor Signature:    Print Name:                      Date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person                      Print Name:                      Date:

Obtaining Consent



## Appendix D: Written Assent



**C O L L E G E C H I C A G O**

### **Informed Assent Form**

#### INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in a study with other Israeli and Palestinian children. In this study you will be dancing and moving together and creating a dance for a final performance. I want to study how dance and movement will affect your friendships with the other Israeli and Palestinian children. This assent form will give you the information you will need to understand why you are participating in this study. It will also describe what you will need to do. It will also tell you the risks and possible uncomfortable feelings you may experience. You are encouraged to take some time to think this over. You are also encouraged to ask questions now and at any time. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and it will be a record of your agreement to participate. You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

#### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study will be to learn how dance and performance can build friendships of Israeli and Palestinian children. This study will be a step towards creating understanding and peace for the children who live in an area of conflict.

#### PROCEDURES

The study will be taking place from August 18<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> in Israel. We will have an optional performance at the camp and the study will also have an optional final performance. If you agree to be part of this study:

I will interview you. The interview will give me information of what you know about the Israeli and Palestinian conflict and how it affects you. The interview will also tell me about your experience with movement and dance. You can join this study if:

- You feel safe to participate in peaceful activities with Israelis and Palestinians.
- You know about the Israeli and Palestinian conflict.
- You feel safe being in this study.
- You are not part of a political party that could be a threat to anyone involved in the camp.
- You treat everyone at the camp equally and with respect.
- If you choose not to participate in my study, you can still be part of the camp. You will be doing other activities, such as, a sports workshop, or an interfaith cooking workshop that will be led by interns.
- Should you express any uncomfortable feelings in this study, you will be asked to try another activity of the camp. You or you parent/guardian have the option of stopping your participation at any time in the research study. Lastly, if I decide that you need to take a break or stop participating, I will ask you to try another activity in the camp.

You will participate in five to seven two-hour creative movement sessions and two final performances. In the movement sessions, we will always start with a warm up. Then we will continue the movement and creating the dance for the final performance. As we continue to

develop our movement repertoire, friendships and team building skills, we will build the choreography for our performance. You will end the performance with a final discussion with the audience and me about your experience in this study. You will not be contacted after the study is finished.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a short interview to get to know you.
- Participate in five to seven creative dance and movement sessions.
- Participate in two optional performances:
  - One final optional performance at the camp in the kibbutz at the end of the camp.
  - And another optional performance after the camp is over so that your family can also see the dance.
- Participate in an optional discussion with the audience and me at the end of the performance in Jerusalem

You will have the opportunity to stop participating in any part of the study at any time. If you choose to stop participating, you will have the chance to join another camp session, such as, the interfaith cooking or the spots sessions. In order to remove yourself from the movement sessions you will speak to any of the staff members of the camp and, or myself. We will then take the appropriate steps to help your transition to another group.

#### POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS

The risks in this study include:

- The interview process, making, and performing the dance may bring up physical or emotional discomfort before, during, or after the study. I will not be providing therapy, but I

can give you a list of therapists and counseling centers if you need to talk about any upsetting emotions you feel. You can choose what you want to share.

- I will not use your real name when I write about this study.

Possible inconveniences as a result of the study procedures may include the time it takes to complete the interviews, which will take about 15 minutes.

#### POSSIBLE BENEFITS

The possible benefit of being in this study will be to have the opportunity for potential relief and transformation of uncomfortable feelings in a supportive environment.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

I will not use any private information, like your name or where you live, when I talk and write about this study.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ understand that my parents (mom and dad)/guardian have/has given permission (said it's okay) for me to take part in a project about finding new friendships through dance and movement done by Maria Ninos. I am taking part because I want to. I have been told that I can stop at any time I want to and nothing will happen to me if I want to stop.

#### PARTICIPANT STATEMENT

This study has been explained to me. I volunteer to take part in this research and summer camp. I have had opportunity to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research, it is my right as a research participant, to ask one of the contacts listed above. I understand that I may withdraw from the study or refuse to participate at any time without penalty. I also understand that if Maria Ninos, the researcher in the study, thinks that it will be best for me to stop participating in the creative dance and movement sessions, she may take me out of the movement groups. I will have the chance to move to other activities of the camp. I will receive a copy of this consent form

_____ Parent/ Guardian Signature	_____ Print Name	_____ Date
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Relationship (only if not participant): \_\_\_\_\_

_____ Assent of Minor Signature:	_____ Print Name:	_____ Date:
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_____ Signature of Person Obtaining Consent	_____ Print Name:	_____ Date:
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_____ Main Researcher's Signature	_____ Print Name:	_____ Date
---	----------------------	---------------

## Appendix E: Interview Questions

Name:

Age:

Date:

Nationality:

1. Where were you born?

2. Where are you from?

3. How has the Israeli and Palestinian conflict affected you?

4. Have you ever danced before?

5. Do you have Israeli or Palestinian friends?

**Appendix F: Audience Consent Form for Post-Performance Questionnaire**

# Columbia

C O L L E G E C H I C A G O

## Informed Consent Form

Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study

**Title of Research Project:** Dance, movement, and a performance with Palestinian and Israeli children living in war conflict that you participated in.

**Principal Investigator:** Maria Ninos

**Faculty Advisor:** Jessica Young, MA, BC-DMT, LPC, GL-CMA, [jyoung@colum.edu](mailto:jyoung@colum.edu)

**Chair of Thesis Committee:** Laura Downey, MA, BC-DMT, LPC, GL-CMA  
[ldowney@colum.edu](mailto:ldowney@colum.edu)

### INTRODUCTION

This consent form is to inform you about a change that had to be made for the dance, movement and performance study with Israeli and Palestinian children living in war conflict. This consent form will give you the information you will need to understand why this change is being done and why you are being asked to sign the informed consent.

You are being asked to participate because there was a change in the original plan of the study. The post-performance questionnaire you have filled out and sent to the principal investigator was meant to be anonymous. However, since there was no time to hand it out right after the performance, the principal investigator of the study had to email you the post-performance questionnaire. Although the principal investigator will not reveal your name in the study, there can

no longer be a guarantee that your name will not be revealed in your emailed response, because there is a link via email from your email to the principal investigator. I am now asking you to sign this Informed Consent form so that I can use the data I already collected from you on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study will be to learn how dance and performance can build friendships of Israeli and Palestinian children at the Kids4peace organization. This study will be a step towards creating understanding and peace for the children who live in an area of conflict. For this study I am asking

- How can dance, movement and a performance develop the social skills and team building skills of Israeli and Palestinian children living in war conflict?

My guiding question is: how will engaging in dance and movement help develop empathic bonds between Israeli and Palestinian children?

### PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

- Sign the consent form to allow the principal investigator to use your reflections and observations, which you responded to the performance in the post-performance questionnaire with and emailed to the principal investigator of the study.
- You will not be contacted in the future about this questionnaire.

### POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS

The risk(s) in this study is(are):



- There are no risks involved in your participation in this study; however, because there is an email trail connecting your information to me, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

#### POSSIBLE BENEFITS

The possible benefits of being in this study include:

- You may not directly benefit from this study; however, I hope that your participation in the study may increase the validity of the study.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality means that the investigator will keep the names and other identifying information of the research participants private. The investigator will change the names and identifying information of research participants when writing about them or when talking about them with others, such as the investigator's supervisors.

- In the study, I have only discussed the post-performance questionnaire in the methods, results, and discussion section.
- For the protection of your identity, I have used the terms "the audience member/s" when referring to the audience's responses.
- Study records will be kept for five years in a locked office safe in my home, with access available only to myself. And after five years they will be destroyed.
- When study data is released, it will be given to my Faculty Advisor, and to the Columbia College Chicago Dance/Movement Therapy and Counseling Thesis Committee. Information will include selected interview narrative data, direct interview quotes, body observations, and findings. The purpose of this disclosure is to represent and share, as truly and accurately

as possible, the experiences and stories provided by your child. The confidentiality of each individual will be honored.

- All the forms that are related to this study (informed consent, Assent, Surveys and Journals) will not have any real name on them.
- At the end of this study, I may publish my findings. Your privacy, as indicated on this consent form, will be respected in any future publication or presentations.
- In the situation where someone will hack into my email and find the post-performance questionnaires, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

The following procedures will be used to protect the confidentiality of your information:

1. The researcher(s) will keep all study records locked in a secure location.
2. All electronic files containing personal information will be password protected.
3. Information about you that will be shared with others will be unnamed to help protect your identity.
4. No one else besides the investigator will have access to the original data.
5. At the end of this study, the researchers may publish their findings. You will not be identified in any publications or presentations.

## RIGHTS

Being a research participant in this study is voluntary. You may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You may also refuse to participate at any time without penalty.

Thoughtfully consider your decision to participate in this research study. We will be happy to answer any question(s) you have about this study. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact the principal investigator, Maria Ninos

Phone Number 001(310) 505-327 or the faculty advisor, Jessica Young 001 (312) 369-6897 If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Columbia College Chicago Institutional Review Board (IRB) staff at 312-369-6994 or IRB@colum.edu.

#### COST OR COMMITMENT

- This process should not take any longer than 15 minutes.
- There will be no cost for you to participate in this study.

To return the consent form please print the print and sign it, then scan and email it in a PDF format to: maria.ninos@loop.colum.edu

#### COMPENSATION FOR ILLNESS AND INJURY

If you agree to participate in this study, your consent in this document does not waive any of your legal rights. However, in the event of harm arising from this study, neither Columbia College Chicago nor the researchers are able to give you money, insurance, coverage, free medical care or any other compensation injury that occurs as a result of the study. For this reason, please consider the stated risks of the study carefully.

#### PARTICIPANT STATEMENT

This study has been explained to me. I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had opportunity to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research or my rights as a research participant, I can ask one of the contacts listed above. I understand that I may withdraw from the study or refuse to participate at any time without penalty. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_

Participant/Parent/

Guardian Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name:

Date:

Relationship (only if not participant): \_\_\_\_\_

Assent of Minor Signature:                      Print Name:                      Date:

Signature of Person                      Print Name:                      Date:

Obtaining Consent

Principal Investigator's                      Print Name:                      Date

Signature

## **Appendix G: Post-Performance Questionnaire**

1. Has this performance given you a new perspective on the future of these children?
  
2. What about this performance illuminated you with any ideas for further social skills development for Israeli and Palestinian children?
  
3. If and how has this performance inspired you to get involved in the development of social skills for the Israeli and Palestinian children?