

**THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENT  
DANCERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION  
IN A DANCE MOVEMENT THERAPY  
GROUP, WITH REFERENCE TO  
CHOREOGRAPHY AND  
PERFORMANCE**

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# ABSTRACT

## **The experience of student dancers in higher education in a dance movement therapy group, with reference to choreography and performance**

This thesis investigates the experience of a dance movement therapy (DMT) group as part of an undergraduate dance degree in higher education. The primary focus is the students' perceptions of the group and of links with choreography and performance.

The research tracks three cohorts of students through an eight-week DMT group experience using a case study methodology. Through a series of semi-structured individual and group interviews and tape-recordings of verbal group process, it uses the students' own reflections as a basis for interpretation. Systematic thematic analysis of texts combines with interpretation in the creation of the findings. Processes of interpretation and category formation are made transparent for the reader.

The thesis is founded on a literature review, which refers to a variety of fields of knowledge: DMT, Authentic Movement, arts therapies, psychotherapy and counselling, dance education, creativity, choreography, performance, play and improvisation.

The major conclusions are that despite initial difficulties with emotional exploration, students seem to have developed trust in the process as a result of a perceived sense of safety. Other facilitating factors of process are interpreted as play, movement metaphors and affirmation. The variety of experience is acknowledged, and positively perceived experience is compared to negatively perceived experience in terms of perceptions of safety. The positively perceived personal effects of playfulness, self-confidence and relationship are interpreted as having relevance for choreography and performance. Recommendations for further research into the potential relationship between DMT and dance are offered.

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# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

This thesis is about the perceived experience of three cohorts of Bachelor of Arts (BA) dance students of a dance movement therapy experiential group (referred to as the DMT group) and the perceived effects of this experience on choreography and performance. The research questions were: Are there any perceived links between DMT, choreography and performance? If so, what are they, and how do they develop?

## 1.2 Context

The DMT group was a non-assessed component of an optional, newly designed, third-year BA dance module entitled 'Introduction to DMT'. The DMT group had a facilitator who demonstrated the role of the therapist, and who shall be referred to as the therapist. Student choice was based on a module outline (Appendix 1) and an introductory talk (Appendix 2) during which the intention and ethos for the DMT group was explained.

The majority of the students in the study were in their early twenties, white, British and female, attending a small university in the South of England, which specialises in offering opportunities to people with moderate to low 'A' level and Bachelor of Technology grades or portfolio experience. The dance experience of these students is varied, yet there is a strong wave of ballet, tap and stage school training and certainly a predominant emphasis upon external forms. Cohort profiles are in Appendix 3.

The BA dance degree was taught by a variety of staff, with different artistic backgrounds and training, and different teaching aims and methods. The students attended ballet, contemporary technique and contact improvisation dance technique classes, choreography, improvisation, theatre, contact, dance theatre, dance history, postmodern dance courses and vocational courses such as dance in the community and dance administration and dance journalism. Generally, focus was on technique and form, whilst more organic work took place in improvisation. The destination of these students was usually into arts administration, community dance or dance teaching with a very limited number of students moving into performance.

In the case of Cohort 1 (C1) and Cohort 2 (C2), DMT experience consisted of eight sessions lasting 90 minutes on a weekly basis with a break for Reading Week half way through. Due to an alteration in the term structure, Cohort 3 (C3) participated in ten weekly sessions of 90 minutes with a two-week break for Easter occurring towards the end of the semester.

### 1.3 Literature search

Reading of the DMT literature showed that little research had been done to date on the value of DMT for dancers. Emphasis was placed on DMT for people whose emotional conflicts were considered as inhibitory to their mental, educational and/or social functioning. In fact Stanton-Jones (1992) suggested that dance training could prevent dancers from accessing their feelings and images through spontaneous movement:

Trained dancers are said to be able to defend themselves in movement terms; instead of allowing movement to give expression to unconscious material, they can, through use of practised form and style, avoid such expression in the manner that patients in verbal therapy are said to defend themselves through intellectualisation in words (p. 9).

The only research into DMT with an ostensibly well-functioning, creative community was Payne's (1996) study of DMT trainees.

From my own experience in dance education I thought that some of the DMT research findings were potentially relevant to this context. For example, Meekums' (1988, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1998, 2000) extensive studies and Ammon's (2003) more minor study highlighted the value of DMT in promoting relational fluidity, which could serve the dancer well in the task of co-creating. Adler and Fisher's (1984) study of DMT in relation to self-awareness was of interest because this was a quality that might enhance communication in both choreography and performance. Generally, research had emphasised the development of emotional expressiveness through DMT (for example, Shennum, 1987; Payne, 1987; Meekums, 1998; Ammon, 2003), which might provide creative inspiration and maximise performance presence. The link between DMT and anxiety reduction was suggested in Fisher and Cleveland's (1968) work. I imagined that loss of anxiety would leave the dancer's body and mind in a more flexible and open state, facilitating creativity and performance.

I linked these DMT research findings to research on creative people. Research on self-agency and self-awareness in creative people both supported and contradicted the

concept of a relationship between DMT and creativity. Concerning relationship with self, Mackinnon (1962) had found that feelings of certainty and confidence were vital factors in creativity. Concerning awakening of awareness of hidden feelings and motivations, there were conflicting ideas. Freud's theory of sublimation (1908) assumed that artistic creation was a result of unconscious aesthetic processes. Gilroy's (1989, 1992) research into the impact of therapy training upon art therapists to some extent confirmed this theory by suggesting that self-consciousness could inhibit and overwhelm creative output. Yet Gilroy's thesis offered a more complex view, revealing how attitude to creativity after therapy could change from initial inhibition to greater self-confidence and stronger sense of personal purpose in art. This suggestion had already been made by Rosen (1975), based on a small-scale research project looking at art therapists and their art.

Research into the relationship between body–mind awareness and dance education and training was sparse. Hawkins (1991), in a small-scale study lacking reflexivity, had documented a few students' reflections on the positive relationship between exploration of emotions and choreography. Green (1996) had tracked the changing identity of a few dancers undergoing somatic training from a postmodern perspective, which influenced the political intention of their choreography. Whilst there was considerable evidence of change in the practice of dancing and making dances, which included integration of body–mind awareness, research into the relationship between inner and outer awareness in dance was conspicuous by its absence.

It was also apparent that most DMT research was empirical and observational. Although some researchers using these methods had concluded that they offered only limited access to the lived experience of the person in DMT (for example, Fraenkel, 1983), to date there appear to be few DMT research studies that have analysed participants' perceptions (for example, Payne, 1987, 1996; Meekums, 1998). Payne (1993) has recommended qualitative social science methods for research into the arts therapies, as has Edwards (1999), Forinash (1995) and Junge and Linesch (1993a, 1993b) in art and music therapy, on the basis that such methods provide rich subjective data on experience.

## **1.4 Methodology**

Case study was selected as the most appropriate method for this study on the basis that exploration of the contextual details of the DMT group would be important in answering

the research questions (Yin, 1994). Multiple case study was chosen to shed light on significant processes through comparison (Stake, 2000). Individual and group semi-structured interviews and process recordings were selected as the most appropriate tools for the collection of data containing breadth and complexity of experience and perceptions of effects, in that their encouragement of fluid, spontaneous and creative response had been well-documented (Toukmanian and Rennie, 1992; Fontana and Frey, 2000).

The primary data were supplemented by case notes and paintings of therapeutic process, and reflections on the research process, in order to provide data on therapist and researcher involvement and subjectivity of interpretation. In addition, two consultation meetings took place with C1 and C2. Consultation with C3 was precluded by the altered term structure. These consultations were intended to invite reflection on initial findings in order to challenge interpretations.

Thematic analysis (Huberman and Miles, 2000) of transcripts involved interpretation of participants' reflections and creation of categories, which the researcher judged to represent the concepts being reflected upon. Transparency of interpretation is provided in Chapter 4 and Appendices 9 and 10. Similarities and differences were noted (Bungay and Keddy, 1996) and predominant themes were highlighted (Potter and Wetherall, 1987). Contradictions were sought (Rowan, 1981) and categories were continuously cross-checked with the data. Categories changed as a result of these processes. The cycles of data collection and category formation are represented in Figure 1 (Appendix 9).

The standard by which this study may be judged is: Does it do what it sets out to do within its own framework? Therefore:

1. Is the reasoning behind the interpretations of data transparent and coherent?
2. Is the argument tracked back to the data and to the discussion of literature and recent research?
3. Does the reasoning include reference to variation of perception?
4. Is the reasoning reflexive?
5. Is the methodology appropriate to the research focus?
6. Are the tools suitable for the research focus?

## 1.5 Therapeutic framework

The model of DMT under discussion emphasises four attitudes: allowing, awareness, attuning/responding and imagining. It is a broadly humanistic model, strongly influenced by person-centred approaches, with an emphasis upon client agency. Experiencing in the ‘here and now’ (Rowan, 1995) is important in this framework, but this does not preclude interpretation in terms of life experience if the client so wishes.

In addition to the four attitudes, I discuss three baseline ground rules for the creation of group safety in DMT. These are:

- Commitment to confidentiality
- Commitment to personal responsibility
- Commitment to participation.

Confidentiality may be defined as not talking about anyone else outside the group; personal responsibility may be defined as ‘owning’ and containing feelings towards others that might be due to personal emotional processes and harmful to others; and participation may be defined as a willingness to try to engage with DMT process.

## 1.6 Frameworks of research analysis

The theoretical frameworks for the research analysis were DMT theory and existential interpretation of relational processes. Involvement as therapist was also used to inform the analysis and this is discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. Other frameworks for analysis are acknowledged.

## 1.7 The debate

Critical evaluation of the tensions between the disciplines of dance and DMT sets the scene for this research inquiry. In the literature there are those who view choreography and performance as artifice and skilful deceit (Langer, 1953; Blom and Chaplin, 1989), contrasting with those who see the purpose of choreography and performance as authenticity and community (Whitehouse, 1958a, 1958b; Halprin, 1995; Templeton, 1998; Cottam and Sager, 2002; Koltai, 2002). It has been suggested (Halprin, 1995) that the teaching of choreography and performance blends focus on devices (Blom and Chaplin, 1989) with authenticity; skill with personal presence.

How can choreography and performance, which evolve through the crafting of movement with aesthetic awareness and through rehearsal, be aligned with DMT, spontaneous and personally congruent movement? The differences between dance and

DMT are well documented (Schmais and White, 1986; Payne, 1990; Stanton-Jones, 1992), specifically focusing on the different intentions of the two uses of dance. As Payne (1990) has indicated, DMT uses movement for discovering more about internal feelings and images, while dance uses movement to create aesthetically pleasing dynamics:

The major difference between dance as performance art and dance as movement in therapy lies in the basic theory. The central principle of dance movement therapy is that a significant and powerful connection exists between motion and emotion. The role of the therapist is to give attention to the mover, helping them to explore this connection in their own life and experience, with the aim of healing themselves and enriching the relationship between the physical and the psycho-emotional. This movement process is a dance, but it does not aim to make 'art' or to use dance for performance. The approach to and the context of that dance are significantly different (p. 7).

Schmais and White (1986) consider the difference in terms of rehearsal, structure and spontaneity:

Dance therapy differs from 'stage' dancing in that the stage performer does not express his feelings in the moment. He achieves the choreographer's intent by tapping past experiences and thus presents a rehearsed, stylised version of human experience and emotion. The dance therapist, on the other hand, does not structure the encounter but works with what unfolds as a result of their movement interaction (p. 26).

Whilst acknowledging the differences between the two disciplines, this thesis inquires into potential correspondences, on the basis that relationship between the two disciplines could be mutually invigorating.

Schmais and White (1986) suggest that symbolisation in DMT is an aesthetic process:

Producing any art requires some degree of skill for structure and symbolism. Even the most elementary dance symbol requires certain technical mastery. Transforming self-expressive gestures into moving images that represent the group's needs depends on discipline' (p. 33).

Based on the premise that the structure and control involved in making the symbolic movement renders scary internal thoughts and feelings safe, Schmais argues further that creation of symbol is vital in the healing process of DMT.

Within the creation and performance of dance might there be times when the DMT process could be helpful to the aesthetic process? Theories of creative process in

art have suggested interplay between intentional forming and relaxation (Gordon, 1975; Meekums, 1993). When the artist lets the mind wander without aesthetic purpose, rational control is relinquished. In such a state of mind, surprising inspirations can occur, which can enrich the art form.

## **1.8 The findings**

The major findings from this investigation are that DMT seems to have been perceived by participants as beneficial to their well-being and beneficial to their creativity in the following ways:

1. Increased playfulness
2. Increased self-confidence
3. Heightened sensitivity in relationship.

These effects seem to have been associated with the facilitating components of play, movement metaphors, acceptance and safety.

The analysis of inhibition in DMT identifies the obstruction of process by feelings of fearful vulnerability, which seem to be associated with self-exposure, external judgment or absence of safety. This finding replicates that of Payne (1996, 2001) and Meekums (1998, 2000).

## **1.9 Specialist terms**

In this thesis I regularly use some specialist terms, which are defined here for the reader.

### *1.9.1 Dance movement therapy*

Dance movement therapy (DMT) emerged as a discipline in the last century and in the UK became a professional training in 1989. Stanton-Jones (1992, p. 10) proposes five theoretical principles for DMT:

1. The mind and body are in constant complex reciprocal interaction.
2. Movement reflects aspects of the personality, including psychological developmental processes, psychopathology, expressions of subjectivity and interpersonal patterns of relating.
3. The therapeutic relationship established between the patient and the dance movement therapist is central to the effectiveness of DMT.
4. Movement evidences unconscious processes, in a manner similar to dreams and other psychological phenomena.



5. The creative process embodied in the use of free association in movement is inherently therapeutic.

In addition, Meekums (2002, p. 8) offers a further principle:

- DMT allows for the recapitulation of early object relationships by virtue of the largely non-verbal mediation of the latter.

The Association for Dance Movement Therapy (ADMT) (2003) defines the discipline as:

The psychotherapeutic use of movement and dance through which a person can engage creatively in a process to further their emotional, cognitive, physical and social integration.

Meekums (2002) offers a creative model of DMT involving preparation, incubation, illumination and evaluation, a mix of right- and left-brain activity. Spontaneous movement uncontrolled by the left-brain is encouraged in incubation and then connected to life experience in illumination. Interplay between spontaneous movement and rational interpretation is common in DMT theory (Stanton-Jones, 1992). However, particularly in work with children, the possibility offered by metaphor (in Drama and Play Therapy) for integration of feelings without pointed reference to life context is acknowledged (Cattanach, 1995).

The theoretical justification of any expressive arts therapy might be formed on the basis that 'self-expression facilitates personal growth and change and that verbalization alone, unaccompanied by affect, creativity, or motor action, cannot touch the full range of human feeling' (Levy, 1995, p. 1). In DMT the body, the body's movement, symbol and connection with others through symbolic process are considered to be distinctive conduits through which to feel and express emotion (Schmais, 1985; Payne, 1990; Meekums, 2002). Justification of the use of body and the body's movement in a symbolic process has been rooted primarily in clinical practice and theory, though several research studies have examined the DMT process and in some instances sought to prove its effectiveness (as reported in Payne, 1992).

Fraenkel's (1983) study focuses upon the role of body and movement in forming relationship. The feeling of being heard, seen and understood by another is described in person-centred literature as empathy. DMT has paralleled empathy variously with synchrony and 'mirroring' (in which the therapist tries to mirror the quality/spatial or temporal pattern of the client's movement at the same time as the client) and 'echoing' (in which the therapist tries to reflect creatively the quality, spatial or temporal pattern

of the client's movement, not necessarily at the same time). Fraenkel's research into synchrony and echoing as empathy is very important in the justification of this parallel, even though it is a small-scale study involving only eight participants. Just as Truax and Carkhuff (1967) emphasise asking the clients about their experience of empathy in verbal therapy, so too Fraenkel is interested in the received empathy of both clients in DMT and friends in conversation. As part of her method she therefore asked clients and friends to use an Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR) system in order to find out from them, using videotapes of the session or conversation viewed immediately after the event (so that their involvement was fresh in their memory), if and when they experienced empathy. She correlates these memories with ratings of movement synchrony and echoing made by trained observers. Her discussion centres upon the key finding that received empathy coincided mostly with echoing, rather than synchrony. Fraenkel's study might be seen to indicate the value of the body and the body's movement in relationship, a finding confirmed by Meekums' (1990, 1991, 1992) work and research into relationship between mothers and children.

The presence of the group in DMT has been acknowledged as a significant factor in personal growth (Schmais, 1985; Schmais and White, 1986; Payne, 1996; Meekums, 1998, 2000). The practice of physical empathy in a group is considered to enhance received empathy in the individual, and to create a feeling of trust and cohesion. Sense of community, enhanced through physical and symbolic creativity, is viewed as empowering to the individual in that s/he feels part of something bigger than herself and in that s/he learns to know herself better through interaction with others. Meekums (1998, 2000) found that her research group of women survivors of child sexual abuse were able to access the strong, 'adult' part of self through identification with the group.

### *1.9.2 Movement metaphor*

Movement metaphor is described by Meekums (2002) as 'a symbol encapsulated in either movement or posture' (p. 22). Halprin (1995) proposes a process of 'psychokinetic visualization' during which movement, image and feeling all happen simultaneously. Case examples from DMT and Authentic Movement (Adler, 1972; Dosamentes-Alperson, 1981; Chodorow, 1991; Adler, 1996, 2000) confirm the relevance of such a multilayered process for many people. The term movement metaphor may be seen to correspond to Halprin's psychokinetic visualisation process, in that motion, emotion and image may be present simultaneously in movement metaphor.

Symbolisation has been identified as a significant healing process in DMT (Schmais, 1985; Stanton-Jones, 1992; Meekums, 2002). Clinical practice has shown how symbols, images and metaphors give access to personal and archetypal feelings (Chodorow, 1991; Lewis, 1993). There are essentially two key arguments for the use of symbol in accessing emotions.

First, that it circumvents rational thought, and is therefore uncensored by moral and cultural dictates. Through the creation of a symbol, a person might escape the confinement of emotion imposed by these dictates, and become able to feel and express emotion.

Second, which is connected to the first, the symbol provides safety for the exploration of emotions. Emotions, which are frightening (for existential, moral or cultural reasons), might be contained by the structure of the symbol (Schmais, 1985). Paradoxically emotions may both seem to gain and to lose intensity through the symbol (Pearson, 1996). They gain intensity in that they can be embodied and expressed in a larger-than-life, epic, mythical or fairytale context. They may appear to lose intensity in that they are separated from their original context and expressed indirectly.

There seems to be little research available into the pitfalls of symbolisation in DMT, though Meekums (1998, 2000) and Mills and Daniluk (2002) have examined the difficulty of using body movement to access painful memories for women survivors of child sexual abuse. If the body is interpreted as container of painful emotion, then body movement becomes potentially dangerous, in that it might shake repressed emotion to the surface of awareness. It is important to realise that in some instances a person's avoidance of particular emotions or events may well be important to their emotional stability. The ability of DMT and other expressive arts therapies to circumvent rational control may in these instances be shocking and disturbing to the individual, rather than salutary. In the same way, as analysed above, using the arts therapies with artists may cause overwhelming emotion to flood the mind, disabling the artist's creativity.

### *1.9.3 Process*

Process is defined by Mindell (1995) as 'the flow of experience, the movement which is inherent in life and nature' (p. 57). She refers to organic movement flowing from a physical impulse, to the way things are born, how they move, grow, decline and die in the natural world. Thus process may be seen to refer to an organic unfolding of potential.

#### *1.9.4 Authentic Movement*

Authentic Movement (Musicant, 1994, 2001; Payne, 2003) is a discipline related to DMT. In Authentic Movement, the concept of being moved rather than moving (Whitehouse, 1958a, 1958b, 1972) is central. The mover, in the presence of a witness, waits for an internal impulse to arise spontaneously in the body, and allows it freedom of expression. This concept may be seen to correspond to the concept of process above.

### **1.10 Conclusions**

How would DMT be approached by dance students: people who were more familiar than most with using the body to create symbolic meaning? How would they fare in this DMT context, which asked them to let go of their training and to move as children in symbolic play? What effects might be perceived? Would DMT have any perceived significance for choreography and performance?

With these questions in mind, the thesis is presented:

- Chapter 2 provides a critical analysis of literature and research pertaining to the research focus and findings.
- Chapter 3 provides a methodological rationale.
- Chapter 4 makes the data analysis process transparent for the reader.
- Chapter 5 gives the context of the DMT group.
- Chapter 6 discusses the positively perceived personal effects.
- Chapter 7 discusses the negatively perceived personal effects.
- Chapter 8 discusses the perceived connections between DMT, choreography and performance.
- Chapter 9 concludes with discussion of the findings and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

I will begin by exposing my rationale for and approach to the selection of literature and critical analysis of texts. Cooper (1989) advises that a literature review may ‘focus on research outcomes, research methods, theories or applications’ (p. 13). In this instance I used the research question and then the research outcomes to seek out a variety of literature through:

- Systematic, regular database searches (illustrated below)
- Participation in conferences relevant to the research focus (listed below)
- Subsequent networking
- Research journals (e.g. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, *Research in Dance Education and Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*).

Through focused selection and evaluation, I discuss in this review the literature that I judged most relevant, in terms of the findings (Mulrow, 1995). Texts were initially sought because they were relevant to the research focus: the experience of student dancers in higher education in a DMT group, with reference to choreography and performance. Databases were selected on the basis that they would provide access to research and literature in the various domains of education, social sciences, health, psychology, the arts and dance. Databases consulted were: ERIC, PDC, ASSIA, BHI, BEI, Psyclit, Dance on Disc, Art Abstracts, Web of Knowledge and IBSS. Search terms were selected in terms of the working title of the project:

- Dance movement therapy
- Dance movement therapy groups
- Dance movement therapy with dancers
- Dance movement therapy in higher education
- Dance movement therapy and creativity
- Dance movement therapy and choreography
- Dance movement therapy and performance.

The connections being researched yielded very few studies, so I substituted arts therapies, group therapy and experiential group therapy for dance movement therapy in

order to find out if there was any relevant literature in related disciplines. This produced a few significant as well as many irrelevant texts.

As I began to synthesise the findings, I researched the emerging concepts, using the same databases. This time the search terms were much more effective in producing relevant texts from DMT and related disciplines. Search terms used were:

- Imaginative play
- DMT and play
- Dance and play
- Movement and imaginative play
- DMT and movement metaphors
- Dance and movement metaphors
- DMT and improvisation
- Dance and improvisation
- DMT and Authentic Movement
- Dance and Authentic Movement
- DMT and playfulness
- Dance and playfulness
- DMT and relationship
- Dance and relationship
- DMT and self-confidence
- Dance and self-confidence
- Humanistic DMT
- Person-centred DMT
- Unconditional positive regard (UPR) and DMT
- Therapist involvement and DMT
- Dance and UPR
- Trust and safety in DMT
- Trust and safety in dance
- Dance and assessment.

Relevant research and/or contacts were discovered at the following conferences:

- Dance, Culture and Art-Making Behaviour, 30th Annual Conference on Research in Dance, November 1997, Tucson, Arizona, USA
- International Conference on Dance Therapy, May 1998, Ghent, Belgium

- The Art of the Moment, Looking at Dance Performance From Inside Out, 31st Annual Conference on Research in Dance, November 1998, Columbus, Ohio, USA
- Between Nature, Explorations in Ecology and Performance, July 2000, Lancaster, UK
- Evidence and Practice, 7th Annual Counselling Research Conference, May 2001, Bristol, UK
- 1st Art Therapy World Congress, March–April 2003, Budapest, Hungary.

In the literature accessed, I refined the focus by evaluating their relevance to some critical questions arising in the inquiry. I wanted to find out if anything had been discovered about the difficulties as well as the benefits of DMT. In addition, I wanted to know if any research pointed to potential tensions between DMT and dance training as well as to potential relationship. I was interested to see if any research had been done on the dilemmas surrounding the practice of DMT in dance education, questioning the ethics of using DMT with student dancers. This critical angle was particularly motivated by C3's experience.

In approaching the relevant research and literature, evaluation of its validity gives a critical edge to the review (Black, 1993). In the case of qualitative studies this would be indicated by the quality of reflexivity (Steier, 1991); in positivistic or pluralistic studies claiming causality, it would be indicated by the researcher's ability to account for other possible causes (Black, 1993). In terms of both relevance to the inquiry and differentiating the inquiry, similarities and differences in questions and findings are also highlighted.

## **2.2 Organisation of the review**

The sections of the literature review, which synthesise the combined literature searches and which I judge to be useful in presenting the research terrain, are:

1. DMT, self-awareness and creativity (finding and focus).
2. Group DMT, self-awareness and awareness of others (finding).
3. Ethos of humanistic DMT compared to ethos of choreography and performance (focus).
4. Experiential DMT and dance in higher education (focus).
5. Spontaneous movement and the development of playfulness in DMT (finding).

6. Play and the development of self-awareness, self-confidence and relationship in DMT (finding).
7. Humanistic person-centred practice, UPR, witnessing and therapist involvement in relation to trust, safety and development of self-confidence (finding).
8. Vulnerability in DMT with reference to self-exposure, external judgment and absence of safety (finding).
9. Playfulness, self-confidence and relationship connected to choreography and performance (finding).

Due to the scarcity of research in the discipline of DMT, relevant research from other fields, such as Art Therapy, is also discussed. Practice-based literature, not essentially research, has also been included on the basis of relevance to the findings. Seminal texts in the fields of psychotherapy and arts therapies are present as they supply a background of established core theories, which bear relevance to the study.

### **2.3 DMT, self-awareness and creativity**

The only research I am aware of which focuses specifically on the relationship between self-awareness and creativity is to be found in the discipline of Art Therapy. This is discussed below. However, in DMT several studies have been undertaken which clearly propose a relationship between DMT and self-awareness, DMT and creativity, and DMT and creative life-change. These studies will be reviewed first and their relevance to this study highlighted.

Payne's (1996, 2001) research looks at DMT and practice rather than DMT and creativity, but the process findings are relevant here. The data for the research correspond to this research data in that both studies focus on perceptions of a DMT group. Payne shows how metaphor was used to explore feelings in relationship and argues that identification and expression of feelings, particularly anger, resulted in development of intimacy; self-awareness through DMT leading to relationship.

Payne's research population was different to mine. As in Gilroy's (1989, 1992) study, a mature group of professional people were interviewed. Reflection on therapeutic process might be expected to reflect this maturity, particularly in a group who had chosen the profession of art therapist (in Gilroy's study) or dance movement therapist (Payne's study). In addition, Payne's longitudinal study shows the development of experience and reflection over a period of three years. Thus, the



resulting in-depth, reflexive interpretation of DMT experience might be considered as a particularly significant contribution to analysis of DMT process.

The validity of Payne's findings lies in (a) a carefully constructed collaborative consultation process and (b) evidence of reflexivity in interpretation. Through collaborative interviews, participants shared with the researcher their reflexive processes over time. The researcher endeavoured to include their interpretations in the final write-up. Thematic analysis of group process is discussed using a developmental model of group formation and disintegration (Payne, 2001) and other interpretations are acknowledged. Self-awareness was not only attributed by participants to DMT, but also to the collaboration process.

Meekums' (1998, 2000) research was designed as a multiple case study, intended to consider how a programme of creative arts therapies could aid the recovery process for women survivors of child sexual abuse. The creative model for recovery from child sexual abuse trauma which develops out of analysis of participants' perceptions of experience of creative arts therapies is described as follows: *striving*: struggling to survive, burial, dilemma of embodiment; *incubation*: letting go into the art form, unearthing, facing the reality, speaking the unspeakable; *illumination*: gaining a new perspective; and *evaluation*: laying the abuse to rest, gaining temporal and spatial distance (Meekums, 2000, p. 80–110). This model might be seen to reflect the concept of accessing different modes of awareness in therapeutic journeying (Houston, 1987). The identification of creative processes at play in DMT is significant for this study. Incubation involving spontaneity and release, illumination involving surprise in what is created, and metaphor, as creative surprise, are particularly relevant. If creative process is inherent to DMT, a potential link with creative process in dance is suggested.

Methodologically, Meekums' study is different to this one, in its use of triangulation to confirm validity. Pluralistic or integrative methodologies (Braud, 1998) as evidenced here would seem to combine respect for participant perception with robust external querying of researcher bias. Criticism of the inquiry (acknowledged by Meekums) might focus on the absence of interviews with those who left the programme. Nevertheless, evidence of the difficulties as well as the rewards of DMT for this client group is discussed. I will refer to this in Section 2.10.

Another recent research project (Mills and Daniluk, 2002) offers findings that emphasise creativity in DMT. Validity is constructed through a reflexive,

phenomenological, co-operative inquiry scrutinising in-depth interviews with six women survivors of child sexual abuse. The findings are interpreted in terms of:

1. Sense of spontaneity
2. Permission to play
3. Struggle
4. Freedom
5. Intimate connection
6. Bodily reconnection.

Mills and Daniluk's findings are remarkably similar to the findings of this study, with emphasis upon the creative components of spontaneity, freedom and play present in DMT. Having fun, playing, relaxing and moving together seems to have facilitated group trust and spontaneity simultaneously. Achieving spontaneous movement seems to have given the women a sense of freedom to explore their internal worlds through reconnection with their bodies and release of emotion through their bodies.

DMT as development of a creative approach to life is given a high profile in the literature. It is argued that through encouragement of spontaneous flow of breath, movement, feeling and image, movement-based expressive arts therapies facilitate the birth of fresh possibilities (Halprin, 2003). By inhabiting these aspects of being in the moment, and engaging with them, allowing them expression, it is argued that a person can break free from established patterns of being and can awake to the possibilities of the moment (Halprin, 2003). The Gestalt approach to DMT with its emphasis on staying in the present moment may be seen as an essentially creative approach, focusing on emerging forms as they come into being through body movement, expressing them, playing with them, noticing them spontaneously change and grow (Halprin, 2003).

The argument that DMT facilitates creativity by encouraging free expression of body (Adler, 1972, 1996, 2000; Whitehouse, 1972; Chodorow, 1991; Payne, 1992; Stanton-Jones, 1992; Bartal and Ne'eman, 1993; Lewis, 1993; Levy, 1995; Meekums, 2002, Halprin, 2003) may be scrutinised by comparing it with other approaches to living. Traditions such as swaddling babies (Jackson, 2003) and footbinding (Pinkola Estes, 1992) might be associated with restraining the body's breath and stunting the body's growth. Such traditions might be considered to arise in cultures which aim to control feelings through repression of the body (Pinkola Estes, 1992), contrasting with cultures which aim to facilitate self-awareness through re-connection with the body

(Rogers, 1951; Maslow, 1968; May, 1975; Gendlin, 1981; Merry, 2000; Somers, 2000; Natiello, 2001; Pearmain, 2001; Mearns, 2003).

Swaddling and binding babies has the effect of total stillness, no movement, no crying. Jackson writes: ‘This contrived inertia delays infant development, especially the baby’s ability to communicate his needs and receive responses through his own efforts and cries’ (p. 17). This practice might be seen as an extreme example of a process of training a child to ignore needs and feelings (Rogers, 1951; Maslow, 1968; May, 1975), creating a ‘false self’ (Winnicott, 1985). In this instance, conflict might be created between self (Rogers, 1951, 1996) and family/society (Winnicott, 1985). Such conflict might conceivably lead to dis-ease and ill-health. McDougall (1991) writes of theatres of the body, arguing through case examples that un-lived and banished emotional pain will find a way to express itself through bodily-felt pain. With reference to these examples and arguments, spontaneous expression and release of feelings through the body in DMT might be described as personally creative.

As indicated in the Introduction, Stanton-Jones (1992) has outlined five theoretical principles underlying DMT, which may be summarised as follows:

1. Body–mind interaction
2. Movement as reflection of personality
3. Centrality of therapeutic relationship
4. Movement as dream evidencing unconscious processes
5. Therapeutic quality of being creative in spontaneous movement.

Of these five, body–mind interaction, movement as dream and movement as creativity are particularly relevant to this discussion of self-awareness and creativity. A central tool in DMT is the movement metaphor (Meekums, 2002), which has been considered as creative by many practitioners and theorists (Holden, 1990; Stanton-Jones, 1992; Meekums, 1998, 2002; Halprin, 2003). Halprin (2003) shows through numerous case examples how metaphor can invite the participant into a new land, letting her/him see things s/he has never seen before. Metaphor, considered as a bridge between waking and dreaming (Schmais, 1985; Cox and Theilgaard, 1987; Siegelman, 1990; Rogers, 1993; Winterson, 1996; Dwivedi, 1997), becomes a way of gaining new awareness, ‘bypassing defences’ (Gorelick, 1989, p. 152) and ‘touching the depths without stirring the surface’ (Cox and Theilgaard, 1987, p. xiii). It can provide clarity when thoughts are confused and a safe hiding place when feelings are yet too fragile for intellectual analysis (Gorelick, 1989). Metaphor has been considered as able to contain

the complexity and the depth as well as the polarities of human experience (Cox and Theilgaard, 1987). Shuttleworth (1985) argues for the self-sufficiency of metaphor, giving examples of creative enlightenment and growth, suddenly blighted by inviting the rational mind in too early. Mills and Daniluk (2002) provide research evidence for the value of metaphoric engagement without verbal processing as a safe and gentle way of accessing painful feelings. Cattanach (1995) refers to the safety created by 'aesthetic distance' in drama and play therapy with children. Self-sufficiency is also present in the concept of metaphor as a unique vehicle for expression of essence, defying translation in analytic terms (Shuttleworth, 1985). However, whilst connectedness to self and others through symbolic experience may be very powerful, inspirational and spiritual (Adler, 2000), connectedness through prosaic analysis of metaphor may also fulfil the need of the rational mind to understand (Stanton-Jones, 1992).

Metaphor in DMT has been found to facilitate identification and expression of feelings (Adler, 1972; Schmais, 1985; Chodorow, 1991; Stanton-Jones, 1992; Lewis, 1993; Halprin, 2003). It has also been associated with uncovering human connection with the transpersonal (Whitehouse, 1958a, 1978; Chodorow, 1991; Bartal and Ne'eman, 1993; Lewis, 1993; Adler, 1996). Exploration of feelings through metaphor has been considered as a creative opportunity for authentic expression of self, unlimited by intellect and reason (Cooper, 2001; Meekums, 2002; Halprin, 2003).

Creation or re-creation of self may be seen to happen freely as a mover embodies the metaphors, eternally giving birth to new metaphors. The concept of bringing something to its fullness so that evolution into new form (metamorphosis) may occur is constantly being demonstrated in the natural world. The cycle of growth and decay (e.g. seed, shoot, flower, fruit, seed) shows how things need to reach a crescendo of life in order to burst into a new form. If decay happens prematurely, the form atrophies rather than developing into something capable of further transformation. By giving birth to metaphors through movement, a person can inhabit them and let them evolve through a creative process of active participation (Chodorow, 1991).

Metaphor is present in therapies other than DMT. Cox and Theilgaard (1987) present a model, which they call 'The Aeolian Mode', in which metaphor also has a central role. They use the word 'poiesis' to describe a process in which metaphor calls 'something into existence that was not there before' (p. 23). By waiting for images to surface in awareness, whilst attending to the whole being of the other, the therapist aims to catch a hidden quality of the other's experience. The model emphasises:

1. Being in the moment with imagination.
2. Developing awareness of 'aesthetic imperatives' as 'patterns which connect'.
3. Sensitisation to 'points of urgency', or moments of relationship between therapist and other when the 'mutative metaphors' may enter the other's mind and be transformational without having to face rejection by the rational mind.

There are evidently similarities between the model of The Aeolian Mode and DMT. Both are sensitive to the potential of metaphor and both are concerned with facilitating its emergence. Both are therefore involved with creative process: the giving birth to images out of a void.

Freud's theory of creativity (1908) raises questions about similarities and differences between therapy and art. Cox and Theilgaard's (1987) proposition that the communication of metaphor can enter the mind without encountering rational 'defences' might be aligned with the Freudian concept of art as sublimation of 'id' impulses, which are too frightening for the 'ego' ('consciousness') to face. If DMT calls metaphors into existence and leaves them at subliminal level, it might be considered similar to art-making. But if it calls metaphors into existence and then encourages people to notice how they are feeling, a therapeutic process of self-awareness may be seen to exist. In addition, some models of DMT encourage connection between metaphor and personal experience, setting in motion a process of linkage between metaphoric and analytic modes of perception (Meekums, 2002). There is clinical and research evidence that DMT can work in different ways, according to the receptivity of the rational mind, which is enhanced by self-acceptance and self-confidence (Mills and Daniluk, 2002). If someone does not wish to explore the meaning of metaphor because they feel too fragile emotionally, then therapist insistence on exploration of meaning would be inappropriate and unethical. In this instance explorations in DMT could, as in The Aeolian Mode, 'reach the depths while the surface remains intact' (p. 33).

DMT as potentially creative in the life of the individual must also be balanced by consideration of DMT as potentially destructive. However I found little research into the negative effects of DMT. Meekums (2000, 2002) and Mills and Daniluk (2002) have shown how working with the traumatised body may cause feelings to emerge, which are potentially overwhelming for the rational mind. Because metaphor can circumvent rational thought processes, it becomes a powerful saboteur of rational control and status quo. This may be viewed as creative, but it may also be viewed as destructive. Defences against feelings may be very necessary for the survival of many people. Feelings often

get in the way of personal and social action and practical effectiveness. Thus DMT may be accused of launching people into a world of feeling through body movement, for which they are unprepared and ill equipped. Vulnerability is discussed further in Section 2.10.

It may also be argued that the arts therapies, like verbal therapies, take people away from community and spiritual awareness in that they cause introversion: a wallowing in self. Immersion in DMT may be viewed as a fundamentally narcissistic activity, which disconnects the individual from others. It follows that DMT process may be seen as debilitating (being incapacitated by overwhelming feelings) and isolating (focusing on the personal rather than the communal or spiritual). If both these states were true then DMT could not be said to be helpful to the artist needing to express and communicate.

Relating Freud's theory of sublimation to DMT with dancers, it might be argued that distillation of metaphor could sabotage an artist's creative process. If art largely depends upon unconscious outpourings, then the exploration of feeling and/or meaning in metaphor would sabotage the 'defensive' ability to create explosions of colour and form. In addition, if overwhelming emotions surfaced alongside exploratory movement in DMT, then presumably the dancer would no longer be able to work. She would lose her sense of aesthetic purpose in which she is driven unconsciously to create a 'defence' against unpalatable emotions. She might lose purpose by experiencing her emotions.

Rosen's (1975) small-scale interview-analysis, comparing the creativity of artists who had been in therapy to that of artists who had not, is relevant here. Rosen considers self-confidence, positive attitude, personal motivation and self-expression to be the hallmarks of the artists who had been in therapy. However, she suggests that their work is 'erratic with vacillating styles' compared to the artists who had not been in therapy. Although she considers them to be equally talented, she suggests that the artists who had not been in therapy are more consistently 'highly creative'. Whilst assessment of artistic talent and quality may be criticised as subjective and invalid, the report on perceptions of art-making utilises artists' reflections, so has more credibility.

Gilroy (1989, 1992) discusses the perceptions of recently trained art therapists on the effects of their training upon their art. Using a sample of 214 questionnaires (59% of those sent out), Gilroy has been able to give an analysis of a broad range of experience. However, the questionnaire as a data collection tool may be criticised as researcher-led and non-interactive, therefore not allowing for clarification of response. Nevertheless, positive effects of art therapy training are identified as development of:

1. Spontaneity
2. An ability to wait and let things happen.

The main inhibitory effects of art therapy training are identified as:

1. Interference of self-consciousness in creative process (understanding underlying meaning stopping flow).
2. Confusion between personal images and images that communicated something beyond themselves.

Gilroy's study in particular shows how therapy may be perceived to have a significant impact upon art-making. Spontaneity and self-confidence perceived as facilitating, and self-consciousness perceived as inhibiting, are mirrored in this study. However, although these studies provide analysis of perceived effects of therapy on art-making, neither of them examine the process of therapy. This study fills that gap, offering the reader the opportunity to track perceptions of creativity back to therapeutic experience.

## **2.4 Group DMT, self-awareness and awareness of others**

In an inquiry into arts therapies with women survivors of child sexual abuse, Meekums (1998, 2000) suggests that the group was important in forging a new strong adult identity for individual members. The change from 'lone victim-child to collective powerful-adult' (Meekums, 1998, p. 348) seems have occurred as a result of being in a particular group context for arts therapies. Payne (1996, 2001), Meekums (1998) and Mills and Daniluk (2002) emphasise the significance of group safety for facilitation of therapeutic process. Meekums' participants named non-possessive warmth and non-judgmental witnessing and Payne's participants emphasised confidentiality and participation as significant in the creation of safety. Mills and Daniluk (2002) suggest that group unity was perceived as fostering synchronised movement, and that non-judgmental witnessing was considered to be important in dissipating self-consciousness and self-judgment. Meekums provides various policy and structural recommendations for the building of safety, including support systems, choice of participation, a 'bill of rights', circle dances, structured group discussion, confidentiality rules and private space, all of which are intended to contain the session, increase empowerment and foster group cohesion. Such recommendations express respect for participants as agents of their own lives (Rowan, 1995). They defend participants' internal life and give a

structure for physical and mental communication and connection. The groups in Meekums' research seem to have been safe containers for unspoken pain, witnessing the 'unearthing' (Meekums, 2000) of individual story. Anzieu's (1984) image of the group as mother to itself, holding and containing vulnerability, might be applied here. Trust in the group was perceived as essential for the creative process of recovery to occur. Safety in Meekums' research is considered again in Section 2.10 with reference to witnessing.

Relationship building through metaphor has been considered in the literature. In verbal therapy as well as arts therapies, metaphor has been considered as the substance of intimate relationship (Sledge, 1977; Ettin, 1985; Winnicott, 1985; Lewis, 1993; Glouberman, 1995; Thorpe, 2001). Mills and Daniluk's (2002) research findings highlight group dance as significant in developing relationships. Schmais (1985) discusses the process of symbolisation in a DMT group:

Patients living in a world of personal chaos and terror find order and meaning in shared symbolic expression. Subsumed by the symbolic significance of the dance, they become part of an event that transcends the self (p. 33).

Schmais seems to suggest that there is an organising principle at work in the process of symbolisation, akin to Ehrenzweig's (1967) concept of 'the hidden order of art'. Somehow art has the capacity to transform chaos into order: 'the pattern that connects' (Cox and Theilgaard, 1987). I think Schmais is also proposing that sharing of images in DMT can bring people in a group into depth-relationship through an experience that takes them beyond the personal into the realms of the transpersonal (Payne, 2003).

Could it be that co-creation of symbolic movement awakens the individual's life energy, termed 'vitalisation' (Schmais, 1985), by facilitating a 'letting go' of internal insecurity and deliberation through identification with the group and with the universal feelings being expressed in the symbol? If so, making symbolic dance in a group allows individuals to feel their strength and creativity rather than their weakness and passivity. Connection through body, movement and imagination can be perceived as more satisfying than connection through talk because it is more tangible. Community experience of singing and dancing can give a visceral sense of belonging (O'Donohue, 1998). Yalom (1985) underlines the importance of the group in indicating that the individual does not suffer alone. Perhaps DMT and other arts therapies can deepen this



sense of belonging in a group because of their emphasis upon feeling and experiencing together through the art form.

A recent small-scale inquiry over three months (Ammon, 2003) into group DMT with ‘ten patients with archaic ego diseases’ (meaning people with personality disorders originating in childhood) used observation, video recordings, focused interviews with guiding questions and projective personality tests to inquire into ‘bodily and emotional expression, relationship to the group and ability to express feelings verbally’ (p. 293). The validity of the findings may be questioned in terms of the interference of ‘guiding questions’ in interview, and bias not being discussed. The allegiance to observational methods leaves little said about interpretation. In addition, some of the projective personality tests were not easy for the participants to do, so may be considered inappropriate. Nevertheless, Ammon draws the following conclusions on physical, emotional and relational dimensions of experience:

### *1. Bodily and emotional experience*

Patients changed from experiencing almost nothing to experiencing themselves better. Five patients moved from feeling stiff, immobile and confined to feeling more free, flexible, lighter and more powerful. In terms of feelings:

Considerably more patients spoke of their feelings in a more differentiated and detailed manner: for example, feelings of love and warmth were uttered. They felt their anxiety more intensively and were able to experience aggressive feelings and sadness (p. 296).

### *2. Relationship*

In relation to the group, it was discovered that there was a significant change from no contact to feelings of connection, warmth, sympathy, security, comfort and shelter. Ammon writes ‘All in all, the importance of the contact to individual patients had increased. In dancing the group was sensed more strongly’ (p. 295–296). Ammon reports an almost dramatic change experienced in the relationship to others. Shared movements instilling a sense of self in relationship seem to have begun a process of bonding and connection enjoyed and valued by nine out of ten patients. In finding that body awareness and emotional awareness occurred simultaneously, and that enhanced self-expressive ability together with shared movement developed a sense of connection to the group, Ammon presents evidence of two underlying principles of DMT (Schmais, 1985, Schmais and White, 1986):

1. The connection between physical and emotional expression.
2. The fostering of relationship through movement interaction.

Movement effects of DMT correlated with psychological states have been researched quantitatively since the 1950s, particularly in the USA. Higgins (1993) explains the development of a movement-assessment scale to chart and monitor the movement of people with schizophrenia. Such assessment models fit snugly with a scientific framework by claiming visible evidence that creative change has occurred. I would argue that such modes of assessment limit and distort complex subjective movement and that internally lived experience can only be accessed by asking participants about their experience. Payne (1992) argues that more qualitative research, which 'takes into account the interactive nature of human beings' (p. 15), is necessary in order to get inside the experience of DMT and to begin to understand the delicate and subtle nature of healing processes.

The tension between personal process and group process is not explored in Ammon's study. Payne (1996), however, reports how trainee dance movement therapists resented the call of group process, perceiving it as interference in their personal process. Self-awareness and awareness of others were at odds much of the time. The findings of this research both complement and contradict this finding. Whilst immersion in personal process did, at times, take people away from group process and awareness of others, discovery of personal needs/states of mind fed back into the group process in the form of personal authenticity and self-assertion, which contributed to the development communication and awareness amongst group members.

## **2.5 Ethos of humanistic DMT compared to ethos of choreography and performance**

Technique in dance does not come without application. Dancers are required to learn and practise forms of movement, just as other artists learn mastery of their craft. There is an expectation in dance performance and choreography training that the student will take on board received wisdom and will learn to copy movement with dexterity, perfection and finesse (Whittock, 1996). The faultless execution of taught form is the mark of a competent dancer. Whilst Rudolf Laban (1978) pioneered creative, self-expressive dance in the 1940s, in the past 25 years there has been less focus on self-expressive dance and a re-assertion of technique and performance in dance education, in

order to find a balance between self-expression and mastery of movement (Adshead, 1980).

The external mirror held up in performance and choreography training is changed for an internal mirror in humanistic DMT. Now the dancer is encouraged to forget how she looks externally and she is asked to move how she feels inside (Halprin, 2003). The processes are diametrically opposed and there may therefore be strongly felt tension in the body of the dancer who experiences DMT for the first time. Trusting the body to go its own way and accessing feelings from such untutored movement may feel alienating to the dancer who has been trained to ignore body pain and told to leave her feelings at the door (Preston-Dunlop, 1998).

The permission to be who you are in movement (without the pressure to construct a product in a given amount of time) in humanistic DMT creates a very different culture to that of established frameworks for choreography and performance training. These frameworks generally put pressure upon students to come up with a finished product showing signs of learnt technique in a limited time (Whittock, 1996). In such a context there is little time for sensing, feeling, imagining or exploring one's inner landscape in relation to others. Such processes might be considered to be self-indulgent and narcissistic (Press, 1997) with little relevance for choreography.

However, many contemporary theorists and practitioners argue for balance in choreography and performance between externally focused technique and organic process which honours the internal experience of the dancer and welcomes her active response to choreographic ideas (Whitehouse, 1958b; Tufnell and Crickmay, 1990; Marranca and Dasgupta, 1999; Cottam and Sager, 2002; Koltai, 2002). The International Conference on Art and Nature at Lancaster University in 2000 brought together hundreds of artists interested in the connection between inner and outer landscapes, sensation, emotion and art. The work of Michael Clark, DV8, Lea Anderson and Rachel Kaplan shows evidence of the conscious use of personal material transmuted into symbolic form. Interviews that I conducted with Anna Halprin, Rachel Kaplan and Lea Anderson (Appendix 4) indicate that these choreographers welcome the resources, which come from the internal experience and engagement of the dancer in the dance (Halprin, 1997; Kaplan, 1997; Anderson, 1998). Kaplan (1997) states:

There is a lot of silence about one's life, it's not polite to talk about ugly things; it's against the rules; there's so much propriety. But I don't really play it that way. I'm interested in what's true for people, what is really happening. There is so much in language and

communication that is about dissembling and pretending ... and I'm interested in intimacy ultimately. The loving and the hating in that final piece shows so much violence and territory, but also a huge longing for connection, that just doesn't get talked about a whole lot but we're all hungry for it, for contact, so hungry for love, so hungry for a relationship, so hungry to feel part of something ... so I try to get to that place in people where their real experiences and their real feelings are.

Dance training institutions such as Dartington College of the Arts, The School for New Dance Development, Amsterdam and Arnhem Institute for the Arts have programmes of study that encourage the dancer to explore personal material as a resource for choreography and performance. In the USA I am aware of two research projects (Hawkins, 1991; Green, 1996) concerned with use of self in choreography. Hawkins conducted a small-scale practical study in which exploratory improvisation in a non-judgmental environment was used as a resource for choreography. Whilst this study is not rigorously constructed and consists of a few verbatim testimonies of experience, it nevertheless suggests that several students were able to allow choreographic material to emerge from an internal focus on sensation, feeling and image. Green researches the perceived effects of a course entitled 'Somatics and Creativity'. Critical reflexivity on researcher bias would enhance this study. However, from an acknowledged postmodern perspective, it is claimed that development of body consciousness enabled students to peel off layers of self, which they felt had been foisted on them by their culture and that this new political awareness provided thematic material for choreography.

Despite the above examples of integration between internal and external focus in dance research and choreography the question remains: How can choreography and performance, which evolves through the crafting of movement with aesthetic awareness and through rehearsal, be connected to DMT, which is concerned with spontaneous, personally congruent movement? The differences between dance and DMT are well documented (Schmais and White, 1986; Payne, 1990; Stanton-Jones, 1992), specifically focusing on the different intentions of the two uses of dance. As Payne (1990) has indicated, DMT uses movement for discovering more about internal feelings and images, whilst dance uses movement to create aesthetically pleasing dynamics. Schmais and White (1986) consider the difference in terms of rehearsal, structure and spontaneity.

The process of transforming the personal into the universal has been analysed by many writers. Langer (1953) viewed the symbolisation process in dance as a process in which the personal was transcended and personal feelings became *Scheingefuhle* or the appearance of feeling. Kaplan (1997) speaks of a process of objectification of experience through dance. Selecting and playing with images, she is able to step in and out of them to discover if they capture and convey original experience. This aesthetic process of choosing symbolic movement in dance is different from the birthing of symbolic movement in DMT and points to an essential difference in the two disciplines. DMT is intended as exploration of feeling, whilst dance is a crystallisation and synthesis of experience (Langer, 1953). Whilst there may be cross-fertilisation between the two disciplines of dance and DMT (for example, the use of symbolisation or metaphor in DMT, the use of personal experience in dance) they remain fundamentally different in intention. DMT is concerned with creation of movement metaphor in order to access personal feelings and themes (Payne, 1990; Stanton-Jones, 1992; Levy, 1995; Meekums, 1998, 2002), whilst dance is generally concerned with the manipulation of movement metaphor in order to represent feelings and communicate concepts (Blom and Chaplin, 1989).

Nevertheless moments of connection between the two disciplines may be perceived. Schmais (1985) has suggested that symbolisation in DMT is an aesthetic process. This might be linked with the concept of 'aesthetic imperatives' in The Aeolian Mode (Cox and Theilgaard, 1987). Based on the premise that the structure and control involved in making the symbolic movement renders scary internal thoughts and feelings safe, Schmais (1985) has argued further that creation of symbol is vital in the healing process of DMT.

Within the creation and performance of dance might there be times when the DMT process could be helpful to the aesthetic process? Theories of creative process in art have suggested interplay between intentional forming and relaxation (Gordon, 1975; Koestler, 1989; Meekums, 1993). When the artist is focused on the aesthetic outcome, she controls her medium of expression. When she lets her mind wander without aesthetic purpose, she gives up this control. In such a state of mind, inspiration may occur, which may be utilised as a resource by the rational mind. DMT has been compared to Jung's (1990) concept of active imagination (Chodorow, 1991). If so, then DMT could replicate the relaxed state of mind suggested by creative process theory, and therefore become part of the artist's creative process.

## 2.6 Experiential DMT and dance in higher education

Adshead (1980) has been highly influential in defining the identity of dance education over the past 20 years. Her definitions of choreography, performance and appreciation emphasise the development of aesthetically intelligent critical thinking, which contrasted with the self-expressive focus of Laban's modern educational dance (1978). The Gulbenkian Report, 'Arts in Schools', has also maintained creativity in the arts should be balanced with deepening children's knowledge and judgment of the arts (Robinson, 1994). The balance between expression and appreciation continues to be upheld in arts education. Abbs (1987, 1989a, 1989b) has endeavoured to promote sensuous understanding through the arts as well as critical appreciation of the arts through knowledge of the cultural traditions and conventions that inform them.

Whittock (1996) has delineated the differences, as he perceives them, between dance training and dance education in Britain. He contends that whilst training develops mastery of form through copying, education must develop creativity through internalisation, evaluation and critical analysis of movement. He argues that instruction breeds obedience, conformity and self-doubt, and that education should encourage self-referenced and divergent thinking, self-confidence and the challenging of tradition. Of university ethos and practice he writes: 'Dogmas and narrow-mindedness, inertia and conformity, can flourish anywhere. But at least universities are, by their aims, committed to openness, enquiry and innovation' (p. 589). Davenport (1994a, 1994b) has advocated a similar ethos for dance education in colleges and universities in the USA. She raises the issue of self-reflection as a learning medium in dance, stating:

In the dance classroom, the physical and psychological sense of self is the medium through which movement fundamentally evolves. The dance studio supports the vulnerability of the student by thriving on individual differences, encouraging open communication, and mandating creative expression (p. 82).

Hankin (1997) recommends student-centred teaching strategies in the technique class in order to facilitate students' grasp of concepts and subsequent creative use of concepts. With reference to choreography, Bloomfield (1983) draws attention to the connection between creative mind and creative body:

It is the opportunity for experiment and experience which allows the development of this gift (the ability to unify idea and form) to seek and find expression, for it is my belief that although the elements of choreographic form may be studied and practised they can become

little more than exercises for the person devoid of creative initiative (p. 104).

Hankin provides a rationale for the development of body and mind in dance in higher education via internal experiencing and external appraisal.

Buckroyd (2000) offers a developmental perspective on dance training and dance education, based on five years' experience as a counsellor at the London School of Contemporary Dance. With particular reference to dance schools, she makes a case for the emotional welfare of young dancers. She describes how a dancer lacking a sense of her own power and worth uses dance to escape from life through narcissistic focus on perfect body form and technique, an introversion which is clearly evident in the absence of expression in the dance. Buckroyd's rationale for the validation of the self in dance education and training is primarily based on compassion for the whole individual, but her descriptions of dancers who lack an internal locus of evaluation are highly relevant to the evaluation of creativity in dance. She suggests that dancers who work automatically, without internal experiencing and evaluation are not capable of creative acts.

Buckroyd maintains that sense of self is fused with body image in young dancers, so that being seen and criticised is experienced intensely. As a consequence of this the viewer and critic have the power to enhance self-esteem or crush it. Buckroyd argues that as the adolescent is in the process of separating from family and developing as an independent person, dance schools are in *loco parentis* and therefore have a responsibility to facilitate the separation process. She suggests that this can be done through validation of the student's sense of self, by affirming her body, her emotions, her ability to think creatively, and her ability to interact with others. Buckroyd recommends the use of an interactive group model in dance teaching on the basis that the ability to form peer relationships is developmentally imperative (identification with peer group being a necessary milestone in adolescence to facilitate the separation process) and fosters creativity (collaboration versus competition, interconnection of a variety of creative ideas versus isolation and rivalry).

Davenport (1994a, 1994b) suggests that most young dancers resist the changes they are asked to embrace because they impact upon their personal lives. She argues that not only do dance teachers have the responsibility to teach movement in terms of acceptance of self and others and the spontaneous integration of body and mind, but also the responsibility to offer emotional support and careers advice to students.

In order to raise the profile of psychological issues in dance, Brinson (1993) emphasises the creation of a culture of the mind and a culture of the emotions to provide balance with the culture of the body prevalent in dance training. He states that dance provides a unique resource for the combined education of the body, the emotions and the intellect. He describes dancers as 'prophets of a different future and better humanity in which body, mind and emotions equally are balanced and valued' (p. 52)

The national inquiry into dancers' health and injury (Brinson and Dick, 1996) recommends that dancers should know how to relax, pace themselves and combat staleness, and that dancers' psychological needs should always be considered alongside their physical ones. Sports psychology, which employs cognitive behavioural techniques, target setting and visualisation, is now being used in dance to deal with performance anxiety, recovery from injury, concentration and motivation (Horosco, 1982a, 1982b, 1982c, 1982d; Taylor and Taylor, 1989; Schnitt, 1990; Shipkowski, 1991; Hausstock, 1993). Dance Science also draws from areas such as kinesiology, biomechanics, exercise physiology, nutrition and psychology (Dunn, 1990; Plastino, 1990). An interest in the value of body therapies with their emphasis on body mind interaction has been present in dance for some time. In 1980 and in 1983 *Dance Magazine* ran features on a variety of body therapies (Myers, 1980, 1983) and argued for their inclusion in dance training, on the grounds that they could free the body and mind from old, stale habits of movement and make way for creativity in dance. More recently, *Contact Quarterly* has focused on the relevance of Authentic Movement for contact improvisation, choreography and performance (Cottam and Sager, 2002; Koltai, 2002).

Finburgh (1989) recommends the development of emotional intelligence and communication skills in dancers in order to enhance expressive ability and projection of emotion. She suggests that through improvisation in pairs and in groups focusing on relationship, the dancer can practise responding and communicating. She writes:

Improvisations allowing dancers to express intention incorporate the use of mind, energy, emotions and the body within a communicative whole. They reduce the self-critical anxiety which leads to wooden performances (p. 861).

Potter (1992) recommends more involvement of mind, voice and imagination in dancer training. She believes that self-acceptance and acceptance of others leads to awareness of self and others, which in turn reduces injury and facilitates fluid interaction with other dancers. In addition she advocates that more time for relaxation is



given to dancers; time to play and explore ideas, to sift through material, to make choices, to work, re-work and evaluate (p. 61).

Cardinal and Hilsendager (1995) did a study to determine the extent to which dance wellness-related components had been included in higher education dance programmes in the USA. Results show that 57.1% of responding schools offered dance wellness programmes. They identify a lack of teacher training as a significant factor in the absence of dance wellness programmes. They also suggest that the more structural aspects of dance wellness (i.e. anatomy, kinesiology, biomechanics and dance injuries) rated higher in accreditation requirement status than the less structural aspects (i.e. health, nutrition and psychology). Except for eating disorders, both services and departmental policies in areas relating to the psychological aspects of dance wellness were almost non-existent. It appears that there has been no research to date exploring the contribution that DMT (either as a clinical or experiential group) could make to dance wellness in higher education, or to the fostering of creativity in dance in higher education.

### *2.6.1 Experiential learning*

Experiential learning was pioneered by Heron (1971) and Kolb (1983). It aimed to free the mind of the individual to make sense of theory in terms of lived experience. It was the opposite of didactic methods of teaching and learning, giving responsibility for learning to the learner but providing a context in which theoretical concepts could be lived out, enacted, experienced. It aimed to develop the whole person (Heron, 1996) and to strengthen the individual's ability to express and come to terms with the strong feelings created by conflict and confrontation with the values and attitudes of others. This in turn would enable the person to use their own and others' feelings, attitudes and values as a resource in addressing human problems.

Heron (1996a) has illustrated how he used experiential group work to explore the concept of holistic learning. His rationale for the experiential group was that this concept could only be appreciated and integrated if the group was able to see, feel and experience emotions, images and spiritual consciousness for itself. Experiential learning has been used in nurse training (Titchen, 2000), social work training (Beedell, 1996; Berger, 1996; Moore 1998) and in therapy training (Payne, 1999). The value of the experiential group in social work training is discussed by Berger (1996), who identifies the need for empirically based guidelines for appropriate and creative use of experiential

groups. He suggests a gradual change from didactic teaching methodologies towards experiential methodologies as students gain in knowledge and confidence. An integrative, methodological approach is also recommended by Feiner (1998) in relation to graduate training in group therapy.

Payne (1996, 1999) evaluates the impact of experiential learning through DMT on recently qualified dance movement therapists and concludes that whilst participation facilitated greater self-awareness, it was not perceived as contributing to enhanced professional practice. She suggests a role for creative methodologies in exploring the value of such groups. In a related study, Izzard and Wheeler (1995) examine the development of self-awareness in trainee counsellors. They use the traditional methodology of a control group and questionnaires based on Yalom's (1985) list of therapeutic factors. Whilst it was recorded that self-awareness increased more amongst participants in the experiential group, reflection on how greater self-awareness had evolved was missing. In their conclusion, Izzard and Wheeler (1995, p. 10) state: 'Creative ideas for methodological strategies to research into self-awareness in training counsellors need to be generated so that it can be examined from different angles'.

Experiential groups in undergraduate arts education are in their infancy. To my knowledge no other research in this area exists. Whilst experiential arts therapies groups are an established component of arts therapies training, just as the personal development group is usually a requirement of counselling and psychotherapy training programmes, on the basis that it enhances professional ability (Payne, 2001), the experiential component of an undergraduate arts degree, if it exists, needs a different rationale. The educational rationale for experiential DMT must refer to educational aims such as understanding concepts. Yet, in addition, experiential groups may have therapeutic effects. Perhaps experiential work needs to acknowledge the overlap between therapeutic and educational aims more clearly. If an experiential group becomes an educational and a therapy group, boundaries, contracts and responsibilities need to be clearly identified and put in place (Payne, 2001). Ethical concerns about experiential work in therapy training have been well documented (for example, Merta and Sisson, 1991), confidentiality and the dual role of the facilitator being two key issues. Ethical issues have been raised within social work training (Ephross, 1999) and general education (Gitterman, 1995) on the grounds of invasion of students' privacy, as well as reservations concerning the effectiveness of experiential participation in achieving academic goals (Berger, 1996). In this study, the process of taking the experiential DMT

group to the Research Ethics Committee for the purpose of approval of research proposal (Appendix 5) helped the researcher/facilitator (referred to as the therapist) to assess risk to participants and to clarify safety nets for students who were in need of emotional support. Safety nets in relation to therapeutic and research processes are discussed in Chapter 3.

Taylor (1991) suggests some boundaries for undergraduate therapy training. Emphasis is placed on the recognition of the developmental stage of late adolescence/young adulthood, noting that it might be marked by enormous dramatic and intense change (p. 45). Consequently, the recommendation is made that the experience of therapy training should correspond to developmental stage. In particular, putting young people in the position of therapist to others is considered to be inappropriate, because they are still in the process of forming and shaping their own personalities. Assessment of vulnerability corresponds to Buckroyd's (2000) developmental concerns for young dancers in training and education. Such acknowledgement of vulnerability in an educational group places considerable responsibility on the facilitator of experiential work in DMT. How can an appropriate level of experiential work be guaranteed? The concept of following the client, present in person-centred work (Mearns, 1997), may offer guidance in this respect. Using this framework, it may be argued that if the therapist aims to let the participants engage with the medium of DMT in whatever way they feel comfortable, then potential therapist imposition of premature psychological movement is kept in check.

## **2.7 Spontaneous movement and the development of playfulness in DMT**

Garvey (1977) writes:

The kind of play, which most clearly reflects exuberance and high spirits, is based on the resource of motion. The running, jumping, skipping, shrieking and laughing of children at recess, or after school is joyous, free and almost contagious in its expression of well-being (p. 29).

Spontaneous movement and playfulness go hand in hand in childhood, but are often lost as the process of socialisation occurs. Growing up often means losing touch with spontaneous vitality as a child learns to conform to the culture into which s/he is born (Lee and Lopez, 1995). Early in a child's life, being playful is to find intrinsic

pleasure in movements for their own sake (Millar, 1976; Garvey, 1977): a relishing of sensory experience. Sometimes this pure joy of movement is enhanced in relationship. When someone joins in the movement, smiles and eye contact ensue and the pleasure becomes both intrinsic and shared (Stern, 1985).

Spontaneous movement as an aspect of DMT is highlighted by practitioners, researchers and theorists (Schmais, 1985; Schmais and White, 1986; Payne, 1990; Meekums, 2002; Mills and Daniluk, 2002). Mills and Daniluk (2002) identify that it is the 'sense of spontaneity', which is significant in their participants' journey of self-discovery. The women survivors of child sexual abuse in their study speak of 'rigid mental control blocking connection with their bodies and authentic emotions' and describe how moving spontaneously helped to let go of the mind's control. In moving spontaneously, their bodies and emotions are released and expression is encouraged.

It may therefore be argued that the ability to be playful depends upon the letting go of fixed, established patterns. For being playful means to experiment, to try out new things, to perceive things from different and unusual perspectives, and to do all this with a smile, enjoyment and receptivity (Garvey, 1977). It may also be argued that these aspects of playfulness may be developed in DMT through the body, on the basis that vitality (Schmais, 1985) reconnects a person to their creative, inquisitive, interactive template for relationship with the world (Piaget, 1951).

Spontaneous movement may also be termed 'improvisation' (Tufnell and Crickmay, 1990). There appears to be little research into the connection between dance improvisation and playfulness in choreography and performance, even though the rationale for improvisation in dance education and training is often the creation of fresh movements, which might be integrated into performance (Tufnell and Crickmay, 1990). As reviewed above, Hawkins' (1991) interviews with students on an experimental choreography programme suggests that some students gained new resources of movement and image by breaking free from traditional or taught forms, a finding replicated in this study.

How then does improvisation differ from DMT? I found no research comparing these two disciplines, although one of the students in this inquiry (who must therefore remain anonymous) made this the focus of her dissertation. She asked four students participating in both DMT and in improvisation to delineate the similarities and differences. Significant differences ascertained were:

1. Absence of choreographic agenda in DMT

3. Focus on feelings
4. Group environment
5. Talking together about the experience.

Similarity was found in the focus on spontaneity, expression and release of movement impulse, yet the absence of choreographic agenda and the permissive environment in DMT were considered to maximise this spontaneity.

## **2.8 Play and the development of self-awareness, self-confidence and relationship in DMT**

Piaget (1951) identifies different kinds of play according to developmental stage. According to Piaget, symbolic or make-believe play occurs between two and seven years, whilst play, controlled by collective discipline and rules, occurs between the ages of eight and eleven years. The type of play generally referred to in DMT is symbolic play (Payne, 1992), although the other type of play, referred to by Piaget, also appeared.

Freud (1908) viewed play, like art, as a process of sublimation of unconscious wishes, and suggested that conflicts from each developmental stage would be reflected in children's play. Play as subliminal is viewed as cathartic but disconnected from reality. Piaget (1951) concludes from his observations of children that symbolic play facilitates assimilation and consolidation of emotional experience, suggesting that through play children are able to absorb emotional experience into awareness. From a symbolic interactionist perspective (Blumer, 1969), play is a culturally embedded phenomenon in which the individual is able to express feeling about and make sense of a situation, free from the constraints of society or institution. It is conceivable, therefore, that play as a magical world of make-believe may separate the individual from reality, and in so doing free him/her to explore feelings and integrate them into awareness.

Self-awareness through play has been discussed in relation to Play Therapy. Axline (1964) has illustrated a play therapy process in which a small boy was able to express and explore his feelings symbolically. Cattanach (1995) writes:

Children playing in therapy create a symbolic or metaphoric world where the power to change or reconstruct events belongs to the children. In this play space the children make acts of representation through which they can interpret or re-interpret their own experiences by playing in imaginary worlds (p. 226).

Self-awareness may be seen to occur symbolically in play. Noticing and expressing feelings, which emerge during play, can reconnect the individual with physical and emotional needs, as well as with blocked emotion. In this way self-awareness gained through metaphor may help to promote self-assertion and self-confidence (Axline, 1964). Particularly in work with children, play is viewed as a safe, gentle way of both releasing and integrating emotion, giving the child the opportunity for both self-expression and self-control. In creating different scenarios, using different potential, the child is empowered to transcend the confinement, which may be present outside the playing space (Cattanach, 1995).

Conversely, involvement in the flow of play may lead to loss of self-awareness (Lee and Lopez, 1995). In letting go of social restraints and giving in to spontaneous action, awareness of self may recede, as rapture or another powerful emotion occurs. Such flow of action, which occurs in play, can have a contagious effect on groups. Lee and Lopez (1995), referring to the *talch'um*, a playful, community, mask dance from Korea, write of the possibility of collective flow in co-creation of playful movement.

Symbolic play and movement seem to combine in DMT, where the movement metaphor may be interpreted as containing deep personal and existential meaning for the participant (Meekums, 2002). Through participation in symbolic or playful movement a group may become bonded and cohesive (Schmais, 1985; Sandel, 1993; Mills and Daniluk, 2002).

## **2.9 Humanistic, person-centred practice, UPR, witnessing and therapist involvement in relation to trust, safety and development of self-confidence**

Humanistic psychology emphasises human creativity (Rowan, 1995). The humanistic view of human nature is a very positive one, grounded in a belief that every human baby has within the blueprint for growth into a life of creative community with others and with the transpersonal (Maslow, 1970, 1976). This view of human potential may be criticised as unrealistic, with little acknowledgement of the 'darker side' of human nature. Yet this hopeful impression of life is tempered by existentialism in the writings of some humanistic practitioners, such as May (1967), who claim that growth is not inevitable and that choice resides within the individual. Thus in humanistic psychology

creativity is seen to be innate to human life but it is still a choice, just as sterility and decay might be a choice.

Thus, humanistic and existential practice aims to revitalise (Moreno, 2003) and strengthen the will to make creative choices (Yalom, 1991). From a research base Rogers (1957) proposed six conditions for the facilitation of personality change. Within these, he emphasised the value of a relationship between therapist and client in which the therapist was congruent, empathic and non-judgmental (offering UPR). He maintained that in such an honest, warm, approving relationship a person could learn to trust his/her innate capacity to sense and respond to life in a way that would be beneficial to their own well-being, growth and creativity. The connection to an 'internal locus of evaluation' or sense of self as authority has been highlighted as an essential element in artistic creativity (e.g. Mackinnon, 1962; Gordon, 1975).

The person-centred approach continues to evolve with writers such as Natiello (2001) and Pearmain (2001) unfolding the depth dimensions of their work with clients. They and others are convinced of the value of the self-awareness and congruence of the therapist, the ability to be transparent and vulnerable, authentic and 'in-the-moment'. They describe how in letting themselves be how they are in the present in relationship with their clients, they have been able to connect with the depths of experience of their clients and that this has been transformational for both. They give case examples of feedback from clients who specify the genuineness of the therapist as the factor, which gave them the confidence to be whom they felt they were 'inside' and live creatively as a result.

This case study approach to researching the processes of humanistic therapy developed out of a research tradition begun by Rogers in the 1950s. Masson (1990) criticises this early research because of its reliance on identification of beneficial therapist qualities by independent observers. Later, Rogers and other humanistic practitioners, such as Truax and Carkhuff (1967) asked clients about the therapeutic process, which influenced the establishment and refinement of the necessary and sufficient conditions for personality change. More recently, qualitative methodologies, which plumb the reflexive resources of the client, have been developed in order to gain inside information (McLeod, 2001). IPR invites the immediate recall of the client in order to identify key moments of benefit and change in therapy, providing insight into the recipient's perception of therapeutic process. This method, as well as client narration

and storytelling, has been used in therapy research (Rennie, 1992, 1994) to analyse therapy from a client-based perspective.

Rodgers's (2002) analysis of interviews with nine ex-clients of a general public, voluntary sector, counselling service aims to 'tap client reflexivity' (p. 185). A form of grounded theory analysis is used to discover common themes and results are analysed in terms of the client as the agent of personal growth. Whilst this study may be considered to be limited by the small number of participants (nine), the restriction to a single setting and the lack of control over variables (such as counsellor's theoretical base), it nevertheless provides rich data, analysed through involvement, intuition, reflexivity, rigorous cross-checking of categories with data and organised using client words.

Rodgers's final categories of client 'therapeutic requirements' (p. 192) are:

1. Permission
2. Engagement
3. Transparency
4. Restructuring.

Permission may be correlated with UPR, but in addition to 'being heard and not judged' (p. 192) Rodgers picked up 'anonymity, dedicated time and space, and having confidence in the counsellor's ability' (p. 192). Engagement may be connected to UPR as well as to congruence, in that 'the person feels valued and understood as a unique individual and the counsellor is 'real' themselves, actively exploring things with the person in depth' (p. 192). Transparency in this instance refers to client congruence in the presence of UPR and empathy: 'the person feels able to voice things with a deep honesty, without any pretence or need to justify themselves' (p. 192) and they feel that the counsellor 'sees through them' (p. 192), acknowledging the person 'inside'. Finally the counsellor is perceived as helping to restructure perceptions and interpretations by 'offering an alternative perspective or a new framework of understanding, and by accompanying the person as they work through and let go of things, often at an emotional or experiential level' (p. 192).

Both the process of discovery and the findings of this study are similar to this research. Rodgers aimed to uncover clients' perceptions of therapeutic process, finding out what they needed from therapy, what they found most helpful, and how they felt it had affected their lives. I was also intent on discovering dancers' perceptions of DMT, as well as perceptions of effects upon personal growth and creativity. In exploring and analysing perceptions of process, I located an underlying stratum of analysis in which



students spontaneously reflected on how they felt the process had evolved. This led to the concepts of movement metaphor, play, acceptance and safety as facilitating components in DMT.

Rodgers's central conclusion is that the therapist is 'a tool that people use' (p. 192) and that therapy is concerned with the release of client resources, so that agency in self-recovery is reclaimed. The balancing qualities of malleability: 'moulding to the hand of the user' (p. 192) and core inner strength are suggested as optimum therapist qualities, in the dual purpose of meeting clients' therapeutic needs and containing their process.

The most recent review of research in client-centred psychotherapy (Bozarth *et al.*, 2001) concludes:

Research has supported the theory that a congruent therapist's experience of empathic understanding of the client's frame of reference and experience of unconditional positive regard are related to positive outcome.

Yet Bohart and Tallman (1999) and Rodgers (2002) prefer to re-frame therapeutic process in terms of client ability to use therapy and the therapist according to personal therapeutic need. According to these researchers, the development of internal locus of evaluation, self-trust, self-respect, self-approval, self-confidence and independence is in the hands of the client, served by the therapist. This constitutes an altered focus on practice, which honours much more the self-motivating forces latent in every client.

Trust and safety in terms of absence of power abuse in humanistic therapy may be challenged with reference to Masson (1990). He describes the work of Carl Rogers as a tyranny of benevolence and argues that Rogers's claim of relational equality is inaccurate. He maintains that abuse of power is present in practice as in all forms of therapy. As fuel for his argument, he analyses Rogers's work with people termed schizophrenic in a state hospital. He exposes a hospital system of coercion and repression of patients and accuses Rogers of collusion in his failure to act on behalf of the patients. According to Masson, such political limpness indicates both a failure to understand patients and an unethical response to their situation. Masson challenges the concept of congruence as complacent and patronising. He describes it as a justification of any kind of behaviour on the part of the therapist. Taking a different tack, Masson also questions the existence of congruence, empathy and UPR. He maintains that all three are a fiction, barely possible within the therapy hour and certainly not possible

outside of this. The therapist is therefore acting a part, trying to be someone who s/he is not; a phoney character who changes back into a self-centred, judgmental being once the therapy hour is over.

All these criticisms are to be reckoned with for they do expose some fundamental problems in the practice of humanistic therapy. Is therapy just an excuse for inactivity? My thinking about therapy and action has been influenced by Macy (1991), a Buddhist scholar, who argues that compassion and action follow one from the other. It is argued that if empathy with others and with the planet is experienced so that compassion with pain and wounding is felt, then the impetus to do something to heal the pain will result. The way in which this argument is embraced in humanistic practice is through the suggestion that the empathic listening itself can stimulate the recipient's will to act to bring about change. But what happens if the therapist hears about unjust, abusive social/interpersonal situations? Does s/he still remain passive or does she hold out her hands to the person so that together they may do something about the situation? Such an ethical dilemma is acknowledged at times of extreme circumstance by the profession, but the essential tension between listening and acting remains.

I consider Masson's challenge to professional validity and integrity to be highly valuable. I believe that therapists, like any other professionals, must be held accountable and, like any other professionals, must be prepared to question what they do and how they carry it out. Reflexivity through research is now happening more in counselling and psychotherapy (McLeod, 2002); practitioners are becoming braver in self-challenge by inviting recipients to comment on process (Rennie, 1992, 1994) and subjectivity of interpretation is being unravelled and scrutinised (West and Talib, 2002).

It may be argued that Masson's (1990) accusation of therapist pretence is based on the premise of perfection. A counter-argument may therefore be that therapists do not pretend to be perfect, rather they intend to meet the conditions for a limited amount of time in the therapy hour, because of their proven efficacy. As long as the therapist acknowledges his/her professional intention, rather than pretending constancy, she is not acting disingenuously; she is being honest about her own human frailty.

I suggest that therapy is a meeting between two (or more) vulnerable people: the therapist companion and the protagonist adventurer(s). The therapist wishes to give support by journeying into the hidden lands of another's internal experience of the world, bringing her own internal experience of the world along too. Therapy is therefore the meeting of two internal worlds in which both people tread beyond the boundaries of

what they know of themselves in the world. And yet the relationship is not equal because whilst personal responsibility is present, there is an agreement that one person (the therapist) will be there for the other if in need. Therapeutic relationship is discussed further in Chapter 5.

The concept of UPR is constantly evolving through challenge and discussion (Bozarth, 1998). Rogers (1986) in one of his last articles wrote:

When the therapist is experiencing a positive, non-judgmental, accepting attitude toward whatever the client is at that moment, therapeutic movement or change is more likely. Acceptance involves the therapist's willingness for the client to be whatever immediate feeling is going on- confusion, resentment, fear, anger, courage, love, or pride. It is a non-possessive caring. When the therapist prizes the client in a total rather than a conditional way, forward movement is likely (p. 199).

This definition seems to emphasise openness to and acceptance of whatever the other is feeling or experiencing in the present moment. This is also present in Natiello's (2001, p. 35) conceptualisation of authentic relationship: 'Authentic relationships require openness, responsiveness, shared power, alternating influence, co-operation and a strong commitment to the empowerment of the client'.

Openness to and acceptance of the other is also present in the concept of witnessing in the discipline of Authentic Movement (Adler, 1972; Musicant, 1994, 2001; Payne, 2003). In Authentic Movement the witness to the mover practises the art of self-awareness, accepting all that the mover needs to be in the present moment and differentiating self from other. Witnessing in Authentic Movement therefore involves self-aware owning of sensation and feeling, image and thought in response to the mover, combined with an accepting openness towards the mover.

Meekums (1998, 2000) suggests that in a group context safety is not only dependent upon the therapist's acceptance, but also on the acceptance of the group members. The concept of witnessing is used in the research analysis to describe a process of active attention with acceptance and support in the group for the person in focus. Being witnessed and witnessing seems to have fostered group cohesion and solidarity in Meekums' study. Acceptance by the group seems to have enabled the individual both to accept personal experience and to feel stronger in coping with its aftermath.

Further to this, Meekums (2000) states 'The need for safety was the single most often referred to element in recovery by all fourteen participants in my study' (p. 69).

Meekums specifies the ways in which safety was perceived to be generated. Some of the ways identified are particularly relevant to this research, and will therefore be listed: group cohesion, group agreements (with particular reference to confidentiality), valuing of difference, sharing experience, timing of interventions (for example, emphasising group-building exercises before more expressive and exploratory techniques), blending of structure and freedom, structuring of space, use of humour, and respecting individual choice to say 'no' to participation. It seems that in all these components of safety the concept of witnessing (as used in this research) abounds, in that all these elements may be seen as a sensitive response to the needs of the participants. Whilst Meekums' research groups (women survivors of child sexual abuse) may be seen as particularly vulnerable, the relevance of the findings for other groups seems to be confirmed by the findings of this study. Acceptance and safety are discussed in Chapter 6.

## **2.10 Vulnerability in DMT with reference to self-exposure, external judgment and absence of safety**

A process of inhibition of movement in DMT, operating against sensory awareness, has been identified by recent research (Meekums, 1998; Mills and Daniluk, 2002). Fear of the body as container of painful experience (Meekums, 1998) and concern with what others might think (Mills and Daniluk, 2002) are suggested as potential causes of inhibition, in conflict with the desire for spontaneous self-expression. Thus, inhibition of movement flow was considered as obstructing playfulness, preventing further exploration of feelings in Mills and Daniluk's (2002) study. Of particular interest for this research was the finding that self-consciousness in the group was a key inhibitor for the two ballet-trained members of the group. Concern with being judged as a person seemed to combine with aesthetic awareness to inhibit spontaneous flow of movement in both instances.

Thus, free, open self-exploration through movement may be experienced as impossible, if feelings are perceived as frightening or painful. Potential self-exposure through movement may be in direct opposition to an intention to deny experience perceived as shameful (Meekums, 1998, 2000). Self-exposure may be feared as potentially exploitative based on abusive experience, and critical judgment may be anticipated due to feelings of guilt (Meekums, 1998, 2000). Thus, it is argued, safety, created by non-possessive warmth, becomes essential in providing a counter-experience,

so that exploration of feelings does not leave the person fearful of manipulation by others.

Both Payne (1996) and Meekums (1998) suggest the pivotal role of safety in DMT process. Payne argues that when safety is threatened, DMT process becomes difficult. Challenges to confidentiality were considered as threatening by participants in Payne's study. Payne therefore argues that stable boundaries, which ensure the containment of physical and emotional material, are vital in facilitating process.

## **2.11 Playfulness, self-confidence and relationship connected to choreography and performance**

Research into playfulness connected to choreography and performance is lacking, although a recent study into the relationship between play and dance has some relevance. Lindquist (2001) videotaped dance lessons taught by dance teachers in five different Swedish towns, and analysed them in terms of two theories of dance education: Laban and Dahlgren. Subsequently, she interviewed selected groups of children, asking for their opinions of dance education, and how they related dance to play. Comparison between their statements and her analysis of lessons then ensued. The study may be criticised because it lacks reflexivity and reference to alternative interpretation, and it might be considered as limited by the selected interpretive frameworks. Nevertheless, a coherent, informed argument is provided for the inclusion of play in dance education. It is argued that play combined with dance facilitates involvement, enabling children to embody characters and move with feeling and intention. Lindquist suggests that through a process of make-believe and imagination the 'whole' child is drawn into the dance, so that dance is ignited from inside rather than imitated and worn as clothing which does not belong to the wearer.

Elkins (1996) presents a small-scale research project, in which the response of high school and university students to open improvisation with minimal tutor input was analysed. Although this study lacks reflexivity, Elkins's reflections are of interest to this study: she notes the gradual development of an ability to experiment with movement and take risks and considers this an essential component in students' choreographic process.

Self-confidence in relation to choreography and performance has been a popular focus for recent research and practice. Dance educationalists, in particular, have been concerned with both the physical and the psychological welfare of the dancer in relation

to the dance. In 1996 Brinson and Dick wrote in their summary of the report of the National Inquiry into Dancers' Health and Injury:

Over the last 30 years the demands on dancers have increased enormously: demands for excessive thinness, for ability to perform in several different styles. Long hours of work, inappropriate eating habits and inadequate working conditions can also undermine dancers' health. Yet no comprehensive health and injury service for dancers exists (p. 1).

More recently at the Dance UK Conference in 2000, Currie, Consultant Psychiatrist and Honorary Medical Officer of UK Athletics, identified a psychological process common in many young dancers in which external image is aligned with traditional aesthetics and becomes the overriding focus of a dancer's life (Currie, 2000). All efforts are bent upon achievement of an image, which has come from somewhere other than internal experience. If the image is not achieved then sense of personal value is diminished. This is the opposite of 'the internal locus of evaluation' described by Rogers (1996) or the notion of the 'true self' given by Winnicott (1985).

According to Nabarro (2000):

A dancer often relies on external criteria (teachers and peers) for feedback rather than learning to assess and appreciate her own progress, making her overtly dependent on others. She will not want to disappoint them. She may have difficulty in dealing openly with her emotions and so is more likely to show her distress through her body. Her self-discipline and capacity for hard work, allied with her very high standards, her sensitivity to others and her profound uncertainty about her own value and identity, make her extremely vulnerable.

Nabarro is particularly concerned about the development of eating disorders in young dancers, but the fragile sense of self which she identifies must be a cause for concern for many reasons, connected to both the art and the life of the dancer. As referenced above, Buckroyd (2000) argues that lack of self-investment in dance leads to loss of creativity and that a bright, analytic mind which uses personal experience as a touchstone is a necessary prerequisite for creative endeavour. This argument is to be found elsewhere (Davenport, 1994a, 1994b; Whittock, 1996). Without internal fire no freshly inspired dance can emerge; it will simply be a repeat patchwork performance of other people's ideas. As referenced above, Finburgh (1989) argues that the absence of passion negatively affects both choreography and performance. She suggests that the lack of a sense of internal motivation may lead to a feeling of emptiness in both dancer and audience.

Thus, it is possible that underdevelopment of self-respect and self-honour may negatively effect both health and creativity. As noted above, Buckroyd (2000) has various suggestions for the development of independence in young dancers, in connection to learning and teaching. She advocates active learning strategies, for example, problem solving in group work, to develop critical thinking about dance. She advocates an approach to teaching which respects the authority of the individual to learn from experience, developing an organic understanding of body movement.

Buckroyd's ideas come at a time when approaches to movement that emphasise internal awareness are becoming more popular in dance education [Conference on Research in Dance, 1997, in particular, Dissanayake (1997), Lichlyter (1997), Press (1997), Rinehart (1997) and Wallace (1997)]. During the time in which my research took place, both Feldenkrais and Skinner Releasing Technique (SRT) became part of the optional curriculum at the university where the research was undertaken. Openness to internal experience on a sensory and imaginative level is present in both these techniques, yet the focus on the emotions seems not to be so sharp. DMT may be conceived as developing the emotional maturity of the dancer, which Buckroyd (2000) maintains is essential in facilitating self-care during a rigorous training and enhancing creativity.

Shaw's (1993) theoretical dissertation argues for the development of the dancer's 'ego strength' on the basis that it would promote creative involvement in the dance. Shaw suggests a number of oppressive forces prevalent in dance companies, which vie against the self-assertion of the dancer, diminishing capacity for creativity, both in choreography and performance. Whilst the territory of this thesis is similar to Shaw's, it is researched, rather than theoretically discussed.

I have found no research into relationship, choreography and performance. Yet sensitivity to others is evidently valued by choreographers: 'I focus on that person and not just physically: I try to generate imagery off paying attention to them' (Dunn, 1999, p. 345). Trungpa (1996) believes that a basic problem in artistic endeavour is lack of relationship. He particularly notes the split between artist and audience. He argues that alienation leads to exhibitionism, clumsiness and aggression. He offers the concept of 'meditative art', in which the artist embodies the viewer as well as himself. He claims that this empathic approach to art leads to appreciation and expression of things as they are. Dilley (1990), a colleague of Trungpa, describes three aspects of awareness useful to choreography:

1. Outer awareness
2. Inner awareness
3. Transcendent awareness (or sense of connection to all living forms).

Experimental dance performance has been criticised as introverted and lacking empathy with the audience. Pape (1994) refers to the self-absorption present in experimental dance as an impediment to communication.

Nadel (1978) argues that empathy with dancers' movement enhances choreography. As the dancers are the raw materials of the dance, the choreographer must befriend them so that the dance emerges out of them. Beiswanger (1978) also describes dance as a co-operative creation, emerging out of choreographic sensitivity to the quality and style of the dancer. He maintains that the choreographer must be sensitive and open to the possibilities offered by the dancers. In this way the dancer and choreographer are in reciprocal relationship: the dancer expressing consciously and unconsciously with her whole being, and the choreographer, receiving, acknowledging, facilitating as well as moulding, changing and shaping.

The absence of research into relationship between dancers with reference to choreography and performance suggests that relationship is either ignored or not valued by the dance research community. I found this surprising, as dance is usually created in groups. On the basis that group dynamics affect any group venture (Bion, 1961), I suggest that dance created in groups must be influenced by group relationship.

## **2.12 Conclusions**

In this literature review I have given indications of how I created a boundary for the selection of texts, using the research focus and findings as markers of relevance. Key texts were located via a variety of databases, as well as through attendance, presentation and networking at international conferences, and regular consultation of relevant journals. Seminal texts have been analysed, as well as research, when I have considered them relevant to the field of inquiry. I have included all relevant recent and current research, located via database searches in November 2003. Critical appraisal of texts has sought to evaluate the validity of their contribution with reference to focus and methodology, as well as discussing the aspects of the research that pertain to the focus and findings of this study. Thus I conclude from this literature selection and analysis that the field of relationship between DMT, choreography and performance has not been researched extensively before, whilst the relationship between Art Therapy and Art has.



The data collection methods and approach to the analysis of data chosen for this multiple case study are not innovative: interview and a form of thematic analysis, reliant upon reflexive, subjective interpretation, has been used before in the field of DMT (e.g. Payne, 1996), and heuristic analysis of process is common in the field of counselling and psychotherapy research (McLeod, 2002). The strengths of the methods and approach to analysis have been acknowledged (McLeod, 2002; Rodgers, 2002) as:

- Giving a voice to the participants through generation of and extensive reference to rich data
- Providing a creative, self-aware re-framing of the focus of study.

The criticism of these methods in terms of subjectivity will be faced ‘square-on’ by showing awareness of how theoretical frameworks and subjective experience influence perception, questions asked and the process of sense-making followed (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Critical discussion of methodology and research process is found in Chapters 3 and 4.

## CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will define my methodological position in relation to the research aims. I intend to show how this position may be considered appropriate for the terrain I am exploring: DMT. Although the study might be considered as cross-disciplinary (DMT in relation to dance), the vehicle for exploring this relationship is the DMT group and the data are reflections on the group experience in the immediate context of individual sessions (the process recordings) and subsequently on the group experience and its perceived effects on the individual, personally and creatively, in the separate context of the individual and group semi-structured interviews.

The research is presented as a qualitative, multiple case study involving systematic thematic analysis (Huberman and Miles, 2000) of interviews and process, using DMT and existential theory, and therapist's reflections on process. Subjective interpretations of the data are owned, exposed and discussed (Chapter 4) and other interpretations are acknowledged.

Thus, as stated in Chapter 1, the standard by which this study may be judged is: Does it do what it sets out to do within its own framework? Therefore:

1. Is the reasoning behind the interpretations of data transparent and coherent?
2. Is the argument tracked back to the data and to the discussion of literature and recent research?
3. Does the reasoning include reference to variation of perception?
4. Is the reasoning reflexive?
5. Is the methodology appropriate to the research focus?
6. Are the tools suitable for the research focus?
7. Does the study investigate the experience of DMT for dance students and its relationship to choreography and performance?

### 3.2 Research questions and research aims

The focus questions for this research were: Are there any perceived links between DMT, choreography and performance? If so, what are they and how do they develop? The research aims were to find out participants' views on these questions, with reference to

their experience of DMT and its perceived effects on the individual, personally and creatively.

### 3.3 Research aims and selection of methodology

For this research a case study appeared to be the most appropriate apparatus. According to Yin (1994) case studies conducted from different methodological standpoints at least have this in common: 'A case study is an empirical inquiry that

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon, within its real-life context, especially when
- the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (p. 13).

I wanted to explore how DMT was received in the real-life context of a dance programme in higher education. It might be argued that case study was the most appropriate vehicle for the presentation of the contextual details of this experience.

Stake's (2000) concept of 'intrinsic' case study would seem to match the underlying interest in the case in its own right, present in this research. Yin's (1994) concept of 'exploratory case study' seems also to be relevant, in that an exploratory approach was required to find out the variety of perceptions of DMT. Hence the initial questions were exploratory in nature. First, in the process, participants were asked: What happened this week? What did you notice? How did you feel? Second, in interview, they were asked: What was your experience of the DMT group?

Yet, the concepts of 'instrumental' (Stake, 2000) and 'explanatory' (Yin, 1994) case study would seem also to apply in terms of the research intention, i.e. to find out if participants perceived that their experience of DMT had affected them personally and creatively. Hence the interview posed the following additional questions: Has it affected you personally and, if so, how? Has it affected your creative work at university and, if so, how?

In addition, a multiple case study (of three cases) design was selected in order to enhance the research intention to seek out variety. By comparing three different cohorts (51 students), a range of responses to DMT were sought, which facilitated a broader understanding of process than might have been afforded by a single case study. The multiple case study helped to discern aspects of experience which were held in common and those which were attributable to particular circumstances and dynamics.

This study shares Stake's (2000) conceptualisation of case study as 'constructivist' rather than following Yin's 'positivist' strategies for validity and reliability. Thus, this

case study emphasises transparency of interpretation, rather than seeking multiple sources of evidence to supply convergent analysis. The focus questions were: Are there any perceived links between DMT and choreography/performance? If so, what are they and how do they develop? The data were therefore used with a view to answering this question. Whilst thematic analysis (Huberman and Miles, 2000) was employed with the intention of ‘raking out’ all the data initially, the focus questions were subsequently used to organise it. Thus, the focus questions may be seen to slant the data, and to lose the concept of the case being presented either unchanged or in its entirety. Thus, the way in which this case study has been interpreted and constructed renders it unique.

In addition, this multiple case study is not considered to be replicable; its context and its process are considered to be unique in terms of individuals, context and circumstances. Thus in both context and interpretation it is distinctive: whilst the same questions might be asked, the researcher’s process of sense-making is particular, due to frameworks for analysis (see Chapter 4) and practice (see Chapter 5).

### **3.4 Research aims and data collection tools**

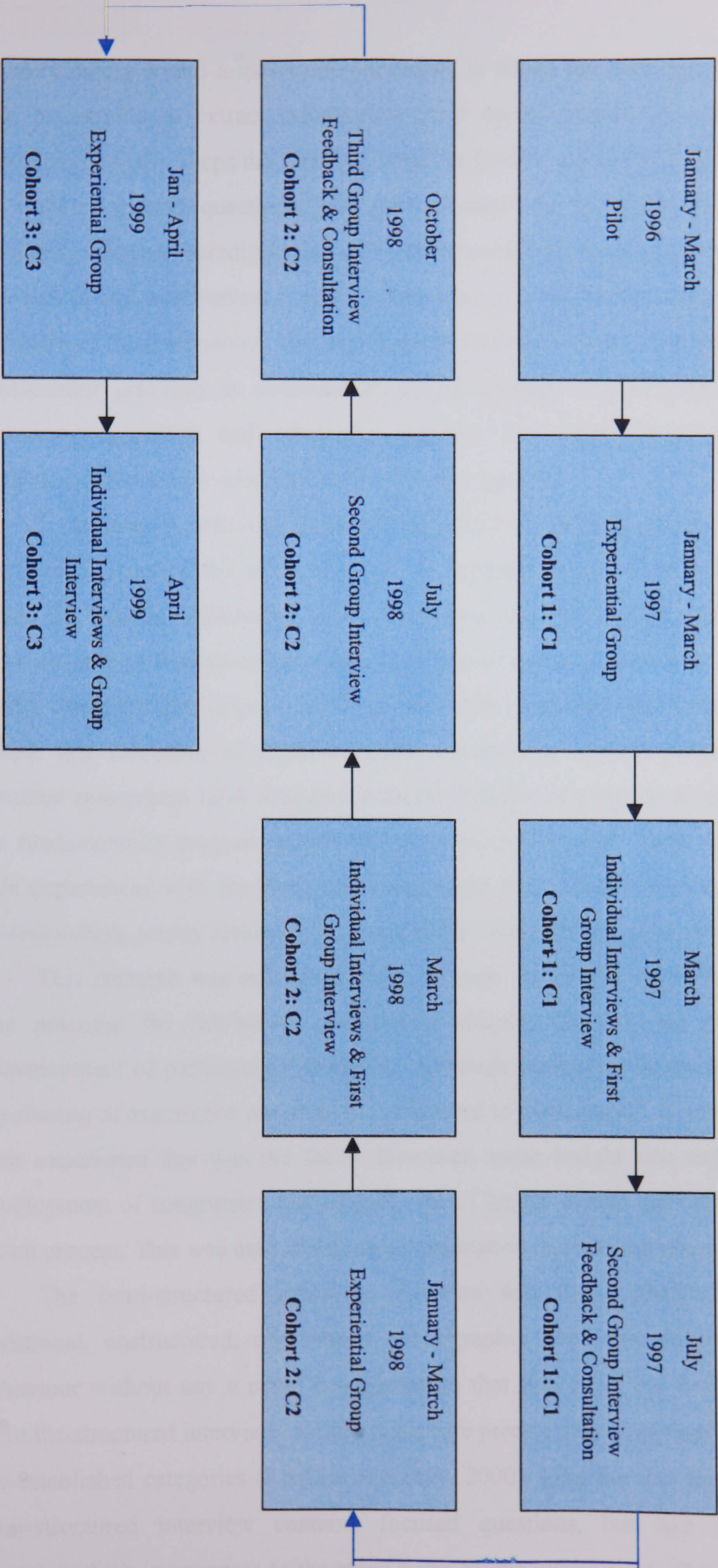
The principal data collection tools were semi-structured interviews (individual and group) and process recordings, supplemented by therapist’s reflections on process and case notes, and further group consultation interviews (Scheme 1). The triple tools of process-recordings, individual and group interviews were intentionally chosen as a means of stalking the experience from different angles to appreciate the complexity.

#### *3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews*

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most appropriate way to find out about perceived experience, effects and development of effects. Structure was necessary in the form of a few selected questions, in order to glean participants’ views on the research questions, whilst openness to lengthy reflections was also necessary in order to invite the emergence of unprompted, spontaneous and unexpected material. The individual interviews lasted for 30 minutes and the group interviews for 60 minutes.

Oakley (1981), Ribbens (1989) and Cotterill (1992) have all offered critical debate on the research interview from a feminist perspective. Oakley has questioned the ethics

**Scheme 1:  
Research Procedure**



of interviewing within a masculine paradigm, in which the interview is seen as a tool used by experts to extract information from naïve subjects. In such a model the interviewer usually keeps the research intention hidden and is in control of the interview via a set of specific questions. This type of interview, usually to be found within a positivist research paradigm, is also characterised by emotional distance between interviewer and interviewee, a strategy that aims to gather information untainted by the influence of the interviewer. The power differential in this interview structure is clearly considerable and may be criticised on ethical grounds as disempowerment (actively promoting ignorance and sabotaging agency) and covert manipulation (standard questions, followed by unilateral construction of theory).

Consequently, within the feminist approach a very different model of interviewing has been constructed, the tenets of which are intimacy and collaboration. Blumer (1969) called for 'intimate familiarity' with respondents and their worlds in order to find out more about their internal experience. Promotion of intimate familiarity does not happen easily. Oakley (1981) argues that it is only when trust has been established between people that revelation of secret thoughts and feelings about experience takes place. Feminist researchers have struggled with the paradox of trying to promote trust within the fundamentally unequal context of the research interview. Some have shared their own experiences with the interviewee and some have invited interviewees to become co-researchers, jointly creating theory out of the jointly created interview text.

This research was not co-operative, though limited consultation did take place. The potential for full-blown co-operative enquiry is discussed in Section 3.7.2 (Development of participant reflexivity). Although I aimed to be open and responsive, my sharing of experience was minimal compared to participants'. It was clear that it was their experience that was the focus. However, some insight into experience through development of congruence and empathy (see Chapter 5) was gained during the DMT group process. This was used to inform interpretation in some instances (see Chapter 4).

The semi-structured interview (Fontana and Frey, 2000) differs from the traditional, unstructured, open-ended, ethnographic interview, aiming to understand behaviour without any a priori categorisation that may limit the field of inquiry, and from the structured interview, aiming to capture precise data to explain behaviour within pre-established categories (Fontana and Frey, 2000). Like the structured interview, the semi-structured interview contains focused questions, but like the unstructured interview there is openness to the story given by the interviewee. The questions are not

intended to limit the story, but rather to provide a springboard for a ‘stream-of-consciousness’ unfolding of experience albeit with a particular focus.

Three focus questions were asked in both the individual and the group semi-structured interviews in this inquiry with a view to finding data that might answer the research questions: Are there any perceived links between DMT, choreography and performance? If so, what are they and how do they develop? Interview Question 1 was chosen to address the latter part of the second research question, i.e. ‘How do they develop?’ I needed to know about participants’ experience of DMT in order to establish how perceived effects were perceived to develop. Question 2 was also aimed at the latter part of the second research question. I needed to know if and how participants had been affected personally, in order to find out if and how perceptions of self (arguably the focus of most therapy) affected choreography and performance. Question 3 was designed to interface with the first research question and the first part of the second research. The interview questions were therefore:

1. What was your experience of the DMT group?
2. Has it affected you personally and, if so, how?
3. Has it affected your creative work at university and, if so, how?

Group interviews as well as individual interviews were conducted because some people prefer to speak in a group and some prefer the privacy of the individual interview. Group interviews can aid participants’ recall of group experience (Fontana and Frey, 2000) and stimulate embellishment of reflection.

The environment for all interviews was intended to be conducive to free expression of thought and feeling. Time was spent with the independent interviewer, responsible for the group interviews, discussing the concepts of UPR, empathy and active listening (Rogers, 1959) in relation to the interview environment. The concept of group interviewer as ‘moderator of group dynamics’ (Fontana and Frey, 2000) was also discussed to raise awareness of issues such as prevention of domination, encouragement of diffident members and ensuring a response from the entire group. In addition, the independent interviewer’s experience as a teacher had given her a good grounding in group dynamic issues such as these, and her experience as a choreographer of autobiographical material contributed to identification with the subject matter.

### *3.4.2 Process recordings*

Process recordings were made of the final 30 minutes of the DMT group sessions. Discussion of process would have taken place each week as an integral part of the DMT session, regardless of the research. These recordings of verbal process were intended to throw up material in relation to the latter part of research Question 2: How do [perceived links] develop? By analysing what was happening in the sessions in terms of verbal process, I hoped to gather some baseline information to furnish an answer to this question.

### *3.4.3 Therapist's reflections on data and case notes*

Therapist's reflections on process and case notes were used as a critically examined subjective touchstone in the analysis of the primary data accessed through interviews and process recordings. Thus data, which referred directly to the DMT group experience, were perceived and analysed by the researcher with reference to personal involvement. The potential strengths and weaknesses of such a use of involvement are discussed in Section 3.5 (Research aims and methodological philosophy).

### *3.4.4 Group consultation interviews*

The intention of these interviews was to share my initial interpretations of the data, with a view to inviting participants' views on these. Further to this, the intention was to include the participants' commentary on my interpretations in the final write-up, in order to increase validity. As in the other group interviews, these interviews lasted for 1 hour. Only two such interviews occurred, one with the full group in C1 and one with the four remaining second year students (the rest of the group having left university) from C2. As C3 left university a few weeks after the end of the DMT group, it was impossible to set up a consultation interview before their departure.

## **3.5 Research aims and methodological philosophy**

The research aims to find out participants' views on the research questions, with reference to their experience of DMT and its perceived effects on the individual, personally and creatively locate the terrain of this study. It is the terrain of sensations, emotions and imagination. Thus in considering methodological philosophy, I had to select one that would allow me entry to this terrain.

Wiener and Sher (1998) state:



Using qualitative methodology, an evaluation of encounter can be reached through appreciation of the patient's experience of the counselling process and the mental and emotional changes occasioned by it. This interpretative task cannot be accomplished by observing the patient as a mechanism geared to respond to certain conditions in regular ways; rather the research has to 'get inside' the patient and the social context surrounding the patient's crisis. This requires a kind of understanding called in the qualitative literature, *Verstehen*, in which through an empathic and imaginative identification with the patient, the researcher makes sense of what the patient is doing or experiencing (p. 145).

Particularly Rogerian practitioners have long since advocated the virtues of empathy in gaining access to the client's inner life. Schmid (2001) writes:

To be empathic generally means to expose oneself to the presence of the Other: to be open to being touched existentially by another person's reality and to touch his or her reality (p. 53).

Josselson and Lieblich (1995) describe the Platonic ideal of knowing in research terms:

Knowledge as transcendence, involves the creation of ... a 'potential space' in which the boundaries between the self as knower and other as known are relaxed. In this space, aspects of the known are allowed to permeate the knower, and this is the essence of empathy (pp. 30–31).

Oakley (1981) notes the positivist criticism of subjectivity and bias within the empathic stance but champions it as a vehicle which promotes trust and therefore access into the lives of others:

A feminist methodology ... requires that the mythology of 'hygienic' research with its accompanying mystification of the researcher and the researched as objective instruments of data production be replaced by the recognition that personal involvement is more than dangerous bias – it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives (p. 58).

In transpersonal paradigms of research empathy is valued highly as a tool of inquiry. Particularly in 'Intuitive Inquiry' (Anderson, 1998) the concepts of interconnectedness, sympathetic resonance, trust, compassion, reflective listening, indwelling and pursuit of paradox are justified through feedback as legitimate ways of learning about other's experience.

Moustakas (1981, 1990) suggests that in heuristic inquiry tacit knowing, intuition and indwelling give the researcher access to inner experiences of others. He describes a process of witnessing people with an open mind in order to 'dwell in' their reality:

To understand something fully, one dwells inside [the visible and obvious] and [invisible and essential] factors to draw from every possible nuance, texture, fact and meaning (Moustakas, 1990, p. 24).

The concept of indwelling without preconceived ideas and with the intention of trying to understand what it is like for the other person is akin to the concepts of empathy, congruence and UPR in person-centred verbal therapy (Cameron, 2001; Cooper, 2001; Klein, 2001; Leijssen, 2001; Natiello, 2001; Pearmain, 2001; Prouty, 2001; Warner, 2001) and bodywork (Geggus, 2002) as well as Authentic Movement (Whitehouse, 1958a, 1972; Chodorow, 1991; Musicant, 1994; Adler, 1996, 2000).

Whilst empathy may be criticised as intangible and only imagined by either therapist or researcher, where no feedback has been sought in therapy research its presence and therapeutic effect have been acknowledged by clients themselves (Truax and Carkhuff, 1967; Fraenkel, 1983). The most recent review of research in client-centred psychotherapy (Bozarth *et al.*, 2001) concludes:

Psychotherapy outcome research supports the major tenets of client-centred therapy ... Research has supported the theory that a congruent therapist's experience of empathic understanding of the client's frame of reference and experience of unconditional positive regard are related to positive outcome.

The testimonies of clients have therefore indicated their perception of the presence of empathy, and in addition the therapeutic value of feeling understood. The potential value of empathy in research into the lived experience of others is suggested by these findings.

However, in this inquiry I cannot provide much external evidence that empathy was achieved either during the process or during the research interviews. I can show examples of my interpretation of the presence of empathy as therapeutic tool (Chapter 5) and research tool (p. 67), but I cannot confirm receipt of empathy. The research design did not encompass a fully co-operative inquiry, so that the concept and realisation of empathic understanding as a research tool was not discussed with participants.

My involvement in terms of congruence is much more tangible. Unfolding one's own process in DMT is, I consider, less convoluted than unfolding the process of others, as it uses direct personal experience as the source of information. I was connected to my

own experience in a way I could never be in relation to others. For this reason, I think that the concept of congruence is perhaps less contentious than the concept of empathy as a research tool, as its impact upon the researcher is given straight from the horse's mouth.

Congruence is defined by Rogers (1996) as being fully and deeply oneself with awareness. The reflexive account of therapeutic process in Chapter 5 is intended not only to give insight into my own involvement with the students as therapist, but also to show how this involvement connects with the analysis. Use of experience as therapist in data analysis is particularly discussed in Chapter 4. I consider that my experience with the students in DMT gave me 'inside information' into the process. Through experiencing with them some of the freedom and some of the restriction, I was able to identify more closely with their statements in both process and interview. In this way I consider that experience acted like a detector, helping me to locate and flesh out key themes. Of course such a process of detection may be considered very differently. Subjective memory may be seen to predetermine findings. Thus how can involvement be capitalised on, with awareness of this potential for predetermination? Systematic analysis of text (Huberman and Miles, 2000) makes use of particular strategies to offset bias, for example, cross-checking data with analysis, seeking representation of complex and contradictory experience. These strategies have been employed in this research [see Figure 1 (Appendix 9), Table 1 (Appendix 10) and Chapter 4].

The concept of congruence might be easily aligned with the concepts of subjectivity, multiple realities and reflexivity so prevalent in qualitative research, whereas the concept of empathy might be viewed as contradictory in its emphasis upon seeing things the same way as others. Rogers's (1959) acknowledgement of the boundaries within the concept of empathy is, I think, helpful in delineating its intention and its scope. Similarly, this research acknowledges difference and separateness, whilst attempting to gain some insight into different perceptions via empathy, for example:

*Example 1*

*Student:* At first I was very apprehensive about what I might feel and what might come out, and then during Session 2 I felt really frightened and scared because I thought my feelings were going to overtake me and I wouldn't be able to control them. It seemed like everybody was taking it out on me, laughing at me.

*Therapist:* (imagining what that must have been like to feel frightened of being overwhelmed and out of control) (sustained, taking it in) That was how you felt ... scared.

Example 2

*Student:* They were clicking their fingers and clapping their hands.

*Therapist/Researcher:* You really hated that.

*Student:* Yes, I felt as if they were targeting me.

Example 3

*Student:* I found it extremely hard at the beginning to treat this as a model. I found it hard not to actually....

*Therapist/Researcher:* Actually treat it as therapy rather than a model of therapy?

*Student:* Yes.

In these three examples my emotional focus (Examples 1 and 2) and my conceptual focus (Example 3) were with the interviewee. I was trying to put myself in their shoes, emotionally and cognitively. Their responses may be seen to affirm that I am on the right lines; that I have understood how they felt or what they were thinking. Nevertheless, where I see attempts at empathy, others may see imposition of my own words into someone else's perception. Unfortunately, it was not possible in this research to set up a subsequent inquiry into my interview style, due to funding limitations and the imminent departure of the groups from university. Reflexive analysis of my interview responses therefore takes the place of feedback from interviewees in this instance with the intention of discussing intention and response.

### **3.6 Methodological position and therapeutic traditions of research**

I work within a humanistic, experiential framework of therapy, a framework that is interested in inner experience and perception (Rogers, 1996). Rogers writes: 'The only necessary aspect is the inward realisation of the total, unified, immediate, "at-this-instant," state of the organism which is me' (p. 205). In Rogerian therapy, the therapist learns to enter the client's framework without thinking about it: 'I am able to experience my understanding of [the client's] feeling, without any conscious thought about it ... without any type of diagnostic or analytic thinking' (p. 202).

Humanistic, person-centred therapy relinquishes the role of therapist/expert and advises the therapist to follow the client in order to catch a glimpse of a separate and different reality. Thus, entering a positivist, scientific tradition of research, which seeks to discover facts about phenomena through disengaging from them and objectifying them, and using intellect to find objective, consistent, causal relationships between events and predict probability, may pose a problem for humanistic, experiential therapists, whose practice aims are very different.

However, Rogers was a pioneer of research into therapeutic process. He considered that both subjective and objective processes of understanding experience could contribute towards a multi-faceted image of experience. He and others (e.g. Truax and Carkhuff, 1967) developed a method of interviewing the clients, in order to catch participants' perceptions of therapy as data, aiming to uncover 'multiple and contradictory truths' (Rogers, 1996, p. 210). These texts were considered to contain the substance of therapy, i.e. the feeling world of the client. The concept of consulting the clients continues to be upheld in counselling and therapy research today (McLeod, 2001), but there is much debate about how data are perceived and used. Empirical methodologies pioneered by Rogers continue to be popular amongst current researchers in the field (Goss and Rose, 2002), whilst the exploration of subjectivity within this is much more developed (Cornforth, 2002; McLeod, 2002). Grounded theory is widely employed by practitioner/researchers, whilst heuristic approaches are on the increase and *bricolage* (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) of the two is recommended (West, 2001).

In grounded theory, reality is considered to be 'out there' (West, 2001). Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 23) state: 'A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents'. In heuristics, reality is viewed as 'co-created but understood within the researcher' (West, 2001). West notes other differences between the two methodological assumptions in terms of the role of the researcher, the content of the data, and understanding the phenomena. The role of the researcher in grounded theory may be considered as detached participant observation versus, in heuristics, active engagement, including own internal processes. In grounded theory the content of the data may be considered to be what the researcher sees and is told and collects from written documentation versus, in heuristics, all aspects of the research experience, including the researcher's inner processes. In grounded theory understanding the phenomena may be considered as lying with those researched excluding the researcher versus, in heuristics, ultimately within the researcher: inner or tacit knowing (West, 2001, p. 129). Perhaps with the intention of healing the split between such scientific and heuristic epistemological processes, qualitative researchers have created new versions of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000; Rodgers, 2002).

The way in which I have approached the interview transcripts and process recordings in this research has been systematic (Huberman and Miles, 2000) and creative. In brief, the system of analysis consisted of reading, interpreting, categorising and cross-checking all the reflections in the interviews. New categories were created

whenever new concepts were interpreted as being present. Otherwise reflections were placed in established categories. Popular categories were noted (Potter and Wetherall, 1987) as well as less popular categories, and similarities, differences and contradictions were highlighted (Rowan, 1981; Bungay and Keddy, 1996). Regular cross-checking of interpretive categories (Huberman and Miles, 2000) with the data occurred during analysis as illustrated in Figure 1 (Appendix 9). Categories were then clustered around 'gathering concepts', which were judged by the researcher to gather related categories together in several overarching concepts [Figure 2.1 (Appendix 9)]. The process recordings were analysed using an additional critical question: How do they talk about what they talk about? [Figure 2.2 (Appendix 9)]. This question was chosen in order to inquire into experiential and relational processes during the DMT group. Interpretation of categories is discussed more fully in Chapter 4. Here it needs to be emphasised that I am not presenting unfiltered accounts of experience that speak for themselves. I set about gathering and grouping the data in a systematic way with awareness that my interpretations were dependent on my understanding of the participants and the process of DMT, which was affected by both perceptual sensitivity and theoretical understanding. Subjectivity of interpretation is apparent. Other researchers in other disciplines would have interpreted the data differently, for example, interpretation by a choreographer might have been more attuned to the aesthetic components of the DMT sessions and therefore more likely to sift these out; a sociologist might have been more interested in the host institution for the DMT groups, emphasising references to the dance educational environment. As a dance movement therapist, my interest is clearly with the relationship between the physical, emotional and imaginative experience of the participants, and it is this focus that slants the construction of the data. But, by making this subjectivity overt, rather than presenting dogma, I intend to offer a self-aware interpretation of DMT, in the hope that my particular understanding may be of interest to other practitioners/researchers in the fields of DMT and dance. A detailed account of my 'workings out' in the creation of my conclusions is to be found in Chapter 4.

A prickly concept in this research is causality. It may appear as a contradiction in terms that a qualitative study of perceptions is in any way concerned with establishing causal links between events. Indeed qualitative research frequently aims to 'drop the notion of cause and effect' (Payne, 2001, p. 272). On the one hand I am emphasising the uniqueness and variation between different perceptions, while on the other I am interested in commonality of perception, perceived causes and perceived patterns of

causality. It is the inclusion of the word perception, which both defines and confines (in positivist terms) the concept of causality in this study. Hence, the patterns of causality in this study are based on impressions and are not intended to be considered as objective truth, not to be confirmed through replicated studies. They are a perceptual moment in time.

The concept of causality in any form, objective or subjective, has been heavily criticised in poststructuralist and postmodern ethnographic frameworks (Best and Kellner, 1991; Denzin, 1997). The impossibility of representation of phenomena and the consequent dubious nature of suggestions of causality lies at the heart of these methodological positions. In addition, on ethical grounds, taking words out of people's mouths and reconstructing them causally has been viewed as 'causality capitalism' (Seale, 1999).

Yet the world is certainly experienced by people in a physical, emotional and imaginative way, and people do consider how their experiences happen. If the researcher systematically cross-references data that report how experiences happen, then evidence of perceived causality must emerge. Huberman and Miles (2000) consider that qualitative studies are 'especially well suited to finding causal relationships (because) they can look directly and longitudinally at the local processes underlying a temporal series of events and states' (p. 434). The ethical criticism of appropriation of people's words for manipulative purposes might be addressed through practises of sharing and consulting in co-operative inquiry (Heron, 1996b; Payne, 1996). This inquiry sought to share ongoing findings, but attempts at consultation met with limited success. This is discussed in Section 3.7.2 (Development of participant reflexivity).

In summary, the selection of the humanistic approach in collection and interpretation of the data and in the suggestion of causality was due to the nature of the topic and phenomena being researched. Human emotion cannot be measured scientifically. It requires a different approach, which is more likely to allow its vicissitudes to become visible. Theoretically informed, subjectively transparent, systematic analysis of interview texts and process recordings (Huberman and Miles, 2000) was the sense-making method chosen. This facilitated a close connection to participants' responses in the formation of a creative synthesis (Moustakas, 1990). *Bricolage* of method and analysis (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) was used to create an integrative (Braud, 1998) study in this respect.

However, contrary to Rogers' recommendation for the use of scientific measures in tandem with subjective ways of knowing, this study used very little measurement here, which may be considered a weakness. There are no random control trials, no triangulation, and only a limited consultation with the participants concerning the findings of the study. However, opportunities for triangulated research were noted during the inquiry, which are discussed in Section 3.9 (Consideration of alternative methodologies). As it is, there are no external reference points to validate the findings and the conclusions. Others have chosen to use pluralistic methodologies in order to strike a balance between subjective and objective ways of knowing (Braud, 1998; Meekums, 1998). I chose not to do this because I was particularly interested in exploring subjectivity of interpretation as part of the critical account of the research process. I suggest that my subjective, thematic analysis of perceptions may be viewed as one 'take' on DMT and dance, which may be added to other studies conducted from other methodological positions.

### **3.7 Consideration of ethics**

#### *3.7.1 The DMT experiential group*

Before the proposal for an experiential DMT group as the un-assessed component of the DMT module was submitted, the ethical dilemmas that surrounded this initiative were closely reflected upon. Subsequently applying for Research Ethics Committee approval at the university host establishment (Appendix 5) caused me to reflect upon additional ethical questions regarding the research participants (Homan, 1991). Before the ethics of these ventures are discussed, it is important to emphasise to the reader that the DMT module (Appendix 1) was a vocational option amongst several other options on the third-year dance programme, and that the attendance of the DMT experiential group on this module was presented as non-negotiable. If students elected to follow the module, they knew that they were electing to attend the group as well. The reason for this was the attendance requirement for the host university: students are permitted two absences in course attendance; non-attendance of the group would leave students with insufficient attendance-hourage. In addition, experiential learning was proposed as the principle learning method on the module. Non-attendance of the group would deprive students of access to this learning.

As Payne (1999) remarks, there is a surprising scarcity of research into experiential groups with reference to either ethical concerns or educational



effectiveness. Experiential groups have been discussed already in Chapter 2. In this instance, an experiential DMT group was proposed for dance students in their final year of university, the majority of whom were in their early twenties, with a significant minority in their late twenties. The vulnerability of this group was considered in terms of life stage and life situation. Research has shown (Grant, 2002) that young people at university are a vulnerable group who often experience difficulties in coping with university context and who express worries about health and relationships. Academic requirements, university life, unsatisfactory and inadequate housing, severely inadequate finances and worry about the future are all identified as causing stress. Worry about health, managing vague anxieties around phobias, and panic attacks are also prevalent amongst this population. Equally, coping with sadness, depression and mood changes, lack of self-confidence, and uncertainty in relationships are identified as commonly experienced (Grant, 2002).

In addition, Buckroyd (2000) has commented on the particular vulnerability of young dance students in relation to underdevelopment of inner self due to excessive focus on external self. Thus, inviting a potentially emotionally fragile group to participate in experiential DMT was ethically contentious for the following reasons:

1. Experiential learning operates on the basis that learning comes through experience of the subject matter (Heron, 1996).
2. In this instance it would mean exploring personal emotions and images through movement (Payne, 1990; Stanton-Jones, 1992; Levy, 1995; Meekums, 2002).

The following questions emerged as a result of reflection on the proposal:

1. Were these students suited to and prepared for such an initiation into the field of DMT?
2. What were the responsibilities of the facilitator of such an initiative?

### *1. Suitability and preparedness*

In terms of suitability, it was decided to liaise closely with the dance department and a well-established system of pastoral care. Whilst DMT was a free-choice module, all academic advisors in the department were invited to give high-profile consideration to the potential exploration of feelings in the experiential DMT group during option-choice tutorials. In addition, academic advisors were asked to request that students who wanted to participate in the group, but who were emotionally vulnerable, identify themselves to the facilitator, so that a further individual discussion about the nature of the group could

be arranged. It seemed inappropriate to put a ban on the group, or to intimidate students who, whilst being emotionally fragile, felt that they wanted to participate in the group, or to seek information about students in confidence, yet it felt important to be aware of any particular vulnerability, preferably from the students themselves out of respect for them as adults. This stated, it has been established with student consent at this particular university that some personal information is shared amongst academic staff, so that they may fulfil their pastoral as well as their academic responsibility towards the students: caring for their emotional well-being as well as being concerned with their learning. If an instance occurred whereby the facilitator/therapist became aware of emotional vulnerability via a staff member rather than via a student, it was intended to suggest to staff that they could again invite the student to talk further with the facilitator/therapist about the nature of the group. This discursive process happened four times before the commencement of the group. In one instance the student, who had suffered from clinical depression, chose not to do the module, and in three instances students discussed coping strategies with me in order to keep themselves safe if they felt vulnerable. Evidently in these instances student motivation might be queried. Perhaps students saw the module as an 'easy option' and determined to pursue it with as little personal involvement as possible, or perhaps they pushed away their anxiety because they desperately wanted to learn about DMT, and to do this were given no other option but to join the group. However, by creating these avenues of opportunity for pregroup one-to-one discussion, it was intended to take time with potential participants to facilitate an informed decision, which would benefit the person emotionally and educationally. An informed decision may be gauged by articulation of concerns about the group in relation to personal needs and processes. Yet articulation does not guarantee awareness and, paradoxically, can often hide true feelings (Stanton-Jones, 1992). Informed decisions are discussed further under Section 3.7.2 (Research). At least two students did not disclose to me their need for therapy until the DMT groups had finished. It is suggested that these students needed time to develop trust in me before disclosing. The fact that they 'slipped through' the procedure for identification of particularly vulnerable students might suggest that there were others who did too and that perhaps DMT was undertaken with students, ignorant of their particular therapeutic needs.

## 2. *Facilitation responsibility*

Person-centred frameworks emphasise participant agency (Gendlin, 1981; Bohart and Tallman, 1999; Rodgers, 2002) and recommend the role of ‘follower of process’ to the therapist. In this role the therapist aims not to initiate or impose process upon the participant. Rather, the participant is the protagonist creating the story and the therapist ‘attends’ to it. It may be argued that an ‘attending’ role reduces the potential for active manipulation of process. Yet, it is argued (Winnicott, 1985) responsibility for creation of a safe environment lies with the therapist. The facilitator/therapist’s aim in this instance was to create a safe, facilitative environment for self-discovery, giving advice on personal safety measures for process work. Through presentation of strategies such as ‘windows of opportunity’ (opening and closing channels of awareness) and ‘grounding’ in present bodily experience (Gendlin, 1981), it was hoped students could see that they could take care of themselves if they felt they would be overwhelmed by material.

This approach to DMT therefore emphasises participant as agent of personal process. This rationale is evidently open to question on at least three counts:

1. Participation in the group was compulsory.
2. As such, students may have felt that, despite reassurance to the contrary, the nature of their involvement was being marked as part of the course.
3. Students might be so fragile that they were not in a position to make active decisions about their involvement, due either to incongruence (following instructions without self-awareness) or to lack of self-confidence (overriding self-awareness and following a perceived expert’s advice, regardless).

The only tool to detect if someone was entering a personally unsafe state would be the facilitator/therapist’s own empathic ability. In C1, Session 4, it was noticed that one participant sank to the floor. She had not eaten before the session and was unnerved by a vitally visualised image. I, as the therapist, sat next to her, our backs supported by the wall, so that I could see the rest of the group. As we sat together, she talked to me about the image and how she felt. In this instance I was able to act as a ‘grounding’ agent for this person, so that she left the session telling me that she felt in control of herself. However, it might be suggested that this was done to placate me or without awareness of the internal impact of the experience. There are several examples of my lack of awareness of a student’s fragility, for example, at the end of a session, one student told me that she had been overtaken by her memories and feelings and that she had

intentionally 'switched off' from her feelings; another (in the verbatim quotation in Example 1 on p. 67) in interview told me of her experience of paranoia, of which I had been unaware. The fact that these examples exist suggests that there might have been other examples that were unexpressed to me.

Thus, the concepts of participant agency and therapist alertness are fallible concepts, and participant anxiety and distress is not entirely defended against. Thus I took other safety measures. First, I made sure that all students were aware of the free professional counselling service available on site at the university. I told them where it was located, how and to whom to self-refer, and I gave them written information on how it operated. Second, I told them that if anyone felt 'a bit wobbly' at the end of the session and felt that they needed more supervised input from me in wrapping-up the process, that option was open to them. This suggestion may be criticised in terms of boundary-weakness and consequent lack of safety. While I am aware of this argument, I judge that the way in which this 'extra time' was described specified a particular situation in which it might be needed. In fact the suggestion was never followed up. Timing was always strictly adhered to. The only occasion when I thought it might be used was in the final session of C3, when feeling ran high and conflict was unresolved. While staying with the boundary of the session as a whole, I checked out with the participant who made the statement 'It feels like a kick in the stomach' if she needed to stay longer, but she declined, saying that she would be alright, she would go to the refectory with her friends. Rather than a confirmation of her internal safety, this might be interpreted as lack of confidence in me, or wariness of me, or uncertainty about what might happen if she stayed. Equally, the student might have been concerned about stigmatisation of difference; she might have felt embarrassed, ashamed or humiliated. All of these interpretations are possible. Her letter to me thanking me for the course and for facilitation of learning gives me some confidence that she did not feel the experience had been detrimental, but this is also open to question on grounds of the student-teacher relationship, power differential and desire to please.

Discussion of how far students were prepared for the experience of DMT may centre on the introductory seminar (Appendix 2) given to all potential students 3 months before option choices were made. During this seminar, students were informed in depth and detail about the nature of the group, its purpose, its structure, its intentions, its potential in terms of process and repercussions on the group and the individual. Students were invited to make contact if they needed further clarification. A few introductory

handouts on DMT were distributed. This seminar, given with the intention of enhancing informed choice, may be criticised as insufficient in preparing students for the group, on the basis that understanding about the process could not come about until the students were in the process; indeed this was the rationale for the experiential component in the first place: that understanding would be developed through experience. Thus the aim of preparing students for the experience may be considered to be an impossible aim, in that no preparation can be made for the unknown. Yet a case might be made for the communication of the ‘unknowableness’ of the DMT group, for while this might be considered as anxiety-provoking, its honesty might also be seen to facilitate active choice: students would choose DMT knowing that the group experience was unpredictable.

### *3.7.2 Research*

In terms of the research initiative, as part of the ethical review application I queried whether the research would be likely to produce distress and anxiety beyond what students would normally experience in DMT. Effectively, the research involved students in additional individual and group interviews over a period of several months (C1 and C2) or over a period of several weeks (C3). It would also involve verbatim quotation or reference to their experience in the thesis and possibly published texts, in other words taking their words from them and using them for analysis. In some parts of the world people will not be photographed because they fear the theft of their soul. This concept might also be applied to research interviews in terms of appropriation of another’s experience. I noticed a mercenary approach to interviewing in myself: sometimes I felt delighted by reflections because I thought I could use them for analysis. Research interviews may therefore be criticised as disempowering for the participant on the basis of potential manipulation (Stacey, 1988; Homan, 1991; Lee, 1993).

Potential exploitation was tackled in the ways described below.

#### *1. An outline of research intentions*

A research meeting was held at the end of the term preceding DMT once the module choices had been made. An introduction to the research project was given in terms of research into the DMT group (Appendix 2). An outline of methods was presented and involvement of participants was discussed. I told people that I would like to refer to, and quote from, sessions and semi-structured interviews. It was explained that references

would be anonymous with the intention of preserving confidentiality. (However, discussion of research potentially operating against confidentiality is to be found in Section 3.7.3 (Use of process and semi-structured interviews). I also explained my intention to share with them any initial analyses produced in the timeframe of their attendance at university and beyond, if they requested it. (Discussion of findings took place in C1 and C2, but not in C3 due to altered term structure. Copies of almost-completed drafts of several chapters were sent to four individuals after they had left the university.) Students were asked to consider research involvement over the Christmas period. Consent forms were given out after Christmas, before the commencement of the DMT group. This staggered plan for encouraging reflection was intended to empower participants in making a considered choice.

## *2. An outline of participant rights*

Student freedom of choice in research involvement was emphasised; it was clarified that research involvement was not compulsory: they could choose to be involved or not and their choice would in no way affect their assessment at the end of the course. If consent was given, it was given with some insight into the nature of the experiential group, and into the nature of the research involvement (see above). However the notion of informed consent is open to question (Homan, 1991; Lee, 1993) for, as stated above, full information was impossible: students did not know in advance how they would be affected by the DMT group or by the research. Thus while I asked for consent at the beginning of the course, I made it clear to students that this could be withdrawn at any time up to the completion of the thesis. I referred to the research intention every week as I set up the tape-recorder for the last half-hour of the session and again in interview. I reiterated that students could withdraw consent at any time and still participate in the group. One person declined to be recorded in interview and four students asked if they could be interviewed in pairs. These requests might be interpreted as evidence of anxiety about the research interviews, in the first instance not wanting to be quoted and in the second instance fear of being exposed in one-to-interview. The semi-structured group interviews were attended by the majority of the group (except in the consultation interview with the second-year students in C2. In this instance the rest of the group had left university), which might be seen to indicate either interest in the research, or in offering an evaluation of the group, or in a continuation of process in some form, or alternatively to be a result of feeling compelled to attend. No students withdrew their

consent in terms of reference to experience and reflections on experience, which might be considered as continued support for the research or alternatively forgetting about it and withdrawal from it.

### *3. Development of participant reflexivity*

The encouragement of self-expression and personal reflexivity was acknowledged by all cohorts:

The other thing I was going to say was how encouraged we feel in this session to talk. I find all the talking surprising. We're not like that in other lessons. I find that the group's articulate, very able to express what the movement has done for them, and what has happened for them. They're so eager to share it with everyone.

Whilst student evaluations were not chosen as a methodological tool, due to a preference for interactive consultation, their presence shows how students were empowered in general to give their opinions. (These evaluation forms are to be found in Appendix 6.) It might be argued that if participants are able to express their own experience and reflections on experience with clarity and expansiveness, their experience may be less susceptible to distortion by researcher interpretation, particularly if the researcher has the intention of referring rigorously to the interview data (Huberman and Miles, 2000). Honourable reference to data may be guaranteed via submission of data with thesis or via supervisor reference. As the data in this instance are massive, the latter option has been chosen.

Framed in another way, the encouragement of participant reflexivity is viewed by Rennie (1992) as the only way into the experience of others:

In the state of reflexivity, the person creates the unspoken and the intentionality behind the spoken. Unless research strategies are used that access this reflexivity, the researcher's understanding of client's processing will be either incomplete or misguided (p. 227).

Rennie therefore suggests that the quality of participant reflection is an indicator of research validity. This research built in opportunities for deepening participant analysis of process over time. Throughout the DMT process participants were encouraged to be reflexive, through reflection on the DMT process within the session and through the keeping of a weekly, personal, reflexive journal. The journal was not intended as a data collection tool, but to enhance participant experience. Further reflection on the DMT process was encouraged in individual interviews and group

interviews over time (at staggered intervals in C1 and C2; C3 was unable to do a follow-up interview due to alteration of term structure and the end of their university career coinciding with the end of the DMT group). The elapse of time offered participants a chance to process their experience further. Group interviews allowed for the interaction between participants' reflections, triggering memory and stimulating new insights. Thus, the interview schedule was devised to empower participants to make sense of their own experience, and in so doing to see how their analysis complemented or contradicted my own memories and reflections.

By sharing and discussing initial findings, and sending journal articles and drafts of the findings chapters to interested students, I hoped to invite critical comment. However, consultation was not consistent, only achieved with the whole group in C1 and with the second-year students in C2 (the rest of the group having left university). The loosening of involvement with the research which was a phenomenon in this inquiry might be attributed to the age and circumstances of the students, or alternatively to the design and methodological position of the research. If the research had been designed as co-operative, more time would have been invested in developing consultation processes, possibly creating greater motivation. However, full-blown co-operative inquiry was not selected in this instance due to the potential difficulties and cost of long-distance consultation. This is discussed in Section 3.9 (Consideration of alternative methodologies). As it was, consultation during attendance at university brought limited alternative interpretation. In C1, oppression in the group was considered by one person to be present virtually throughout the process, whereas I had viewed it as dissipating gradually. In C2, the potentially positive relationship between DMT and dance, which I was suggesting, was criticised as unrealistic in the context of dance education.

#### *4. Development of researcher reflexivity*

Reflexivity in this study is intended to promote ethical representation and analysis of the breadth of data. Reflexivity was developed by:

1. Sifting out assumptions and value judgments and revealing interpretations
2. Comparing interpretations with data
3. Comparing interpretations with research and literature
4. Developing self-awareness through focus on body experience (Gendlin, 1981)
5. 'Research cycling' (Heron, 1988, p. 44)



#### 6. Developing a 'dialectical' (Rowan, 1981) relationship with the data.

Regarding the last point, Rowan (1981, p.93) emphasises the importance of researcher openness to contradictions and paradoxes. He argues that receptivity to the aspects of research, which do not fit the emerging theory, allows a more complex picture to emerge. In this inquiry most students perceived a positive connection between DMT and personal and/or creative growth. However, some people perceived no connection. They reported feeling lost in the learning process due to lack of structure and indicated a state of fearful vulnerability connected to self-exposure, external judgment and lack of safety. All of the above processes are discussed in Chapter 4, with the exception of developing self-awareness through focus on body experience, which is discussed in Chapter 5.

#### 3.7.3 *Use of process and semi-structured interviews*

It is conceivable that research into therapeutic process might be responsible for increasing anxiety around therapeutic process, particularly in the light of research into group safety (Payne, 2001). Confidentiality was an issue in Payne's (1996) as well as in this research. The spillage of process into research reports and publication could well be perceived as sabotaging confidentiality. There is therefore an inherent problem in therapy research. In therapy case study, insights that are gained in confidence are exposed publicly. It might be argued that insight is fostered through manipulative safety-creation, and that this safety is destroyed once the researcher sees fit. Evidently, transparency of research intention goes some way to meeting this criticism. However, the participant might not be aware of the undermining of therapeutic safety caused by the research. It therefore becomes the responsibility of the researcher to highlight this possibility and to make the boundaries of the research clear to participants. The way in which I did this is discussed above.

#### 3.7.4 *The social intention*

Organic and feminist approaches to research suggest that the researcher might have an altruistic intention, as well as a selfish one (Oakley, 1981; Stacey, 1988; Ribbens, 1989; Devault, 1990; Cotterill, 1992; Reinharz, 1992; Maynard and Purvis, 1994; Clements *et al.*, 1998), that is, the researcher may intend that the experience of being researched may in some way be perceived as empowering and life-enhancing to the person. Research into therapeutic process also carries this intention (Payne, 1996; Meekums, 1998). Research as therapeutic cannot be gauged fully in this inquiry, as I did not try to

discover perceptions of research involvement. Logistically, this would have been difficult, as students had moved away from university. Nevertheless, this logistical difficulty could have been overcome via a questionnaire. This option was not pursued, however, due to the researcher's particular selection of methods allowing for semi-structured discussion and providing opportunities for spontaneous expansion. Research into the effects of being researched was therefore limited to inquiry into the perceived effect of the tape-recorder in the process. Some said that initially it made them feel self-conscious, some that they were unaware of it, some that they actually grew to include it in the scene as an object which drew people together: it became a campfire and the group was gathered around it. It is arguable that a span of response ranging from perception of restriction to perception of enhancing communication might be present in these observations. Despite lack of evidence, I feel it is important not to lose sight of the intention in this inquiry to respect individual decisions through complying with them (for example, meeting particular requests for involvement as outlined above) and to respect individual contributions by actively listening to them and honourably referring to them. These intentions may be considered as potentially empowering to the participants.

### **3.8 The disadvantages and merits of a multiple relationship**

The multiple roles of therapist, course leader, interviewer and researcher were present in this inquiry. They may be seen to vie against the concept of an open spirit of inquiry on the basis of power and vested interest. The multiplicity of role was determined by circumstance in this instance: researching my own practice was a proposal, which was sanctioned by the host university. It may be considered as both limiting and enhancing perspective and understanding.

#### *3.8.1 Vested interest*

I designed and taught the new module: 'Introduction to Dance Movement Therapy'. I also facilitated the experiential group. It was in my professional interests that the group be well perceived and evaluated. There is no doubt that vested interest existed here. I had to plan a strategy for detecting it (self-awareness) and counterbalancing its effects (action). This strategy developed into noticing the internal effect of statements perceived as positive or negative; learning to stand back from these effects in order to receive the communication; seeking out statements perceived as negative; giving them visibility in

the write-up; looking for defensiveness in argument-formation; and imagining other interpretations.

Learning to stand back from internal effects of perceptions was vital in separating the researcher from other roles. It was a difficult task, in which time played an important part (Janesick, 2000). Seeking out statements perceived as negative could have occurred at interview [as in Gilroy's (1989, 1992) research]. This might have encouraged participants to focus more intently upon both aspects, giving a bolder profile to both positive and negative perceptions.

### 3.8.2 *Power*

It might be argued that as therapist I became a 'powerful' presence in the psyche of the research participants. Whilst humanistic, person-centred practice seeks to dissolve power in the therapeutic relationship by emphasising client-agency (Rogers, 1959; Bohart and Tallman, 1999; Rodgers, 2002), the therapist may still be seen as powerful in some way by the client. In this inquiry, such a perception was evidenced in C1, but not in the other two cohorts: 'You were a safe person. If ever there was something wrong in us, you were there to make us feel OK about ourselves.' Most participants' perceptions of the therapist centred upon permissiveness, acknowledging participants' feelings and allowing participants to choose or not to make sense of their experience in their own way: 'There was no right or wrong'.

In some cases, I felt that participants were wary of me as a therapist in the DMT group and that this wariness impacted upon the research interviews. In this instance, prior relationship in another context can be seen as blocking free-flowing conversation. Conversely, where I felt a trusting relationship was present, I noticed that students were more willing to share their experience. In these instances, I was given much more insight into internal processes, as in Meekums' (1998) research the existing therapeutic relationship was found to facilitate research involvement. The therapeutic relationship was in this way pivotal to how much data and what kind of data was received. It both created and destroyed opportunities.

Another aspect of power, which has already been discussed, was the presence of the role of course leader. Yalom (1985) refers to the potential difficulty of therapeutic sharing when the therapist plays other roles involving assessment:

A leader who wears two hats compounds the problem even further for the group members who feel restricted by the presence of someone who may in the future play an evaluative role in their careers (p. 526).

In the role of course leader I passed judgment on the academic work of participants. Whilst the assessed part of the course (the theoretical essay) was separated from the un-assessed component (the DMT group), via difference in content and anonymity of essay scripts, participants may have linked the interviews unconsciously with their assignments, thinking that if they said nice things to me in interview they would be sure to gain a good mark. Due to the possibility of such unconscious processing, I decided to employ an independent interviewer for the group interviews. My intention to analyse the group interviews after they had been rendered anonymous via transcription by a professional typist was clarified with participants. I hoped that if the power dynamics of multiple roles interfered with open reflection, speaking to an independent person might enhance it.

Another way of trying to reduce unconscious linkage was via a statement of role boundaries. As therapist, I defined my role as creator of an environment conducive to self-exploration and I defined the timespan during which the therapeutic relationship would exist. As researcher, I defined my role as active listener to their reflections on experience and explained when and how the research interviews would take place. As course leader, I defined my role as teacher of theory and assessor of anonymous scripts. I emphasised that the assignment would not be about the experiential group and would be anonymously marked; that they were two separate components of the course.

It has been argued above that involvement enhanced appreciation of data (Moustakas, 1990). However, involvement tends to magnify the close-up view of experience, sometimes to the detriment of a perspective of the wider landscape. Perhaps a balance between involvement and separation capitalises on the strengths of both positions. Meekums' (1998) has acknowledged a need to distance self from findings in order to separate and analyse. My separating process was enhanced through recycling my impressions and interpretations over time, as discussed in Section 3.7.2 (Development of researcher reflexivity).

### **3.9 Consideration of alternative methodologies**

I have already suggested that this research might have been designed as a co-operative inquiry. Payne's (1996) research provides a reflexive example of co-operative inquiry in which participants were involved in the construction of the analysis, increasing research validity. Integration of collaborators' reflections over time was particularly important in

this study, given the research focus of connection between experience of DMT and professional practice. Unlike Payne, I did not plan my research as a collaborative process, due to the short-term nature of the experience under scrutiny and the pull of relocation and new life focus once students had left the university. Payne's population was different to mine: an older, more mature group, which she tracked over a period of three years, contrasting with my multiple case study of a short-term group (eight to ten weeks) with young dance students in their early twenties. The difference in age, training, life circumstance, length of participation and focus of research are therefore significant in choice of methodology. Nevertheless, it is possible that if this research had been designed with the express purpose of sharing analysis with participants, there would have been more commitment to long-term consultation, however strategically difficult this might have been.

The method of IPR (Rennie, 1992) might have been useful in establishing pivotal moments in therapeutic process, aiding subsequent analysis of facilitative elements of therapeutic environment. However, given the group situation and the student's academic schedule, this method was not practicable.

Opportunities for triangulating research presented themselves during the research cycles, for example, feedback from a visiting choreographer, Lea Anderson (Appendix 4, final paragraphs) and from dance staff. These uninvolved perceptions of student creativity and performance might have been usefully incorporated in a pluralistic study, complementing students' own perceptions of relevance for choreography and performance. However, correlation of enhanced choreography and performance with DMT experience would still have been problematic, in that many other variables might apply. Control groups might have facilitated causal conclusions, but I suggest that the complexity of experience and causality could never be overcome completely.

### **3.10 Conclusions**

In this chapter I have clarified my methodological position and matched my research aims with choice of methods, tools and analysis. The research process is discussed further in Chapter 4, with particular focus on the process of sense-making, in order to show the reader how I reached my final analysis and conclusions.

# CHAPTER 4. REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

## 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I intend to illuminate the research process for the reader by showing the development of two strands of analysis:

- My relationship with the data
- My thinking about the data.

Some of the processes I will discuss are listed here:

- Sifting value judgments
- Looking for defensiveness in interpretation
- Developing internal self-awareness
- Standing back
- Comparing interpretations with data
- Developing a ‘dialectical’ (Rowan, 1981) approach
- Seeking out statements which I perceived as negative
- ‘Research cycling’ (Heron, 1988, p. 44)
- Comparing interpretations with research and other literature
- Imagining other interpretations.

Discussion of reflexive processes is followed by a reflexive account of my ‘workings out’ with reference to Figures 1 to 6 (Appendix 9) and Table 2 (Appendix 10). It is hoped that reflexivity and transparency will give the study greater validity (Steier, 1991; Payne, 2001). I will begin the discussion with reflection on the use of my experience as therapist in the analysis of the data.

Despite the intention to conduct this research in a spirit of inquiry, it was difficult to escape from vested interest. As course leader and therapist I wanted my model of DMT to be positively received for professional reasons. I had, therefore, a vested interest in the presentation of positive perceptions. I felt glad that the criticisms and the misgivings were seemingly less than the positively perceived outcomes in terms of quantity and emphasis. It would have been easy for me to lose sight of their importance for the study, which aimed to represent the complexity of response. Only in the latter stages of the inquiry do I feel that I have owned this vested interest and so been able to

'bracket' it off (Payne, 2001), seek out lost information and reframe the presentation of the inquiry. Self-awareness is a process of separation from oneself in the sense of being able to step outside oneself and look at oneself more objectively. Thus the owning of bias enables the researcher to identify and present bias openly, so that the reader may include it in the matrix of their understanding. In this inquiry, this process of 'objective subjectivity' (Reason and Rowan, 1981) has occurred during a period of analysis (1997–2003), which has been double the duration of that of data gathering (1996–1999, including the pilot project) in accordance with Janesick's (2000) recommendation. I sense that for me the period of analysis after the data were completely gathered has been crucial in helping me to let go of my involvement with the DMT group, thereby facilitating more freedom in the consideration of the data. In particular, in the years 2002–2003, I found that my relationship to the data changed. Whilst it still conjured up vivid memories, I found that I was looking at it in a different way. I felt more 'in tune' with an open-ended spirit of inquiry. It was as if I had been in the groups almost by magic, and I was examining something that was separate from me, but with which I had once had a close involvement. I felt for the first time that this was a situation, a context and phenomena that interested me, not because of my involvement in or my desire to promote DMT, but because I really wanted to understand the many levels and facets of the cases as much as I could, while recognising the limitation of one person's view.

This new relationship with the cases led me to re-read the data several times and to actively seek out contradictions to the emerging picture (Parlett, 1981; Rowan, 1981). This vital end-phase to the analysis is shown in Figure 1 (Appendix 9). I began to focus in on the insecurities, the confusions, the disappointments and the hostilities as perceived experience and effects of the DMT group, contrasting with playfulness, self-confidence and relationship. I now began to empathise with the 'negative' perceptions and to try to understand things from other starting points. I felt I was experiencing 'altered perspectives', as some participants had during the DMT process: for example, seeing shapes and patterns from different vantage points, listening to different experiences of the 'same' experience. This altered perspective enabled a new picture of the data to emerge, which, it is suggested, (Rowan, 1981) gives the case study greater breadth and depth.

The category of Fearful Vulnerability (Figure 4.1 and 4.3, see Appendix 9) was created as a gathering concept for the categories of confusion, disappointment and hostility, which all seemed to be connected to fear of being vulnerable. The concept of

vulnerability as open to ‘wounding’ [from the Latin *vulnerabilis*: liable to injury (Skeat, 1978)] seems to encapsulate the perception of potential danger in DMT. Fear of being wounded seems to have been a powerful emotion in the DMT groups relating to both internal and external sense of safety. Perceived causal factors of fearful vulnerability seem to have been linked to the concepts of self-exposure, fear of judgment and absence of safety.

## **4.2 Use of experience as therapist of the DMT groups in data analysis**

In the previous chapter I suggested that my involvement with the DMT groups helped me to ‘get inside’ (Wiener and Sher, 1998) the experience of others. In Chapter 5 I discuss the nature of this involvement with reference to congruence and empathy. Here it is my purpose to show the reader how this involvement both stimulated identification with the interviewees and interfered with communication.

### *4.2.1 Identification*

I found on many occasions that the moments being recollected by the participants took me back to my own experience in the group. Visual, kinaesthetic and emotional memory was sometimes hooked up, adding contextual detail and vitality to the scene being recalled in my mind by another. For example, when one person was describing how her body felt awakened and empowered, I was able to re-vision her moving dynamically in the space, seemingly in a world of her own, joyful and powerful. My memory of this moment seemed to correspond to her internal memory:

I really had this strong feeling of what I could do. I felt I could do some really brilliant things. I was feeling really great and getting more positive ... and I had this strong feeling of what I could do ... I don't know whether I visualised it in my head or whether it was just purely a feeling I felt just through moving. I felt my body could have done some really great things.

One participant reflected on his self-consciousness in DMT. I remembered the young man beginning to roll then crawl on the floor, then I saw him look round and stop, sitting back on his heels. ‘He seemed to shrink’ I wrote in my case notes. In interview the protagonist reflected on his awkwardness and embarrassment in that moment: ‘I felt like sinking into the ground’. I suggest that my memory in this instance helped me to re-vision him in that moment and identify with the state he was describing.



Several participants in C3 remembered the red medicine ball and the ‘secret protection’ (the people under the green stretch cloth). I remembered this scene very vividly myself. I remembered how I felt in amongst the ball game: excited, alert, strong and vital (coinciding with others’ recollections) but also nervous and jittery (my own feelings in relation to this youthful, vibrant, aggressive game). As I separated from the ball game and moved between this and the stretch cloth group, I remembered being struck by the vocal hilarity, which seemed to ensue under the cloth, which seemed to me to correspond to the gathering physical excitement in the ball group. There seemed to be an invisible but perceptible link and tension between the two. This strong visual image of two distinct, high-energy groups engaged in invisible conflict stayed with me as I listened to reflections on the unspoken rifts in the group: ‘In DMT they want it all to be nice and isn’t it great and it just isn’t like that’. I suggest that witnessing and being involved in this experience helped me to identify with a group dynamic of vigorous connection as well as invisible or disguised conflict, which was identified by others: ‘As a group we move together quite flirtatiously; we were doing something like a bunny hop, but it was a very aggressive bunny hop’.

#### *4.2.2 Interference*

In C1 I sensed a gradual increase in freedom of movement and play in the group. I observed a change from dance improvisation to the play of children: running, jumping, pretending. I sensed more fluidity in relationship, noticing how one person who had told me of her fear of intimacy, spent time in pair-work, and how another who had told me of broken relationships in the group, was moving with those with whom she had felt estranged. I suggest that this impression of fluid relationship interfered with my recognition of statements about disconnection from others (‘I just felt all closed in and that everybody was out to get me’) and continuing tensions in the group (‘Every week there was this pressure to conform’). I suggest that whilst in interview I acknowledged these opposing impressions, my overriding impression pushed them aside when I began to interpret the data. The lost data were found again on re-reading the data a number of times over several years (Figure 1, Appendix 9). I suggest that if I had not been present in the process then these statements may not have been lost temporarily, as an uninvolved researcher would have been totally dependent on the interviewee to build up a picture of what happened, and all the pieces of the jigsaw would have been used to create the final picture. In a sense I had a ‘final picture’ as therapist before the

interviews took place. In some cases I had to work on paying more attention to the transcripts to ‘undo’ or ‘unpick’ some of my overriding impressions.

### 4.3 Reflexivity during interview and analysis

As stated during the introduction to this chapter, I noticed, both during the interviews and on re-reading the interview transcripts, how I felt when someone shared their frustrations, their disappointments and their dismissal of any relationship between their experience and their creativity, or simply did not say very much at all. I felt disappointed in myself, as if I had not done my job well enough. It had been my assumption that participants would welcome this opportunity to explore personal and possibly transpersonal imagery through movement. I was transferring my own experience of personal/creative growth inappropriately to a different context, instead of beginning with a blank sheet and seeing what happened in this particular context. My disappointment in what I perceived as negative or bland experience contrasted with my enthusiasm for what I perceived as positive engagement with the medium of DMT.

With growing awareness I tried to put this bias aside in order to welcome and appreciate any experience of DMT. However it is conceivable that this bias somehow filtered through in interview and influenced its content and process. If participants perceived that I wanted to hear about joyful and fulfilling experience, rather than disappointing and dissatisfying experience, they may have been discouraged to reveal anything that I might have perceived as negative. Such a power dynamic might have been caused by the multiple role (see Chapter 3) or by a desire to please the therapist (Clarkson, 1995). I therefore went back to the transcripts to see if there was any evidence of this. Whilst I did find evidence of my enthusiasm for what I perceived as positive experience, for example, ‘You were aware of symbolic significance, that’s great!’, I also found evidence of my affirmation of what I perceived as negative experience, for example, my reflection back to students, ‘You felt lost and confused because there was no structure’. I also found evidence of participant self-assertion, for example, ‘I was doing it for *me*, not because I needed to do something creative for you to accept and mark’, and a freedom to express how they felt regardless of how their statements might make me feel, for example, ‘I wish I could see the point’. Overall, it seemed that the potential leaking of my bias had not had repressive consequences in interview. Comparison of these interviews with those conducted by the independent interviewer revealed no significant difference in the presence of negatively perceived

comments. Paradoxically though, a ‘reverse effect’ from that intended might have caused participants to feel protective of me in these interviews.

Despite some awareness of my value judgments and attempts to put them aside, I came away from the interviews and from my first reading of the data with an overwhelming impression of perceptions of experience as rewarding in many different ways and relevant to performance and choreography. However, as I began to separate from the experience myself, I found that I was more able to stand back and devise an active strategy for reclaiming negatively perceived comments and for giving them due representation in the final write-up. This process felt similar to an ‘Equal Opportunities Policy’ in terms of research data. I was actively seeking out and representing minority views, which had been sidelined initially by researcher bias. The prerequisite for such a process was, as stated above, an ability to ‘stand back’ and read the data dispassionately, as well as a focused intention to seek out views which contradicted my expectations, my views and my hopes. This process took a long time to evolve.

It might be considered a weakness of the research that this process did not occur earlier. The use of focused questions in interview to identify perceived difficulties and problems as well as perceived benefits and applications might have drawn out both ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ perceptions more actively (as suggested in Chapter 3); the suggestion of potential difficulty by the interviewer might have been experienced as affirming its existence and encouraging its expression. This strategy of focused questioning was used by Gilroy (1989, 1992) to identify perceived effects of Art Therapy training on the art-making of art therapists. However, I had opted for open-ended questions (What had happened and how, if at all, they had been affected?) on the basis that I did not want to lead the response. As it was, the detection of difficulties and problems occurred during the analysis of the data. By re-reading the transcripts several times (Figure 1, Appendix 9) with ‘dialectical’ intent (Rowan, 1981), I was able to develop the category of Fearful Vulnerability (Figures 2.1 and 4.3, Appendix 9) as a gathering concept for all the difficulties and problems, which had been identified by the participants.

#### **4.4 Analysis of semi-structured individual and group interviews**

In this section I aim to show the reader my ‘workings out’. I will refer to Figures 1 to 6 (Appendix 9) and Table 2 (Appendix 10) as I consider them to be an accurate visual representation of my thinking. First, I took solitary time to read through the interview

transcripts, interpreting statements in terms of categories/concepts/themes (Huberman and Miles, 2000). This process of interpretation was continuous, so that categories were filled up with statements or new ones created (if I considered that the statement did not fit any existing ones) until all the transcripts had been read. Predominant and consistent themes were identified in this way (Potter and Wetherall, 1987). The evolution of the categories was ongoing throughout the inquiry, monitored against the data to see (a) if my interpretations reflected the data and (b) if I had missed anything.

An overview of the data gave rise to the categories clustered around the later-evolving gathering concepts of Playfulness, Self-Confidence, Relationship and Fearful Vulnerability in Figure 2.1 (Appendix 9). Gathering concepts are defined here as concepts, which are interpreted as gathering related categories together in one overarching concept. Some categories seemed to be connected to more than one gathering concept. Experiencing and Spontaneous Movement seemed to refer both to Playfulness, (in terms of openness and receptivity to the moment), and to Self-Confidence (in terms of feeling positive and empowered). Honesty and Separation seemed to refer both to Self-Confidence (in terms of feeling positive and empowered through being direct and independent) and Relationship (in terms of being able to express self honestly to others perceived as different). The categories were represented in all cohorts, to a varying degree, although the category of Altered Perspectives was unique to C1. Similarities and differences were noted (Bungay and Keddy, 1996) and variation is discussed with particular reference to the perceived causal factors of Affirmation and Safety, Self-Exposure, External Judgment and Absence of Safety (see Chapters 6 and 7).

Clusters were separated out and rearranged into categories relating to the interview questions. These are represented in Figures 3 and 4.1 (Appendix 9). Figures 3.1–3.3 and 4.1 show how statements in response to the first question (What was your experience of the DMT group?) were assigned to various categories:

- Spontaneous Movement (Figures 3.1 and 4.1). Statements were assigned on the basis that they referred to movement in terms of release from intellectual or aesthetic direction.
- Interrupted Movement (Figures 3.1 and 4.1). Statements were assigned on the basis that they referred to movement stopping in mid-flow.

- Self-Awareness and Self-Acceptance (Figures 3.2 and 4.1). Statements were assigned on the basis that they referred to awareness and/or acceptance of physical and emotional states.
- Alienation from Self (Figures 3.2 and 4.1). Statements were assigned on the basis that they referred to a process of disconnection from sensing and feeling.
- Awareness and Acceptance of Others (Figures 3.3 and 4.1). Statements were assigned on the basis that they referred to sensitivity to others' physical and emotional states.
- Alienation from Others (Figures 3.3 and 4.1). Statements were assigned on the basis that they referred to processes of distancing from others.

The categories interpreted from Question 1 seemed sometimes to be connected to the categories interpreted from Questions 2 and 3 (Figures 3.4–3.6 and 4.2–4.4). However, sometimes contradictory connections were interpreted, for example, it seems that sometimes Self-Awareness led to Self-Confidence:

Before I had no confidence in choreography, because that thing was there that I couldn't let out, because if I had put that in my dance then everyone would see it and it was too personal. I hadn't faced it in myself.

However, sometimes Self-Awareness seemed to be linked to an increased sense of vulnerability:

I think it's because it's [the piece] so close to me that it means so much to me. It's part of me so if they said something about it, they say something about me. Because it's really closely connected, it scares me.

Generally though, Spontaneous Movement seemed to be connected to Playfulness and Self-Confidence, for example:

I had this strong feeling of what I could do ... I don't know whether I visualised it in my head or whether it was just purely a feeling that I felt just through moving. I felt my body could have done some really great things.

Awareness and Acceptance of Others seemed to be linked to Relationship, for example:

[In Technique] I was able to appreciate the other people moving and how they move. Before I did observe them, but now I can fully appreciate how much effort they are making.

Similarly, Interrupted Movement seemed linked to Confusion, for example, in reflections on self-consciousness arresting movement, and the confusion and embarrassment that followed. Alienation From Self seemed linked to Disappointment, for example, in reflections on not being able to let spontaneous movement and feelings emerge, and then feeling disappointed in self and group. Alienation From Others seemed linked to Hostility, with reference to comments such as: ‘I get really bloody irritated by the fakeness in this group’.

The six concepts relating to perceived effects of DMT were therefore:

- Playfulness (Figures 3.4 and 4.2). Statements were assigned on the basis that they referred to play, novelty, receptivity, freedom or enjoyment.
- Self-Confidence (Figures 3.5 and 4.2). Statements were assigned on the basis that they referred to feeling positive and empowered.
- Relationship (Figures 3.6 and 4.2). Statements were assigned on the basis that they referred to connection and involvement with others.
- Confusion (Figures 3.1 and 4.3). Statements were assigned on the basis that they referred to loss of purpose and motivation.
- Disappointment (Figures 3.2 and 4.3). Statements were assigned on the basis that they referred to feelings of dissatisfaction.
- Hostility (Figures 3.3 and 4.3). Statements were assigned on the basis that they referred to critical, aggressive or fearful feelings towards others.

Playfulness, Self-Confidence and Relationship seemed closely interconnected, as did Confusion, Disappointment and Hostility. Due to the volume of material in each of the first three categories it was decided to itemise them for discussion, but due to less evidence in the second three categories it was decided to discuss them as a whole. The synthesising category of Fearful Vulnerability was created in this instance, as it seemed to link Confusion, Disappointment and Hostility, in that fear of being ‘wounded’ in some way by others was present in all these states. Confusion was attached to loss of focus, which was attached to fear of other’s opinions; Disappointment was attached to dissatisfaction with the environment, which was attached to fear of others; Hostility was attached to criticism of others, which was attached to fear of others’ criticism.

The perceived causal factors (see Figures 3.1–3.6, 4.1 and 4.2, Appendix 9) attached to Spontaneous Movement, Self-Awareness and Self-Acceptance, Awareness and Acceptance of Others, Playfulness, Self-Confidence and Relationship were:

- Play

- Movement Metaphors
- Affirmation
- Safety.

Affirmation and safety have been highlighted as essential in the facilitation of therapeutic process (Payne, 1996, 2001; Meekums, 1998, 2000). Movement Metaphors seem to have been viewed by participants as part of Play, but it was decided to separate them out because in many cases it was playful involvement with specific movement metaphors that seemed to be associated with the development of Playfulness, Self-Confidence or Relationship. This argument is developed in Chapter 6. The four identified facilitating components of DMT were used to inform the creation of Figure 5 (Appendix 9), which presents them as concentric rings of experience. This evolving model may be compared to Meekums' creative model (1998, 2000, 2002), which emphasises the creative aspects of DMT and other arts therapies, with particular focus on metaphor. This research also suggests that it is creative engagement in a supportive environment that is perceived as therapeutic by participants. The perceived causal factors (see Figures 3.3–3.6, 4.1 and 4.3, Appendix 9) of Interrupted Movement, Alienation From Self, Alienation From Others and Fearful Vulnerability were:

- Self-Exposure
- External Judgment
- Absence of Safety.

These perceived environmental causes are discussed in Chapter 7. These results might also be compared to Meekums' findings (1998, 2000) relating to the difficulties of DMT for women survivors of child sexual abuse. They seem to indicate that allowing the body expression was experienced as both releasing and terrifying. Potential self-exposure, as well as the risk of critical external judgment, was perceived as inhibiting. Group support and safety was thought to have been empowering in the rewarding but difficult process with DMT and other arts therapies.

The interpretive links between Playfulness, Self-Confidence, Relationship and Choreography and Performance are illustrated in Figures 3.4–3.6 and 4.4 (Appendix 9). Playfulness linked to Choreography and Performance has been interpreted as present in perceptions of risk-taking and openness to the unexpected. Transference of playful experience in DMT (themes, shapes, emotions, music, props, ambience, movement metaphors/quality) has been interpreted as evidence of perceived relevance of DMT for Choreography and Performance. Spontaneous creation and trying out new ideas have

been interpreted as applying to both Playfulness (in terms of willingness to work without a score or convention) and Self-Confidence (in terms of feeling positive) in Choreography and Performance. The interpreted interrelationship between Playfulness and Self-Confidence is further discussed in Chapter 6. Perceptions of self-assertion, self-control and self-investment have all been correlated with Self-Confidence, on the basis that they testify to perceived self-empowerment. Finally, perceptions of enhanced relational components in Choreography and Performance have been linked to the perceived development of Relationship in DMT. All of these links are supported by the data and discussed in Chapter 8.

#### **4.5 Analysis of process**

I approached the process transcripts differently. Instead of ‘raking out’ all the data and systematically interpreting them, the following questions were asked: What are they talking about and how are they talking about it? These questions were intended to facilitate an analysis of process. Figure 2.2 (Appendix 9) shows my perception of how emotions, sensations, images, movement metaphors and relationships were discussed. Sometimes they were re-experienced, sometimes experiences were compared, sometimes others’ experiences were rejected, and sometimes there was silence. This evidence of different ways of responding to the movement experience informed the discussion of Play and Movement Metaphor, Affirmation and Safety (see Chapter 6) and Self-Exposure, External Judgment and Absence of Safety (see Chapter 7).

#### **4.6 Other possible interpretations of semi-structured individual and group interviews and process**

It is conceivable that the data could be grouped and interpreted differently. The influence of DMT frameworks of understanding (Schmais, 1985; Schmais and White, 1986; Payne, 1990, 1996; Levy, 1995; Meekums, 1998, 2000, 2002) and Winnicott (1985) is clearly evident in terms of the interpretive links made between:

- Spontaneous Movement and Playfulness/Self-Confidence
- Play and Playfulness/Self-Confidence/Relationship
- Movement Metaphors and Playfulness/Self-Confidence/Relationship.

The influence of humanistic frameworks is present in the conceptual link between:

- Affirmation and Playfulness/Self-Confidence.



The influence of therapeutic frameworks in general impacts upon the perceived connection between:

- Safety and Playfulness/Self-Confidence/Relationship.

Equally the focus on discussion of sensation, emotion, images, movement metaphors and relationship in the process data is influenced by DMT theory, arts therapies theory and metaphor theory. A sociologist might not focus on the content of the process, but concentrate much more on the culture of the group in terms of the wider context of dance in higher education.

It is therefore conceivable that analysis of all data from a perspective other than DMT might not focus on the movement component so much. A play therapist might focus interpretation on imaginative play. A 'verbal' therapist might focus interpretation on affirmation, safety and the process of verbalisation. In this respect it would be interesting to do a controlled study, isolating the different dimensions of experience suggested here and comparing the results.

In terms of criticism, interpretation might focus much more on the difficulties of DMT and dance in higher education. Even though much of the evidence points to a positively received experience particularly in terms of personal growth, an educationalist might query the learning component of the experiential group. Interpretation might therefore focus on learning, and produce a very different set of categories, for example, cognitive learning, emotional learning and physical learning. Thus, the interpretations presented in terms of categories and links between categories reflect the frameworks of understanding outlined above, yet they are supported by cross-reference to the data.

#### **4.7 Interpretation of metaphors**

In this discussion I will refer to Table 2 (Appendix 10) and Figure 6 (Appendix 9) as they encapsulate my interpretation of group metaphors. It will be noted that these interpretations are strongly influenced by existential frameworks for understanding human relationships and it is therefore expected that other frameworks of interpretation could be used to furnish different arguments. For example, the group process might be interpreted developmentally (as in Payne's research, 1996, 2001) or analytically (Foulkes and Anthony, 1984; Obholzer and Roberts, 1998).

As it is, Table 2.1–2.3 (Appendix 10) clearly shows the interpretations of movement metaphors in terms of existential concepts of separation and connection

(Appendix 7 offers the same summary with music and props indicated). These two fundamental aspects of existence: that human beings are alone and that they need to feel connected to others (O'Donohue, 1998) are proposed as propelling forces behind the movement metaphors. The spiralling round these two concepts is interpreted as occurring in different ways in the three cohorts. In C1 metaphoric response is interpreted variously as desire for a pre-birth merged state (spinning, lovers, child playing with her hair, squeezing together, embrace, nest, womb, cocoon, foetus, jigsaw, moulding), or negotiation/exploration of separation and difference (blocking, stand or sit, fast or slow, squeezing together/breaking apart, fleeting embrace, nest, trap, butterfly, departing), including exploration of intimacy/safety and danger in relationship (nest, encroaching ball games, cyclone/storm, ghost-train, fairground, tunnel, catapult, keeping ball on track, being naughty, jumping over people). The nest metaphor was interpreted in terms of merging, separation *and* intimacy as it seemed to represent these various dimensions of relationship to different people. Equally, the embrace was experienced both as connection and separation. In C2 metaphors are interpreted similarly as manifesting exploration of intimacy/safety and danger (playground, fluid relationship patterns, wrapping, guiding, getting married, glass barrier, encroaching ball games, guarding, party, circle). Support and caring in relationship has been interpreted in the wrapping and guiding metaphors. In C3 supportive relationship (massage) is contrasted with rivalry (parading, mimicking, contrasting, amplifying, trying to out-do, flamboyant movement, 'British Bulldogs', rolling on top of each other, competing for volume, squashing, powerful/aggressive/forceful throwing/kicking) and distance/isolation (islands, watching, gazing, staring, closed groups). Interpretation of metaphors is further discussed in Chapter 6.

Figure 6 (Appendix 9) interprets all the data (interviews and process) in terms of fearful/fragile response to separation contrasting with confident response to separation. Self and group are conceived as mutually interconnected and inter-responsive. Thus, individual inner state is considered to impact upon group, and group environment is considered to impact upon individual inner state (Giddens, 1989). Self-confidence is seen as pivotal in the development of intimate, communicative, sensitive and creative relationships, whilst fear is seen as pivotal in the development of either merged or hostile/competitive/oppressive relationships. The relationship between self and group/context is further discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

## **4.8 Conclusions**

This chapter has sought to clarify for the reader how the data were handled by the researcher. It is hoped that the 'workings out' have been clarified and the frameworks for interpretation acknowledged. Further to this, in Chapter 5, through a discussion of a developing model of DMT, the role of the therapist is analysed. In particular, the discussion of empathy in Chapter 5 complements Section 4.2 (Use of experience as therapist of the DMT groups in data analysis).

# CHAPTER 5. A DEVELOPING MODEL OF DMT

## 5.1 Introduction

There are a wide range of influences upon my thinking and practice as a dance movement therapist, which I have integrated into the model presented here. ‘Integrative’ is an increasingly popular concept in counselling and psychotherapy, as frameworks draw closer through a common belief in the value of the ‘therapeutic relationship’ (Kahn, 1997; Clarkson, 1995). According to Angelo (1998), ‘integrative’ implies planting and transforming concepts and methods inside self, rather than grafting them on, so that the integrative practitioner synthesises and actively creates a model, rather than copying a variety of models and using a ‘box of tricks’.

I have engaged with five key frameworks of therapy and movement through training, continuing professional development, work and personal therapy:

1. Gestalt movement-based expressive arts therapy (Tamalpa Institute)
2. Psychodynamic DMT (Laban Centre)
3. Feldenkrais Method
4. Humanistic, person-centred counselling and psychotherapy
5. Authentic Movement.

The interaction with each of these five frameworks has been creative, and from it my own way of working has been born.

## 5.2 Key frameworks of therapy and movement

### 5.2.1 *Gestalt movement-based expressive arts therapy*

Daria Halprin (2003) introduced me to a five-stage model for using movement to connect with personal themes:

1. Identify
2. Express/confront
3. Release
4. Change
5. Grow.

Staying in the present moment, and developing different channels of awareness (awareness of body, awareness of emotions, awareness of images and awareness of thought patterns), the training emphasised letting movement emerge and evolve without using force of mind to change it. The Halprin's model (Halprin, 1995, 2003) was an organic one, which trusted in the ability of the body to provide guidance in the art of balanced living. Other media, such as creative writing, art, drama and voice, were used in response to movement experience to broaden the field of perception.

Within this 'now'-based model there was space for the expression of 'unfinished business', unresolved and disconnected emotional turbulence, to emerge and be expressed (Stanton-Jones, 1992). Work on the 'inner child' (Halprin, 2003) involved imagining and being a child again and reconnecting with feelings from the past.

### *5.2.2 Psychodynamic DMT*

Psychodynamic theory of internal dynamics, hailing from Freud, provides a framework of interpretation of human behaviour based on the relationship between the id, ego and superego (Brenner, 1974; Brown and Pedder, 1989). Within this framework, control of chaotic instinctual drives is the concern of both the ego (as 'conscious' self) and the superego (as absorbed parental authority). Without control or with too much control the drives are perceived to threaten the existence of the ego and the superego. A balance between expression of id impulses and tempered id activity is sought.

The concept of unexpressed emotion incorporated in the body (Reich, 1933; Lowen, 1994) and its release through movement is central to the model of psychodynamic DMT. Interpretation by the therapist is thought to be helpful in a process of 'conscious' integration of rediscovered emotion. Repressed emotion, particularly in relation to a parent, is considered to give rise to the phenomenon of Transference: an inserting of past into present relationship. The concept of transferential relationship is utilised in the therapeutic relationship (Clarkson, 1995) as a central vehicle for process. The therapist's ability to perceive counter-transferential feelings and images arising in response to Transference is thought to give the therapist insight into the patterns of relationship that the patient unconsciously creates.

### *5.2.3 Feldenkrais Method*

Moshe Feldenkrais developed a philosophy and system of movement which encourages body awareness through small, precise, articulated movements, on both left and right

sides of the body, supported by the floor (Rywerant, 2003). Allowing the body to be as it is and not trying to force change is a central aim in the Feldenkrais Method. Awareness is another. Change through experiencing and awareness is a concept shared with Gestalt Therapy (Stevens, 1971).

#### *5.2.4 Humanistic, person-centred counselling and psychotherapy*

Humanistic theory derives from a variety of Eastern and Western influences (Rowan, 1995). It emphasises human potential rather than illness. It aims to integrate body and mind and to activate the client's agency by letting go of the concept of therapist-expert, and by encouraging the client to experience self in the present moment with awareness.

The person-centred framework in humanistic counselling and psychotherapy was developed by Carl Rogers. Its central component is the therapeutic relationship and the creation of conditions for therapy that are conducive to the unfolding of the client's potential. In 1958 Rogers gave a paper entitled 'The Characteristics of a Helping Relationship' (Rogers, 1996) in which he asks the therapist to consider ten questions, relating to therapist input:

1. Can I be in some way that will be perceived by the other person as trustworthy, as dependable or consistent in some deep sense?
2. Can I be expressive enough as a person that what I am will be communicated unambiguously?
3. Can I let myself experience positive attitudes towards this other person - attitudes of warmth, caring, liking, interest, respect?
4. Can I be strong enough as a person to be separate from the other?
5. Am I secure enough within myself to permit him his separateness?
6. Can I let myself enter fully into the world of his feelings and personal meanings to see these as he does?
7. Can I receive him as he is? Can I communicate this attitude?
8. Can I act with sufficient sensitivity in the relationship that my behaviour will not be perceived as a threat?
9. Can I free him from the threat of external evaluation?
10. Can I meet this other individual as a person who is in the process of becoming, or will I be bound by his past and by my past? (pp. 50–55).

Key elements of person-centred therapeutic relationship may be perceived in these ten questions: separateness and empathy, relational depth, non-possessive caring, awareness

of self and other in the present moment, positive regard for what the client is feeling and being in the present moment, freedom from judgment, sensing the creative potential of the present moment, communication of receptivity towards the client, non-intrusive presence, trustworthiness, consistency, and unambiguous congruent communication. These elements of being are considered in person-centred practice (based on both behavioural research employing external rating and on qualitative research asking for client perceptions) to contain and facilitate client self-healing and personal growth through relational connection based on spontaneous vitality and emotion.

### *5.2.5 Authentic Movement*

Whitehouse (1958a, 1972) conceived Authentic Movement as ‘being moved’ from an ‘inner impulse’. She advised waiting quietly for the impulse to arrive and moving with eyes closed to intensify inner connection with impulse, emotion and image. Movement takes place in the presence of a witness, who endeavours to be open and receptive to the mover (Musicant, 1994, 2001; Payne, 2003), aware of separate self, in terms of sensations, emotions and images. This relationship between mover and witness is conceived as a cradle in which the ‘authentic’ self, originating in inner impulse, can express and observe itself. The quality of the witnessing is perceived as affecting the ‘authenticity’ of the movement. The greater the receptivity of the witness, the more vital the movement becomes.

## **5.3 Evolution of a model**

Out of my experience and training in these five frameworks I created a way of working which emphasised the following attitudes:

### *1. Allowing*

I ask participants to give themselves permission to relax and ‘let go’ and to try to let their movement flow without thought of how it might look and without force.

### *2. Awareness*

I ask participants to notice their physical self (breath, muscles, skin, joints, head, neck and shoulders, ribcase, back, arms and hands, pelvis, legs and feet) during the warm-up and the process. I also ask them to notice any emotions, images and thoughts of mind. I advise them that if one level of awareness seems to give them no source of movement or seems to overwhelm them, they can make a choice to open and develop another level of awareness.

### *3. Attuning and responding*

I ask participants to attune themselves to and respond to sensations, emotions and images through movement, whilst acknowledging the need to be still at times. I ask them to attune mind to body and to give the sensation, emotion or image life by breathing and moving.

### *4. Imagining*

I encourage people to leave their adult self behind and to re-experience childhood. I encourage them to play creatively using movement and props, to build a world of make-believe. I ask them to inhabit their imagination and become physically and dramatically involved in this world (Pearson, 1996). As a result of this research I am developing a new model of DMT, which is illustrated in Figure 5 (Appendix 9). In this model play, movement metaphors, acceptance and safety are considered as interconnected aspects of experience. Discussion of these four interconnected aspects of experience is presented in Chapter 6.

In addition to these four attitudes, I discuss three baseline ground rules for the creation of group safety. These are:

- Commitment to confidentiality
- Commitment to personal responsibility
- Commitment to participation.

Confidentiality may be defined as not talking about anyone else; personal responsibility may be defined as ‘owning’ and containment of feelings towards others which might be due to personal emotional processes and harmful to others; participation may be defined as a willingness to try to engage with DMT process.

The framework that seems the least in evidence in the four attitudes is the psychodynamic framework. Whilst this framework offers an interpretation of internal and interpersonal dynamics, I have found it least helpful of all the frameworks because it does not sit comfortably with my experience and perception of life. I consider the framework to be essentially deterministic, which clashes with my own preference for the concepts of agency and choice. However, the concept of counter-transference has been useful to me, though I prefer to perceive this phenomenon in a slightly different way. I attribute the flow of feelings between therapist and client to human permeability. Kinaesthetic sensitivity to unvoiced, invisible feelings and images (Cox and Theilgaard, 1989) seems to me to be attached to a human ability to be porous to the invisible and the inaudible. I do not reduce this communication to previous significant relationship, but



am inclined to accept it, rather than interpreting it, as an expression of a person's experience 'here and now' (Rowan, 1995). The concept of 'advanced empathy' (Egan, 1994) is not dissimilar to the concept of counter-transference, indicating detection of unconscious communication. In 'advanced empathy' as in counter-transference the therapist's ability to connect and separate is considered essential. Connection allows for empathic transfer of experience, whilst separation allows for distinction between personal and transferred feelings.

#### **5.4 Reflections on space, structure, timing and metaphor**

My aim in the DMT sessions was to create a playing space (Winnicott, 1985) in which the imagination had a leading role. First, I would invite everyone into a circle, as in a ritual, with the intention of forming a hermetic ring, in which the individual might be released from the constraints of everyday life. I described the session as 'a special time' in which everyone could let go of what had happened to them that morning and what was about to happen afterwards, and just relax and enjoy the moment, giving themselves permission to feel and move the way they needed to. I drew people together through movement in time to music (Chaiklin and Schmais, 1979), and once everyone felt warmed up and ready to play, I no longer took a lead, but let the movement process develop uninstructed. The move from structure to freedom of choice in movement terms happened in response to the group process, which was considered to begin when people walked into the studio. I noticed how the group seemed as the warm-up progressed. Did I perceive a desire to stay together in structured activity or did I perceive a need to separate and explore? In order to find out from them what they wanted to do, I asked the group if they wanted to stay together in the circle or move into unstructured time freely choosing to be alone or to move spontaneously with others. If the group chose unstructured time, I moved in and out of relationships with participants, all the time trying to be aware of the group as a whole. Some detailed reflection on particular interactions follows.

The dominant presence of metaphor as transformative agent in the playing space illustrates DMT theory (Payne, 1990, 1992; Stanton-Jones, 1992) and corresponds to Meekums' (2002) creative model of DMT. Meekums states that her model views 'DMT as a creative act in which the central importance of the movement metaphor supersedes any emphasis on behavioural, cognitive, relational, spiritual or psychodynamic goals' (p. 13). This creative model, valuing inspiration and revelation through imagination, seems

to me potentially appropriate for dancers who have not declared themselves in need of therapy, and who apparently do not have problems that interfere with their daily ability to function in the world. The degree to which the participants in this research moved into Meekums' (2002) 'illumination' stage in which sense-making of metaphor occurs varied. Often the metaphor was allowed to rest. It is notable that in therapeutic work with children metaphor is often left at symbolic level (Pearson, 1996) whilst adults seem to have a greater need to interpret. A full discussion of the way in which participants seem to have used metaphor is given in Chapter 6.

## 5.5 Reflections on congruence

Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?  
 Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?  
 (Carroll, 1912)

Throughout the therapeutic processes of the three cohorts, I made case notes and painted pictures (Appendix 8) after the sessions, and reflected during supervision. These were the clinical tools that enabled me to feel my way inside my own experience with the cohorts. They helped me to be more aware of my own sensations, emotions and imagination, clarifying my involvement in the interactive process (Cooper, 2001).

My paintings were an imaginative response to my experience of the DMT process. Sometimes they were of my feelings, sometimes of myself in relationship, sometimes of my perception of the group or of individuals in the group and I am not in the frame because I felt less involved. These paintings sometimes helped me to see things of which I was unaware, providing a source of insight for reflective analysis. In all cases they were expressionistic and helped me to reconnect with the feelings experienced at the time.

I will discuss three different examples of my response to the DMT process with a view to discussing the concept of congruence. These examples took me variously into a shared experience, out of shared experience, and possibly connected me to the experience of others [therapist's body as container of others' unconscious feelings (Lewis, 1993)].

### 5.5.1 *Into shared experience*

First, in C1 Session 3, I was feeling lonely and lost, dangling in the space, uncertain of my role, feeling less than capable of holding everyone's process. I focused into my body

(Gendlin, 1981) and felt emptiness in the hollow cave of my chest. I was moving like a shadow, as if reflected by something else, without internal purpose (Painting C1:3, Appendix 8). I was tangled up in my perceived role of caring for everyone else and I had lost touch with my own sensations, emotions and images.

I perceived that the people in the group might also be lost. This perception was based on observation of some people wandering around, some massaging each other in pairs and threes. Aware that we could all be lost, I moved back to back with one person, to see if she wanted to explore movement together and compare this to being alone. She was sitting down, slightly curled over, quite still. I sat down back to back with her and felt the warmth of her body against mine. We both relaxed and our bodies connected in easeful relaxed contact and support, then we began responding to each other's movement, rocking side to side, leaning backwards and forwards. When the group came together, my partner shared how lonely she had felt before we moved together. She cast me in the role of the wise one, someone who seemed to know how she was feeling and had come to rescue her. She explored her pattern of waiting for others to take action rather than asserting herself and spoke of her desire to state her own needs in future. In subsequent weeks she explored her themes of self-assertion with growing confidence. She explained how this personal groundwork was the foundation of her choreography on Greek Cypriot women in a male-dominated culture.

In this session her ability to share her feelings prompted others to explore their feelings of loneliness. I had been part of this group experience of loneliness and I acknowledged my own feelings to the group. The discussion then spiralled around our need for others as well as our need for self-assertion in relation to others. This was a moment of connection in the group and I was part of that connection. C1 emphasised my involvement as significant in facilitating process in DMT.

I learned about myself as therapist through this interaction. I learned that I was not happy to be a dispassionate observer of process. I did not want to be on the periphery, uninvolved. I learned that if I did this, I was a shadow of a therapist, not fully present, not connected to myself or to others. By attending to my body I connected with feelings of emptiness and this moved me into relationship with someone who was feeling something similar. Natiello (2001) writes: 'Authentic relationships require openness, responsiveness, shared power, alternating influence, co-operation, and strong commitment to the empowerment of the client' (p. 35).

I suggest that the experience I have described helped me to appreciate the value of authentic relationship, for both therapist and client. We both let down our guards in this moment and we both experienced our need for each other and for others. This helped me to connect with participants' reflections on being alone and being with others. In letting myself be vulnerable, I could feel my own aloneness and need for connection and I discovered that many people in the group were feeling this too. Friedman (1994) states:

A certain very important kind of healing – existential healing – takes place through meeting rather than through insight and analysis. The existential trust of one whole person in another has a particular representation in the domain of being (p. 59).

Lambert's psychotherapy research, reviewed in Miller *et al.* (1995) maintains that the quality of therapeutic relationship accounts for 30% of positive outcomes and clients' participation for 40%. It is tentatively suggested that this example may have strengthened the therapeutic relationship and built trust, which contributed towards a safe environment for therapeutic process: 'I felt like I could trust you'. My partner emphasised the importance of authenticity in several sessions after this experience. She continued to work with sensation, emotion and imagination, embodying personal themes and exploring them through movement.

Yet the investment in authenticity is not without dilemma. Is the therapist ethical in gratifying her own needs in a group? Therapy training generally involves a process of self-awareness, through which the therapist learns how to siphon off her own issues so that they do not colour the client's process. There is a possibility of role reversal if the therapist expresses her own feelings, so that the client might be placed in the unethical position of having to take care of the therapist. Rogers (1975) describes congruence as 'laying yourself aside' (p. 4) and immediacy as the direct sharing of the therapist's feelings, judged by the therapist to be for the client's benefit. Such an altruistic rationale seems to me to ignore the creative possibilities in sharing existential pain and joy. I am arguing for acknowledgement of feelings by the therapist from a vision of therapy as an intimate sharing of human experience in which the therapist is included.

There is no doubt that such a vision is contentious. What is the specific role of the therapist in such a model? Does she not become one of the participants and lose her distinction as therapist? My argument still designates the therapist as someone who nurtures an awareness of everyone's emotional state, providing an emotional safety net for participants. Yet, in addition, I am arguing for therapist awareness and sharing of

existential truths, stemming from my lived experience of the healing capacity of honest, direct human contact (C1: DMT 3, Appendix 8).

Another ethical question emerges from this example. How in a group of 14 people could I justify this focus on movement experience with one person? Did this involvement not take me away from being present for the others in the group? There is inevitably tension between the concept of authentic involvement in relationship with one or a few and the responsibility of the therapist to be there for everyone.

Therapist presence in the 'here and now' (Rowan, 1985) means letting go of formulas for intervention. Yalom (1991) states:

Therapists frequently wobble, improvise and grope for direction. The powerful temptation to achieve certainty through embracing an ideological school and a tight therapeutic system is treacherous: such belief may block the uncertain and spontaneous encounter necessary for effective therapy (p. 13).

I am arguing that if I, as therapist and human being, value someone, I enter into relationship, and it is through this commitment that they will know that I value them. Knowing someone cares enough to be involved brings a joyous feeling, which, I would argue, can be supportive of a person's sense of self. Equally, the type of commitment I offer in opening up my vulnerable world of feelings can encourage people in therapy to be with me in such a world. Using this rationale, my own ability to be vulnerable becomes a significant factor in therapeutic process.

Yet, what of more destructive urges that I might feel, for example, anger, hatred or rivalry in relation to a client? I would argue that expression of such emotions would be hurtful and destructive. The responsibility of the therapist in this instance would be to contain the feelings, drawing them into consciousness and taking them away to personal therapy for expression and exploration. I would consider immediacy, in this example, to be inappropriate. Thus, although I consider congruence might involve sharing of deep human emotions such as grief, loss, loneliness, I agree with Rogers (1959) and Mearns (1997, 2003) that congruence must also involve discrete containment of feelings.

On observation and participation, Yalom (1991) states:

Therapists have a dual role: they must both observe and participate in the lives of their patients. As observer, one must be sufficiently objective to provide necessary rudimentary guidance to the patient. As participant, one enters into the life of the patient and is affected and sometimes changed by the encounter (p. 13).

I found that the groups for DMT in this inquiry were too large for one therapist to be deeply aware of everyone's process. I was trying to stay alert to any need for support generally, whilst empathising and being aware of my own feelings with one or a few individuals. I was often overwhelmed by the enormity of the task that I had set myself and I noticed that this feeling transmuted into a feeling of distance and separation from the people in the group. This feeling of distance seemed to increase in C2 and C3, perhaps connected to the increased size of group (C1, 14; C2, 20; C3, 17). Foulkes (1991) delineated a 'task group' as between nine and 15 members and a 'large group' as between 15 and 70, indicating that the task group might achieve intimacy more quickly.

### *5.5.2 Out of shared experience*

I will look at some moments from C3, Session 2 to discuss this concept. After the warm-up I felt vague, without direction, without connection to others. I did not focus on my body or my feelings as I had done in the example above. Instead I joined in with a ball game, moving mechanically and patting down a vague feeling of dissatisfaction.

My painting (Painting C3: 2, Appendix 8) shows four black pin people locked in a black square. There seems to be very little room for movement in the figures; they seem fixed or bound in some way. Compared to this 'stuckness', the ball is whizzing round and round and across the frame, like a crazy fly, mesmerising the people. My picture seems to me to lift out my hidden experience of the ball game, the denied feeling of tightening in my body, the loss of flow, the sense of being trapped. I was not sufficiently in touch with my own process during the session to be able to share it with others. So I stayed stuck and closed.

In this session, the theme of 'not getting what I want from this group' (C3: 1) reached an impasse. There were a few clashes during the session and an expression of hurt and anger during the verbalisation, resulting in tears and a hug. Yet the deeply rooted problem of historical wounding was not unearthed, and relationship based on sharing of internal feelings was rejected by many. My experience of dissatisfaction could be seen to be connected to the dead-end conclusion of this session – a parallel process (Hawkins and Shohet, 1996).

### *5.5.3 Connection to the experience of others*

In C2, Session 1, after the warm-up, most of the group gravitated towards the edges of the big studio. Some people gazed out of the windows as they stretched their legs in

balletic poses at the *barre*. Others huddled in twos and threes, talking. Some lay down. Contrasting with this, two people danced with ease, luxuriating in the music. They spun, they opened out their bodies, they reached outwards and upwards. The contrasts were stark: earth and air, closed and open, static and fluid, solid and spinning.

Where was I in all of this? I stayed with stillness on the edge and then joined the moving people and flowed round the studio with open expansive movement, in order to appreciate the contrast between static and flowing energy. Soon I noticed that I was feeling nauseous (Painting C2: 1, Appendix 8). It was a strong feeling. I wondered where it came from. Supervision facilitated discussion of several possibilities. It could have been a physical manifestation of my own anxiety growing out of an awareness of reluctance (perceived rebellion) in the majority of the group. It could have been my own physical rejection of the degree of openness that I felt in the expansive movements I was making. In my mind the words came: 'Too much too soon'. I wondered if my nausea was not just my own anxiety, but also a manifestation of the nausea not being felt by the static, huddled, collapsed people around the edges of the studio (Lewis, 1993).

The events of Session 2 confirmed the message of reluctance I was receiving. One student, in particular, strongly rejected the purpose of the group and others spoke of feeling exposed, awkward, self-conscious and unsafe. Later in interview some people acknowledged their fear of exposure in exploring personal material in dance: 'I never did anything based on personal material, on emotions. It was always movement shapes probably because I never wanted to put myself up for someone else to judge'.

## 5.6 Reflections on empathy

I consider that the art of 'attending' is essential in a process of empathic awareness. I am defining 'attending' as a two-fold process. First, the therapist waits for clients to move or speak, with welcome anticipation for whatever they chose to do and however they choose to be. Next, the therapist joins the dance with self-awareness, in what may become a mutually created metaphor, the client leading and the therapist following. In this definition of 'attending' I suggest that there are connections with UPR (waiting with welcome anticipation), congruence (joining with self-awareness) and empathy (joining and following).

In DMT I feel that sometimes I experience something akin to Cooper's (2001) concept of 'embodied empathy' – resonating 'down to the bones' (p. 222) – and Heathcote's (1984) concept of empathy through imagination. By moving into the

imaginary drama, I feel that I am able to connect with clients' feeling world and share some of their emotional experience. Rogers (1959) states: 'Being empathic is to perceive the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy and with the emotional components and meanings which pertain thereto ... ' (p. 210).

I like to wait until I feel that I am invited into the drama. I need to know that the person wants me to be there and wants to include me in the imaginary journey. Often in this inquiry I did not feel invited in. Instead I felt wariness. Discussion of participants' apprehension is presented in Chapter 7. In Chapter 3 the use of empathy as research tool has been discussed. Further to this, I will now examine briefly three interventions aimed at empathic awareness.

### 5.6.1 Example 1

In C1, Session 6 I was invited into the 'big tent' which had been created with the stretch cloth. There was a 'bubbly', vivacious atmosphere inside the tent that seemed to be infectious. Everyone was chattering, wriggling and snuggling. I felt infused with the excitement and the happiness of the group. I could imagine myself as a young child again, feeling the excitement 'in my bones'. Rogers continues with his definition of empathy:

[Empathy] means to sense the hurt or the pleasure of another as he senses it and to perceive the causes thereof as he perceives them, but without ever losing the recognition that it is *as if* I were hurt or pleased and so forth (p. 211).

In sensing the warm glee of the group, I was aware that I had not initiated it. I suggest that I had gained access to it through my body and my imagination.

### 5.6.2 Example 2

In C2 in the final session, for the first time the group stayed together. They sang and danced in a circle, holding hands and singing. There was a celebratory as well as a defiant atmosphere in the group. Participants spoke of feeling joyful, sad and cross. I was part of the circle for a short while but my attention was more focused on one member who sat alone. I was aware that she had just lost her grandfather. We had spoken before the session and she told me that she wanted to attend the final session. I asked her if she needed anything from me; she did not know. I moved out of the circle and asked her if she would like me to sit with her. She said 'Yes' and we sat together



quietly side by side. I felt her sadness, whilst being aware of the jubilation in the circle. It was a strange split experience, but I clearly remember the resonance of the sadness inside me contrasting with the visual awareness of the circle.

### *5.6.3 Example 3*

In C3, Session 8, I joined a group of ‘swinging monkeys’ on the igloo frame. I felt a sense of being in the group, but also of emotional distance towards me and possibly in the relationships between others. People were swinging towards each other, resting for a while then swinging away. This was the session where someone shared her perception of the experience as: ‘We were like islands’. As the monkeys descended to the floor, there was more connection in pairs, dancing together. I moved to join with a partner and immediately sensed a rejection: her movements seemed precise and clipped, almost mechanical. Soon she moved away to join a massage dyad with a friend. Empathy was closed to me on this occasion. I was not invited into experience. The participant did not want to explore anything with me.

## **5.7 Therapeutic process compared to research process**

Whilst use of experience as therapist in this research has been discussed at the beginning of this chapter and in Chapter 3, it seems important also to consider the differences between therapy and research. The tension between experience and analysis has already been discussed in Chapter 3 with reference to the work of Carl Rogers. It seems to me that this suggested dichotomy is useful in discussing the differences between therapy and research. As a practitioner working mainly in a humanistic, person-centred framework, my focus is certainly on ‘here and now’ (Rowan, 1985) experiencing. Yet, as researcher, I was interested in analysing how participants were responding to DMT, which led me to ask questions, such as: Did you make any sense of the image? Thus, the analytic inquiry into how the students were responding to process as well as the analytic inquiry into perceptions of causality differed considerably from my practice as therapist. While capitalising on the strengths of the therapeutic mode, this research aimed to develop other skills in analysis of data. These differences are represented in Table 1 (Appendix 10).

## **5.8 Conclusions to reflections on the therapeutic process**

I have explored aspects of a developing model of DMT experienced by participants in this multiple case study. I have reflected on specific interventions with reference to interpretations of congruence and empathy. Essentially, my intention was to create an environment in which students felt free to play with movement using their imagination. Generally, I did this through affirmation and acceptance of their movement and feelings by smiling, moving with them, reflecting their movement and their words, staying with stillness and silence (Painting C3: DMT6, Appendix 8). I showed them that I was able to play, and in so doing I encouraged them to forget any improvisational agendas to discover material for choreography and to indulge in whatever movement emerged.

The problematic nature of therapist congruence has been discussed. Thoughts on the relationship between therapist and clients have been offered. The significance of the therapist's personal presence in terms of sensation, emotion and imagination for both facilitating and understanding the process of therapy has been suggested. In the next three chapters I discuss the findings of the study.

# CHAPTER 6. ‘SPECIAL INGREDIENTS’ IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLAYFULNESS, SELF-CONFIDENCE AND RELATIONSHIP

## 6.1 Introduction

The research questions were: Are there any perceived links between DMT, choreography and performance? If so, what are they and how do they develop? This chapter responds to part two of research Question 2: How do they develop? It discusses response to the DMT group and perceived personal effects. It was intended that following the trail back to the original experience and finding out if this was perceived to have caused personal change would shed light on how connections between DMT, choreography and performance, if they were perceived to exist, developed. Data for this chapter are taken primarily from the semi-structured individual and group interviews, with particular reference to Questions 1 and 2:

1. What was your experience of the DMT group?
2. Has it affected you personally, and, if so, how?

The interpreted categories of perceived effect on self (perceived to exist both in the context of the DMT group and as permanent development), namely playfulness, self-confidence and relationship, are explored in this chapter, whilst the interpreted category of perceived effect on self (perceived to exist in the context of the DMT group), namely fearful vulnerability, is discussed in Chapter 7. Detrimental effects of therapy are also discussed in Chapter 7. The evolution of the categories created from these questions has been discussed in Chapter 4 and Figures 2–4 give visual representation of this process. To summarise: Question 1 gave rise to the dichotomies:

- Spontaneous movement versus interrupted movement
- Self-awareness and self-acceptance versus alienation from self
- Awareness of others versus alienation from others.

Commonly perceived causal factors for these phenomena were play, movement metaphors, acceptance and safety versus self-exposure, external judgment and absence of safety.

Question 2 gave rise to the following gathering concepts:

- Playfulness (containing several categories, including spontaneous movement)
- Self-confidence (containing several categories, including spontaneous movement, self-awareness and self-acceptance)
- Relationship (containing several categories including awareness and acceptance of others).

Although in Question 1 the participants spoke about inhibitory and alienating experiences in DMT, they seem to have perceived effects as mostly positive in the long term, although one participant felt that she had gained nothing either personally or artistically from the group. The difficulties experienced in group DMT were discussed, however, and these are given representation in Chapter 7. As already stated, it must be acknowledged that perception of negative effects could have been sought more directly, as in Gilroy's (1989, 1992) study, in which she asked participants to consider both stimulating and inhibitory influences of Art Therapy training on art-making. The absence of questions designed to ferret out negative perceptions might be considered as a weakness in this study, as discussed in Chapter 4. However, open-ended questions were expressly chosen to give the interviewee freedom of response.

The second source of data in this chapter is the recordings of verbal process, supplemented by case notes. At the beginning of the process verbalisation, participants were asked to respond to the following questions:

- What happened this week?
- What did you notice?
- How did you feel?

These questions may be seen to correspond to the first interview question:

- What was your experience of the DMT group?

The difference was that the question in the process was being answered immediately after the movement experience, so might be expected to give more impassioned detail of DMT experience than would be possible several weeks after the group had ended. Whilst the interviews might be expected to give rise to a more distanced and considered reflection on what happened and where it had left them, the process recordings might provide a different key to what happened by taking me back to the experience of the moment. Case notes were also used to begin to answer the question: How do they talk about what they talk about? This question was used as a focus for the analysis of the process recordings in order to shed light on how the participants were engaging with

DMT, and hence to provide further insight into development of perceived effects. This has been discussed in Chapter 4.

To summarise, play, movement metaphors, acceptance and safety are interpreted as ‘special ingredients’ (in the DMT model experienced) in the development of playfulness, self-confidence and relationship (Figures 2.1, 3.1–3.6, 4.1 and 4.2, Appendix 9). The profiling of these four factors is based on process and interview reflections. Playfulness is defined as free, open, spontaneous engagement with process, often with enjoyment. Self-confidence is perceived as overlapping with playfulness in terms of openness to process, but containing other concepts such as self-value and self-assertion. Relationship is defined as connection to others and involvement with others. Play is defined as free, child-like movement, frequently involving imaginative experience. Movement metaphor is defined as symbolic movement. Acceptance is defined as affirmation of self, including experience and feelings. It refers to acceptance by others and also to self-acceptance. Safety refers to a feeling of security and containment.

Figures 2.1, 3.1–3.3, 4.1 and 4.3 (Appendix 9) also show that self-exposure, external judgment and absence of safety have been interpreted as significant factors in the inhibition of movement, self-awareness and awareness of others, based on process and interview reflections. The category of Fearful Vulnerability has been created to represent process and interview expressions of confusion, disappointment and hostility. Positively perceived experience is discussed in this chapter and negatively perceived experience is discussed in Chapter 7.

## **6.2 Play, movement metaphors, acceptance and safety in the development of playfulness, self-confidence and relationship**

### *6.2.1 Play and playfulness*

Play was identified as central to the model of DMT here experienced. Participants spoke of enhanced ability to play. Play was associated with fluidity and openness, freedom and exploration. Generally, participants valued having time to explore movement free from product-making. They felt they had been given permission to be themselves, encouraged to make internal connections and internal decisions. They spoke of ‘learning how to play again’, ‘feeling free’, ‘being a child again’, ‘forgetting their troubles’, ‘having fun’,

‘letting go’ and ‘not bothering about what others might think’. These comments on play informed the concept of playfulness emerging from the data.

It seemed that there were two essential aspects to the playfulness being developed in DMT:

- Fluidity and openness to process
- A feeling of enjoyment.

### *Fluidity and openness to process*

Fluidity and openness in movement was noticed: ‘There are times when I get lost in the movement and the movements flow one to another ... it comes so naturally’. Improvisation, as a strategy for discovering images, emphasises ‘the ability to be still and open one’s attention to the present moment’ (Tufnell and Crickmay, 1990). It might be suggested that there are parallels between DMT, Improvisation and Authentic Movement, in that all of these disciplines focus on listening to the body and letting the body express itself, free from external templates. In Authentic Movement the term used is following an ‘inner impulse’ (Whitehouse, 1958a, 1958b, 1972). In Improvisation the following process is described: ‘Setting the mind loose from the ongoingness of everyday life to find what lies at the edge, behind our thinking, seeing’ (Tufnell and Crickmay, 1990).

DMT is also justified on the basis of organic movement flow: ‘The creative process embodied in the use of free association in movement is inherently therapeutic’ (Stanton-Jones, 1992).

The following comment by a participant may suggest that openness to process may also be connected to childhood play in DMT:

A regressive childhood thing, age three, finding an inner something, rather than the intellectual ... If you go into inner emotions and feelings, the inner creative part, there’s a space for that intuitive, childlike, creative thing inside us, that you can tap, the Unconscious, and go with that, let the Unconscious come out a bit, let it flow, and if you can tap into that a bit really, rather than trapping it and getting caught in a web.

Freedom, going back in time, being a child again, intuitive awareness, emotion and creativity are all present in this reflection. Perhaps the emphasis on finding the child within and connecting with feelings through play is particular to the model of DMT here researched, differentiating it from Improvisation and Authentic Movement. Whilst both

improvisation (Tufnell and Crickmay, 1990) and Authentic Movement (Musicant, 1994, 2001; Payne, 2003) both focus on feelings, they do not generally encourage participants to recreate childhood again in a group context, using props to play with. Perhaps through DMT, as described in this inquiry, spontaneous movement may be infused with childlike, emotional vitality, contributing to the development of playfulness: 'In almost every session we were wild and childish; there was a playfulness about us....'

This childlike, emotional vitality was perceived as developing through suspension of intellectual and external concern, and through permission to explore 'inner' realities. The concepts of 'letting go', 'suspending the rational mind', 'playing with metaphors and symbols' have been discussed in relation to therapy (Winnicott, 1985; Cox and Theilgaard, 1987), in relation to DMT (Stanton-Jones, 1992; Payne, 1992; Meekums, 2002) and in relation to creativity (Arieti, 1976; Meekums, 1993). Winnicott (1985) writes:

Psychotherapy takes place in the overlap of two areas of playing, that of the patient and that of the therapist. Psychotherapy has to do with two people playing together. The corollary of this is that where playing is not possible then the work done by the therapist is directed towards bringing the patient from a state of not being able to play into a state of being able to play (p. 44).

Winnicott refers to therapy as 'playing' in a 'transitional space'. He sees therapy as a mingling of lived and imaginary experience, a meeting of two real/imaginary worlds. Playing, by Winnicott's definition, requires an ability to inhabit an imaginary world and this ability is cultivated by a relationship in which the person feels affirmed and respected as a valuable human being. Where affirmation and respect are present, the person's inner being or 'true self' can emerge in play and be creative.

### *A feeling of enjoyment*

Students emphasised 'having fun' and 'enjoying' play in DMT. Relishing personal movement in play is a common feature of childhood play (Millar, 1976; Garvey, 1977). In this instance, having fun seems to have contributed to free-flow movement and reconnection with self in dance:

Dance is there to be enjoyed, a way of expressing yourself, and when somebody stops (claps hands once) enjoying it ... that's very harming. I found that by doing this group (DMT), I thought 'No, I don't care. I might not be able to do that perfectly, but I'll try it and to hell with it'. Whereas before it was restrictive.

Enjoyment of movement in play seems to have motivated student involvement with DMT. It lessened anxiety in relation to the unknown quantity of DMT and weakened the restrictive influence of aesthetics and assessment. This finding corresponds to Mills and Daniluk's (2002) recent research into DMT with women survivors of child sexual abuse. In their study, 'permission to play' was identified as significant in providing balance in DMT. The women involved were able to recapture a feeling of playfulness and freedom through play, which constituted a vital counterpoint to the 'heavier' work of reconnecting with painful memories.

### *6.2.2 Play and self-confidence*

Winnicott (1985) suggests a sequence of three processes in development of a 'true' sense of self. The concept of the 'true self' seems akin to the Rogerian (Rogers, 1957) concept of congruence in that the inner life of the person is perceived as motivating external action. Winnicott's sequence is as follows:

1. Relaxation in conditions of trust
2. Creative, physical and mental activity manifested in play
3. The summation of these experiences forming the basis for sense of self (p. 66).

Dissipation of anxiety seems to have occurred through play in this study. The enjoyment and relaxation found in play were identified as facilitating involvement in process. In all cohorts, assertion of self was one of the first themes to emerge, as participants began to connect with inner impulses and feelings, and became more aware of needs, themes and patterns of behaviour. Winnicott writes: 'In these highly specialised conditions, the individual can come together and exist as a unit, not as a defence against anxiety but as an expression of I AM, I am alive, I am myself (p. 66)'.

The freedom afforded by play was acknowledged: 'It is not structured or set; it is free, you can do what you feel. You are not restricted in any way to do what someone is telling you to do or what you think you should do'. Sometimes participants discussed a process of emotional evolution and self-awareness through play. This process, and its relationship to self-confidence will be discussed in Section 6.4 (Movement metaphors and self-confidence).

## **6.3 Movement metaphors and playfulness**

Movement metaphors were vehicles of play in DMT. Thus, playfulness developed through engagement with movement metaphors. Students spoke of 'feeling more free in



their bodies', 'feeling looser', 'moving like a child' and 'moving spontaneously'. It seems that involvement with movement metaphors contributed to loss of 'dance-like' movement and to development of 'free-flow, un-self-conscious movement'. One student describes the spontaneous evolution of the 'nest' metaphor:

I remember how we made a bird's nest: everyone made a long line and I wanted to be part of it and not long after that everyone started changing and I just stayed where I was and when I sat up there was the bird's nest with the opening towards me, so I just climbed in and curled up.

This recollection captures the playful quality of movement, created in the moment, without conscious desire to craft or organise. This memory of creation of movement metaphor is fairly typical of other recollections of movement creation. The movements are described as 'coming out of nowhere', as 'playful' and 'spontaneous', as well as 'surprising', for example: 'That was weird!', 'It was amazing!'

The phenomenon of surprise in metaphor has been discussed in relation to therapy (Cox and Theilgaard, 1987), DMT (Meekums, 2002) and creativity (Arieti, 1976; Meekums, 1993). Cox and Theilgaard have noted the startling quality of metaphor as escapee from rational control; Meekums has warned of the power of movement to waken sleeping trauma in the body, whilst Arieti has noted the sudden creative synthesis that can occur through metaphor.

Chodorow (1991) refers to DMT as 'moving imagination'. As such, it has affinity with all therapies that use imagination as a central tool. In DMT participants may feel they can inhabit their imagination and share it with others. Participants in this study often engaged playfully with metaphor, sometimes fluidly and openly and sometimes with a sense of enjoyment and humour (Table 2.1–2.3 and Appendix 7). There seem to have been many metaphors, for example, the nest, the baby in the womb, the cyclone/storm, the embrace, the barrier, the playground, hiding under the stretch cloth.

It is suggested that in all these examples participants became involved in symbolic movement, usually without thought of potential meaning. It seemed as though they were immersed in the activity: they were in the nest, in the womb, in the cyclone/storm; they experienced the embrace, the barrier, the playground, and felt what it was like to hide under the stretch cloth, referred to as 'the green protection'. Through make-believe, it seemed that they were able to explore the various dimensions that the metaphor presented to them. They seem to have explored what was it was like both inside and outside the nest, womb, storm/cyclone; they seem to have experienced both the joy and

the sadness of the fleeting embrace and both the protection and the vulnerability of the barrier. They seem to have experienced the longing to join in as well as the fear of rejection in the playground, and to have enjoyed the secrecy and the freedom which they perceived 'the green protection' to offer them. Sometimes the experience of metaphor led to verbal connection with feelings, thoughts and personal themes, which were either discussed in the group or in individual interviews. Examples will be discussed in Sections 6.4 (Movement metaphors and self-confidence) and 6.5 (Play, movement metaphors and relationship). Sometimes, though, the experience of moving, feeling and imagining seemed enough in itself and no verbal sense-making took place:

*Interviewer:* Did you make any sense of the image? Did you make any connection with going inside the nest?

*Participant:* I just experienced it.

Cattanach (1995) writes:

Play is a symbolic process through which the children can experiment with imaginative choices aesthetically distanced by the creation of this other playing reality from the consequences of those choices in 'real' life (p. 224).

Thus, climbing inside the nest, getting married, tying and being tied, being in the storm and outside it, spinning and stopping, squashing and being squashed were not reflected on (in either group or individual interview) in relation to anything happening in the group or outside the group. They seem to have been experienced playfully in the moment without any compulsion to interpret. It seems hard to gauge if 'integration of release and augmented insight' (Cox and Theilgaard, 1987) took place through metaphor in these instances, or whether it was simply a process of catharsis. Both processes are possible. What can be argued is that in playing with metaphor, participants were able to experience themselves in a 'fluid, playful' way:

I used to have a problem with balance in Technique and Choreography, but now I feel free and I noticed how different I was. It wasn't just dance, it was me as well.

It opened me up to something new.

I'm not so serious in DMT. I can escape from that character and I can move in a different way, freely and with laughter.

## 6.4 Movement metaphors and self-confidence

As discussed above, movement metaphors seem to have been vehicles for the development of playfulness. Playfulness in movement was perceived as leading to emotional balance and self-confidence:

I expressed how I felt through movement and I can concentrate more now. DMT has helped me focus on things, just giving time for myself to sit down and notice how I am. I feel so brilliant. It's just nice to come out of DMT, and we go for a cup of tea and we talk, and X is really relaxed and revitalised and I feel really calm with the whole week in perspective.

Self-confidence was discovered in movement metaphor, perhaps illustrating the concept of re-creation of self in metaphor (Cattanach, 1995):

I really had this strong feeling of what I could do. I felt I could do some really brilliant things. I was feeling really great and getting more positive ... and I had this strong feeling of what I could do ... I don't know whether I visualised it in my head or whether it was just purely a feeling I felt just through moving. I felt my body could have done some really great things.

Sometimes involvement with movement metaphor led participants to make connections with feelings:

I felt really tired and lethargic and for the first time I stayed with this and moved in that way, I turned and rolled and felt my weight. I felt really annoyed and angry and I didn't realise I felt like that until I said it and it shocked me. As I crawled along I changed my weight emphasis and crawled on my hands really pushing into the ground. In the end I felt relieved, it was a really good release and I felt really calm afterwards.

Participants spoke about 'facing themselves', and sometimes worked with life themes through movement, with growing awareness:

In the session I was dragging Y around. I felt I was being really manipulative. I was dragging her and taking her where I wanted to, and she was doing what I wanted her to do, and I had a sense of being in control, because in my own life I'm really quite weak in the sense that I'll always do things for other people to please them.

Having a tantrum. Yes! Like really, really fast. I remember at one point I was on the floor doing something. It was really exhilarating. It was like being on a roller-coaster ride. I was spinning on the floor and tumbling, quite violent. I've noticed it sometimes when I'm improvising. I do have these violent kind of bashings on the floor. I

suppose its some kind of anger coming through, but I can't really figure out where it comes from ... although I do in a way....

Metaphors sometimes facilitated a process of association. For example, circular movement seemed to be a dominant movement pattern in C1. One participant recalled the spinning, turning and spiralling and she associated it with the sea and the wind: 'a free spirit always returning.' Another spoke about sea and mermaid imagery, associating freedom and beauty with the mermaids. The circle is an ancient symbol of spiritual being, representing the timeless cycle of birth and death, creation and destruction (Cooper, 1998) present in spiritual dance-forms (Langer, 1953). Its spontaneous emergence in this group was associated with infinity, for example, 'I felt as if I could have carried on running round and round for ever', and altered states of consciousness: 'I was lying on the floor and Y was walking about the space, a circular movement as if she couldn't stop. That was comforting but hypnotic'.

In these two examples it was as if the participant was caught up in a spin, mesmerised, made giddy and comforted by the whirling movement. One participant described how running round and round caused pain in her legs and how she felt disconnected from physical sensation as the giddiness and fun took over. In this instance circular movement became a vehicle for loss of physical awareness. Paradoxically, circular movement was also associated with heightened emotional awareness. For example, someone felt the pain of her isolation as she moved around the edge of the group, yet choosing to circle round and round became an important landmark in her personal process, symbolising her independence.

It seems that in some cases, self-awareness led to increased self-confidence in personal life as well as in choreography:

DMT has made me aware that I want to do and say what I feel from now on, and not lie.

Before, I had no confidence in choreography, because that thing was there that I couldn't let out, because if I put that in my dance then everyone would see it and it was too personal. I hadn't faced it in myself....

Whilst Gilroy (1989, 1992) argues that self-awareness can inhibit art-making, she also suggests a correlation between self-awareness and self-confidence. I will return to the relationship between self-awareness and creativity in Chapter 8. This section has been documenting how self-awareness through movement metaphor may contribute to

increased self-confidence. It seems that sometimes a process of self-awareness was set in motion through engagement with movement metaphor, which subsequently led participants to pay more attention to their feelings. They seem to have attended to their needs more fully and to have experienced a feeling of self-worth as a result:

I expressed how I felt through movement and I can concentrate more now. DMT has helped me focus on things, just giving time for myself to sit down and notice how I am. I feel so brilliant.

## 6.5 Play, movement metaphors and relationship

In playing together, the ebb and flow of movement brought people into and out of contact with each other. Relationships were experienced and explored through movement. In the individual interviews many of the participants remembered ‘whole-group’ metaphors, indicating a sense of feeling connected to the group. The majority of students spoke about their cohort seeming ‘closer’ as a result of engaging in the DMT group. In fact, perceptions of increased emotional and physical connection between participants, both in the group and outside of it, is one of the most significant findings of this study, on the basis of frequency and emphasis in the transcripts. This heightened connection might be compared to Templeton’s (1998) definition of *communitas* as a sensitive connection between group members, including a heightened awareness of each others’ physical, emotional, imaginative and spiritual being. A group may be seen as a dynamic constellation of individuals in relationship. The ebb and flow of energy, emotion and imagination in a group depends upon the quality of relationships between participants. In DMT it is believed that movement, emotion and imagination create metaphors that shed light on relationship (Stanton-Jones, 1992; Meekums, 2002).

The metaphors in C1 that received most attention in interview were circles (commented on by four people) and lines (four people). One circle: the nest (four people) had particular significance for participants. Within these metaphors I see the themes of connection and separation (Benson, 1987). These interpretations of movement metaphors are influenced by existentialist epistemology. However, inferences were informed by and cross-checked (regularly between 1997 and 2003) with participants’ reflections on their experience of metaphor. Thus, transcript reference to connection and separation informs the existentialist interpretation, inviting consideration of how participants felt during the process of connecting and separating with others; how relationship developed. Nevertheless, it is likely that another therapist or researcher, working within a different framework, would identify other unifying themes and make

other interpretations. For example, these metaphors might be interpreted by a sociologist as a response to a specific social situation, behaviour resulting from context (Giddens, 1989), rather than existentially inherent. For example, the metaphor of the nest, described as ‘a chaotic weaving in and out’ by one participant, could be seen from a social framework to manifest fear and anxiety in response to the absence of tasks in DMT. I will now discuss some of the metaphors using the concept of existential aloneness and need for connection. Internal process and external environment are considered as interactive. Concepts of individual developmental processes (Erikson, 1994), ‘splitting’ (Klein, 2001) and projection (Freud, 1908; de Maré *et al.*, 1991) are considered relevant to enhancing an understanding of internal process.

### 6.5.1 Cohort 1

The flux of energy in lines and circles reminded many people of the playground. As in a playground, participants seem to have experienced brief encounters of closeness and intimacy, before breaking apart again in independent movement. Trust and friendship, rivalry, competition, conformity and domination (Yalom, 1985; Houston, 1993) seemed to be live issues. They seemed to be acted out in playground games such as throwing objects at each other, trying to grab things from each other, exchanging clothes, performing dances about self-assertion and personal pride (for example, flamenco dancing). This shadow side of the playground was opened up in the second group interview when one person raised the subject of conformity and domination, revealing her own experience of oppression in the group. The naming of such undercurrents of power was difficult for the group to discuss. Conformity as confirmation of individual identity (Satir, 1988) can provide a refuge, and the pressure of the peer group is particularly strong in adolescence (Heaven, 2001). Whilst these students were not adolescents, their youth is perhaps a significant factor in the presence of peer-group pressure. Considerable self-confidence is required to challenge it. In C1, it seems that only one person’s self-confidence and trust in the group was strong enough to do so.

Lines were associated with connection and separation. One participant remembered how everyone had been connected in a long line on the floor. She felt ambivalent about this connection: wanting to be separate, she stood up, yet wanting to be part of the line, she stepped into any gaps that were left. Connection, love and friendship were associated with the line by three people who recalled a moment when everyone was connected in a line on the floor; as they looked up they saw two

participants whirling together in a brief embrace and then whirling apart again. The two involved associated different things with this metaphor: one remembering it as 'saying sorry' and the other experienced the theme of parting in it. Those who witnessed this moment felt both joy and sadness. It seemed to hold the group together for a moment. Everyone was focused on the duet. Later, it seemed to facilitate discussion of what it felt like to be alone and what it felt like to be in relationship.

In a different session one participant saw and felt the images and music from the film *Brief Encounter* in her mind as lines of people criss-crossed past each other. The image from the film of people coming and going from a railway platform seems to encapsulate much of the movement material of this group. de Maré *et al.* (1991) have theorised that fear of intimacy governs human relationships. The tentative reaching out to and withdrawal from each other present in this group might be seen as an illustration of this.

The metaphor of the nest formed itself out of lines and circles, woven together and apart spontaneously. Perceptions of the nest varied considerably. One person remembered it as a chaotic weaving together, and a desperate trying to escape:

It was very strange because we were all in a line, very rigid, and then it became chaos. It seemed like something was sorted out and it was fine ... and then ... confusion. Everyone was weaving in and out constructing a nest and yet we were birds trying to get out of the nest. It seemed like everyone was trying to get out but nobody could.

Another person remembered there being a 'calm connection' between group members, and yet another recalled the physical closeness and playfulness present in the weaving of the nest:

The nest image was in everyone's mind. That was a real moment...all that interweaving of arms and legs. I thought it was really playful...like threads weaving in and out.

The variety of perceptions of the nest seems to be connected to the variety of feelings amongst individuals about being in this group. One person acknowledged her feelings of 'disconnection' from the group, whilst another felt ambivalence towards joining the group and then enjoyed the feeling of being in the centre:

When everyone made a long line I wanted to be part of it, but I didn't want to join the line so I made a branch off it. Not long after that it all started changing and I just stayed where I was and when I sat up there

was a bird's nest with the opening towards me, so I just climbed in and curled up.

Whilst the metaphor of the nest created fear, confusion and a need to escape in one person, for another it represented the opposite: a containing space: a home where she could 'climb in and curl up'.

Anzieu (1984) refers to the potential of the group to become mother to itself, and Houston (1993) uses the image of the nest or womb to encapsulate this concept. It seems that in C1 the group was perceived in this way by some participants, a perception which seemed to arise from individual process (for example, being able to trust and needing to trust) and from the group environment (for example developing an open and trusting culture, letting go of past mistrust).

In this instance the nest may have symbolised the group as a place where participants would be accepted and nurtured till they were ready to leave. Feelings of wanting to escape from the nest and a recurring theme of longing to be outside the DMT space (gazing out of windows, opening windows) were strongly present in this group, but balanced with a strong sense of feeling safe and supported in the group. Perhaps the sense of safety and belonging, as well as the sense of fear of constraint and over-containment, facilitated the process of separation and emotional independence in C1. The easeful image of a butterfly emerging from a cocoon in one session seems to me to suggest a hopeful, willing response to growth and change.

The theme of separation and union present in the nest seemed a universal theme present in all groups. It surfaced over and over again in metaphor and dynamics. Separation and belonging may be perceived as fundamental to human existence, and the tension between hunger to belong to something larger than self and need to assert the self as separate may be considered as the nub of human experience (O'Donohue, 1998). The interpreted metaphors of separation and union that reappear throughout the DMT processes in the three cohorts may therefore be seen as manifestations of the essence of human experience.

Whilst I favour this existentialist analysis of these metaphors, I am aware that they could be interpreted from other perspectives. For example, a developmental perspective might consider the metaphors to manifest in some way the life-stage issues of the participants (Piaget, 1951; Erikson, 1994; Heaven, 2001). The majority of participants were in their early twenties, away from their family home during term time at university. They were in the process of leaving this family home and forming a separate identity. A



minority of participants had left behind both their family and their country to study at the university (C3), so separation in this instance could be seen as even more poignant. From a developmental perspective the metaphors of separation and connection would be seen as play promoting integration of life-stage issues.

The response to separation from the group was different in each of the three cohorts: C1 was ready to leave, wanting separation; C2 held on to an illusion of continued union, denying separation; and C3 broke apart in anger, hurt and regret, taking refuge in separation. These responses could be attributed to a need to assert a separate identity after intimate group process (C1), a need to continue the process of trust building (C2), and a longing for intimacy strangled by mistrust and fear (C3).

### 6.5.2 Cohort 2

Separation and connection seemed to be a theme contained in the movement metaphor of the mirror. Mirroring and being mirrored was perhaps particularly needed in C2 (the only group which had not worked together before, although some group members knew each other) to create a sense of empathy and acceptance as well as strengthening the sense of separate identity and facilitating self-awareness (Stern, 1985; Winnicott, 1985). In this instance, the creation of movement relationships by participants might be seen to fulfil their therapeutic need (Bohart and Tallman, 1999). Alternatively, mirroring might be experienced and perceived as merging with another, a fearful response to separation (Yalom, 1991).

The skipping-rope was a central feature in this group, created by winding up the green stretch cloth. It occupied most of the space, a core group congregating round it and people coming and going from it. For several participants this activity awakened memories of school, the need to join in a group and the fear of doing so. They were able to re-experience the anxiety of venturing into a group and were happy with the positive outcome of acceptance in their DMT group. In some cases skipping brought back memories of connection, which were contrasted with current feelings of separation: 'While I was skipping, I remembered all about my playground, and how I used to participate in things. Sometimes I feel very distant from people.'

There were strong movement contrasts in this playground. One participant recalled quietness and wildness occurring at the same time. Another's dominant memory was of frantic movement in the central space, encircled by pockets of internally

oriented activity: extroversion in the centre and introversion on the edges. Others noted the scarcity of whole-group movement.

Group size and stage of development might account for the absence of cohesion. Generally, participants were content with diversity in terms of varied activity and varied levels of connection with feelings and images, perhaps because they were not yet certain that they wanted to enter into a group process. The unity felt in the final session in the circle showed a change towards group interconnection, the metaphor making dynamics visible. This could also be seen as a defiance of separateness, experienced either as separate/together or merging.

### 6.5.3 *Cohort 3*

Many people remembered playground games as a feature of this group, games involving rules. Often there were ball games. Other playground themes included watching, showing and 'hanging out'. The playground games were often games of structure, involving the whole group or the majority of the group. They encouraged action rather than feelings. Lindquist (2001) has shown how imaginative play facilitates emotional involvement in dance. In contrast to this, the kind of play often chosen in this group was based on concrete reality rather than imagination. Some members acknowledged that through such play they wanted to forget their feelings of the moment. In Session 2, a charismatic participant began a game of 'British Bulldogs' with the intention of bringing the group together into the action. This game begins with one person catching another, then the two catching another and so on, until there is a line of people catching the final person as he or she runs across the room. In the penultimate session the majority of participants formed a circle and began to roll a medicine ball with increasing vigour across the circle aiming to touch or knock over the person in the middle, who had to jump out of the way. In both games rules had to be followed in order to play. Group membership was achieved by joining in the game of being caught (strongly and roughly at times). A lot of laughter accompanied these games, in particular in the latter game, which was very loud and boisterous. Other ball games played were baseball and catch in a circle, involving forfeits. These games involved between four to ten people at different times. They too seemed to be all about playing according to the group rules; they might be interpreted as manifestation of inclusion, exclusion and conformity, prominent issues in most group processes (Schutz, 1976).

These games were remembered variously as being fun, providing a focus, and providing an opportunity to release energy and to change mood. Only three people analysed the content of the games in terms of intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics. One participant saw the passing of the medicine ball in the circle as confirming group membership and, in her case, confirming estrangement from the group. Another participant talked about the difficulty of refusing the relationship when the ball was thrown. Another saw the games as a manifestation of male patriarchal and institutional structures, involving organisation and competition. She considered this to be a threat to creativity and tried to sabotage the games by wrapping the ball in a scarf. It might be argued from participants' reflections that these games were indeed often about avoidance of feelings: rules and rigidity versus creativity and flexibility. Alternatively, competitive games might be seen as structuring feelings with action: 'against' some and 'with' others.

The need for rules and action, rather than free-flow movement and feelings, might be considered as a response to the absence of safety in the group. This group was perceived by a few members to be unsafe for DMT process because of abuse of trust and 'fakeness'. A few group members actively disliked others. Hostile feelings can be very frightening because of their potential to destroy. Flight from such feelings is common through physical activity disconnected with feelings, or through unconscious imaginings (for example, dreams). In the final session, when feelings of hurt and anger at perceived insensitivity spilled out, members felt vulnerable and appalled.

Four members considered hiding the inner self to be a central theme in this group. Several people spoke in their individual interviews about the need to keep their emotions secret, fearing abuse of trust if they were open with their feelings. For example: 'I get really bloody irritated by the fakeness in this group. So I was only able to be myself when I was hidden'. This participant began to analyse her choice of pretending to be a witch:

Witches say things and you never get to know anything about them and you think 'Who are they?' They do all this and they tell you a little bit and they give you the golden apple and suddenly you've got this inspiration and you think 'Wow!'. But they never stand there saying 'Oh I've been down the pub and did you know?'; you know they are not open people....

Being a mysterious witch gave this participant a sense of power and self-protection from abusive relationships.

Hiding self appeared in many group metaphors, for example: three people huddled under the green stretch cloth, shuffling around the edge of the room, until they found a space to settle and draw pictures, still under the cloth. Participants felt that the cloth offered them protection from the majority of the group, which was playing vigorously and aggressively with the medicine ball. Underneath the cloth they made raucous, flamboyant sounds. One participant said they were being themselves, just as they were at home in their shared house. Paradox was contained in this movement metaphor: simultaneous hiding and showing; blocking connection with the majority group and nurturing connection in the small group.

Watching, massaging and grooming took place frequently in this group, mostly in pairs or small groups of three people. Two individuals experienced watching as separation from those being watched, whilst most people reflected on the physical and emotional intimacy experienced in pairs and small groups as they massaged and groomed each other. There was one occasion when the whole group formed a massage circle. Group members experienced powerful energy passing round the circle. This was an occasion when group members shared their pent-up feelings and thoughts about the degree programme. One student analysed the tactile, physical culture of this group as a fundamental human need for connection:

We are relating to each other, grooming each other, rolling over each other, which is not typical, but probably normal human behaviour; but it's not behaviour we are given images of.

Massage occurred frequently in pairs, but only on one occasion in the large group, whilst rough physical contact in whole or large group-movement occurred more frequently (for example, 'British Bulldogs' and the play with the medicine ball), perhaps indicative of conjoined affection and hostility, love and hate. Attraction and repulsion was spoken about:

There are playful elements in the group. As a group we move flirtatiously in the space. We were doing something like the bunny hop, but it was a very aggressive bunny hop ... a lot of strength there.

The group metaphors of watching and grooming may demonstrate the polarity of distance and intimacy or merging which characterised this group. Emotions towards others bubbled beneath the surface but were not shared in the large group. One participant spoke of 'something very thin' keeping the group apart, and another described the movement relationships as 'careful'. These two statements conjure up the

image of skating carefully over the ice, wary of plunging into the dark water of feeling. The ‘something very thin’ could also indicate a very delicate protective membrane, which when broken exposes the person’s vulnerability. Carefully keeping the membrane intact keeps the person safe. Fear of being hurt was always present in C3 and the resulting wariness of sharing feelings left some participants feeling isolated, sad and confused:

In almost every session we were wild and childish, but there was a sense of people being isolated. So there is a playfulness and at the same time not quite being a group. I don’t think there is enough honesty or openness towards each other and that is why we are separate ... which is a shame.

Whilst metaphors of separation and connection seem to be present in all the cohorts, the metaphor of hiding is particular to C3. Whilst fear of vulnerability seems present in all three cohorts, it appears to have been offset by development of trust in C1 and C2 and exacerbated by a lack of trust in C3. The themes of belonging and separation seem to have been experienced in all three cohorts through a variety of metaphors. These metaphors acted both as containers of emotional and psychic realities and as starting points for reflection on personal and group processes.

## **6.6 Acceptance and the development of playfulness, self-confidence and relationship**

In one of his last articles, Rogers (1986) writes:

When the therapist is experiencing a positive, non-judgmental, accepting attitude toward whatever the client is at that moment, therapeutic movement or change is more likely. Acceptance involves the therapist’s willingness for the client to be whatever immediate feeling is going on – confusion, resentment, fear, anger, courage, love, or pride. It is a non-possessive caring. When the therapist prizes the client in a total rather than a conditional way, forward movement is likely (p. 199).

Playfulness, as openness to movement process, was associated with feeling valued and respected by many participants: ‘F moves so freely and naturally in DMT. I think it’s because she feels a bit special, and it does make a difference to the way she normally dances’. Participants stated that they had felt ‘under no pressure to perform’. They felt that they could ‘be as they were’ and that there was ‘no need to change themselves to meet an expectation’. They felt that there were ‘no rights and wrongs in DMT’; their

experience was accepted as complete in itself and there was 'no pressure to make sense of it'. The therapist's acceptance of participants in the moment was considered as contributing significantly to a playful experience of DMT:

You didn't ask us 'Why did you do that?' It was more like 'What did you feel like?' – a different angle.

I think we felt comfortable knowing that you didn't have to explain yourself. It was just the way it was.

We only brought up things we wanted to say.

It was a learning experience. When people were speaking about how they felt when they were moving, I don't think they were thinking 'I hope I'm doing this right so I can get a good mark'.

In a culture of acceptance of the 'now' the participants seem to have found some escape from aesthetic concerns 'It doesn't matter what you look like', and a welcome opportunity to be playful 'You can move any way you want'.

Meekums (1998) suggests that 'non-possessive warmth' is essential in working with women survivors of child sexual abuse, helping to undo the experience of judgment and blame familiar to this population. Meekums uses the term 'witnessing' to describe 'being benevolently seen, heard and understood' (Meekums, 2000, p. 77). Being witnessed by other group members was considered by participants in Meekums' study to be a powerful factor in their recovery process. It seems to have forged a strong bond between group members, helping them to feel both compassion and respect for themselves. Prouty (2001) dissects the Rogerian concept of UPR into the following components: love, care, compassion, non-judgment, acceptance, nurturance, valuing, prizing and respect. Participants in this inquiry often referred to the permissive environment of DMT, pinpointing acceptance of, and respect for, people as pivotal in developing playfulness and self-confidence, for example:

I'm not really fluent and confident normally, but in this class I don't feel like I was pushed or watched, and I've enjoyed it and said what I wanted to say, and I feel really pleased about that.

In a group situation the responsibility for creating an accepting environment is extended to all group members. Everyone present has the ability to facilitate or destroy therapeutic growth by their attitude to other group members. In all cohorts people tried to listen, understand and show compassion despite the opposing force of criticism and hostility tangled up between some group members. Thus, acceptance by the group was

identified as significant in facilitating a process of personal growth: 'Without the acceptance of the group, we couldn't have been so open'. Acceptance and support in the group was perceived as facilitating personal and artistic evolution: 'DMT has helped me get to grips with my dissertation on a personal and an artistic level because I felt supported and accepted by the group'. It seems that a group culture of acceptance of and respect for difference was developed to some extent in DMT: 'There was always a big, big distance, because they did find us strange. They never showed us they wanted to find out. But it's completely different now'. Acceptance by others was perceived as contributing to self-acceptance, which was linked to self-confidence:

It all relates to confidence. If you're confident when you dance you're OK. You're happy to share it with everyone else, you really give it you all. Dance Therapy helps you to feel OK because it says you're fine as you are.

Self-acceptance seems to have led to greater self-confidence in all areas of life. Acceptance of physical need led students to make more time for physical nurturing, for example, eating good food at regular times, relaxing after strenuous classes. Acceptance of personal movement seems to have led to an increased motivation to be self-expressive through movement: 'I can't be anything other than me (in my dancing) really'.

Acceptance of emotions seems to have led to greater freedom of emotional expression, for example, identification of anger through movement facilitated expression of anger through movement. Generally, the development of a self-accepting attitude seems to have helped students to relinquish a self-punishing, critical attitude ('When I watch myself on video, I feel completely disgusted'), which was perceived as having a positive effect on their self-confidence:

In Dance Therapy I would never get nervous ever. I wouldn't have any anxieties ever ... It helped me to deal with the way I felt, which helped me to have a bit more self-esteem.

Self-acceptance seems to have developed alongside acceptance of others:

I felt fluid and I didn't feel under pressure. I was able to enjoy (Technique and Choreography). I've been able to appreciate how other people move. I did observe them before, but now I can fully appreciate how they move.

Acceptance of others seems to have led to empathic awareness of others: 'We have changed, we're more sensitive to each other and more willing to sense how people

are feeling. There's not a barrier any more'. Thus, a culture of acceptance seems to have brought participants into contact with each other. The swiftness of this process of acceptance and empathy surprised many:

A lot of us aren't from the same background, and not all of us are third years. We're a mixed group, a lot of us haven't worked with each other. But now you wouldn't realise that we'd never worked together ... eight weeks!

It might be suggested that guidance in the building of an accepting culture can facilitate relationship in groups, even when the group has a history of poor communication: 'When we first started there seemed to be a really rigid atmosphere in the class, but now it's so open, nobody seems to mind saying what they think'. It might be suggested that a group culture, which encourages acceptance of others through the practice of receptivity with self-awareness, facilitates relationship:

It was a breakthrough session for me because up till now I felt separate from the group. I was trying to be inside the group, but I couldn't feel anybody. I was so much in myself that I wasn't able to. Today was the first time I was feeling the whole group, and letting the group be around me. I don't think I have been able to see people recently. I just wasn't seeing anybody. I needed this. I've had a chance to see you all today.

The concept of receptivity with awareness seems akin to the Authentic Movement term 'witnessing' (Adler, 1972; Musicant, 1994, 2001; Payne, 2003). An overlap between the discipline of Authentic Movement and the model of DMT in this inquiry might be suggested in this instance.

## **6.7 Safety and the development of playfulness, self-confidence and relationship**

Safety seems to have been the axis upon which the playful process of engagement with movement metaphor rested. The discussion of absence of safety in Chapter 7 highlights the importance of safety in therapeutic process. In this inquiry safety seems to have been created through a process of trust building in an enclosed space protected from intrusion by things outside the group:

You shut the door and that was you, you were there, for that set time, and nobody was going to come and disturb you, stop it or anything. Trusting the rest of the group was really important.



Payne (1996, 2001) suggests that safety is the foundation of the therapeutic work, initially dependent on physical, and subsequently on emotional, boundaries. Meekums (2000), with reference to research with women survivors of child sexual abuse, states: 'The need for safety was the single most often referred to element in recovery by all fourteen research participants in my study' (p. 69).

In Meekums' inquiry the associations with safety, relevant for this study, were confidentiality, respect for difference, sharing, witnessing, appropriateness of activity in terms of timing, need for more time, use of humour, the right to say 'no' and finding a balance between freedom and structure. As in both Payne's (1996) and Meekums' (1998) research, and in this case study too, safety in the group seems to have been dependent on members' sense of physical and emotional containment. Emotional containment may be present in the rule of confidentiality. Keeping confidentiality may be perceived as a commitment to keeping group members safe, by protecting others' emotional life from intrusion by outside forces. In this study, as in both Payne's and Meekums' studies, confidentiality was named as a significant factor in the creation of safety for therapeutic work, alongside acceptance, empathy and support:

When you get this group situation and you are bound and committed, it's total, it's OK to do this [DMT]. No-one's going to do you down, so you feel quite relaxed, no fear or phobia. You can vent all your feelings.

I was able to find myself, having the support of everyone else. It was hard to deal with my feelings throughout, but empathy and support made it possible.

In antithesis to these statements, the perceived absence of confidentiality led to feelings of insecurity and an inability to explore feelings:

You were talking about confidentiality and I remember feeling so angry because I saw all those people agreeing who wouldn't respect it. That is why I'm not really comfortable with letting myself go.

The perception of empathy and support in C2 may be compared with the perception of indifference experienced by one participant in C3, which contributed to her unwillingness to share feelings: 'Some people I'm close to and others I'm not. So when asked how I felt, I thought "Who cares anyway?"'

As in Payne's and Meekums' studies, creation of a safe exploratory environment was initially dependent on trust in the therapist ('You were a safe person', 'We trusted

you'). Perception of therapist acceptance facilitated trust in personal process. The concept of the therapist as 'guide' compared to 'teacher' seems to have been associated with respect for the individual's own judgment: 'It was as if you guided us to become more aware of how we were. You gave us information and ideas and we dealt with them on our own'.

The concept of activating client agency has been the focus of recent research (Bohart and Tallman, 1999; Rodgers, 2002). The therapist as tool for the client to use in the service of personal growth seems to apply here in the descriptions of therapeutic relational process offered by participants. As in Payne's study, safety was associated with the non-intrusive, but active, presence of the therapist. Many participants seem to have responded to the therapist's guidance. They spoke of her 'opening things up', and 'raising awareness' by 'observation of the here and now'.

The component of therapist involvement also seems to have been significant in building trust in the process: 'You weren't a watcher; you were a participant' and 'To see you moving around the way we were gave us confidence to do whatever we wanted'. Rogers refers to therapist congruence as being 'freely and deeply' oneself, with accurate self-awareness (Rogers, 1957, p. 97). Lietaer (2001a) suggests that UPR and congruence are 'the foundation, the deeper-lying fertile soil, necessary to enable to therapist to respond sensitively to the experiential world of the client' (p. 90). I have chosen to discuss therapist congruence with reference to my own process in Chapter 5. The concepts of 'participation' and 'joining in' found in the data seem not to be as 'layered' as the concept of congruence, with its emphasis upon deep sensing and feeling. In interview, participants talked about my being part of the group, not separate from it, not judging or instructing. Participation and involvement seem in this instance to be connected to acceptance, rather than congruence.

However, during the process, students did seem to need evidence of my connection with process. They wanted to know if I wanted to be there and how I felt. Participation, on these occasions, seems to have had a greater connection with the concept of congruence. Perhaps participants sensed a lack of congruence on my part, and indicated that they needed to feel that I was fully present with awareness in order to dive into sensation and emotion themselves. These requests came at times of insecurity with the process, suggesting that therapist congruence and safety are interrelated in therapeutic work.

As above, the concept of witnessing (Adler, 1972; Musicant, 1994, 2001; Payne, 2003) from Authentic Movement may be considered relevant here. Witnessing in Authentic Movement seems to combine elements of UPR, congruence as well as empathy, in its emphasis upon receptivity to another's movement, self-awareness and the ability to put aside value judgments. In the requests for evidence of my engagement with process it may be that participants wanted to know that my involvement was active, as in the concept of witnessing: open both to self and others.

Payne (1996, 2001) and Meekums (1998, 2000) suggest that commitment to experiencing and sharing promotes group trust. This seems to represent experience in this case study:

DMT has made me aware that I want to do and say what I feel from now on, and not lie, because it's not fair to myself and the rest of the group'.

In one session the group was compared to a baby requiring safety (the image seeming to suggest extreme vulnerability), which would be developed by 'being true to ourselves and to others'. A sense of increasing group commitment seems to have influenced individual commitment to the process in C1 and C2. As people began to open up to one another, they relaxed and enjoyed the feeling of being seen and heard. In some cases they were able to give each other critical feedback without feeling threatened: 'You used to have an attitude. I was scared of you!'

Self-confidence seems to have been connected to involvement in a contained group process. Whilst some participants spoke of anxiety due to lack of structured exercises, others seem to have been reassured by the simple structure of the DMT group, as in Payne's (1996) study, and to have looked forward to the verbal sharing of different perspectives, which was the final phase of group process. Paradoxically, this sharing of difference seems to have resulted in a feeling of connection and belonging, which seems to have developed self-confidence:

In the discussion afterwards you sometimes find that everyone feels similar emotions at times. So we are learning to help each other out, to feel better about ourselves. We're all in the same boat.

Finding emotional strength and self-confidence through experience in a safe group has been identified before in relation to arts therapies groups (Meekums, 1998). Here too, the sense of 'I am not alone' seems to have both boosted self-confidence and increased commitment to process.

Thus, perception of group safety seems to have brought people into relationship: ‘We needed time to build up trust and become a group’. From a starting point of individuality: ‘Initially I thought I was an individual in there, amongst a lot of other individuals’, those people who experienced a sense of group safety were able to connect with others expressing their feelings:

I was glad to be honest with people. We’ve all got things going on, and to be able to notice and recognise each other’s things for me was just .... Well, we’re all human, we’re not just dancers.

## 6.8 Conclusions

In this chapter I have discussed four ‘special ingredients’ in the development of playfulness, self-confidence and relationship, based on the process and interview reflections. These ‘special ingredients’ are identified as play, movement metaphors, acceptance and safety. These four factors have been presented as interconnected aspects of facilitating experience (Figure 5, Appendix 9). It is likely that other researchers might have focused on other ‘special ingredients’, such as ‘the therapist’ or ‘the student’, re-framing the interpretation of the data. In my choice of categories I have been mindful of the data, continually cross-checking categories with verbatim comments in order to challenge and alter them. It was intended that the final categories would provide a useful focus for the analysis of DMT process and personal effects.

It was also intended that this discussion of perceived experience and perceived personal effects of experience would create a kind of audit trail for the perception of the effects of DMT on choreography and performance presented in Chapter 8. Thus, the analysis of perceived experience and personal effects of experience provided in this chapter aims to give insight into how any perceived links between DMT, choreography and performance might have developed through the experience in the DMT group. However, before presenting the final findings chapter, consideration of the difficulties experienced in the DMT group must take place in Chapter 7.

# CHAPTER 7. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN: FEARFUL VULNERABILITY IN RELATION TO SELF-EXPOSURE, EXTERNAL JUDGMENT AND ABSENCE OF SAFETY

## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the ‘other side of the coin’: the other story that seems to have occurred alongside the positively perceived experience of play, movement metaphors, acceptance and safety. This other story took much longer to emerge. Researcher bias has been suggested as the reason for this slower gestation in Chapter 4.

The category of Fearful Vulnerability was created by coalescing confusion, disappointment and hostility associated with experiences of self- and relational-alienation. The process of categorisation has been discussed in Chapter 4. The concept of vulnerability as being open to ‘wounding’ [from the Latin *vulnerabilis*: liable to injury (Skeat, 1978)] seemed to encapsulate the anticipated danger in relation to DMT. Fear of being wounded seems to have been a powerful emotion in the DMT groups relating to both internal and external sense of safety. Perceived causal factors of fearful vulnerability seemed to be linked to the concepts of self-exposure, fear of judgment and absence of safety. Meekums (2000) has argued that specific factors connected to post-therapy deterioration may be interpreted as relating to the absence of a sense of safety.

## 7.2 Self-exposure in relation to fearful vulnerability

Participants referred to the difficulty they experienced in ‘letting themselves go’ in movement, due to their training in dance. They had been taught override impulses, rather than to respond to them:

You have to condition your muscle memory to be in certain positions and then suddenly you are expected to move in a way that is inspired purely by your emotions. This is a great contradiction.

They had been taught to use movement manipulatively, rather than self-expressively:

You have to learn how to fake; you get taught how to look out, and how to focus and audience's attention on certain parts of the body, or in a certain direction, just by the way you look, and the way you hold yourself.

These aesthetic concerns were cited as inhibiting the flow of movement in the initial sessions of DMT, when movements were described as 'dance-like' and sometimes 'contrived'. As sessions progressed, some participants expressed shock as they watched people moving more spontaneously, in what they perceived as 'self-exposing' ways: 'To see her moving like that was very weird'; 'Suddenly the whole group got up and started screaming and I thought "They are all mad"'.

Potential self-exposure in movement was identified as a cause of anxiety: 'Dancing is so personal ... it's you ... there's nothing to hide behind'. 'Aesthetics' was perceived as a way of hiding in DMT, but there were other ways of hiding too. People spoke of dancing away from feelings rather than into them. 'Dancing the blues away' was a theme expressed in all cohorts, but brought into particular focus in C3, perhaps due to the conflict of interests in the group. One faction in this group clearly did not want to use DMT to explore feelings; instead they wanted to 'escape from them'. This split was evident in all the groups to some extent:

You've got to trust somebody and build up a bond with somebody if you are going to release your feelings ... and I'm not ready to build up bonds with people to get them broken (C1).

I think some people used it as a therapy class because they felt safe within its boundaries to let emotions come up and to be able to express those emotions, and then other people didn't (C2).

The anxiety around potential self-exposure in DMT is evidenced in comments such as:

Well, at first I was very apprehensive as to what I might feel and what might come out of them [the sessions], but after about the first two I felt really frightened and scared because of what had happened in the session; and I thought my feelings were going to overtake me and I wouldn't be able to control it, but as the sessions went on I came to be able to deal with how I was feeling....

It seems that alienation from self in terms of alienation from powerful feelings, perceived as 'difficult', 'unpleasant' or 'frightening' occurred frequently in DMT.

Such fear of and alienation from feelings seems to have led in some cases to disappointment. Participants who felt that they had not engaged in any depth relationship with self were disappointed that they had learnt nothing new. Some spoke

of the absence of mind/body connection and the disillusionment that followed. These participants had hoped that through DMT they might be able to tap into images and other forms of knowing to which they had not yet had access. One person compared an experience of discomfort, which brought self-awareness in an early DMT session, with the bland nature of experience, which followed in subsequent sessions. This person analysed his lack of satisfying experience in terms of his own fear of self-exposure. Another participant described his experience of embarrassment and awkwardness when he tried to move how he was feeling. For a few minutes he felt that he had allowed his body to move freely, then he had experienced an acute sense of self-consciousness and felt 'too exposed' and 'silly'. Perhaps, despite a cognitive intention to discover unconscious imagery through bodywork, the possibility of discovering emotional significance in this imagery – 'I was very apprehensive as to what I might feel' – was daunting for the majority of students. This finding relates to one of Gilroy's (1989, 1992) discoveries: that fear of interpretation inhibited creativity. In this study, it seems that fear of feeling, combined with fear of interpretation, inhibited involvement with the DMT process.

In other examples, dismissal of feelings was considered to be helpful to alleviate mood. Far from being perceived as 'alienating', consciously altering mood via specific movement choice was considered to be therapeutic and empowering. Some people perceived engagement with feelings as 'dragging them down' and 'taking away motivation'. They sought to be uplifted by the DMT sessions, using movement as exercise to cut loose from emotional baggage, rather than a means of exploring it. When participants in C3 were invited to explore the image of 'the trap' (emerging in the dialogue of Session 5) through movement metaphor, someone responded 'We don't want to *feel* it, we want to *escape* from it'.

### **7.3 External judgment in relation to fearful vulnerability**

It seems that DMT process was inhibited considerably by fear of being judged:

I haven't really moved authentically. Perhaps I'm frightened to move because I'm still thinking 'Are they analysing me?' 'What are they thinking about what I'm doing?'

Facilitation of Authentic Movement (Whitehouse, 1958a, 1958b, 1972) takes place in the presence of a non-judgmental witness. This accepting presence is considered to enhance spontaneous flow of movement. It seems that in this inquiry the

presence of its opposite: 'fear of being judged' led to interrupted movement and alienation from feelings: 'I felt exposed and vulnerable. I didn't want to explore my feelings through movement in case people laughed at me'; 'I had gone inward and I thought people were laughing at me'.

There are several examples, particularly in the early sessions, of people breaking off from their attempts to connect with their inner feelings through movement because they felt they would be mocked. So they seem to have buried their feelings and taken part in an activity in order to escape from their feelings. Flight into movement activity might be considered in this instance as a response to anxiety. Exploration of feeling through movement was sometimes experienced as an 'isolating' experience; and going inward was experienced as being separate and therefore vulnerable to attack by the disconnected other. A way out of this feeling of isolation was to rejoin the group, taking part in movement, which was not personally motivated. This might be contrasted with personally motivated movement in relationship, which also took place and which was experienced as emotionally satisfying: 'I was beginning to explore something with Z ... that was exciting'. Participants returned over and over again to the tension, which they experienced between exploration of personal themes and taking part in group activity. The data seem to suggest that this tension might be partly due to fear of being judged. Judgmental processes in the group were perceived as preventing awareness of other's feelings:

People are judging ... its just accusations without empathy or sympathy or sharing. Maybe we need a bit more compassion, less judgment of each other to make it easier on ourselves.

At its most extreme, the judgment of others was experienced as a physical attack: the ultimate rejection of the other: 'It feels like a kick in the stomach'.

#### **7.4 Absence of safety in relation to fearful vulnerability**

The interpreted metaphors in the DMT sessions are presented in Table 2 (Appendix 10) and also in Appendix 5. All of these metaphors might be interpreted in terms of perceptions of safety. The themes of safety and danger in relationship seem to be particularly present in the metaphors of C1: Sessions 5–7, C2: Session 6 and C3: Session 9. In these sessions participants created movement metaphors in which they experienced danger (for example, the nest, the cyclone/storm, the tunnel, the ghost-train, the fairground, the catapult, ball games versus barrier/amniotic sac) or which were



perceived to protect them from danger (for example, the nest, the womb, the cocoon, keeping the ball on track, the invisible glass barrier, being covered). Danger was perceived as physical (for example, the ball being thrown, people running over chairs under which someone was curled up). It was also perceived as emotional, for example, feeling emotionally forced to conform (C1: Session 1, C2: Sessions 3–5 and C3: Sessions 6 and 9). In these sessions, participants felt the ‘pull’ of the dominant group movement both emotionally and physically (standing, sitting, moving round and round in one direction, squeezing together, being in the nest, ‘British Bulldogs’, aggressive ball game). This was sometimes experienced as oppressive and threatening to the individual:

I felt that if the group had come together, it would have been a scary thing. As much as I did want to be part of that unity, I didn’t like that thought. It really scared me.

Some participants in C1 and C3 spoke of the perceived non-toleration of difference in their group, and the rejection they felt from the group if they did something different (for example, walking round in a different direction, separating from the large group and entering a small, private, group activity). It is possible that non-toleration of difference contributed to the perception of absence of safety, highlighting Meekums’ (2000) finding that acceptance of difference was perceived to create safety. Perceptions of oppression and hostile judgment seem for many participants at different times to have rendered the group ‘unsafe’ to explore personal movement:

Just because of the difference in what we were doing, I felt antagonism from the group. I felt their aggression because there was a difference. I felt them saying ‘We are different, you are different’ ... Some people I’m close to and others I’m not. So when asked how I felt, I thought ‘Who cares, anyway?’.

It seems also that the splitting which often occurred in the groups between those who engaged in outwardly focused play and those who wanted to explore their inner feelings through play disrupted cohesion. The lack of cohesion of motivation and purpose was cited as causing insecurity and loss of motivation: ‘I didn’t feel safe exploring my feelings because there was no commitment as a group to doing this’; ‘I’m not getting what I want from this group’. Again, this finding highlights Meekums’ (2000) discovery that cohesion and commitment to sharing contributed to a sense of safety.

The difficulty of using play to access feelings through a shared imaginative experience in a large group is perhaps evidenced here. Whole-group imaginative play becomes increasingly difficult with increasing group size. It has been suggested that the process of intimacy is different according to group size (Foulkes, 1991), and that fear and hostility are often more rife in large groups due to the perception of multiple threats of attack (de Maré *et al.*, 1991). The feelings of insecurity seeming to arise from lack of cohesion and fear of judgment might be seen to illustrate these theories.

It seems that there were different responses to DMT according to perceptions of safety:

I think some people used it as a therapy class because they felt safe within its boundaries to let emotions come up and to be able to express those emotions, and then other people didn't.

This difference in response might be interpreted as the manifestation of interaction between the individual and environment. Ontological security/insecurity (Laing, 1990) might be seen to interlace with external conditions to create a variety of perceptions of safety (Giddens, 1989). Thus, one participant was frightened of releasing feelings, due to fear of judgment and also, perhaps, due to fear of her own chaotic emotions which she attributed to other participants:

In the first week I felt quite sad, so I just lay down and watched everybody else. Suddenly the whole group got up and jumped around and started screaming and I thought 'They are all mad'. They would never have done that in another class; you know people who hold themselves, who only let you know so much of themselves no matter what situation ... so for them to do that ... it was quite, quite scary.

Absence of commitment leading to absence of security might also have been due to the time in the group's life. In all cases, the groups were in their final year at university (apart from four second-year members in C2) and C3 were in the final term of their final year. Most people seemed to have their sight on the end: 'I'm looking forward to making a clean break'. It is possible that the anticipation of imminent separation clashed with the intention of group DMT to uncover feelings:

You've got to trust somebody and build up a bond with somebody if you are going to release you feelings ... and I'm not ready to build up bonds with people to get them broken.

This clash of interests might indicate the importance of the timing of DMT in student experience. Perhaps inclusion of DMT at the beginning of a group's life or throughout,

rather than at the end, would encourage greater commitment to identifying and expressing feelings.

As discussed in Chapter 6, researchers have reported how the presence of safety in a DMT group would seem to be connected to the quality of the process (Payne, 1996; Meekums, 1998). Payne (2001) has exposed research findings that emphasise the importance of perception of physical and emotional safety in the containment of often volatile, vital and potentially poisonous feelings. It seems that making the DMT group a safe vessel for the release and subsequent reactivity of chaotic feelings is a challenge to the most competent and experienced therapists (Yalom, 1985). This research has discovered that if a group culture of self-awareness, support and empathy can be created, safety seems more possible than in a group where lack of self-awareness and lack of support and empathy are prevalent. In some cases awareness of personal judgments rendered the judgments less powerful. In this way self-awareness was perceived as developing the capacity for appreciation of others and the creation of safety for the potentially exposing process of DMT:

People are judging ... it's just accusations without empathy or sympathy or sharing. Maybe we need a bit more compassion, less judgment of each other to make it easier on ourselves.

## 7.5 Conclusions

The research questions were: Are there any perceived links between DMT, choreography and performance? If so, what are they, and how do they develop? This chapter has sought to provide insight into an alternative inquiry: Were there any perceived difficulties in DMT and, if so, what were they and what were the perceived effects? The perceived difficulties seemed to cluster around the concepts of self-exposure, external judgment and absence of safety. The perceived effects of confusion, disappointment and hostility were linked together to create the concept of fearful vulnerability. This effect was not perceived as being a permanent effect, but only existing in the context of the DMT group.

This exploration of the difficulties of DMT contributes to the research questions by showing how linkage between DMT, choreography and performance might be sabotaged by fear of self-exposure, external judgment and absence of safety. If DMT process has been blocked due to these factors, then potential links between DMT, choreography and performance are impossible to assess. This exploration of difficulties

might also be deemed useful in evaluating the appropriateness of such groups in this context.

Reflections on process and personal effects seemed to bear witness to relational concerns in the DMT groups. Fearful vulnerability seemed to have been precipitated by feelings of self-exposure and external judgment in an environment where safety was perceived as fragile or absent. In considering the reflections on perceived absence of safety, it might be concluded that the DMT groups were ethically questionable and possibly inappropriate for undergraduate dance students in their final year at university. The exploratory intention of the groups might be considered as premature, before the necessary group cohesion had been achieved through structured group-building exercises (Meekums, 2000). Examination of the data demands that this social interpretation (Giddens, 1989) of the DMT groups be considered.

The DMT groups did encourage identification and expression of feelings, but they also encouraged responsibility for feelings (Chapter 5). Despite this, expression of hostile feelings towards another occurred in C3 (final session) and led to a sense of physical danger: 'It feels like a kick in the stomach'. It is also evident that DMT process often involved expression of aggressive feelings through metaphor, for example, blocking, encroaching ball games, percussive bashing, abrasive interaction, jarring/clashing, aggressive bunny hops, 'British Bulldogs', rolling on top of each other, squashing, throwing/kicking the red medicine ball, sometimes with the intention of knocking the 'piggy in the middle' (Table 2, Appendix 10).

This expression of aggression might be interpreted as part of an existential, internally motivated process of moving through fear and hostility towards dialogue and empathy (de Maré *et al.*, 1991) and therefore as valuable therapeutic relational growth, alongside learning about therapeutic process. However, it is also possible to interpret it as an anxious/aggressive response to an environment perceived as unsafe, and therefore as an externally created mass of anxious feelings, of no therapeutic or educational value to the individual.

Perhaps there are no definite conclusions, but only the testimonies of the participants, which bear witness to the differing experiences and interpretations of the 'same' experience. Detrimental effects and positive, creative effects must be weighed in the balance: 'I don't want to carry home these bitter feelings. Let's put away these fight things and remember we have really achieved something as a group'. The experience was perceived as sometimes enjoyable, sometimes frightening, sometimes challenging

and sometimes overwhelming, sometimes personally enlightening and sometimes personally disappointing, sometimes creative and sometimes destructive. Perhaps therefore it is fitting to end this section with a poem created in Session 4 of C2's process, which encapsulates the concept of differing perceptions:

Sometimes images of childhood  
But mostly nothing  
Feel that I need to write this just to say that I was there  
The playground in between  
Too much like eating chocolate, cake and ice cream  
Someone said they were happy and someone else cold  
Have to realise that everyone else is always experiencing something  
else  
The background music starts again, and its expression overlaid  
In one brief moment we nearly all notice the same thing  
But soon it goes back to chocolate, cake and ice cream.

Having explored the contextual difficulties in engagement with DMT, which might preclude any perceived linkage with choreography and performance, it is now time to face the music and address the research questions: Are there any perceived links between DMT, choreography and performance? If so, what are they?

# CHAPTER 8. RELEVANCE OF PLAYFULNESS, SELF-CONFIDENCE AND RELATIONSHIP FOR CHOREOGRAPHY AND PERFORMANCE

## 8.1 Introduction

The data for this chapter are taken from the interview transcripts and, in particular, from the responses to Question 3: ‘Has your experience of DMT affected your creative work at university?’ It discusses the perceived relevance of the perceived personal effects of DMT for choreography and performance. The discussion revolves around perceived actual correspondences, as well as including perceived speculative correspondences. Reasons for phenomena are discussed with reference to student reflections on causation, interwoven with recent research evidence and theory.

The positive perceptions of DMT and the links between DMT, choreography and performance outlined in this chapter may be due to the positive experiences discussed in Chapter 6, but they may also be due in part to the positive attitude of the students concerned. All students chose to attend the DMT group because they apparently had an interest in DMT process. Their ‘DMT friendliness’ would therefore be expected to be greater than a group who had no interest in DMT and who would not have chosen to attend. Although the findings do in fact show initial rejection of concepts and process (C2 and C3), openness to benefits of DMT might still be considered to be more likely in a group who had actively chosen DMT compared to a group who had not.

## 8.2 Playfulness, choreography and performance

It has been argued that playfulness needs to be nurtured if fresh and surprising material is to surface for choreographic work. Meekums (1993) states:

The substance from which the dance emerges is a product of the dancer and choreographer’s improvisations, their openness and receptivity as they play with images and ideas, the limitations of their bodies including their flexibility and their expanding movement vocabulary, the style of the choreographer and the choreographer’s

willingness to subtly play with conscious active decision making whilst remaining open to possibilities (p. 132).

The relationship between receiving and designing form has been discussed extensively in the literature (Beiswanger, 1978; Nadel and Nadel Miller, 1978). It may be concluded that the creative process demands the capacity to blend receptivity to unconscious processes (internal awareness) with conscious decision-making based on visual, kinaesthetic and musical skill (external awareness).

Many participants believed that the playfulness they experienced in DMT had enhanced their creative process in different ways. First there was some evidence that playful movement in DMT was used directly as a resource for choreography and performance. New material emerged from play:

In DMT that week the music and movement were really slow and ambient, sort of sunny and I imagined feeling really happy and relaxed. Everyone's movements were soft and wave-like, and upward, like a utopia. I've transferred this moment to my choreography, when C has a shiny lilac cloth wrapped around her and she's moving slowly, wave-like, it's like she's being born, coming out of a cocoon.

Improvisation is commonly used in both dance (Tufnell and Crickmay, 1990) and drama (Boal, 1994, 1995; Roose-Evans, 1994) to encourage the artist to experiment with movement and voice. In the context of the DMT group, themes were explored through play:

In the session I was dragging X around. I felt I was being really manipulative. I was dragging her and taking her where I wanted to and she was doing what I wanted her to do and I had a sense of being in control because in my own life I'm really quite weak in the sense that I'll always do things for other people to please them.... My dissertation is closely connected to me because I'm looking at Greek dance and gender roles. [Movement] for the men is bigger and more fancy, whereas the women are more restricted in their movement. Through my upbringing I've been very restricted.

Movement exploration in DMT seems, in this instance, to have deepened emotional understanding of the dynamics being choreographed, which made an impact on choice of material. Movement material for choreography was also found from these explorations, for example in relation to the dynamics of control and resistance.

There was some evidence that themes identified in the DMT group (restriction, safety, escape and belonging) were mirrored in choreographic themes, for example, power, restriction and containment in relationship. It is possible therefore that the

experience of DMT gave opportunity to explore feelings, images and thoughts around these issues, deepening understanding, and in turn informing choreography and performance. Participants also discussed the possibility of using some of the shapes, patterns, relational dynamics, music and props, as well as interactions between participants and the environment, as resources for choreography.

The movement quality in DMT was described variously as ‘playful’, ‘organic’, ‘flowing’, ‘spontaneous’, ‘connected to feeling’, ‘empowering’, ‘dynamic’ and ‘alive’. Several participants spoke about the transfer of balance and flow, which they perceived to have developed in DMT, to technique and choreography:

I used to have a bit of a problem with balance, but it seems to flow now; I just feel free, I noticed a difference. It wasn't just dance, it was me as well. Whether it looked fluid or not I don't know, but I felt fluid and I felt I was not under pressure. I was able to enjoy it and wanting to carry on and not wanting the class to end.

However, there seems to be limited evidence of transfer of events from DMT into choreography. Reflecting on the reasons for this, participants felt that the joy of DMT for them had been its separateness from any choreographic agenda. It had been a space in which they could forget about aesthetics and not have to think about collecting resources for choreography. They felt they had been able to relax and let go of ‘left-brain thinking’. They felt there was no need to pay attention to movement metaphors as resources for crafted work. Thus they felt that they could enjoy ‘experiencing’, rather than ‘analysing’, aesthetic merits: ‘Having the time to move without any constraints, not necessarily thinking about things but just exploring’. This expansive attitude towards time perceived in DMT seems to have developed participants’ ability to be playful: ‘I’m not so serious in DMT. I can be funny; I can be many things’.

Rather than transforming happenings in DMT into choreography, several participants seemed to transfer the sense of playfulness and acceptance developed in DMT to the choreographic process:

We spent eight weeks as a whole group, working up to the performance. Each group would be like a therapy session in a way. We would ‘jam’, improvising all session, you could do what you want, you didn't have to move and you could speak if you wanted to.

Choreography is a really personal thing, a creative process, and you can't put pressure on it. For me to do something choreographically, I need time and I need to be able to do it in my own time, and I think the



minute the tutors say ‘You’ve got to do it right now’ then it pushes that.

An art form needs to be free, it needs to have encouragement and it needs to be able to grow, and it needs to be able to express itself, that’s where it comes from, as far as I’m concerned, and obviously when you’re in a situation like this you need to follow rules and regulations, otherwise you wouldn’t have a degree at the end of it. But I think there’s a fine balance between being able to express yourself and following the guidelines ... and where they don’t merge and the expression is really suppressed there’s a problem.

A few participants felt that institutional emphasis on product-making reduced creative potential and they enjoyed the flowing moment to moment process of DMT. This was considered to be creatively replenishing. The institution was perceived as constantly demanding something, whilst the DMT group was perceived as giving something back.

In many cases the experience of DMT brought back positive memories of childhood, its freedom and its spontaneity. Many participants spoke of feeling refreshed and inspired by this reconnection with childhood. Replicating Gilroy’s (1989, 1992) finding, experience of therapy (in this instance DMT rather than Art Therapy) seems to have replenished creative energy and to have given new hope and possibilities for art: ‘I’ve decided that choreography is something really personal and as long as I feel good with it that’s it; to be all my life in my art, that’s the whole point of art isn’t it?’

To summarise, only a few participants referred to transfer of particular events, happenings, images or movement metaphors from DMT into choreography. However, a frequent response to Question 3 was that they felt more ‘open’ and ‘free’ to take risks and explore new ways of working with material, sometimes using media they had not worked with before. One participant described how chance operated in the creation of her piece: spontaneous movement dynamics arising from the juxtaposition of unrelated characters became the central dynamic of her piece.

### **8.3 Self-confidence in choreography and performance**

In 1952, Rogers (1996) suggested that an ‘internal locus of evaluation’ (p. 354) was one of the inner conditions necessary for creativity. Stern (1985) also suggested that the development of a subjective consciousness (with the ability to independently form and evaluate ideas) was a necessary requirement for creative being. Mackinnon’s (1962)

research on creative people, Storr's (1976) theory of creativity and, more recently, Buckroyd's (2000) argument concerning creativity have all emphasised the necessity of self-confidence in creativity. Mackinnon and Buckroyd both suggest that self-confidence helps the artist and specifically the choreographer to be the author of his/her own creative projects.

Increased self-confidence and resulting self-assertion were thought to be highly significant by many participants in improving the flow of creative movement, in encouraging them to try out new ideas and to persevere with their own ideas experiencing themselves as active creator. Self-awareness and self-confidence were perceived as encouraging playfulness in choreography:

When I started to break through my blockages, I found that I really opened up in my choreography. It was really quite a powerful piece on suppression and release of emotions. Very visual as well, turning movement, thoughts and images into movement.

Self-confidence was felt to be the catalyst for escape from a non-creative phase, and for rejection of typecasting (escaping the judgment of others). Individuals commented on an increased sense of personal power in movement, a sense of new and endless possibilities in their dance; increased ability to explore movement through improvisation; increased enjoyment as well as enhanced focus during performance. A minority of participants decided as a result of increased self-confidence to put their own personal dilemmas, themes and stories into their choreography. They experienced personal empowerment in this process and they felt that their work had more personal and universal significance as a result. One participant found that DMT helped her to access and stay with her feelings (no longer needing medication for depression) and come to terms with family tragedy, so that she was able to make it the subject of her dissertation piece (which she described as a personal catharsis through art). This student also used the exploratory approach of DMT to create her work.

Rosen (1975) and Gilroy (1989, 1992) also identify self-awareness, self-acceptance and self-confidence as perceived outcomes of therapy and Art Therapy training, respectively. As stated previously, in relation to art, Gilroy asked questions about the stimulating and the inhibiting aspects of self-awareness. She suggests that art therapists perceive their work to be 'more spontaneous, natural, fresher' and that they feel 'more able to play, with less self-consciousness and self-control', accepting more readily mess and chaos. Acceptance of unconscious material is experienced as

stimulating; anger and violence in particular are viewed as creative resources. No longer afraid of producing powerful images, these therapists feel more able to take risks. 'Letting things happen' is emphasised, and expressive, exploratory aspects of art are valued more than intellectual and aesthetic concerns. However, the counter-experience of loss of confidence in creative ability, due to the tendency to interpret and analyse the unconscious content of their art, is also described. Confusion between personal and transpersonal images is highlighted. The emotionally draining work of Art Therapy is also considered to have an adverse effect upon creativity. The art therapist is described as being in the service of others' creativity with little time left for personal creativity.

There are similarities and differences between Gilroy's findings and the findings of this study, which may be due to the population difference. The participants in my study were all young and had not been involved over time in one-to-one therapy, whereas Gilroy's interviewees were mature, art therapy-trained professionals, who had experienced extended one-to-one therapy. Gilroy's interviewees were therefore more likely to have engaged with therapeutic process in considerable depth, and were therefore more likely to have been deeply affected by it. The loss of self-confidence and creative motivation which some of Gilroy's interviewees reported might not have been an issue for the participants in my study because they had not experienced an in-depth exploration and analysis of self, or of the symbolic content of their art.

The findings in this study of almost universal feelings of growing self-confidence might suggest that the humanistic model of DMT outlined in Chapter 5 is appropriate in undergraduate pastoral care, where enhancing self-confidence has been an identified issue by researchers into the mental health needs of students generally (Grant, 2002) and dance students specifically (Buckroyd, 2000). This research identifies a tendency towards self-criticism in dance students: 'When I watch it [the video of me dancing] I feel completely disgusted' and the perceived beneficial effect of DMT on focus and self-confidence:

I expressed how I felt through movement and I can concentrate more now. DMT has helped me focus on things, just giving time for myself to sit down and notice how I am. I feel so brilliant.

Both self-awareness and self-confidence were perceived as contributing to self-investment in choreography and performance:

Do you remember when I got upset because my Granddad had ... I was really close to my Granddad. I had been thinking about him loads and I got upset ... It gave me a big phrase of material ... coming out of

inside. It was really quite lovely and flowing and embracing. It made me feel confident about being able to show my feelings in my movements. [The piece] started off being quite literal. It was a little solo for R and it had some of his typical movements. But then it got abstracted so no one would know.

Performance can be very fake, but I've found through this module I've been able to go on the stage and actually be me; this is me now.

The alternative focuses of humanistic DMT and choreography and performance, of expression of internal feelings and transcendence of personal emotion through symbolisation (Langer, 1953), seem to have been met by the participants in different ways. Some seem to have defied the difference, wanting to transfer self-expression directly into their choreography:

To me that's [the content of DMT] an artwork. It's not technically brilliant, but it shows what that person's about at that moment in time.

Others used the emotional expression as a springboard for abstraction through symbolisation:

[The piece] started off being quite literal. It was a little solo for R and it had some of his typical movements. But then it got abstracted so no one would know.

Personal investment in choreography was noticed after DMT:

I think that the pieces on the whole were quite a personal reflection. Knowing everyone so well, I think you could see certain aspects that appertained to that particular person.

Participants spoke about 'doing something for themselves' and 'wanting it to be from me.' Personal investment in choreography and performance was considered to be creative and revitalising:

You are working with people. If they don't place anything on it, or create something else on top of it, then it becomes very stale.

One participant believed that DMT had enabled her to accept her emotional pain, so that she was in a position to share it in her art:

I had no confidence in choreography because there was that thing there that I couldn't let out because if I did that in my dance then everyone would see it and it was too personal. I hadn't faced it in myself so there was no way I could have aired it in front of everyone else, but now I'm going to try and go for it.

This student seems to be suggesting that her creative confidence was impeded by alienation from self; that she had to open herself up to her emotional life in order to become creative. Leonard (1989) suggests that creativity arises out of a person's ability to live and bear emotional pain, and come to terms with lived experience, a theory that is antithetical to the Freudian concept of sublimation.

However, participants were also aware that personal investment laid them open to feeling personally wounded by criticism:

I never did anything based on personal material, on emotions. It was always movement shapes, etc. I never wanted to put myself up for someone else to judge.

Assessment was feared particularly by participants who had put themselves into their work:

I'm really happy with the way my piece is going at the moment. I don't want to be disheartened. I think it's because it's so close to me that it means so much to me. It's part of me, so if they say something about it, they say something about me. Because it's really closely connected, it scares me.

This acknowledgement of personal vulnerability shows how critical assessment has the power to crush a person's sense of self. The quotation also indicates the conflict between head and heart: the student feels happy because she has put her story into her art. She does not want to feel disheartened by intellectual criticism. Several participants spoke about assessment as an inhibitor of creative growth and personal integrity. They argued that assessment led to conformity, as they learnt how to please the assessors, 'playing the game' and 'jumping through hoops' in order to achieve high marks. Such compliance and alienation from self, as creator, is described variously in diverse epistemologies as for example a 'false self' (Winnicott, 1985), repression of the 'id' by the 'ego' in psychodynamic theory (Brenner, 1974; Brown and Pedder, 1989) or domination of the 'persona' over the 'shadow' in Jungian frameworks (Jung, 1990).

Several participants spoke about rules and structures restricting creative development and leading to loss of enjoyment and creative spark. One participant made the point that the DMT group was not institutionalised, it did not require the participant to 'play the game' and that not being interpreted and judged allowed the dancer to get in touch with her deeper self, which could provide the inspiration for choreography. Other participants recommended that individuality be nurtured throughout dance training and education as it had been in DMT, in order to encourage creativity.

Several participants spoke about the inequality of the pupil–teacher relationship in dance teaching. One participant compared this to a child–adult relationship in which the adult behaved in an authoritarian way. Feedback was experienced as destructive to self-confidence and individual critical, creative thinking:

You need the chance to stand back and say ‘I’ll change that’ but somehow it changes to how they look at it and so you are working from that rather than from what you want.

Buckroyd (2000) refers to psychological repression resulting from authoritarian ethos and structure in dance training. She recommends both student-centred teaching and group collaboration as valuable tools in boosting self-confidence and consequently encouraging creativity in young dancers. Smith (1997) analyses dance training institutions in terms of authoritarianism destructive of creative challenge. He is concerned to expose the power of establishment thinking in dance training. He argues that people in the establishment want to continue to dictate ways of perceiving, behaving, thinking, making; they want to see a continuation of their power to judge, and they often cast out those people who are in the process of developing their creativity. Smith considers such an authoritarian structure to be at odds with the notion of originality. Similarly, with reference to general education, Gardner (1995) casts doubt on teachers’ commitment to encouraging creativity, suggesting that it is perceived as anarchic and threatening to the establishment.

The recent Performing Arts Learning and Teaching Innovation Network (PALATINE) conference (11 July 2003) questioned the rationale behind assessment in the arts and considered the value of formative assessment, interactive assessment and self-assessment as important aspects of creative growth. These alternative forms of assessment, involving exploration and questioning, might be considered to be better suited to the development of imagination than assessment based on rigid criteria.

The dichotomies emerging from this research, which might also be seen to manifest the tension between humanistic DMT and choreography and performance, might be summarised as follows: heart–head, self confidence–conformity and feeling creatively nurtured–feeling creatively drained. Whilst DMT was associated with heart, self-confidence and feeling creatively nurtured, choreography and performance were associated with head, conformity and feeling creatively drained. The acceptance and validation of feelings in DMT was identified by participants as giving them increased conviction in their ability to create and as encouraging fluidity of movement. The

perception of dichotomies suggests imbalance. It would seem important to find a balance between heart and head, individuality and mastery of skill, being creatively nurtured and focusing on creative product in all aspects of dance education, including choreography and performance. Promoting head to the exclusion of heart may be considered as losing the creative resource of passion and feeling, promoting conformity to the exclusion of individuality may be considered as undermining creativity, and promoting product to the exclusion of relaxation may be considered as causing exhaustion.

#### **8.4 Relationship, choreography and performance**

The process of DMT combining inner and outer awareness seems to have enhanced or intensified relationship in all cohorts. All participants spoke about improved communication in the group as a result of relational sensitivity, whilst acknowledging the vulnerabilities that were thrown up through the process of increased intimacy (referred to as 'daunting' and 'scary'). The development of empathic skills was thought to have improved communication between participants. Five participants thought that the enhanced relationship had made a significant impact on choreography and performance. Sensitivity to others' moods and needs was perceived as developing out of the DMT experience, pinpointing 'time to observe' as facilitating empathy:

After therapy you sort of knew whether people wanted you to be there or whether they wanted to be on their own, because you observe them: there was more time to just observe.

The development of empathy in DMT was contrasted with the encouragement of competition in dance teaching and assessment, which was perceived to lead to alienation and hostility amongst students.

In performance the empathy which had developed between participants both on a body and an emotional level was considered to have helped the performance group to gel. In choreography and performance personal 'centring' and observation of others were perceived to have helped identify obstacles to creative flow:

Being in the centre of you ... and the observation, you would pick up on things, how people are, whether there are problems. I think these are new ways that can help people to go forward on a dance level, on a performance level too.

A trusting relationship was perceived as enhancing creative communication and motivation in choreography:

Choreography, like any form of play, needs that bond-making, you know, 'Trust me' sort of thing. You can see it through any performance that you do, there's always that element at the beginning. You have to be relaxed with the people that you work with and know where they're all coming from, to be able to give what you have to give, no holds barred.

Several people named 'dancer empathy' as important in choreography, facilitating the emergence of the choreographer's imagination. One participant described her choreography as a reflection of her internal state. She felt that dancers in her piece needed to be able to empathise with her, so that her internal vision could be given accurate representation. Her experience seems to relate to Gordon's (1975) reference to creativity as 'the need to communicate to others – and so to validate further – his [the artist's] private imagery and experience' (p. 24). In terms of Authentic Movement, Cottam and Sager (2002) and Koltai (2002) are researching into the place of authenticity, empathy and intimacy in choreography and performance. Cottam (cited in Cottam and Sager, 2002) writes:

If we're clear about what's going on internally, externally, and our intention and context we have a foundation for expanding our discussion beyond individual personal process and into the area of aesthetics and the creation of something of substance to share with others (p. 42).

If, as Cottam suggests, making and performing pieces about personal experience is potentially valuable for others then, it is suggested, empathy amongst dancers and between dancers and audience needs to be cultivated to facilitate the process of sharing.

Empathy was also named as a choreographer's tool, maximising creative potential by tuning into the human resources of the piece (the dancers) and finding contexts or movements, which would allow these dancers to grow personally and creatively:

I make space and time to observe and analyse the dancers and that helps me to imagine what I can get from the dancer as this character. It's reading body language, noticing how the dancer feels and what could be good for him to do.

In C2 in particular, there was general lament for the lost creative possibility of intimacy in DMT. Participants believed that the empathy, which characterised DMT, had opened up restrictive dynamics, which not only influenced social interaction but



also limited creative invention. One participant spoke of the loss of untapped potential through poor relationships in the group:

It's too late now, we're coming to an end. There's a lot of bitchiness, favourites, non-favourites, so when you come to a session like this and you see everyone for what they are, there are so many qualities that could have been used, and a lot of things that could have been learnt from other people, but we've been stuck with 'I'm working with you. I always work with you, and we work well together, but we always work in this particular way'. Whereas it could have been all of a sudden a whole new thing set off.

Perhaps if dancers and choreographers began their relationship in a humanistic DMT group, cliques would be less likely to form. Whilst misunderstandings, alienation and hostility would no doubt still surface in a DMT group (de Maré *et al.*, 1991), entering into relationship in a secure open environment might offer the possibility of exploration of hostile feelings rather than indulgence in them.

If creative process needs to happen in part in the realm of the unconscious (Meekums, 1993), that is, that it presupposes suspension of conscious critical faculties for part of the process, then it might be argued that artists who work together on creative projects need to be able to trust one another at a deep level (Cottam and Sager, 2002). They need to trust that their creative partners will not abuse the vulnerability involved when rational control is relinquished. If they feel that they are being judged or criticised in any way by others, they will not be willing to explore the irrational.

Dance-making usually takes place in a group context. Choreographer and dancers work together on creating the piece. The dancers listen to the choreographer's vision and they interpret the vision through their bodies. Often dancers improvise together in order to create movement material. This may be seen to imply the need for trust, empathy and sensitivity to others in choreography. With these dynamics in place, dancers could respond to each other authentically from their innermost experience of being. I suggest that if a group of dancers could respond to one another in this way, a dance containing feeling and meaning on personal and universal levels might result. I am aware of very little research into empathy in choreography (for example, Cottam and Sager, 2002), although its value has been noted by choreographers, for example, Dunn (1999) and teachers of improvisation, for example, Tufnell and Crickmay (1990).

Several participants described the nature of relationship in DMT as 'open', 'honest' and 'direct', but the significance of this for choreography and performance was mostly speculative. This suggests that students had not been given the opportunity to

integrate personal and group development in DMT with creative projects, or that empathic responding was not experienced as a valuable creative tool. Whilst C1 were given an opportunity to co-operate on a piece through a residency, the other two groups were not. C1 spoke of a feeling of cohesion during the residency, which they felt to be beneficial to their focus. This was also the perception of Lea Anderson (choreographer in residence) (Appendix 4). This perception, spontaneously given to an independent person, before the interview took place, caused me to reflect upon the different possibilities of triangulated research. If I had set up the research in such a way as to gain independent reflections on students' creative development, objective confirmation of students' perceptions of enhancement of creativity might have been found.

## 8.5 Conclusions

Interpretation of the findings suggests that DMT was perceived as having a positive impact upon choreography and performance in the following ways:

- Transfer of qualities (playfulness, self-confidence, relationship) and
- Transfer of content.

Transfer of qualities was much more prevalent than transfer of content. There seem to be several possible explanations for this, some identified by the participants and some theoretical:

- Reluctance to engage in personal process-work, due to self-exposure, fear of being judged and absence of safety (several participants), therefore consequent absence of personally meaningful symbolic material available for transfer (theoretical).
- Rejection of conceptual relationship between emotional process-work and art (one participant).
- Logistics of the programme structure, which meant that several participants had begun their choreographic projects before the DMT group. If they had experienced DMT first, it may have had a bigger impact (theoretical).
- Limited duration of DMT, perceived as confining the process (participants): 'I think we have taken all this time to become a group and we need a second module to have an experience as a group'. It is suggested that this might limit the symbolic material for transfer (theoretical).
- Timing of DMT, for the end of the group's university life. Perception of imminent separation conflicting with exploration of group metaphors

(participants), therefore, as above, limiting symbolic material for transfer (theoretical).

- Group context operating against individual focus (participants) [also noted by Payne (1996)], therefore limiting individual symbolic material for transfer (theoretical).
- Youth: young people are less likely than older people to be motivated to explore the psyche in DMT, on the basis that their focus is more likely to be outward rather than inward (Noack, 1992), therefore limiting individual symbolic material for transfer (theoretical).

Thus, the relationship between DMT, choreography and performance was mainly attributed to process rather than the content. It seems that playfulness, self-confidence and relationship were developed during the process and these qualities (as defined in Chapter 6) as well as attitudes of acceptance of self and others, and 'letting things be' were transferred to choreography and performance. This was perceived as benefiting creative motivation. It seems that in playing with movement metaphors participants enjoyed the freedom of being in the moment, relaxing and suspending their analytic, choreographic frames of reference. Whilst some people did work consciously with themes through movement, and some found imagery, movement quality or ambience that they wanted to recreate in choreography, the majority of participants placed more emphasis on personal effects, which in turn seem to have affected choreography and performance.

Thus this chapter has discussed the perceived relevance of playfulness, self-confidence and relationship for choreography and performance, which addresses the research questions: Are there any perceived links between DMT, choreography and performance. If so, what are they and how do they develop? In suggesting that the qualities of playfulness, self-confidence and relationship have relevance for choreography and performance, this chapter automatically refers the reader back to Chapter 6 to see how these qualities were perceived to develop. The finding that little personal material was used for choreography also refers the reader back to Chapter 7 on the difficulties of engagement with DMT. Having completed this review of the findings, discussion of the findings takes place and some tentative conclusions are drawn in Chapter 9.

# CHAPTER 9. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

## 9.1 Introduction

The DMT group was described by a participant as an ‘oasis’, meaning ‘a fertile place in a desert, due to the presence of water’ (Webster’s New World Dictionary, 1980). The experience of DMT was frequently associated by participants with ‘replenishment’, ‘nourishment’, ‘revitalisation’. My initial hypothesis for the study had been that DMT might be seen to feed creativity in dance through the unfurling of images and metaphors in DMT movement process. I anticipated that these might inspire choreography and performance. Through my inquiry I discovered that students perceived their DMT experience in a different way. Whilst a few students gave specific examples of personal process in DMT releasing images and themes which they then consciously crafted into choreography, the majority of students spoke of feeling more confident and consequently discovering a fresh attitude to movement, choreography and performance. The hallmarks of the experience that students connected with their perceived new-found freedom in movement and creativity were ‘movement play’, ‘no right or wrong’, ‘no choreographic agenda’, ‘letting things be in the moment’, ‘trust’ and ‘safety’.

One person described the DMT process as ‘healing for the emotions’ and others in terms of a journey in which they had ‘grown up’. Many felt they had been rewarded by the journey; ‘nourished’ and ‘replenished’ in their undertaking. However, many feared the vulnerability of the journey: ‘dancing is me, there’s nothing to hide behind’, and most students felt that it was difficult to honour and express their inner feelings through movement. They had been taught to do otherwise in their dance classes.

They spoke of the pressure to conform to the stereotype slim image of a dancer: ‘I remember in my ballet class a teacher pointing to my thigh and saying “That’s got to come off!”’ Buckroyd (2000) argues that young dancers often dance in order to achieve an external stereotype with a consequent depletion and sometimes devastation of internal personal growth. It might therefore be argued that the young dancer’s sense of self is potentially weak. I am arguing [as others have, for example, Shaw (1993)] that the dancer’s sense of self-needs to be strong if she is to develop into a creative dancer or

choreographer. This research shows how students associated newfound self-confidence and courage in their artistic convictions with their experience of DMT.

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, there has not been much research into the relationship between art and therapy. To reiterate, Rosen (1975) compared the interview responses on art-making of several artists who had been in therapy with several who had not. She judged those who had not to be highly creative but unaware of the levels of meaning in their work. Those who had experienced therapy worked more erratically, though with greater self-confidence, personal motivation and self-investment. The work of these artists was more consciously self-expressive.

Gilroy's (1989, 1992) doctoral analysis of 214 questionnaires returned by recently trained art therapists yielded the following reflections on Art Therapy and art-making. First, that therapy training led to increased self-awareness and self-acceptance and that artists perceived their work to be more spontaneous. Second, that therapy training led to inhibition in art-making due to self-consciousness, fear of interpretation and 'confusion between personal images and images that communicated something beyond themselves' (p. 7).

The question is re-stated: Is self-awareness important or irrelevant to art-making? Is it desirable that the artist knows the extensive layers of meaning present in his/her work or rather is it important that the artist does not know them and thus acts as an unknowing conduit for personal and transpersonal phenomena to take form? This thesis comes down on the side of the value of DMT for young dancers, on the basis that it seems to have empowered them in their personal lives: 'As a result of DMT I felt able to go into counselling and to begin to talk about my problem'.

Equally it seems to have increased their motivation to create, through removal of emotional blocks: 'Before I had no confidence in choreography, because that thing was there that I couldn't let out ... I hadn't faced it in myself'.

Enhanced self-confidence seemed also to have improved creative motivation: 'To be all my life in my art, that's the whole point of art isn't it?'

In this final chapter I am going to analyse both the ease and the difficulty of engagement with DMT in order to show how the perceived personal effects of playfulness, self-confidence and relationship on one hand and of fearful vulnerability on the other developed. The relevance of the findings for the higher education context and the dance education context are highlighted, with particular reference to choreography and performance. This final analysis seeks to respond to the research questions: Are

there any perceived links between DMT, choreography and performance? If so, what are they and how do they develop? The chapter concludes with a proposal for a relationship between DMT and dance, with reference to the findings of the study.

## **9.2 Mental health needs of students in higher education**

Overall levels of stress and anxiety among second-year students at the University of Leicester (Grant, 2002) were found in a recent quantitative study to be generally high. Study concerns centred on concentration, study skills, ability to manage and complete coursework, ability to set priorities, make decisions and manage time, fear of examinations and ability to clarify and meet course goals. Cultural/social concerns manifested as fears about finding a job, adjusting to university life, coping with unsatisfactory, inadequate housing and dealing with severely inadequate finances. In terms of health, there was evidence of general worry, vague anxieties around phobias, panic attacks, sadness, depression and mood changes. Personal and interpersonal issues were about being assertive, improving self-esteem and confidence, understanding and coping with loneliness, developing trust in friendships and maintaining a love relationship (Grant, 2002, p. 88).

Grant's survey was anonymous, so correlation of results with academic performance was not possible. Nevertheless Grant (2002, p. 90) states: 'Levels of stress may have a serious impact on academic functioning and must be a matter of concern for the HE sector'. The intention of Grant's study was to generate data from which to develop provision for the mental health needs of students at the University of Leicester. Building self-confidence was identified as essential in education, alongside promoting positive attitudes, challenging prejudice, being aware of mental health issues and knowing how to refer students for educational/psychological help (p. 97).

The findings of this inquiry would seem to support the findings of Grant's study. Students felt more confident and positive after their experience in DMT and this appeared to them to have had a knock-on effect upon their engagement with their academic work. Whether it was in writing assignments or choreographing pieces, their perception was of increased focus and concentration as well as of increased determination to realise their own ideas. As in Grant's study, I did not correlate perceived personal growth and perceived creativity with rated behaviour or performance, as I was interested in subjective rather than objectively verifiable truth.

### 9.3 Dance educational environments

Roberts and Zelenyanszki (2002) note the trend of expansion in higher education and state that: 'As numbers of students have rocketed, successive governments have failed to match this with real spending' (p. 107). Declining staff–student ratios is one reason, cited by Grant (2002), for a perceived increase in student mental health difficulties, but she points to the lack of hard research evidence for this claim.

This inquiry has discovered that students felt both refreshed and animated by the ethos of the DMT group. This ethos is in stark contradiction to the imperatives that are dominating higher education today (Grant, 2002). The DMT ethos in this inquiry emphasised open exploration without imperatives, such as making a product in a given amount of time. Students noted how different this felt to their other classes, which they perceived as constantly demanding something of them, forcing them into compliance with set criteria in a strict time-framework. In contrast, DMT fed them, allowed time for play and reflection. This environment was felt to be energising and creative. The metaphors of growing might be interpreted as manifestation of this feeling:

I just keep thinking of things growing. Everyone seems really attracted to the light. They seem to be all huddled up at first and then towards the end they have stretched out like strange plants.

A perceived vehicle for a creative, nurturing experience in DMT is play. Piaget (1951) suggests that imaginative play allows for integration of emotion in young children, and Garvey (1977) discusses play as an innate, internally motivated and intensely satisfying experience in childhood. Winnicott (1985) and Cox and Theilgaard (1987) note the value of play for exploring inner feelings and images in therapy. Stern (1985) notes the playful dance between mother and infant in the early formation of relationship and Dissanayake (1992, 1997) concludes that art is a form of play that grows out of an innate potential for patterning of experience. Lindquist (2001) suggests that play makes a valuable contribution to dance education in that it increases motivation through imaginative involvement. Many models of DMT (Stanton-Jones, 1992; Levy, 1995; Meekums, 2002) include the element of play as internally motivated exploration. Play is viewed as the part of a creative process that throws up movement metaphors as if out of nowhere, allowing synthesis to take place, without rational control. In this research play was cited as a facilitating component of DMT, allowing for escape from social conformity, and encouraging childlike spontaneity and creativity (Lee and Lopez, 1995).

Macfarlane (1995) defines education as the 'design, management and creation of environments which support the learning process' (p. 54). As previously referenced, Buckroyd (2000) recommends the use of interactive teaching methodologies in dance education. It is suggested that through exploration, investigation, experimentation and discussion in small groups, students' intelligent response to creative dilemmas might be developed. This recommendation is rooted in experience as a counsellor of dance students and consequent identification of their need to grow into young adults capable of internal reflection and evaluation. This developmental growth is linked to imaginative, creative ability.

As previously referenced, a recent Performing Arts Learning and Teaching Innovation Network (PALATINE) Conference entitled 'Creative Tensions' (11 July 2003) focused on the dual concern of dance education to 'nurture individual voices and resource students with craft skills'. It called for reappraisal of 'the philosophies informing theories of curriculum design, delivery and assessment' and analysis of student learning experiences and learning outcomes.

I suggest that this inquiry into dance students' experience of group DMT offers a small contribution to the debate on learning environments in higher education and specifically to the new wave of critical thinking on dance education. Students spoke about the perceived positive effects on self, choreography and performance, of play, movement metaphors, acceptance and safety in the DMT groups. Play was seen to reawaken enjoyment and spontaneity (playfulness) in dance:

Dance is there to be enjoyed, a way of expressing yourself, and when somebody stops [claps hands once] enjoying it and stops doing that because they haven't done a right movement, and just strips it of any positive elements, that's very harming. I found that by doing this group, I thought 'No, I don't care. I might not be able to do that perfectly, but I'll try it and to hell with it!' Whereas before it was restrictive.

Movement metaphors seem sometimes to have been used as vehicles for exploration of feelings in DMT: 'I felt I was really quite angry, because I was going from wall to wall and I was rebounding off the walls'. Physical and emotional awareness gained from movement metaphors was sometimes translated into choreography and performance: 'It gave me a big phrase of material'.



Group and therapist acceptance (defined as affirmation, including experience and feelings) were perceived as developing a strong sense of self, which was sometimes perceived as impacting on choreography and performance:

I'm not really fluent and confident normally, but in this class I don't feel I'm being watched or pushed, and I've enjoyed it and said what I wanted to say, and I feel really pleased about that.

I've found that through this module, I've been able to go on the stage and actually be me, this is me now.

The perceived effect of increased self-confidence seems also sometimes to refer back to a process of self-awareness and self-acceptance (Figure 4, Appendix 9): 'So learning about myself in a way helped me to deal with the way I felt, which helped me to have a bit more self-esteem'.

In addition, perception of safety was viewed as pivotal in facilitating process:

I think some people used it as a therapy class because they felt safe within its boundaries to let emotions come up and to be able to express those emotions, and then other people didn't.

Commitment to relationship was considered as promoting safety, and the establishment of safety was perceived as promoting more intimate relationship:

When you get this group situation and you are bound and committed, its total, it's OK to do this. No one's going to do you down so you can feel quite relaxed, no fear or phobia or anything. You can vent all your feelings.

Respect, support and sharing in relationship have been considered as significant in the development of group safety before, for example, DMT (Payne, 1996; Mills and Daniluk, 2002) and the arts therapies (Meekums, 1998, 2000).

Thus, the experience in the DMT group seems to have helped many participants to let go of a culture of rivalry and suspicion and begin to enjoy a new culture based on appreciation of self and of others. They felt encouraged to transfer this new attitude to learning in a group to other classes: 'I've been able to appreciate how other people move. I did observe them before, but now I can fully appreciate how they move'. However, it must also be noted that self-exposure, external judgment and absence of safety seem also to have been associated with the DMT group. The difficulty of engagement with DMT is discussed below.

## 9.4 The difficulty of engagement with DMT in a dance educational context

It has been suggested that play, movement metaphors, acceptance and safety experienced in the DMT group were perceived to contribute towards the perceived personal effects of playfulness, self-confidence and relationship. In turn, it has been suggested that these effects were considered to be relevant to choreography and performance (see Chapter 8).

However, in therapy, as opposed to education, people generally share their feelings more intimately. Through the introduction of an experiential DMT group (referred to in shorthand as the DMT group, as explained in Chapter 1) into a dance educational context, an opportunity for evaluation of relevance of DMT for dance education was created. The specific academic rationale for the group (as explained in Chapter 3, see also Appendix 2) was that to learn about DMT, students needed to experience its potential for themselves and this would necessarily involve engagement with personal sensation, emotion and imagination. Yet clearly this experiential group was not defined in the same way as a clinical therapy group and the contractual responsibilities of facilitator (referred to in this research as therapist, see Chapter 1) and participant, were different than those laid down between therapist and client in clinical practice. There are therefore ethical issues present in the concept of the experiential therapy group (Payne, 1999, 2001). How can the safety needed for therapeutic exploration (Payne, 1996; Meekums, 1998) be promoted in an experiential group in an educational establishment, which does not necessarily call to account the competence of the facilitator as therapist? If safety is rooted in trust that the therapist will be there for the client (Natiello, 2001; Pearmain, 2001), how can safety be promoted in a quasi-therapeutic relationship where no such written or legal contract exists? These ethical quandaries have already been discussed in Chapter 3.

The problematic status of the experiential therapy group was sensed by some participants: 'I had difficulty differentiating between a therapy group and an experiential therapy group. This made it difficult for me to enter into the process'. It appears that the lack of clarity concerning roles and responsibilities may undermine engagement with process. Conversely, many students referred to the group as 'therapy' ('after therapy you sort of knew whether people wanted you to be there') and clearly did not differentiate experiential DMT from clinical DMT.

Nevertheless, anxiety around the intention of the group was felt in all three cohorts and difficulty with the personal exploratory nature of the group was voiced: 'It was too open. I didn't know what to do. There needed to be more direction'. Perhaps this indicates that an experiential DMT group emphasising exploration is inappropriate to the learning needs of these students. Meekums (2000) has also noted the threat to safety posed by inappropriate timing of exploratory work. Safety was an enduring issue in all three cohorts, although the relationship with the therapist seems to have been perceived generally as trustworthy ('You were a safe person'). Challenge to safety seems to have been associated in C1 and C3 with mistrust amongst participants. Mistrust was perceived by participants as diminishing investment in process: 'I'm frightened to move because I'm still thinking "Are they analysing me?"'

Group therapy may be conceived as being primarily concerned with intimacy:

The need for privacy fits better with an authoritarian era, when a troubled individual approached an expert in shame, hoping for relief. Group counselling shatters privacy; it stands in opposition to isolation and transforms individual problems into common concerns (Sonstegard, 1998, p. 168).

Creating a safe environment in order to encourage intimacy seems therefore of primary importance in a therapy group. The experiential group, which models a therapy group, must also cultivate a climate of safety. It might be suggested that this is a difficult task given the uncertain status of the experiential group.

## **9.5 Critical analysis of student experience in the DMT group**

Several students found participation in the DMT group difficult for a variety of reasons. One reason cited, as discussed above, was the lack of direction in the group, which led to a feeling of aimlessness. Lack of structure seems to have caused feelings of bewilderment and sadness, associated with feeling lost. The process was described as 'too free, too intimate'. Students wanted a guide, someone who would give them a focus. Someone spoke of a need to return to 'pure dance', she felt that there was 'too much stimulation'. Feelings of uncertainty around the intention of finding feelings and images through movement were sometimes voiced:

I felt both this week and last week, 'What's the point?' I'm not one of those people who think 'Oh I want to go into myself', I think it's a waste of time personally.

Some participants did not want to explore the personal significance of images because it was 'too heavy' and others acknowledged their fear of self-exposure as both internal ('shyness and confusion') and external (suspicion of others, expectation of critical response: 'I don't want to share stuff and then have people attack me'). Someone spoke of 'opening the door on difficult feelings'. Sometimes feelings were 'too raw' to feel safety in their expression. Someone felt 'too hurt and too angry' to express herself verbally. As discussed above, the difficulty of differentiating between the experiential DMT group and a 'real therapy group' was cited as undermining investment in process. The confusion seemed to weaken the boundaries of the group and the safety within it. To re-state: How deep can a person go in a 'model' of a therapy group with no policy or legal statement of professional responsibility?

Alienation from self, group and DMT gave rise to feelings of strangeness, awkwardness and resistance in both C2 and C3. Sometimes a minority group member, for example the man in C2, felt more in the spotlight due to difference and therefore inhibited and embarrassed. Such feelings gave rise to a tacit consensus not to work in depth, which seems to have undermined the stated intention of DMT. Such negative experience of DMT could indicate the unsuitability of the model of DMT offered to students in this case study, and possibly the unsuitability of DMT for student dancers in higher education. I will address both these concerns.

My own practice does emphasise open-ended exploration and this does cause anxiety. It may be that at this stage in a student dancer's life such exploration is not synchronous with a student's personal development. In other words it requires considerable life experience and a sense of personal stability to be able to enter into a process of personal discovery. It could therefore mean that the intention of DMT to uncover personal feelings and images is unsuitable at this stage in a dancer's life, no matter how it is practised. Or it could indicate the need for a more structured approach to DMT, for example using games, exercises, formats with clear focus, purpose and guided movement. It is in fact true that, at this time of writing, I am doing just this with the DMT module, though this is largely due to an even greater increase in numbers of students (to 30) wishing to attend.

This inquiry uncovered that many participants floundered, particularly at the beginning of the process, due to lack of instruction: 'I felt lost. I needed more structure'. I found that students differed in their sense of personal and interpersonal safety, and consequently in the degree of commitment they were able to offer to the process.

Certainly, there was a lot of evidence to suggest that attitudes to the DMT group changed considerably over time: 'I was glad to be able to say that much and be honest with people, because it's not only skin-deep for everybody'. Both C1 and C2 wished that the group could continue. They felt that they had only just begun the process and they were excited to discover more about themselves in relation to others: 'I will be sad next week. I think we have taken all this time to become a group and we need a second module to have an experience as a group'. It may therefore be suggested that extending the experience of DMT for dance students in higher education would deepen involvement in process.

The popularity of this module is not in doubt (Appendix 6: Module Evaluations). Despite initial misgivings, the majority of students expressed perceptions of gain to personal and creative growth:

DMT has helped me focus on things, just giving time for myself to sit down and notice how I am. I feel so brilliant.

There are times when I've got lost in the movement and I feel like I'm improvising and the movements flow one to another ... it comes so naturally.

I would suggest that the popularity of the DMT module has played a significant part in increasing the number of students opting for it. As with any module, word gets around. Of course, I am not in a position to report what students have said to each other about the DMT module but, based on student reflections in interview and on module evaluations, it is reasonable to assume that their communication would be affirmative. The increasing popularity of the module could therefore be seen to suggest that experience of DMT is positively reported and consequently desired by dance students in higher education.

Despite evidence of initial concerns around the exploratory nature of the process, reflections generally indicate involvement with process, a sense of personal growth and a change in attitude and approach to creative projects. Often from a position of scepticism, reluctance, fear and confusion, participants moved to an appreciation of all the benefits they had received from the exploratory forum offered. They honoured the personal growth and the creative stimulus found in the group as well as the support network formed. Their change in attitude seemed to be tied to their growing self-confidence and the strengthening of relationships in the group, both of which stemmed from the establishment of a culture of trust.

This process of change replicates a previously quoted small-scale action research project in dance conducted by Elkins (1996), in which students' response to open exploration in improvisation was recorded. Elkins worked with two different populations (high school and university students) to see if there was a difference in response according to age and environment. In fact, she found that in both situations students were not used to 'being included in educational exchanges' (p. 327). However, she noticed a gradual change from requiring her input to venturing into new activities which 'required taking risks, making choices, and sharing their choices and creations' (p. 327). It would seem that whilst this way of working is challenging in its requirement for a student to take responsibility for her own learning, the benefits to the development of student creativity do provide it with a strong rationale.

## **9.6 Reflections on the significance of therapist and group participation in DMT**

Person-centred practitioners such as Natiello (2001), Pearmain (2001) and Lietaer (2001) have all emphasised the therapeutic value of therapist congruence in interaction. Therapist participation in this research was emphasised by many as important in the creation of an egalitarian environment: 'You weren't a watcher, you were a participant because you made up part of the group, so we didn't feel like you were a teacher'. It was also analysed as encouraging participation: 'To see you moving around the way we were gave us confidence to do whatever we wanted'. Whilst the impact of other roles of authority (course leader and assessor) could sometimes be interpreted in the symbolism of process (for example, being naughty in C1 and being angry in C2), participants maintained that they felt the therapist was in the group, not outside it and not in judgment over them, and that this was significant in how able they felt to act spontaneously. Requests for congruence ('What are *you* feeling, Jill?'), and intimacy of discussion occurring at times of therapist congruence (for example in C1: DMT 5) support the theory that therapist congruence is a facilitating factor in therapy. As previously stated, an alternative interpretation of requests for the therapist to join in the process is that they represented an avoidance of authority issues and, equally, that the therapist's willingness to join in was a self-indulgent fulfilment of personal need to feel part of the group and so to avoid an authoritative role.

However, Yalom (1991) writes:

Therapists have a dual role: they must both observe and participate in the lives of their patients. As observer, one must be sufficiently objective to provide necessary rudimentary guidance to the patient. As participant, one enters into the life of the patient and is affected and sometimes changed by the encounter (p. 13).

Levy (1995) also comments:

The most important ingredient is the therapist's openness to, and empathy with, the patient. Through empathy, individuals receive the message that they are not alone but are travelling with the therapist in a joint journey of self-examination. It is within this empathic and spontaneous dance ... that healing occurs (p. 12).

However, participants spoke of being listened to, but not of being understood. One person in C3 thought that the size of the group worked against their ability to empathise. It is true that I was often overwhelmed by the task I had set myself, as discussed in Chapter 5. Striking a balance between congruent and empathic relationship with one or a few individuals and awareness of the whole group was very difficult for me: I felt restricted in my engagement with individuals because of the call of the group. When I did move in empathic, congruent relationship with individuals, it deepened the process for us both but, as stated before, I would wish in future to explore in greater depth the effect upon the group. Involvement with one or a few individuals might provoke jealousy and clearly it has implications for group safety. In my experience with other groups I have found that eight is an optimal group size for the practice of empathy and congruence in interaction with one or a few individuals, alongside awareness of others' process-needs (a finding which corresponds to Foulkes's (1991) analysis of process aligned with group size).

In C3's process there was often a divided experience, so I split my attention and tried to empathise with both, losing contact with myself. Here, perhaps, the processes of empathy and congruence were divergent and led to obscuring of congruence and the loss of involvement in process. It could be argued that the sense of distance I felt between myself and all the groups at times was rooted in my dissociation from personal experience. Dissociation may be seen as weakening therapist presence ('Sometimes I didn't notice she was there'). Conversely, containment of personal experience might lead to less interference in group process (Mearns, 1997) and awareness of self and others might be enough to facilitate therapeutic process; indeed it could be argued that

the therapist's ability to distance self from process provides the necessary space for the group to take on the work of engagement with difference for themselves.

Yalom (1985) states:

The leader must attempt to structure a group in such a way as to build in the therapeutic norms ... support, self-disclosure, self-monitoring, interaction, spontaneity, the importance of the group, members as agents of help (p. 124).

The emphasis in C1 and C2 on the importance of honesty and support in the group as facilitating process ('to be truthful to each other and to ourselves') supports this theory. All the groups struggled with this dimension of process, and nowhere more clearly than in C2 is the movement from fear and isolation to trust and intimacy illustrated: 'It took several weeks to gain trust, especially with people I hadn't worked with before'. Yalom (1985) continues:

Following the previous period of conflict, the group gradually develops into a cohesive unit ... During this phase, there is an increase of morale, mutual trust and self-disclosure ... The chief concern of the group is with intimacy and closeness ... the primary anxieties have to do with not being liked, not being close enough to people, or being too intimate (p. 302).

The movement metaphors in all cohorts have been interpreted in terms of exploration of separation and connection (see Table 2, Appendix 10, and Appendix 7). In C3 several people wanted to join with others in the group in a shared process, but they were obstructed by others who rejected this possibility because, it seems, they could not shed the legacy of past mistrust. They would not, could not move from this position of mistrust in relation to certain members and therefore blocked the process of engagement. Hawkins (1998) writes:

Joining does not only mean identifying with others. It also means moving toward them to establish the contact through which differences and conflict can be explored. As the group matures, members grow in their capacity to encounter difference and to use their negative reactions as signals to approach, rather than avoid. The experience of difference becomes an opportunity for exploration and growth (p. 426).

The presence of intransigent dynamics, which block movement towards another person, might therefore indicate unsuitability for group DMT. However, the unfreezing of blocks to communication in C1 and the easing of relationship dynamics, perceived even in C3 as a result of DMT, could be seen as evidence to the contrary.



I would agree with Meekums (2000) that group process seems to be facilitated by the commitment of the group members, and that commitment may be defined by a willingness to share personal experience with others. If such vulnerability is not present, it may be suggested that the group's potential for growth diminishes. One person in C3 felt that the group was 'capable of amazing things' and she felt disappointed and crestfallen after Session 1 because of a perceived lack of commitment to the process of sensing, feeling and imagining. She left with the statement 'I'm not getting what I want from this group' and others echoed her disappointment as the process continued.

### **9.7 The development of autonomy and relationship in DMT and its perceived relevance for choreography and performance**

There are many practitioners and researchers in psychology and psychotherapy who support the idea that psychological wholeness involves an ability to be autonomous and an ability to engage in relationship (Jordan *et al.*, 1991; Sampson, 1993; Seeman, 1995 cited in Natiello, 2001; Yalom, 1991). Natiello refers to:

... the human tension between the fear of individuating and the fear of merging can only be eased in a relationship with another person who validates and affirms the will of the patient (p. 29).

Yalom (1991) also pinpoints development of agency as the purpose of therapy (p. 9) and Moreno (2003) speaks of inspiring the will for life.

Separation and intimacy have been interpreted as dominant concerns in C1 and C3. In C1 the readiness for separation might have been connected to affirmation of students' will ('You didn't have to do anything right or anything wrong to achieve what you wanted'). In C1's final session, one participant opened a window and climbed onto the ledge (ground floor room, therefore safe) as if to symbolise her readiness to fly the nest (an image from Session 5 and depicted in Painting C1: 5, Appendix 8). This student had spoken to me about the improvement in her self-confidence (manifesting itself particularly in verbal self-expression), which she felt was a consequence of DMT.

Many students felt that their energy and their will to create increased as a result of DMT. They felt that their movement was more flowing and powerful and that they had greater confidence in their own creative abilities. Their courage to create (May, 1976) was strengthened. Some used personal experience in choreography, some tried new media. Many showed increased determination in realising their own ideas. Generally, there was a good indication that they felt a new strength in their creative purpose and

process, which they associated with DMT. Life energy and creative energy seemed closely aligned in this instance.

Development of an autonomous self appeared to occur alongside development of group awareness. Strengthening of sense of self seemed to correspond with development of capacity for intimacy as empathic connection. Students spoke of enhanced sensitivity to others' emotional states, openness, acceptance and appreciation of difference (Figure 6, Appendix 9). They felt more able to communicate and share. They developed a sense of group or community. Even in C3, where some people intentionally closed down channels of communication, people still spoke of 'seeing others for the first time', and feeling attuned to the feelings of others.

Some students thought the development of their ability to be in relationship was helpful in choreography. They spoke of using the ethos and framework of DMT in the creation of work together in a group. They liked the emphasis on awareness and exploration of sensation, feeling and image in relation to others, which engaged the dancer in the dance and inspired authentic and individually creative responses to movement ideas.

Yalom (1991) refers to intimacy as a reaching out to another whilst knowing that we are ultimately alone: 'Even though you're alone in your boat, it's always comforting to see the lights of the other boats bobbing nearby' (p. 12). In antithesis to intimacy, Yalom suggests that merging is a fearful way out of the challenge of autonomy: 'A common, and vigorous attempt to solve existential isolation is fusion – the softening of one's boundaries, the melting into another' (p. 11). In C3, one participant stated 'There's nothing in particular keeping us all from merging. It's something very thin'. It is possible that this single voice represented something at play in C3 as a whole. Desire for merging could be analysed as an escape from self-awareness and the feelings of difference and conflict present in this group. Similarly, in C1, Session 2, there appeared various images and movement metaphors that could be interpreted as merged states of being (narcissism, lovers) at a time in the group's life when issues of individual power and conflict had emerged (Session 1).

Yalom continues:

One of the great paradoxes of life is that self-awareness breeds anxiety. Fusion eradicates anxiety in a radical fashion – by eliminating self-awareness. The person who has fallen in love, and entered a blissful state of merger, is not self-reflective because the questioning lonely I (and the attendant anxiety of isolation) dissolve into we. Thus one sheds the anxiety but loses oneself (p. 11).

It is possible that the merging that occurred in DMT reflected a fear of aloneness, a state acknowledged by several participants ('Have to realise that everyone else is always experiencing something else'; 'They're my three words: alone, sad, life. Life is within the tree because it's growing, and sad because it's on its own').

## 9.8 A proposal for a relationship between DMT and dance

Whilst it has been suggested (Templeton, 1998) that both DMT and dance could operate in the same framework of authenticity and community, the different intentions of the two disciplines are also apparent in the literature: DMT concerned with authenticity (Payne, 1992; Meekums, 2002) and dance concerned with artifice (Langer, 1953). This inquiry suggests a relationship between DMT and dance on the basis of some of its findings.

Symbolic movement explored in DMT may be a source of emotional awareness, which, in turn, may become a creative force in choreography. Several students encountered personal feelings and themes through DMT, which they used as source material in choreography:

Do you remember when I got upset because my Granddad had ... It gave me a big phrase of material ... coming out of inside. It was really quite lovely and flowing and embracing.

Yet the counter-argument that emotional awareness brings anxiety (Yalom, 1991) and loss of creative focus (Gilroy, 1989, 1992) must also be acknowledged: 'It could bring up too much emotional pain. I'm just trying to hold on and get through my work'.

It may be argued that self-awareness can increase the communicative vibrancy of performance: 'This piece is about me. I think it has more power because I know what I am saying'. Yet it has also been suggested (Kaplan, 1997, Appendix 4) that a dancer moving blindly within a metaphor may produce a riveting performance without self-awareness or even because of it. Somehow the symbol may have a life of its own, its message communicated without the conscious intention of the dancer.

I began by thinking that the movement aspect of DMT could be very important for dancers, awakening a 'felt sense' (Gendlin, 1981) and increasing the presence of the dancer in performance. Yet I also learnt that the dance aspect of DMT in some cases inhibited authenticity initially in some individuals, who felt that their attention to technical perfection was not easily abandoned. It may be argued that, for this reason, the

opportunity to play in DMT was appreciated by many participants. Play was associated with freedom of movement and emotion and imagination:

DMT is not as structured ... it is much more free, you can do what you feel.

I felt I could release more.

The movements flow one to another ... it comes so naturally.

I had this strong feeling of what I could do. I don't know whether I visualised it in my head or whether it was just purely a feeling that I felt just through moving. I felt my body could have done some really great things.

A real release ... Very visual as well ... thoughts and images into movement.

I'd forgotten all about it and then while I was skipping I remembered all about my playground and thinking that I did used to participate.

Such freedom of body, emotions and images was considered relevant to performance and choreography:

I could relax into performance.

We spent eight weeks as a whole group working up to performance. Each group would be like a therapy session in a way. We would 'jam' improvising all session, you could do what you want.

An art form needs to be free, it needs to have encouragement and it needs to be able to grow, and it needs to be able to express itself, that's where it comes from.

Feeling like a child again through play in DMT was particularly noted as a catalyst for the creativity in the arts:

A regressive childhood thing, age three, finding an inner something rather than the intellectual. If you go into inner emotions and feelings, the inner, creative part, there's a space for that intuitive, childlike, creative thing inside us, that you can tap.

Lindquist (2001) advocates the use of play in involving the child in the dance. This research supports Lindquist's theory with an older population in terms of involvement with DMT. Play in DMT seems to have facilitated personal investment in the movement process, with the simultaneous occurrence of personal emotion and image.

Finally, the ethos of acceptance (affirmation of self and other, including experience and feelings) was considered to be highly significant in promoting freedom of expression: ‘You can move the way you want. There’s no right or wrong’. Therapist participation was also cited as encouraging commitment to process: ‘To see you moving around the way we were gave us confidence to do whatever we wanted’. A sense of safety was associated with acceptance, including concepts such as empathy and support: ‘I was able to find myself, having the support of everyone else. It was hard to deal with my feelings throughout, but empathy and support made it possible’.

The value of the therapeutic conditions of UPR, empathy and congruence was first researched by Rogers (1957), who asked the clients about their own experience of therapy. He and other pioneers such as Truax and Carkhuff (1967) showed how, from the client’s point of view, these were the aspects of therapeutic intervention that were perceived to have the most significant impact upon their ability to explore self in therapy. This research may be seen to provide some further reflections on these conditions, with reference to the findings on acceptance, involvement and safety.

## **9.9 Recommendations for future research**

This research has discussed how self-confidence, self-awareness and relationship were perceived as being promoted by DMT and as being relevant to dance education, in particular to choreography and performance. In looking further at self-confidence, self-awareness and relationship in dance, implementation of aspects of quantitative research methodologies might complement this qualitative research design based on perceptions. A more pluralistic design, involving perceptions and triangulation of interpretation, would touch the complexity of individual experience and provide more than one construction of validity, adding to the robustness of the findings.

It is evident that creative process in dance often happens in a group context: a choreographer working with dancers; co-choreographic projects. Equally, performance often involves dancers dancing together. This study concludes that cohesion, rooted in congruence and empathy, was perceived to be valuable for choreographic process and performance. The phenomena of congruence, empathy and cohesion would therefore seem worthy of further investigation. I would recommend full collaboration with artists, as they are the experts on their own processes. A team of dance co-researchers could compare and contrast their experiences of these phenomena in co-operative inquiry using heuristic and phenomenological approaches, in order to touch the richness and

complexity of individual experience, and to increase validity through comparison of analysis.

This study suggests a relationship between DMT and dance, but it does not inquire into ways of integrating DMT into the dance curriculum. Future studies could evaluate ways of doing this, in order to establish how to create an optimum working relationship between the two disciplines. Case study or action research would again seem to be appropriate ways of inquiry in an educational setting.

Finally, an inquiry into the transmutation of personal experience into art could take the form of a much more involved and detailed inquiry into creative process. I would recommend the tracking of one or a few artists, encouraging their involvement in the research process. I would suggest that involvement brings commitment to telling one's truth and exploring the complexity of lived experience and that only through involvement can the split between subjective and objective be healed. In research terms this means that subjective and objective processes need to take place within each participant. Otherwise the experience may be dislocated: subjectively experienced by the participant and objectively analysed by the researcher.

With these recommendations I close this inquiry into dance students' perceptions of DMT in relation to choreography and performance. My intention has been to give some insight into their experience with transparent analysis of their words. It seems fitting to give one of them the final word:

I've decided that choreography is something really personal and as long as I feel good with it that's it, to be all my life in my art, that's the whole point of art isn't it?

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## RESEARCHER'S PUBLICATIONS

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## APPENDIX 1. MODULE OUTLINE

### **DAL305 Introduction to Dance Movement Therapy**

This vocational module is an introduction to the use of dance and movement therapy. It encourages students to develop an awareness of the links between body-felt experience and emotional psychological spiritual experience. The focus will be an experiential dance therapy group involving student participation and analysis.

*Single honours choose between this module and DAL306 Dance in the Community; joints and minors may choose this module to fulfil the dance requirement of their degree route.*

## APPENDIX 2. INTRODUCTORY MEETINGS

### The Dance Movement Therapy Experiential Group

#### An account of information given to students at the options meeting

##### Aim

The aim of the experiential group is to help you experience a therapeutic environment in which you can explore how you feel when you move.

##### Rationale

In higher education experiential groups are often selected as an optimum way of learning about subjects that engage the learner as a whole person (heart and mind). In this instance, an experiential group has been chosen because intellectual learning about dance movement therapy (which is about the body, the emotions and the imagination as well as the intellect) would be inadequate. In contrast, felt-experience in dance movement therapy gives greater insight into the process of the discipline.

##### Facilitation

I am hoping to facilitate your journey into dance movement therapy by providing conditions (as would a therapist) that have been well researched as conducive to exploration of personal feelings and images. The experiential dance movement therapy group will be like a therapy group and yet contractually is not one. You may find that personal issues emerge which you have been only dimly aware of and you may need to take these to a counsellor or therapist (details of Student Counselling Service given).

##### Ground Rules

Confidentiality about others' experience is vital to promote a sense of security. Responsibility for self facilitates an atmosphere of open communication. This is different to a culture where others are blamed for our own feelings and reactions: a defensive culture. A commitment to participation enables group learning to take place.

##### Research Involvement

I would like to do some research into this DMT group and I would like to hear what you have to say about this. As I imagine it, I would like to tape-record the part of the session where we sit down in a circle and talk about our experiences. I would also like to record interviews with you as individuals and as a group after the sessions have finished\*. I would then like to be able to refer to the sessions and interviews when I write about the experience, but I would not give anyone's name. So I would like you to think about this. Do you feel OK about me using your experience in this way?

I have described how moving freely in DMT can sometimes bring up feelings and how we may feel surprised by these feelings. We don't know at this point what will happen in the group, and there may come a time when you want to withdraw from the group and withdraw from the research, if indeed you chose to be involved initially. I want to give you my commitment that if anyone does want to withdraw from either that will be fine: I will not include you in what I write.

I have spoken about my role in the DMT group. I will be intending to facilitate a movement process, so I will be acting as a dance movement therapist, but we are not making an agreement that I will be your therapist and you will be my clients. When the group is over and I would like to interview you, I would be interviewing you as a researcher, trying to find out from you what your experience has been.

I will give out some permission slips when you have made your option choices and you can have time over the vacation to think about how you might be affected by the research project.

I would also like to give you copies of anything I write and I would welcome *your* comments on what I have written.

\*In Cohorts 2 and 3 I explained that the group interviews would be facilitated by an independent interviewer.

## APPENDIX 3. COHORT PROFILES

Cohort 1 (C1) (14 members) consisted of a majority group of students who had been taught together for three years, one student who had shared only a few modules with the majority group, one student who was relatively new to the majority group, having taken a year out from her degree course due to injury and one student on a term's exchange from Canada. As in C3, within this group were tensions affecting trust due to past histories of perceived betrayal and rivalry. (One person came to talk to me after the first session to explain how difficult she found it to share things in a group due to a falling out with another.)

C2 (20 students) was a much larger group, including four students from the second year, one of whom was completely new to the programme having transferred from another university, and students who were doing combined degrees such as Music and Related Arts, English and Related Arts, as well as the majority of students who were registered on Dance or Dance and Related Arts degrees. They had not worked together before as a whole group.

C3 was a group of 17 students who (like C1) had been together for three years, either as Dance majors or Dance and Related Arts joint honours. They had attended classes together for choreography, improvisation and technique and had worked together on choreographic projects in small groups. Dynamics between participants were already established at the beginning of the DMT group. There had been broken confidences and feelings of anger, sadness, and disappointment resulting from these. These dynamics affected the content of the group in terms of movement metaphors and verbal sharing of experience.

Another feature of this group was the presence of four students from countries other than Britain. Two students were from Croatia, one student from the United States, and one student from Spain. The first three of these students were older than the others as they were in their mid- to late twenties, whilst the majority of the group were in their early twenties. The Croatian students had left their homes, families and country in the midst of civil war, so the theme of separation had intense significance for these students. As in C2 there was a man in the group who was in his late twenties. He was the only participant who was a parent. In this group there was therefore a wide variety of experience.

## APPENDIX 4. INTERVIEWS WITH CHOREOGRAPHERS

**Interview with Rachel Kaplan**  
**Spring 1997**  
**Brighton University**

**Jill:** Rachel, will you tell me about your work?

**Rachel:** My personal work has always come from things that have happened to me, conversations that I've had, relationships, things I've seen, situations I've been in. I'm not interested in metaphor but I am interested in the fact that one's life can be a metaphor for a larger situation; the way a person stands in for other people: one experience had by many other people. The theory is that if I as a performer stand up and say 'This is what happened for me', the chances of the audience identifying with it are pretty big. The idea is that the performer stands in a channel for the larger human experience. This is magic; not the kind of theatre magic or trick images that make people go 'Ah', etc. I'm interested in the magic of everyday life and the way it is incredibly complicated. We are all broken up in bits and pieces.

I can speak about my experience in the making. If I can objectify through the process of art, the more I can get a perspective on it so I can write something, or make an image and then I say 'This represents that' and then I look at it or I can place myself in it and see how it feels, step back and say 'Oh this is that experience', then take the next step and show it to other people. Other people say 'Oh yeah, that happened to me, yeah I know that', so conversations happen and feelings happen. Inside the person things get revealed. There is a lot of silence, a lot of silence about one's life. It's not polite to talk about ugly things, it's against the rules, there's propriety so much propriety. I don't really know how it is, maybe it is the way I was brought up, but I don't really play it that way. I am interested in what's true for people, what is really happening. I think there is so much in language and communication that is about disassembling and pretending and I'm interested in intimacy. Ultimately, I want human contact. That is where the last image, the loving and the hating, the hating and the loving and it feels like everything is wrapped up in that final moment. I think there is so much pushing and pulling in the piece, there is so much violence and territory, but there is also a huge longing for connection that doesn't get talked about a whole lot, but we are all hungry for it, for contact, so hungry for love, for a relationship, so hungry to feel part of something, so I try to get to that place in people where their real feelings are their real own experiences. We all have experiences where we fall in love with the wrong people, or they want you but you don't want them, the pushing and the pulling, and the merging thing and the being in love. Over and over the issues are always the same for me.

This piece is interesting because I haven't been in work for a couple of years and I find it has perennial themes: the problem side of the Garden of Eden: apples and women, the body of the woman, and the mother and the child. This comes up for me over and over again. I tend towards the emotional landscape, or the substructure of our lives that runs the show but which we are not conscious of, we don't talk about and we share at rare moments with people we are very intimate with, so I try to reveal the psychological terrain, objectifying it through the process of art.

**Jill:** Can you say a little more about your creative process?

**Rachel:** Well, I have an interest in form, I have an interest in the narrative and I have an interest in language and story. So I have spent 15 years performing and doing stuff, so I have a habit of shaping things. It isn't an immediate expression of heart and soul. You go through a lot of drafts before you get the text.

**Jill:** How do you use personal experience?

**Rachel:** Well, for example, I looked at the dancer of that piece one day and I said 'You'll have to log how much you love and hate your child'. The piece didn't just come out of her technically. The solo in the beginning about being on fire: that came from a crazy exercise. I said 'I want you to pick a habit that you have and I want you to inhabit it for two days and I want you to track the voice that comes up when you don't do it and I want you to track the voice that comes up when you do it and you know you are not supposed to do it'. So she tried to inhabit all the scratching

that she does. She has a severe skin condition and she tried to inhabit the scratching. The text for the piece mostly came from that exercise. I have this theory that if you inhabit a habit there is a voice underneath. Even if no one knows the score or what I'm talking about, it hooks into a state that is genuine, that people become identified with: hunger, oppression, desire, all those things start coming up.

**Jill:** Can you say anymore about your process of making, in particular your use of image?

**Rachel:** Let's look at the solo performance with the rocks. The dancer was beautiful walking along there, just crawling along there, just lovely. One of the first dances I ever did was to make a circle of rocks, so for me somehow that solo has a lot of stuff going on, but really it is about being in a safe home and a safe space and she spoke about safety during the process. Then I found out that she had an abortion, so there is a little secret inside me saying 'Smaller, smaller, smaller'. You don't know, it could be the child, it could be the little voice we do and do not answer to, or it could be the baby she decided not to have. She didn't tell anybody about the abortion. Her silence was a huge presence; she was not committed, she didn't want to be there; she didn't want to work in an exploratory way, so I said 'Here, this is your text. I just wrote it one day and here it is'. I didn't want to expose her. I was trying to respect her process even though for me that fact that she didn't speak for two weeks had an effect on the group and she isolated herself. I felt I wanted to respect her privacy and her choice. I didn't want to say 'You have to tell them', which is what I would have done; I would have said 'This is what is happening and I want you to hold my hand. I am frightened'. But she didn't want to do that so it did do some damage in the group for a bit, then she announced it the day after it happened and it was a shock for the group. Writing that piece for her, writing those words was potentially dangerous for her because it could have triggered a whole world, and possibly did, a whole world of emotion. We talked about it the other day. I said 'You know I wrote that about your situation but it's a larger thing'. This is not easy work and you have to be really brave, face yourself. It's hard for them, hard for me.

**Jill:** It is hard holding those feelings.

**Rachel:** Right and it's hard to have the intention to express them. It is hard to be the performer who is willing to get hollow, so that information comes through you and out. That's what you need to be, you have to be a channel for something larger than yourself so that you can speak to the people. Like in the ancient world of dance you become a shaman: a member of the community who speaks in tongues or speaks of the truth of the community. That is a heavy place to be in. You put yourself somewhere else. Your ego steps out and you say 'OK I'll go some place else and I'll go into trance. I'll displace myself so that I can speak this larger thing, knowing that it is mine but it is yours'. That is what I think about when I perform. I sit, I just sit and pray. I pray that I may understand and speak about this stuff.

The piece I did before this was called 'Diaspora: stories from the city'. Like the piece we watched tonight, it was many different stories on a theme. I think it was more cohesive in a way because it was just me. There are some similar themes: looking for a home, a missing tribe's search for a home. It's everywhere you know, it's in all our relationships, relationships in the past, our relationship to the future, it's in our relationship to the environment, in the relationships of men and women, and in our relationship to God. So I just start spinning images, energies and thoughts and writing and usually I start with the text. But in making the piece we saw tonight, I gave them movement scores to explore, which threw up a lot of stuff during the first week. It was difficult for me not to put myself in and watch it because I wanted to be in it. I am a performer.

**Jill:** Can you tell me some more about how you work with the dancers?

**Rachel:** Well, I tell them what I'm doing. I try not to keep secrets. I don't want to be mysterious with them particularly. I talk to them and I tell them what I am after. In the morning at the practice I teach them yoga to drop their attention down. There was some resistance, but they did it.

**Jill:** What is it like to be an American choreographer working in Europe?

**Rachel:** I came in to work with the European dancers and I said 'Oh my God there is so much tension. The war is not over, there is lots of fear and there are lots of different projections, lots of stress going on, different suspicions about each other'. That, to me, is so interesting. The personal is a metaphor for the political, you know it is a metaphor for the national and the global.

I have travelled a lot and this has taught me that it's all about point of view and context. I saw how very narrow my view is and how context-dependent, how everything I say is grossly American. I am bound by my past and present experience and my future whatever that is to be and yet there is something that is human among us. Belonging is really an issue for me and at the same time a universal human feeling.

I am interested in a place where the whole me is welcome and travelling has given more of a sense of me in the world. I know that I can survive and love and be loved and make contact and in me is more of the world and I am more a citizen of the world than I was before I travelled. Then returning safely has been really important for me and I can travel and return safe and sound.

I see an incredible hunger in people to belong and be part of something and to feel connected. There are a lot of personal, familial, social and psychological forces that keep us from being connected. But if you look at the natural world: see that seagull, that seagull is not thinking about where the other seagulls are or if the seagull is allowed to be in the sky, you know. Sometimes the social order presses upon me.

So some of my work is about belonging and you know if you express something that is true for you and other people identify with it then you belong to each other in a certain way, even if just for a moment. This brings in the big issue for me of what I call 'the fourth wall'. It is a metaphor for the division between audience and performers. The performers want something and the audience wants something. There is a feeling in the audience that they are better than you as a dancer and they want to be entertained by you. Yet at the same time they want to be loved by you and they love you. It is very complicated. So I am a 'wall-buster' I want to take it down.

**Jill:** How has your work changed over the years?

**Rachel:** When I was younger my work was about identity, personal identity, sexual identity. I'm a 'this' or a 'that' and that is the adolescent performance gesture. I think, as we get older we stop caring who we are. We know we exist so we start talking about us in relation to our family, to the tribe, to the world. Ideally we become a globally conscious, connected person, climbing out of our past and out of our personal pain and we identify our pain with the larger pool of suffering. We identify it, work on it, we deal with it.

I am interested in fascism. I think we are full of shit if we don't admit to a destructive, fascist element inside us. We want to kill each other a lot of the time but if we could identify with the people we hate, then we wouldn't want to kill them any more. If we can say 'Oh I understand why you threw that stone. If I were in your position, I would have done the same thing', then it dissolves hate. I think if we can identify with the enemy, instead of saying the enemy is outside us, we get rid of the polarity, which breeds fascism. For me dance is about expressing feeling, and it is often painful for the dancer and for the audience. I am OK about the audience feeling nervous and uncomfortable during the hate scene, but on the other hand I don't want to push people into experiencing their own pain if they are not ready. So when I work with the dancers, I try to track what is going on emotionally (I'm a Hakomi therapist) and to help them relate to each other. It's a fine line. I want them to connect the personal with the universal, but I want to respect their decision not to as well. I gave them the score 'I hate you, I love you, hold me' and I listened to their improvisations. I couldn't use all of it because they felt I was nosy.

**Jill:** So you want performers and audience to feel something

**Rachel:** Yes, I want them to enter a dialogue, getting in touch with those parts of themselves that they have had difficulty identifying with.

**Jill:** What did you think of tonight's dialogue?

**Rachel:** Well, a bit disappointed. Not one question was about feeling.

**Jill:** Why do you think this was?

**Rachel:** I think it was partly because they were students, their age. I think they were overwhelmed.

**Jill:** Is there anything else you could tell me about the process of making this piece?



**Rachel:** I was just following my dreams and intuitions. It was good to be reminded of myself and to see what happens when I don't think of other people. It was the worst parts of my character being exposed. We had an enormous fight, calling names, etc. And it was very honest. I realised you can only take people as far as they can go. I would have liked to have used things, but it was *their* unconscious, which I couldn't expose without their involvement. The work is there but it is time-consuming. This type of work needs more time. Here are all these lonely, pained, isolated women (the dancers) and I need time to form a relationship with them so that we can transform their pain into art.

**Interview with Anna Halprin**  
**July 1997**  
**Telephone**

**Jill:** Anna do you feel that your work is spiritual?

**Anna:** Everyone has a different idea about spirituality. To me something spiritual can be an everyday activity, through the awareness and consciousness you bring to it. It is being a good person and doing good deeds. Being compassionate and caring about the world and the people in it. In the dance around the mountain there is a sense of being connected to the earth and to each other. In that sense the work is spiritual.

**Jill:** How would you describe the role of the artist in society?

**Anna:** I can only tell you how I define *my* role. I don't want to set myself up as some kind of expert or authority or even judge. It is different for each person. It depends on your age, what your experiences have been, where you come from, your culture, your community. The role of an artist at 18 years old is quite different from a person who is 77 years old. The role of an artist from one ethnic background is quite different from an artist from another ethnic background.

When I was younger, the art world was different. Then there were lots of restraints and my role was to break down the barriers, free them up, very different to my role now. Now I work with community. I combine the roles of educator and performer and I get involved. I work with the material and I try to be connected to the truth of it in terms of people's experience. I try to be sensitive to the needs of my community, for example, I took on the AIDS Project, which was a response to the AIDS crisis in our community. We had to confront our fears: a crying need in our community. As an artist I felt it was my role to be responsive to this particular issue. Because I was an elder and I have a lot of experience, I knew I had the tools to do this work. I worked with 135 dancers. Now there is an epidemic of breast cancer in our community, so I am doing a lot of work with them. I just go where the work takes me.

**Jill:** What do you think about the popular concept of the artist as shaman?

**Anna:** I hate that. The word shaman should be reserved for indigenous peoples. Artists are not trained in mystical teachings. I know American Indian shamans who have been training for 35 years. They are not self-selected and never self-defined. They are recognised in their own community and selected by this community. This word should not be exploited. For me, I'm just happy being a competent teacher affording a certain amount of insight and inspiration and I don't have to be a shaman to do that.

**Jill:** How do you see the connection between the personal and the universal in art?

**Anna:** I think if you go deep enough into your own story, you find universality.

**Jill:** Do you think it is important that dancers feel?

**Anna:** Yes, but it doesn't have to be their own story, it could be someone else's story which they feel connected to, which they have potential for. But I do think it is necessary for the dancer to do personal process work.

Last night I had my cancer group and one woman talked about her doctor not listening to her. She was upset and she said that this experience reminded her of her whole life: growing up no-one ever listened to her. We stopped with her at that moment; listening to her tell of how no-one listens to her feelings of loneliness and separateness. Her telling us this helped us to tap into our own loneliness and we touched universality. If you don't have these kinds of experience, you're back to Modern Dance and interpretation.

**Jill:** Dancing without touching the emotional centre.

**Anna:** That's it. I work with the story of AIDS but I don't have AIDS. I am able to generate their stories and act as a carpenter, putting movement together, shaping. I developed a dance based on the five stages of healing at Tamalpa: Identification, Confrontation, Release, Change and Integration.

**Jill:** How do you see the difference between therapy and art?

**Anna:** Art places emphasis on shaping material, the rhythmic, the dynamic, visual and facial aspects.

**Jill:** So art requires aesthetic skill?

**Anna:** Well sometimes it does and sometimes it doesn't. Crude expression can sometimes be as powerful as any refined dance. There were the letters from prison written by two Italian immigrants who were imprisoned for starting a trade union. Their letters were printed in the newspapers. They were written from such powerful roots and a deep place of righteousness and with a twist of magic it worked. These letters are famous. A twist of magic and the intensity of the experience. Sometimes the emotional dynamics are so powerful that it will move you whether it has a refined shape or not. Emotion has allowed the person to find the right form out of instinct.

I have seen professional dancers do self-portraits that aren't as good as those people who haven't had any training. So I think it is the balance between emotional clarity, depth and intensity which generates the appropriate form and art is about a balance between emotion and form.

**Jill:** How does this happen?

**Anna:** It happens when the person has reached a truth and a depth of experience. I saw this happen all the time in Europe when men and women were facing death. The intensity of their emotional expression was so profound. A professional artist could not have reached that depth of feeling.

It's a bit like primitive painting. 'Grandma Moses' is beautiful. It's innocence and purity is so beautiful, but is it art? Well someone must think so because it's hanging up in museums. Maybe the question 'Is it art or is it therapy?' should be re-defined as 'Who are you doing it for and why are you doing it?' and 'What is the audience receiving from it?'

Maybe it is not form, maybe it is what you have to say and depth of intentionality and clarity of how you say it. Something that you communicate at such a deep level that those on the receiving end are being touched and moved and their lives are affected.

**Jill:** Tell me some more about the planetary dance.

**Anna:** It is a unifying dance. It is the mandala: the two circles and the four directions. It is the union mandala. The simplicity of the movement and the mandala form itself enable the people to find a great unifying spirit, which provides a source for people to run for a long time way beyond normal endurance levels.

I hadn't intended it as a mandala; it was made in order to be accessible to anybody of any age and any physical capacity. It is a simple closed score, so that it can be done globally. But everyone makes their own contribution by the way they run, what or who they dedicate their dance to. The power of the dance comes from its simplicity and from the amount of people participating.

**Jill:** Can you talk about process and product in dance?

**Anna:** We use the RSVP (Resources, Scores, Valuation, Performance) cycles with flexibility. After performance we reflect and analyse (valuation). Reflection is about feeling and analysis is a conscious process of comparing performance objectives with the performance experience. These processes feed back into performance.

So process and product run alongside each other. Every time we perform the planetary dance, it goes back into process because in every performance we learn something new and we bring that new feature into the next performance. This is the beauty of the scoring process as opposed to choreography; the beauty of it is it can be ongoing.

**Jill:** How to distinguish 'scoring' from improvisation?

**Anna:** Improvisation is working with an open score. True improvisation has no intention; it is an impulse. I have substituted the words 'open score' for improvisation because it is a little more exacting. Improvisation has nothing to hang on to and no valuation. Improvisation covers too much territory, it is too nebulous. A score has an intention. With an open score the intention is to

see what happens, what do we discover and what do we learn? We can see that this can happen and that can happen and then we can develop what has happened.

There are two types of responding in valuation. One is subjective responding and the other is objective responding. Responding subjectively, we might say 'This has brought up these feelings and these images'. We might write a story or make a drawing. We might dialogue with the material. Responding objectively, we might ask like: 'How could I have used repetition more?' 'How was my performance?' 'Could I have used more/less body parts? Or focused on this body part as more appropriate to the material?'

So you have the subjective, which takes you into the life process, and the objective, which takes you into the art process.

I believe it is the simplicity and clarity of the RSVP methodology that allows so much growth and development. It is a structure that allows for a lot of creativity.

I noticed that in 'Circle the Earth' there were dances that really needed emphasis from specific body parts. If you're doing the 'Warrior Dance' the legs must be the strongest part of the body, the haunches. You need to mobilise all your strength into your legs. If you are doing a 'Confrontation Dance', it is fearful, emotional and frightening, so you use your face. So I am back to science: ideas for change in the dance coming from observation. If I want to do a loving dance then I will use my arms as they embrace, hold my baby, rock my baby. These are the artistic tools I work with, sometimes consciously, and sometimes the emotions are so great that the tools come instinctively, but you can't always rely on that.

**Jill:** What do the people who have experienced the life-art process at Tamalpa go on to do?

**Anna:** They follow every path there is in life itself. They have taken it to hospitals and community projects. Some are using it in a therapy context and some in a theatrical context. Wherever they feel called or suited to work. We all take it in different directions according to the path that calls us.

**Interview with Lea Anderson**  
**October 1998**

**Lea:** I think the most important thing for me in working with images is that the image I have physically, or the image in my head, is very vivid. It has to capture my imagination. I am only attracted to images which I can imagine being part of, or which I feel I can be. For a moment, when I am being, pretending to be that image, it is quite an unconscious thing. I can't really tell what else is happening around me. It's a very 'inside' kind of thing for a second and I don't actually know what I'm doing. So, quite often, I need someone to help me, either by looking or by recording on video and then analysing it afterwards to see what it is that I'm achieving.

I usually work with physical images, although I have worked with memories of dreams which I've had, which have been very vivid and strong as well. Sometimes my own memories of feelings link with the feelings present in a picture.

**Jill:** In the piece you are working on with the students how do the movements arise out of the images?

**Lea:** All the held positions come from the pictures. I showed them some positions then I asked the students provide different positions attached to real-life situations. Some images might serve as punctuation, or a way through into something else.

**Jill:** How did you sequence the movements?

**Lea:** The sequence came from looking at one and putting another one next to it and thinking 'What is the tension? What is the spatial tension between the two?' Maybe another one could have a more surprising tension, so you may want to go for the more surprising one. Another one might be much more subtle, similar images with the same amount of people, maybe not much differently clustered. Therefore it's much slower, not such a radically contrasting sequence. So, I've been improvising with it, saying 'Maybe this one will go next, maybe that one. Oh, no, that doesn't work'.

We've made quite a few changes already because it wasn't communicating what we intended, suggesting things that were inappropriate. Sometimes, quite happily there have been a few coincidences that fit very nicely.

I think at the moment we're making the structure and everyone has lost the feeling of the pictures. It's really hard I know for people to find positions that aren't easy in space, and a face, and difficult to memorise the counts. But once everyone feels more secure with the structure, we can go back and start working with the pictures in much more depth.

I think the analytical work has two strands. Once the structuring of the images has taken place, there's the 'nuts and bolts' analysis, which is geographical and in time, where practically it's not working, pictures can't be seen and I need to separate them out. Then there's another layer of analysis when we consider what the piece is suggesting. Sometimes it can look a bit sweet or sickly. This is something I am interested in: I want to bring out the nastier, rougher edges. Something is missing at the moment, something missing from the original pictures. We need to go back to those images and work in more depth.

**Jill:** How do you work in more depth?

**Lea:** I think that every time you look at a picture again, you see more in it, and I think that some of the performers here don't realise they're not achieving that: the shape and then the focus. I mean, where on your body are they intending the most focus, the most tension? Quite often it's very uniform, and I want them to pick out areas and actually highlight and draw attention to things like the artist has done with brush stroke or colour. It's a matter of perception and being able to physically use the body to be specific.

**Jill:** What about the feeling impact of the picture?

**Lea:** I keep telling people that if they really can't get the shape, then get the feeling. It's almost like it doesn't really matter what they are doing, what is important is that they are imagining totally that they are the person in the picture. It transcends everything else and really stands out. So I would much rather that they got that aspect because it's a more valuable lesson to learn. Imagining what you are and not being the person that you are in class every day, counting and doing the right shapes. Dance can be something much more emotionally involving.

I'm interested in looking at the person in the picture, empathising, trying to replicate the feeling. It's like when you're telling a story about someone, and suddenly you become them. People watching will remark that you did actually seem like the person, even if you weren't doing the voice, it was just the mannerism, a way of being. It's an extraordinary kind of thing, the connection you can make through imagining something else and not analysing it or being embarrassed about it.

**Jill:** So it's about a link with something essential inside the person?

**Lea:** Yes, and you can bring in the details later once you have found the feeling. Once you have found it, you can go back and you have a bit more space in your head to add things more consciously.

**Jill:** What inspired you to become a choreographer?

**Lea:** I can remember about four different incidents when I was young connected to art and performance: a film, two performances and a painting. I had an aunt who was determined that I was going to have some kind of cultural element in my life much to my parents' chagrin. She took me to see some things that I was overwhelmed by. I mean, sitting in the dark watching, made a feeling in me. It moved me so much ... I didn't have the language to describe what it was but it was just so profoundly special in some way ... and in the film *'Joan of Arc'* I found, as a small child of about four, it was the passion of St Joan that moved me. It was a silent film and it contained things that I didn't understand: death and mystic things ... a woman dressed as a boy ... things that I didn't understand but they really fascinated me. It was the feelings that I got from this which were so profound, and I've always held on to this as the purpose of making art: to somehow help an audience towards emotional resonance. So I think a lot about how to do this. I began to look at images that moved me in some way and I hoped that in bringing the pictures to life in dance I could move the audience too.

I know that a lot of dance people think that emotion isn't something that they can consider and it isn't terribly fashionable. But I still feel so rooted in that, with my history, that is. Maybe now I'm expressing lighter feelings; the feelings I was talking about were very mysterious and inexplicable, but feelings can be lighter, joyous. Although, I think there should be some kind of complexity, because things aren't always sweetness and light. There's always something in there that makes it more complicated. That is something that I always try to do. If something is serious and dark, then I don't believe that. I believe there must be some other frequency that's vibrating at a higher level. I like to find the tension between the different feelings that I'm trying to invoke or deal with. With my dancers I talk about the complexities of what we're feeling and we find some way to keep them there, because when we perform things over and over again on a tour we can lose them. We've tried all sorts of things like internal monologues or dialogues with self, little sentences like 'Oh no, I'll stay here, I won't go'. It makes the performance different, because you see this engaging inside.

I'm interested in the emotional aspect of things, which are not supposed to have any emotional content: things which are cunning, witty and quite funny without being really funny. For example, Picasso is witty even when he's very dark. There's a light kind of wryness, a kind of smile. When I see work that is dark and obsessive, it misses me somehow.

**Jill:** Because?

**Lea:** It's almost like we're voyeurs, not supposed to be seeing it, we just happen to be looking. It's not clear that it's with us, as a member of the audience.

**Jill:** The young dancers who take the DMT module have commented on the feeling of returning to being a child again. What do you think about this in terms of creative process?

**Lea:** Well I think we don't have this opportunity very often and to be like a child again could be so important for a dancer. Children are much more able to suspend their imagination, they're not suspicious. You just give them an image and say 'Be that person' and they just do it! They don't say 'Why?'. They just do it and they have the right feeling and everything, automatically. But then you can't get them to keep it. It's too sophisticated, I think, for very young children to shape it and then make a dance with it; but that kind of connection is essential, losing the fear that you get as you get older, that you might be making a fool of yourself.

**Jill:** Yes so here I am trying to connect them with that childhood state of mind. But the question is how do you hook that in to your choreography, your technique, considering the audience ... the analytic?

**Lea:** I've got a book of pictures of children, Victorian children, children from the World Wars onwards. The Company has made the book. Everyone sees a picture of a kid doing something in an unselfconscious way, usually jumping or just hanging around, or just exuberance. We keep these pictures just to remind ourselves not to get too mannered; so we do work a lot from pictures of children, rather than going to our own experience of being a child. But being like a child in a group (as in your work) is quite a special thing. Once you're grown up, you don't get the chance to hang out in groups, other than maybe your work people, which limits the kind of hanging out that you do and the style.

When you're a dance company or a group of students, it's almost your last chance to hang out in a gang and just be friends with everybody, finding ways to exist as a little family.

**Jill:** Can you comment on the group who did your residency programme by the sea in 1997?  
(C1) They had just finished their DMT group.

**Lea:** It seemed to me that the members of the group were very different, so many different sorts of people that I couldn't imagine that they would want to hang out socially afterwards all the time. Usually such a group would break into isolated groups but it didn't work like that. I found that so interesting: the variety of personalities and yet they were so happy to be together, and they had a way of being, a kind of set of rules that they were happy to follow. That was good for the project, especially with it being outdoors where you can lose such a lot of energy and focus, being in such a big, sunny, hot place. Usually people like to trickle off, but they didn't, they held together really well. They were very different from the current group (C3).

**Jill:** How do you like to work with a group?

**Lea:** I don't feel happy being critical. I much prefer the feeling that we're all working together on something. In this piece of choreography they've got to pull faces and they feel embarrassed about it, so yesterday when I noticed some people doing it a little bit I said 'That's great' and gave them lots of encouragement. It's easy to forget to give encouragement as a group leader or tutor. When they're not giving you much energy from their faces you think 'Maybe they're not interested' but maybe they just need encouragement.

# APPENDIX 5. RESEARCH ETHICS

## COMMITTEE APPROVAL



A College of the University of Southampton

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Jill Hayes,  
School of Social Studies,  
Bishop Otter Campus.

23rd January, 1997.

Dear Jill,

I have carefully reviewed your research proposal for work towards your PhD, involving gathering data from some of the students you work with. Your responses on the Institute's Research Ethics Committee form indicate that you have duly considered issues of potential distress and confidentiality, and we are happy to approve your research as proposed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris Gaine".

Dr. Chris Gaine,  
Chair, Research Ethics Committee.



## **APPENDIX 6. EVALUATIONS**

Jill Hayes

Dance Therapy Evaluation Spring Term 1997

1. Did you enjoy the module? *Very much so.*

2. Are there any links between this module and other modules you have taken?

If so, please can you state which modules and what were the links?

Dance Therapy can be seen as very similar to improvisation, in the way that you can move how you feel and want to. It makes you aware of how you are and how you can relate to others and to be aware of others when you perform.

3. Which particular aspects of the module have you enjoyed and why?

I have really enjoyed the process and the discussion afterwards - it has taught me a lot about myself.

4. Which particular aspects of the module have you found difficult and why?

Trying to be myself has been difficult. Learning to have time for yourself felt strange, but worthwhile. Coming up to the group was hard as I did not always want people to know how I felt.

5. Looking at the structure, emphasis (on experiential work) and content of the course, is there anything you would change?

NO - just more of it

6. How much time each week did you spend reading, writing in your journal, or thinking about the experiential work and discussing it?

I usually write my journal the night of the session. I would go back to it after I had done the reading and preparation and add things that I felt had since come out of that session.

7. Are you interested to discover more about Dance Therapy?

yes.

8. Would you have taken it if it were a double module?

Definitely - we want more.

9. What would be the benefits to it being a double module?

To really get into who you are and what is going on in your internal world.

10. For the future, would you be interested in

a) a Foundation Course in Dance Therapy at ChiHE?

b) an MA module in Dance Therapy?

I would like to study dance Therapy further, but it would be hard to do

as an MA as I want to go in to

Dance (as a practical performance subject)

Good idea - and could work

for those that want to go that

way!!!

Dance Therapy Evaluation Spring Term 1997

1. Did you enjoy the module? *Yes*
2. Are there any links between this module and other modules you have taken?  
If so, please can you state which modules and what were the links?

*Improvisation - moving spontaneously*

3. Which particular aspects of the module have you enjoyed and why?

*Not only exploring movement through improv, but  
being able to allow the inner-self / the feelings - of the - moment  
to be expressed*

4. Which particular aspects of the module have you found difficult and why?
- 

5. Looking at the structure, emphasis ( on experiential work ) and content of the course, is there anything you would change? *NO*

6. How much time each week did you spend reading, writing in your journal, or thinking about the experiential work and discussing it?

3 hours approx

7. Are you interested to discover more about Dance Therapy? *Yes*

8. Would you have taken it if it were a double module? *Yes*

9. What would be the benefits to it being a double module? *further exploration  
& experimental work*

10. For the future, would you be interested in

a) a Foundation Course in Dance Therapy at ChiHE?

b) an MA module in Dance Therapy?

*NO*

Dance Therapy Evaluation Spring Term 1997

1. Did you enjoy the module? YES.

2. Are there any links between this module and other modules you have taken?

If so, please can you state which modules and what were the links?

THERAPY IS QUITE UNIQUE, IN AS MUCH THAT IT DOESN'T NECESSARILY INVOLVE DANCE, HOWEVER, THERE COULD BE SOME LINKS TO IMPROVISATION 1+2 BECAUSE OF THE EXPERIMENTAL SIDE OF THINGS.

3. Which particular aspects of the module have you enjoyed and why?

I HAVE ENJOYED WORKING WITH PEOPLE, I DON'T NORMALLY GET THE CHANCE TO DO SO. AND ALSO THE IMPROVISATION THAT TOOK PLACE, BECAUSE IT ALLOWED ME TO EXPERIMENT AGAIN, AFTER NEARLY A YEAR OFF.

4. Which particular aspects of the module have you found difficult and why?

I FOUND THE BEGINNING OF THE COURSE QUITE DIFFICULT ESPECIALLY WHEN WE HAD TO TALK ABOUT THE EFFECT OF THE 'PROCESS' BECAUSE IT WAS QUITE PERSONAL.

5. Looking at the structure, emphasis (on experiential work) and content of the course, is there anything you would change?

IT WOULD BE GOOD TO EXTEND THE COURSE EITHER OVER A WHOLE YEAR, OR ONE MODULE EACH YEAR (3 MODULES IN TOTAL) SO THAT THE STUDY OF DANCE/MOVEMENT THERAPY CAN BE DEVELOPED.

6. How much time each week did you spend reading, writing in your journal, or thinking about the experiential work and discussing it?

2-3 hrs - depending on work and emotions etc.

7. Are you interested to discover more about Dance Therapy? YES.

8. Would you have taken it if it were a double module? YES.

9. What would be the benefits to it being a double module? MORE INDEPTH KNOWLEDGE + MORE PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE.

10. For the future, would you be interested in

a) a Foundation Course in Dance Therapy at ChiHE? YES

b) an MA module in Dance Therapy? YES.

Dance Therapy Evaluation Spring Term 1997

1. Did you enjoy the module? *very much.*

2. Are there any links between this module and other modules you have taken?

If so, please can you state which modules and what were the links?

*choreography: ideas spring from / are influenced by feelings.*

*Art + Dance (1st year): much of what we did in this module was connected to therapy ideas.*

3. Which particular aspects of the module have you enjoyed and why?

*I have found it very interesting to talk about the different therapy-linked things going on e.g. Feldenkrais, Anna Halprin, Tanatis (Free bera?), Wigman etc. Also talking about particular groups of people who benefit from D.T. - Autistic people, learning difficulties, physical disabilities etc.*

4. Which particular aspects of the module have you found difficult and why?

*I have found it difficult to treat it as a pilot and not the real thing. I have managed to do this with a considerable amount of control.*

5. Looking at the structure, emphasis (on experiential work) and content of the course, is there anything you would change?

*I would like it to run over 2 terms.*



6. How much time each week did you spend reading, writing in your journal, or thinking about the experiential work and discussing it?

45mins - 1hr per week

7. Are you interested to discover more about Dance Therapy? *yes*

8. Would you have taken it if it were a double module? *yes*

9. What would be the benefits to it being a double module? *to see more development over a longer period of time.*

10. For the future, would you be interested in

a) a Foundation Course in Dance Therapy at ChiHE?

b) an MA module in Dance Therapy?

*} a distinct possibility.*

Dance Therapy Evaluation Spring Term 1997

1. Did you enjoy the module? YES
2. Are there any links between this module and other modules you have taken?  
If so, please can you state which modules and what were the links?

Improvisation - free moving on impulses  
Choreography - taking ideas for material

3. Which particular aspects of the module have you enjoyed and why?

The experiential part - it gives time to focus on oneself.

4. Which particular aspects of the module have you found difficult and why?

SEEING/UNDERSTANDING THE FUNCTIONS OF DT OUTSIDE OF A 'DANCE' STUDENT SITUATION.

5. Looking at the structure, emphasis (on experiential work) and content of the course, is there anything you would change?

NO

6. How much time each week did you spend reading, writing in your journal, or thinking about the experiential work and discussing it? 2 Hours

7. Are you interested to discover more about Dance Therapy? Yes

8. Would you have taken it if it were a double module? YES

9. What would be the benefits to it being a double module? To further STRUCTURE EXPERIMENTS IN CLASSES

10. For the future, would you be interested in

- a) a Foundation Course in Dance Therapy at ChiHE?
- b) an MA module in Dance Therapy?

6. How much time each week did you spend reading, writing in your journal, or thinking about the experiential work and discussing it?

PROBABLY ABOUT 1/2-1HR WRITING BUT LOTS MORE TIME THINKING + DISCUSSING IT. I USED TO TELL MY BOYFRIEND ALL ABOUT WHAT I'D GONE THROUGH + HOW I FELT.

ALSO IN THE GROUP WE USED TO TALK ABOUT IT IN OTHER MODULES.

7. Are you interested to discover more about Dance Therapy? YES.

8. Would you have taken it if it were a double module? ABSOLUTELY

9. What would be the benefits to it being a double module? WOULD ANALYSE MORE IN DEPTH THE THEORIES ABOUT IT - WE WOULD BE ABLE TO USE THE SESSIONS TO EXPLORE MOVEMENT THERAPY IDEAS FURTHER

10. For the future, would you be interested in

- a) a Foundation Course in Dance Therapy at ChiHE? YES
- b) an MA module in Dance Therapy? YES.

Dance Therapy Evaluation Spring Term 1997

1. Did you enjoy the module? Yes.

2. Are there any links between this module and other modules you have taken?

If so, please can you state which modules and what were the links?

I would relate it to improvisation mod 1 + 2, simply because of the freedom to move in which ever way you like. But other than that it is a relatively new experience.

3. Which particular aspects of the module have you enjoyed and why?

I particularly enjoyed the feedback time after the process. because I find it gave everyone a chance to put into words exactly what they were feeling + to be true to their feelings. I also enjoyed having to write a journal - as it was a secret time an extension of what went on - that I could keep to myself + still be true to my feelings.

4. Which particular aspects of the module have you found difficult and why?

I found the module to be relatively easy + had no problem with understanding my own emotions + others.

5. Looking at the structure, emphasis (on experiential work) and content of the course, is there anything you would change?

No. Apart from using a variety of different spaces.  
u.s.m.

6. How much time each week did you spend reading, writing in your journal, or thinking about the experiential work and discussing it?

I found myself thinking about the benefits of the course a lot during the weeks - and relating it to my own life. Also discussing with fellow members of the group, what went on for us.

7. Are you interested to discover more about Dance Therapy?  yes

8. Would you have taken it if it were a double module?  yes

9. What would be the benefits to it being a double module? We could develop more of a clearer understanding to the theoretical side of D.M. Therapy, and in what ways it is used.

10. For the future, would you be interested in

- a) a Foundation Course in Dance Therapy at ChiHE?
- b) an MA module in Dance Therapy?

Dance Therapy Evaluation Spring Term 1997

1. Did you enjoy the module? *Yes.*

2. Are there any links between this module and other modules you have taken?

If so, please can you state which modules and what were the links?

3. Which particular aspects of the module have you enjoyed and why?

*Being able to experiment with movement.  
And work in another way with people.*

4. Which particular aspects of the module have you found difficult and why?

*Being able to relate some of the theories to myself.*

5. Looking at the structure, emphasis (on experiential work) and content of the course, is there anything you would change?

*Maybe make the course longer*

6. How much time each week did you spend reading, writing in your journal, or thinking about the experiential work and discussing it?

3 hours per week approx.

7. Are you interested to discover more about Dance Therapy? Yes

8. Would you have taken it if it were a double module? Yes.

9. What would be the benefits to it being a double module? More detail into things.

10. For the future, would you be interested in

a) a Foundation Course in Dance Therapy at ChiHE? Yes.

b) an MA module in Dance Therapy? Yes.



Dance Therapy Evaluation Spring Term 1997

1. Did you enjoy the module? Yes.

2. Are there any links between this module and other modules you have taken?

If so, please can you state which modules and what were the links?

Not as yet, although I am doing dance in the community, as I think it will relate to work in the community.

3. Which particular aspects of the module have you enjoyed and why?

I have enjoyed the practical work, it makes a change to be able to do what you want and take time out if you want to.

I also enjoyed looking at other people's interpretation of dance therapy.

4. Which particular aspects of the module have you found difficult and why?

I found dealing with the inner feelings very hard to do, just because sometimes you chose to block them out.

5. Looking at the **structure, emphasis** (on experiential work) and content of the course, is there anything you would change?

I would have liked us to have had objects in the space from the beginning, as I feel this may have relaxed us earlier in the ideas of dance therapy. (not having to dance about all of the time).

6. How much time each week did you spend reading, writing in your journal, or thinking about the experiential work and discussing it?

I discussed the experiential work quite a bit with my partner before writing it down.

I would say I read the articles approx twice - normally after the session and mid week.

7. Are you interested to discover more about Dance Therapy? *yes*

8. Would you have taken it if it were a double module?

*possibly.*

9. What would be the benefits to it being a double module?

*You could explore more + people may be more relaxed.*

10. For the future, would you be interested in

a) a Foundation Course in Dance Therapy at ChiHE?

b) an MA module in Dance Therapy? → *yes.*

Dance Therapy Evaluation Spring Term 1998

1. Did you enjoy the module? *Yes, extremely.*
2. Are there any links between this module and other modules you have taken?

If so, please can you state which modules and what were the links?

*Although I have not taken choreography this year I think this module may have helped - imagination + creativity and adding a personal touch to a piece.*

3. Which particular aspects of the module have you enjoyed and why?

*The Experiential Group was very pleasing. It taught you to get in touch with yourself, have fun, work with others, create and work as a team.*

4. Which particular aspects of the module have you found difficult and why?

*The start was a little confusing e.g. what is DMT. Maybe more feedback is needed from day 1 or preparation work.*

5. Looking at the structure, emphasis (on experiential work) and content of the course, is there anything you would change?

*only, the lack of resources - books, videos on DMT, more B. grand knowledge would be useful.*

6. How much time each week did you spend reading, writing in your journal, or thinking about the experiential work and discussing it?

More time was spent discussing it with others in the group or family. I also made a journal of the eight weeks for myself. Reading resources were very low + difficult to

7. Are you interested to discover more about Dance Therapy? *absolutely!*

*yes*

8. Would you have taken it if it were a double module?

*yes*

9. What would be the benefits to it being a double module?

More time to understand about *DMT*  
~~DMT~~ assess yourself over more time (change)

10. For the future, would you be interested in

a) a Foundation Course in Dance Therapy at ChiHE?

b) an MA module in Dance Therapy?

*yes, extremely - I would be interested in a DMT Course.*

Dance Therapy Evaluation Spring Term 1996

1. Did you enjoy the module? *yes*

2. Are there any links between this module and other modules you have taken?

If so, please can you state which modules and what were the links?

*Improv connects with the experimental class. Movement for movement ~~and~~ need.*

3. Which particular aspects of the module have you enjoyed and why?

*learning of past therapist. Have the experimental class as a time for my own freedom of Movement, and moods.*

4. Which particular aspects of the module have you found difficult and why?

*I found the reading hard, as it almost speaks in another language. It's a hard read.*

5. Looking at the structure, emphasis (on experiential work) and content of the course, is there anything you would change?

Dance Therapy Evaluation Spring Term 1998

1. Did you enjoy the module? **VERY MUCH SO.**

2. Are there any links between this module and other modules you have taken?

If so, please can you state which modules and what were the links?

There were links with Post modern Dance, improvisation, Related Arts, (critical perspectives and feminism, aesthetics and semiotics), Alexander technique, Anatomy in action.

3. Which particular aspects of the module have you enjoyed and why?

The experiential group because it was work in progress and I learnt a lot about myself and relationships as well as theory. You had the opportunity to be creative and explore yourself on a holistic level, in relation to props (balls, material) and other media, eg Drawing, as well as movement.

4. Which particular aspects of the module have you found difficult and why?

I found dealing with my emotions in the present state difficult because I had to stay with them. Sometimes I found it hard to stay with a group as I needed to be on my own.

5. Looking at the structure, emphasis (on experiential work) and content of the course, is there anything you would change?

No. The course should be a double module and the SA should be longer than 1000 words. I feel that the process needs two terms to really get to grips with the experiential process and the theoretical side.

6. How much time each week did you spend reading, writing in your journal, or thinking about the experiential work and discussing it?

I thought and spoke about the group work almost constantly. I researched a lot through reading daily. I wrote a lot in my journal and am going to continue to do so because it really helps.

7. Are you interested to discover more about Dance Therapy?

Definitely

8. Would you have taken it if it were a double module?

Definitely

9. What would be the benefits to it being a double module?

You could explore more. It's vital to the "growth" process in the experiential group. There would be more time for the discussion as well.

10. For the future, would you be interested in

a) a Foundation Course in Dance Therapy at ChiHE?

b) an MA module in Dance Therapy?

Yes,  
definitely

Dance Therapy Evaluation Spring Term 1998

1. Did you enjoy the module? *Yes, very much so*
2. Are there any links between this module and other modules you have taken?

If so, please can you state which modules and what were the links?

*Yes Art + the Unconscious. There was a link between in that the main psychological theory behind both was the work of Jung.*

3. Which particular aspects of the module have you enjoyed and why?

*I have enjoyed all of it but in particular the experiential group. This was because of the fact that we got a really good rapport going within the group and I have got to know a lot of people better.*

4. Which particular aspects of the module have you found difficult and why?

*At first I was anxious about the experiential group, but as time went on it became easier.*

*I thought I would find the theory difficult but as it linked in with other modules it helped.*

5. Looking at the structure, emphasis (on experiential work) and content of the course, is there anything you would change?

*I like the structure of the class. Maybe there could be more on the theory in the first part of this lesson.*



6. How much time each week did you spend reading, writing in your journal, or thinking about the experiential work and discussing it?

A few hours or so. I mainly did this in the afternoon after the lesson as I would come home full of what had occurred in the lesson.

7. Are you interested to discover more about Dance Therapy?

Yes, a lot.

8. Would you have taken it if it were a double module?

Yes definitely. I wish it was.

9. What would be the benefits to it being a double module?

I do think that it is too short. It seems that as we are getting to know each other as a group.

10. For the future, would you be interested in

a) a Foundation Course in Dance Therapy at ChiHE?

b) an MA module in Dance Therapy?

Yes. Definitely for both. I am interested in courses for Dance Therapy. I am interested in teaching and Dance Therapy seems to be a good link or follow on to that.

As the end of term is near as a double module would give more time for exploring diff themes within the group. I also ~~found~~<sup>found</sup> it really helpful to know that this time was just for me and I needn't worry about anything else. I feel this has helped me not get too stressed about other things.

Dance Therapy Evaluation Spring Term 1998

1. Did you enjoy the module? Yes
2. Are there any links between this module and other modules you have taken?

If so, please can you state which modules and what were the links?

A lot of links to Thomas' classes in particular  
similar warm ups -

3. Which particular aspects of the module have you enjoyed and why?

The experiential group - has been a  
good release for outside tensions

4. Which particular aspects of the module have you found difficult and why?

Haven't Really

5. Looking at the structure, emphasis ( on experiential work ) and content of the course, is there anything you would change?

Would of liked to of have more  
structured theoretical lessons and the  
beginning of the class

6. How much time each week did you spend reading, writing in your journal, or thinking about the experiential work and discussing it?

Spent quite a lot of time discussing the group ~~work~~ with people inside the class, and the concepts with people who weren't involved.

7. Are you interested to discover more about Dance Therapy? Yes

8. Would you have taken it if it were a double module? Definitely

9. What would be the benefits to it being a double module?

The group had only just gelled by the end of the session, would of helped to ~~of~~ been able to

10. For the future, would you be interested in <sup>work from this point</sup>

a) a Foundation Course in Dance Therapy at ChiHE?

b) an MA module in Dance Therapy?

would be very interested in both

Dance Therapy Evaluation Spring Term 1999

1. Did you enjoy the module? Yes lots.

2. Are there any links between this module and other modules you have taken?

If so, please can you state which modules and what were the links?

Art and the unconscious ~ gave me an understanding of the unconscious and the shadow.

Improvisation ~ became aware of the 'mask' we wear in daily life. Introduced exploring movement and getting in touch with our original self-selves.

Choreography ~ creating organic movement.

3. Which particular aspects of the module have you enjoyed and why?

I've enjoyed focusing on myself learning to acknowledge my feelings.

4. Which particular aspects of the module have you found difficult and why?

~~Understanding the role of therapy in society - although I understand it + believe it can have many benefits to users, - I wouldn't know where to find therapy on the high street, I still feel slightly confused (I suppose the yellow pages). As I'm only familiar with 'convention' counselling - sitting talking, advising... I want to know more how art therapy is used ~~in~~ by regular society + not just contained within hospital walls. I still don't understand ~~the~~ how this therapy is used - what symptoms a person has to have before they are referred to a dance therapist. Is it just fantastic parents or do Dr's have 'aid lines'? How does all this theory work in the real world?~~

5. Looking at the structure, emphasis (on experiential work) and content of the course, is there anything you would change?

I'd have enjoyed more time each session for the experiential work. More sessions overall. Discussion time @ the end of each session ~~to~~ to start short + get longer. Encourage people to talk, I got excited hearing someone who doesn't often talk. I also got bored of hearing others.

Dance Therapy Evaluation Spring Term 1999

1. Did you enjoy the module? *Yes, very much.*
2. Are there any links between this module and other modules you have taken? *No.*  
If so, please can you state which modules and what were the links?

3. Which particular aspects of the module have you enjoyed and why?

The most enjoyable aspects was most definitely the time we had to play. Many different emotions came out of this, which I certainly did not expect.

4. Which particular aspects of the module have you found difficult and why?

At first I found the the stage at the end where we talk about the session difficult to say how I really felt during the session, in case of offending anybody.

5. Looking at the structure, emphasis (on experiential work) and content of the course, is there anything you would change?:

I would have liked the sessions to be longer. I always felt the sessions ended too soon, just as I was getting into it.

Dance Therapy Evaluation Spring Term 1999

1. Did you enjoy the module? *Very much so, A great experience!*

2. Are there any links between this module and other modules you have taken?

If so, please can you state which modules and what were the links?

*Related Arts within connections between therapies,*

3. Which particular aspects of the module have you enjoyed and why?

*The experience side of the module was great, although could have been longer. This was a great aspect in bonding the group together.*

4. Which particular aspects of the module have you found difficult and why?

*Some of the theories are quite complex to understand.*

5. Looking at the structure, emphasis (on experiential work) and content of the course, is there anything you would change?:

*Just extending the experiential work & maybe having weekly homework to research the different theories.*

*\* I would also have this module at the beginning of the 2nd year to bond the year group, to work closer & help confidence between each other during choreography & dance performances of the technique classes,*

THEATRE

Dance Therapy Evaluation Spring Term 1999

1. Did you enjoy the module? *Yes.*

2. Are there any links between this module and other modules you have taken? *No.*

If so, please can you state which modules and what were the links?

3. Which particular aspects of the module have you enjoyed and why?

*The best part for me was the second half.*

*- Gave me a chance to become closer to the group  
to connect with my feelings.*

4. Which particular aspects of the module have you found difficult and why?

*At first I found it difficult to talk about  
my true feelings, but this became easier as  
the sessions progressed.*

5. Looking at the structure, emphasis (on experiential work) and content of the course, is there anything you would change?:

# APPENDIX 7. BREAKDOWN OF SESSIONS

## COHORT 1

SESSION	METAPHORS	THEMES	MUSIC	PROPS
1	Church Blocking Stand or sit? Fast or slow?	Power in relation to others Acceptance/rejection	Slow ambient/ Spanish flavour/ Cymbals	
2	Spinning Lovers Child playing with her hair	Self-absorption merging	Ambient	
3	Round and round Moving alone Dyads	Distance between people Need for contact Loneliness	Soul II Soul	
4	Squeezing together/ breaking apart Fleeting embrace	Fear of/need for contact Merging/separation	Startled insects	
5	Nest	Feeling trapped or safe in relation to others Belonging/escaping Nurturing/restricting	Enya	
6	Womb Being born Caterpillar/cocoon/butterfly Baby Teddy bear Tent Floor Encroaching ball games	Safety/danger in relationship Dependency Separation and loss Fear of others/intrusion Vulnerability and safety Escape from relationship	No music	Green stretch cloth Stretchy band Fabrics Small ball
7	Cyclone/storm Ghost-train Fairground Tunnel Catapult Keeping ball on track Being naughty	Safety/danger in relationship Boundaries in relationship	Ambient	Green stretch cloth Stretchy band Fabrics Small ball Medicine ball
8	Foetus Jigsaw Moulding Jumping over people Departing	Dependency/separation Self-assertion/empathy Escape and freedom Internal/external boundaries Safety/danger	Peter Gabriel	Green stretch cloth Stretchy band Fabrics Small ball Medicine ball



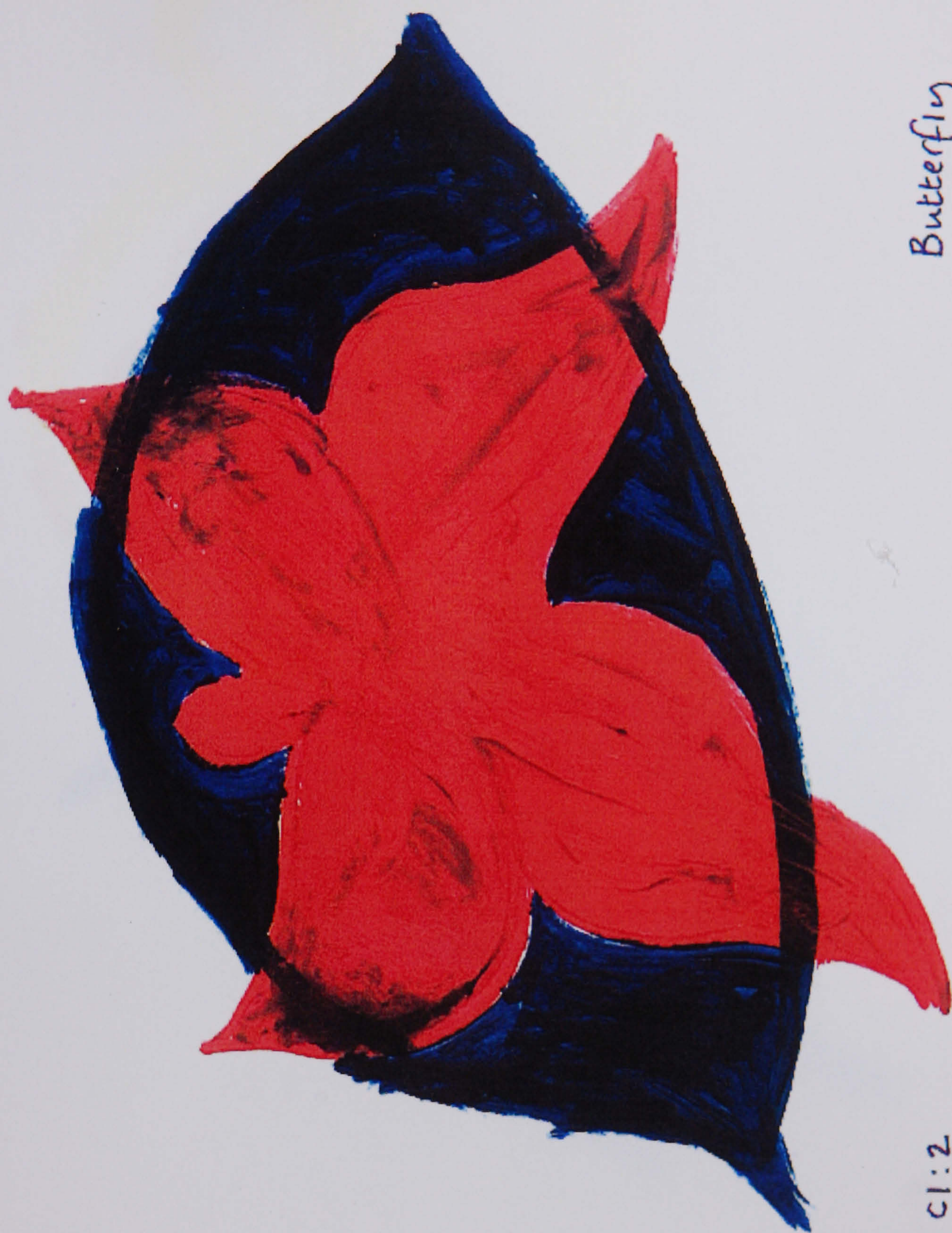
COHORT 2

SESSION	METAPHORS	THEMES	MUSIC	PROPS
1	Edges/periphery	Discomfort with DMT In presence of others	Return of the Cool Six	
2	Edges/periphery Interrupted movements	Fear and avoidance of DMT In presence of others	Annie Lennox	
3	Bashing percussion instruments Abrasive interaction	Group conflict Challenging others	No music	Paper Crayons Percussion Instruments
4	Playground Skipping Fluid movement Fluid relationship patterns	Spontaneous, childlike interaction Need for/fear of contact Loneliness Fleeting connection Vulnerability	Les Voix Bulgares	Green stretch cloth Stretchy band Fabrics Small ball
5	Wrapping Tying Being guided as if blind Getting married	Connection and bonding between people Support/nurturing Co-dependence Security	African	Green stretch cloth Stretchy band Fabrics Small ball
6	Invisible glass barrier Encroaching ball games Guarding self	Safety and danger in relation to others Vulnerability Self-protection Secrets Feeling scared and alone	Peter Gabriel	Green stretch cloth Stretchy band Fabrics Small ball
7	Knotting Tearing Re-arranging Flitting around	Feeling unsettled Anticipating ending of group	Instrumental	Green stretch cloth Stretchy band Fabrics Small ball
8	Party Circle 'Lets stay together' Stamping feet	Connectedness Feeling annoyed about ending Denial of ending	Tina Turner Barbara Streisand	Green stretch cloth Stretchy band Fabrics Small ball

COHORT 3

SESSION	METAPHORS	THEMES	MUSIC	PROPS
1	Clashing movements Interrupted flow	Group conflict	K. D. Lang	
2	Aggressive bunny hops Jarring/clashing	Group conflict	Lighthouse Family	
3	Rocking Massaging in pairs	Nurturing self and others	No music	Paper Crayons Percussion Instruments
4	Dressing up Parading in mirrors Mimicking/contrasting/ Amplifying Trying to out-do Flamboyant movement	Showing off to each other and to therapist	Annie Lennox	Green stretch cloth Stretchy band Fabrics Small balls
5	Massage circle	Nurturing each other Support Obedience/independenc e Anger Feeling trapped	No music	
6	British Bulldogs Massage dyads	Control and vulnerability in group	Popular	Green stretch cloth Stretchy band Fabrics Small balls Plastic flowers Baseball bat Paper Crayons
7	Spinning	Disengagement from group	Classical	Green stretch cloth Stretchy band Fabrics Small balls Plastic flowers Baseball bat Paper Crayons
8	Islands Monkeys Watching Swinging Gazing Static energy 'Held' movement	Alienation and withdrawal from others	Popular	Green stretch cloth Stretchy band Fabrics Small balls Paper Crayons
9	Covering/hiding Secret creativity under stretch cloth Witch Rolling on top of each other Squashing Powerful/aggressive/ forceful throwing/kicking red medicine ball Competing for volume	Hiding/power/aggression /hostility in relationship	No music	Green stretchcloth Stretchy band Fabrics Small balls Red medicine ball Paper Crayons
10	Shouting Staring Warily watching Closed groups	Hurt, embarrassment and hostility in relationship	Al Green	Green stretch cloth Stretchy band Fabrics Small balls Paper Crayons

## APPENDIX 8. PAINTINGS



Butterfly

c1:2



CI:3



CI:4



CI:5



Cyclone

CI:7





CI DDdoc



C2:1

C2:3





C2:6



C3:2

1



C3:6



C3: 8

APPENDIX 9. FIGURES



C3:9



## APPENDIX 9. FIGURES

Figure 1: Cycles of data collection and category formation



- PR = Process recordings  
 ISSI = Individual semi-structured interviews  
 GSSI = Group semi-structured interviews  
 SCI = Systematic categorisation of interviews  
 SCP = Systematic categorisation of process recordings  
 AF = Adding new data to findings  
 RC = Re-categorisation  
 RRD = Re-reading data  
 LfC = Looking for contradictions  
 CCD = Cross-checking data

**Figure 2** Gathering and linking categories

**Figure 2.1:** Data from the individual and group semi-structured interviews

**Response to questions:**

**What was your experience of the DMT group?**

**Has it affected you personally, and if so, how?**

**Has it affected your creative work at university, and if so, how?**

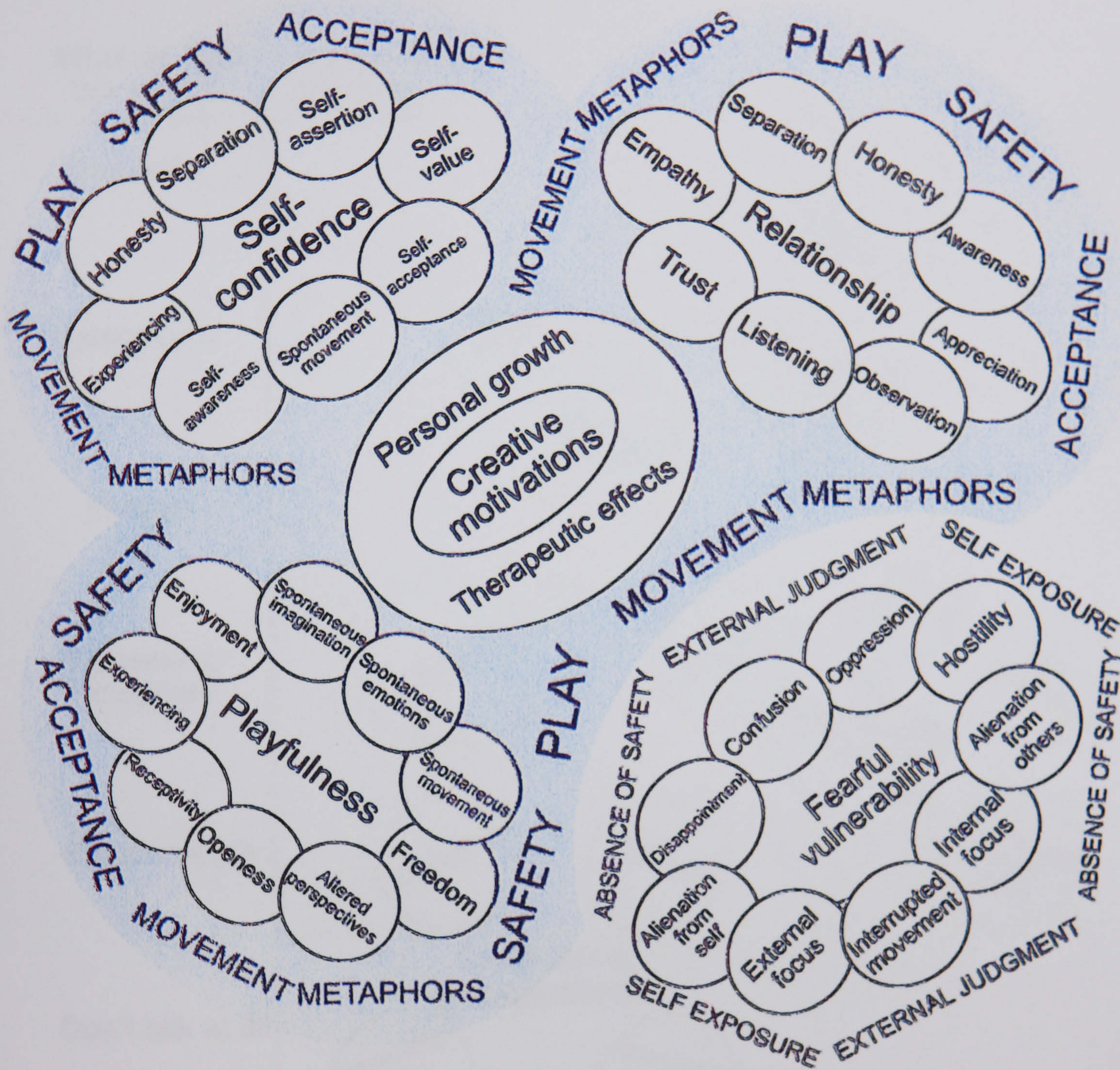


Figure 2.2: Data from verbal process and case notes

Response to questions:  
 What happened this week?  
 What did you notice?  
 How did you feel?

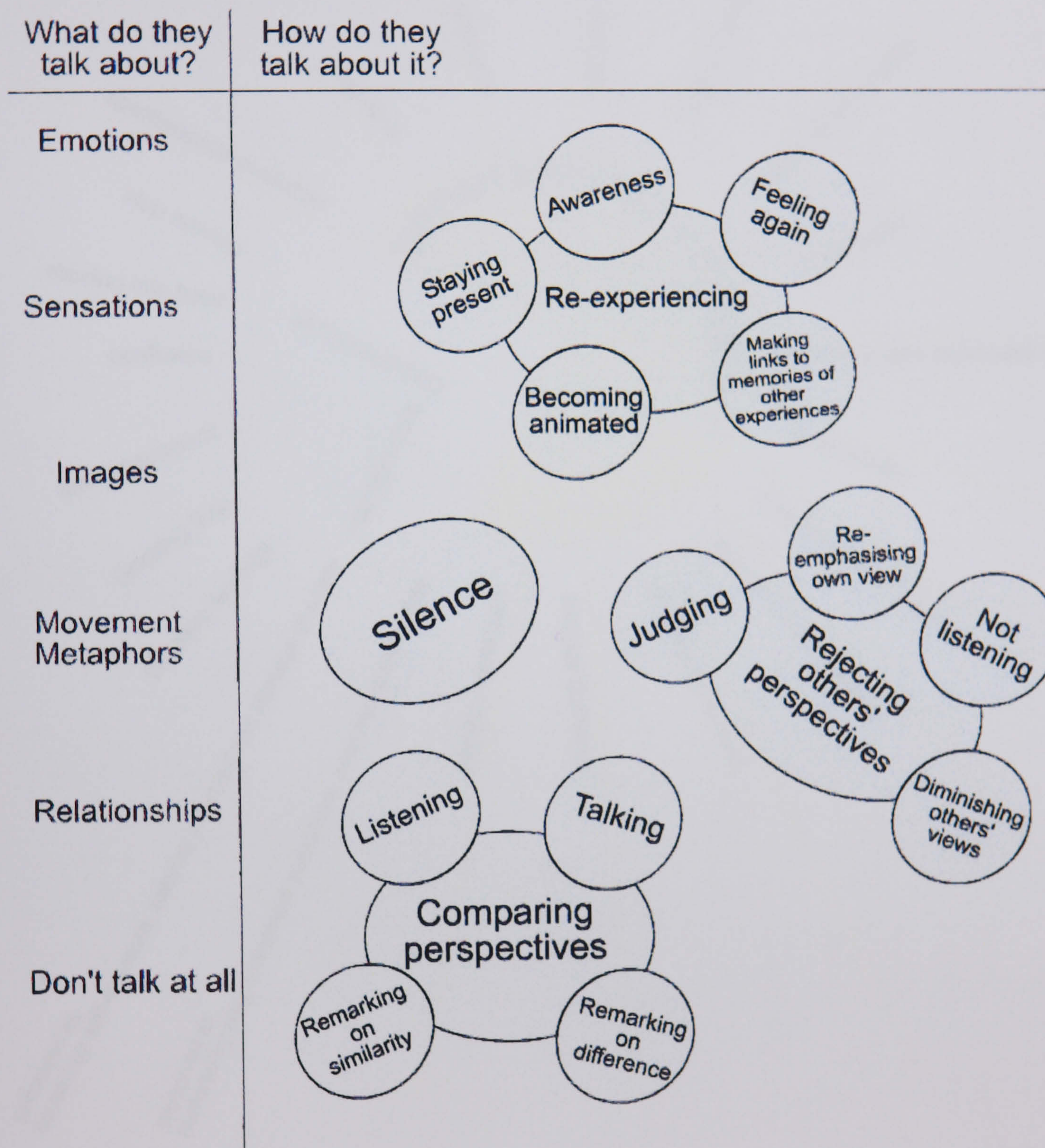


Diagram 3.1: Spontaneous movement

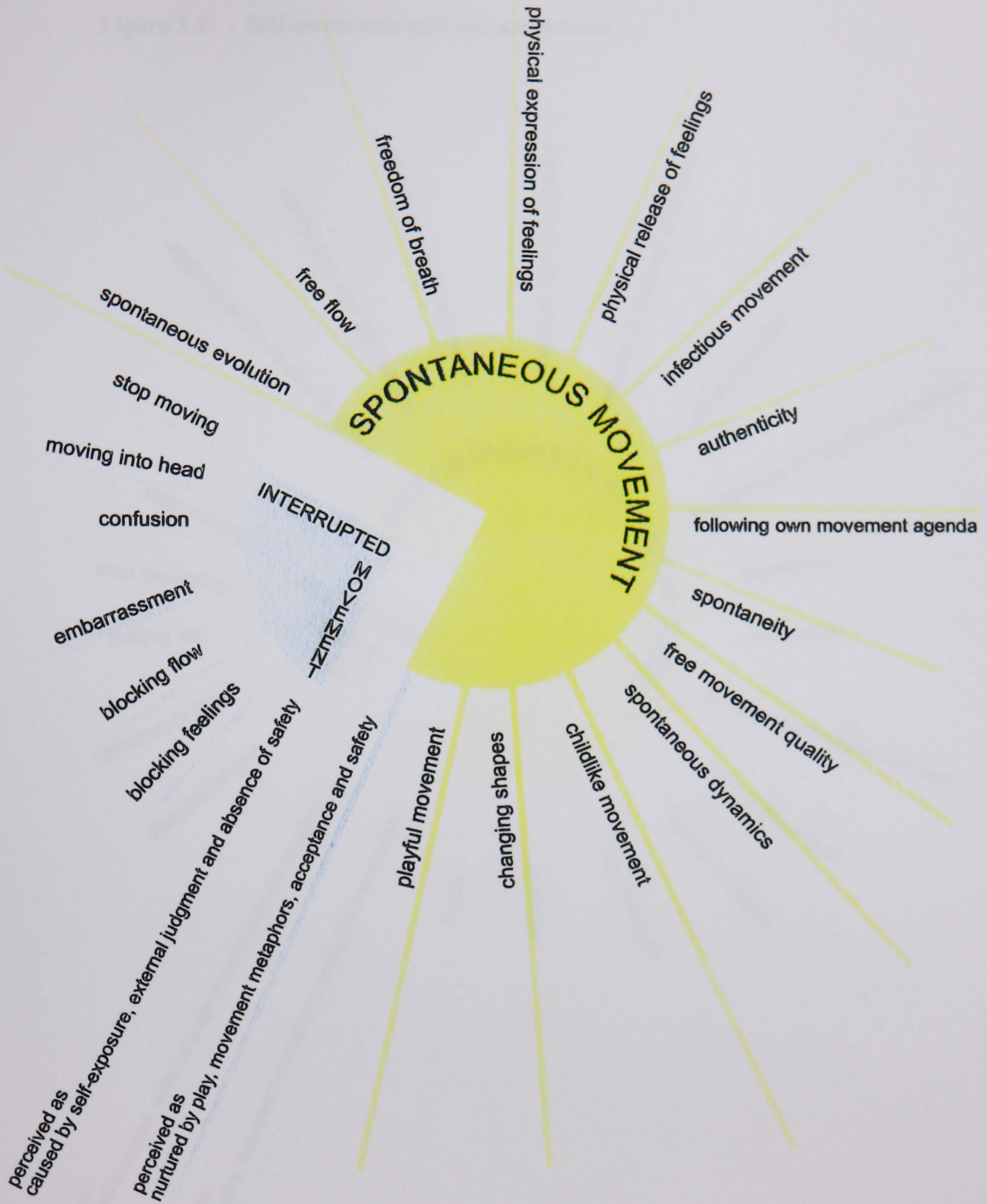


Figure 3.2: Self-awareness and self-acceptance

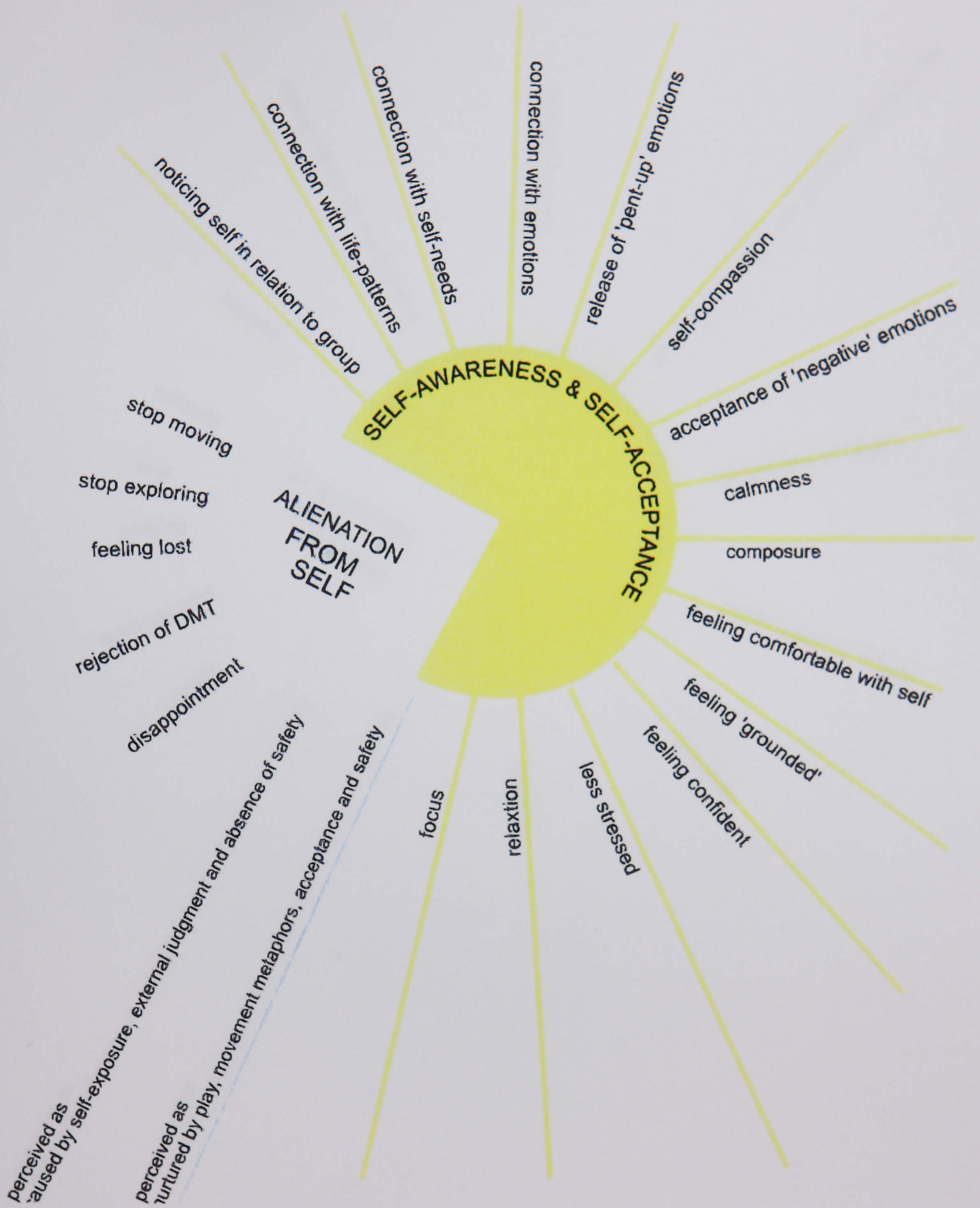


Figure 3.3: Awareness of others

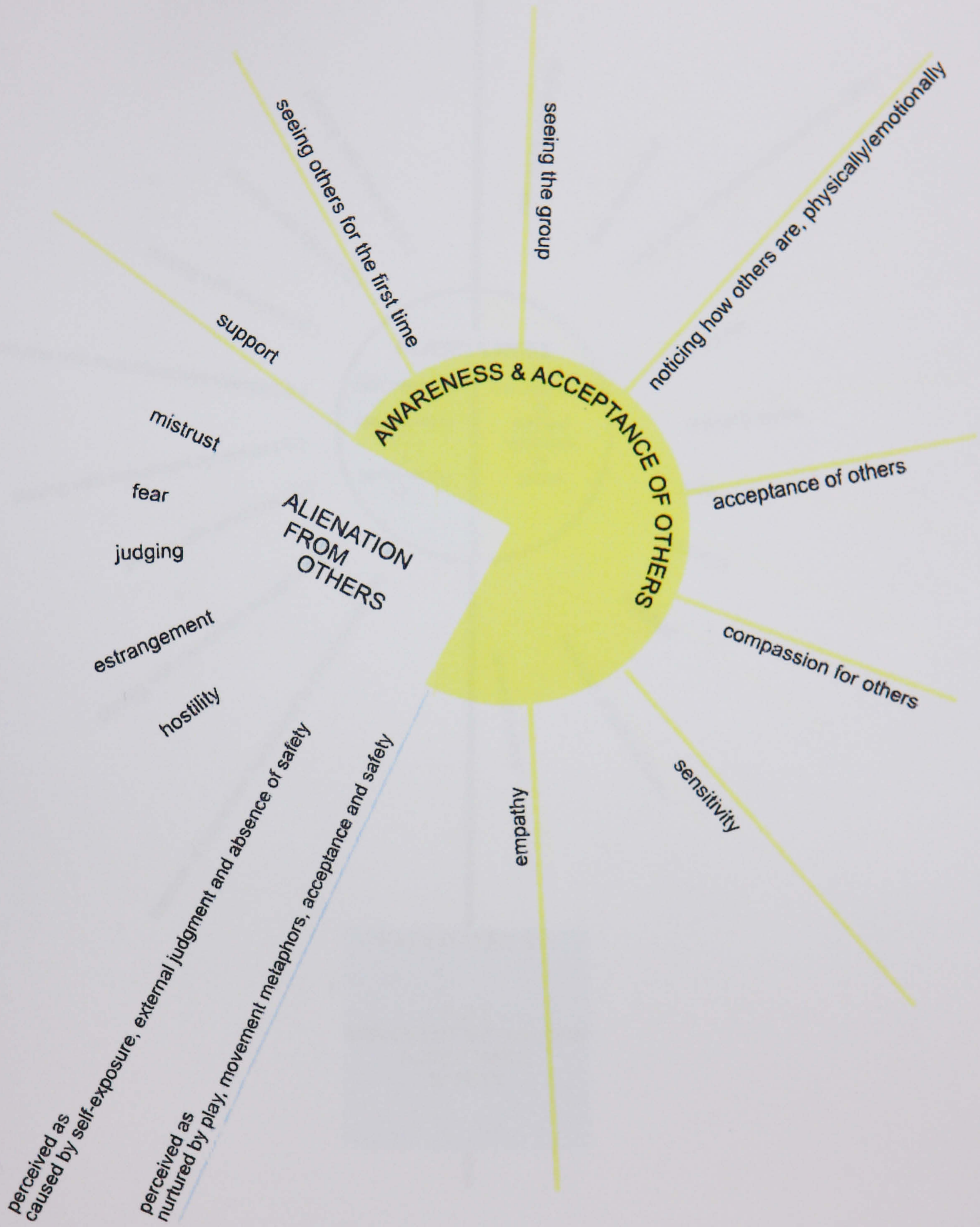


Figure 3.4: Playfulness

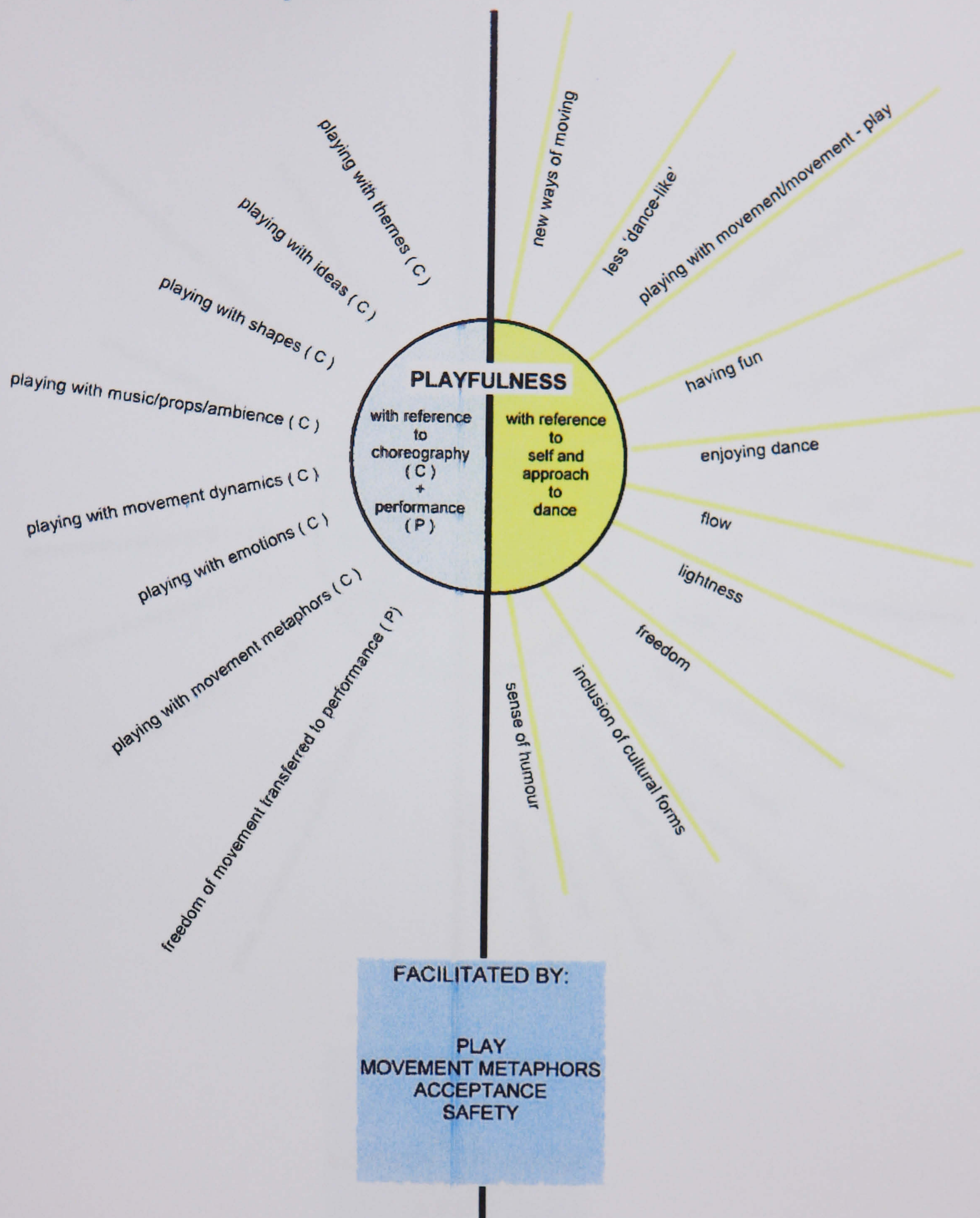


Figure 3.5: Self-confidence

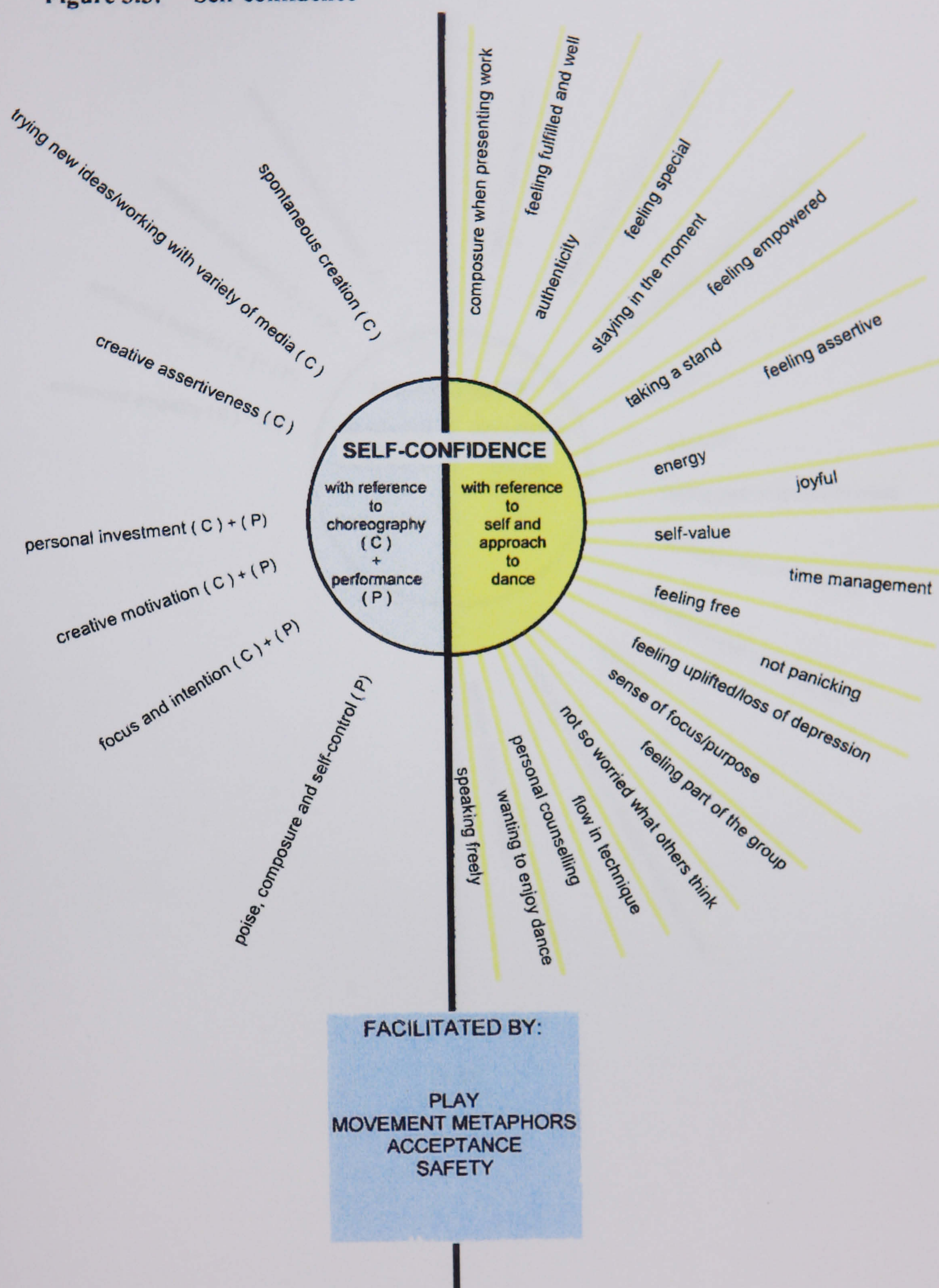




Figure 3.6: Relationship

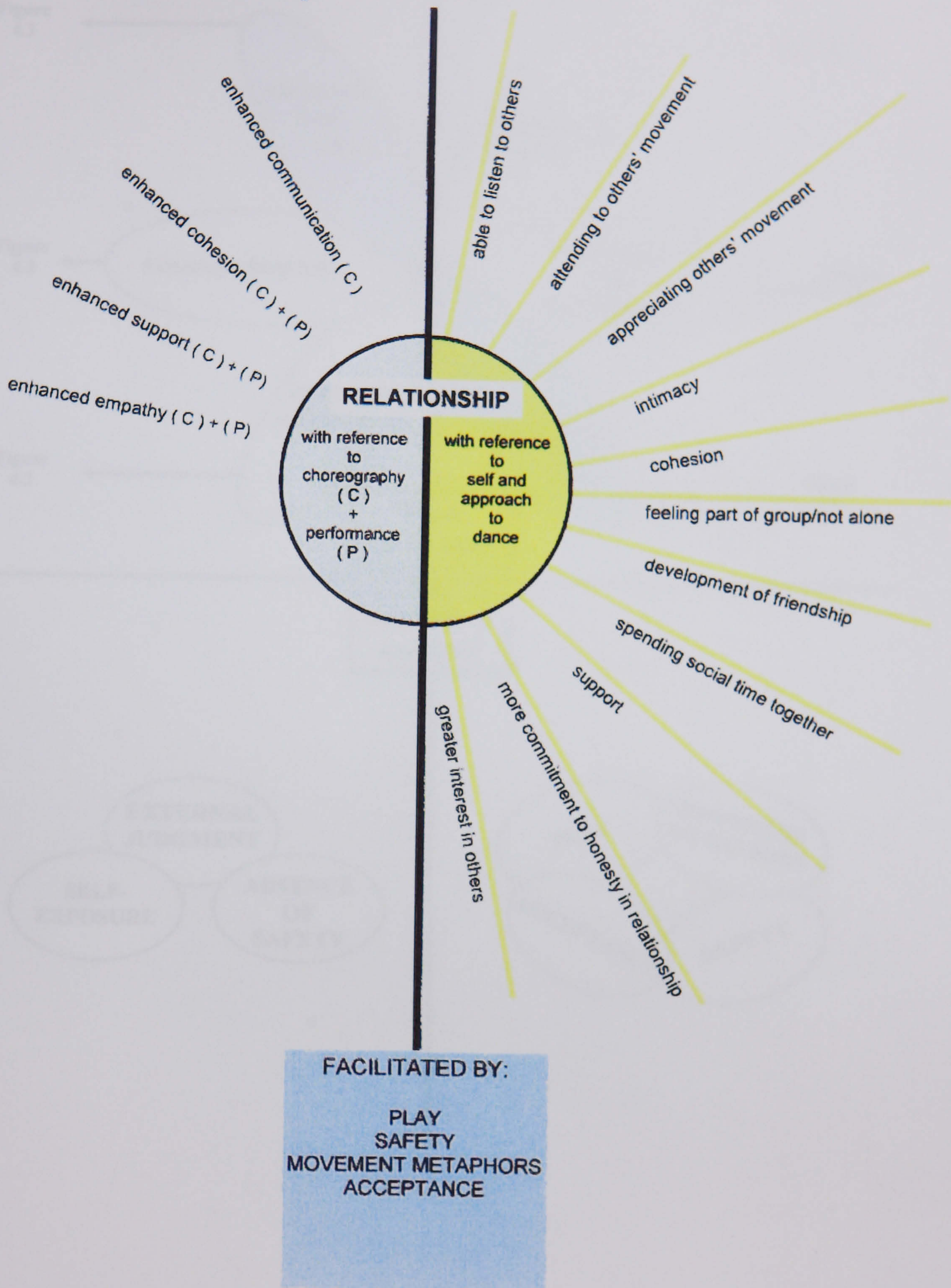


Figure 4.1: What was your experience of the DMT group?

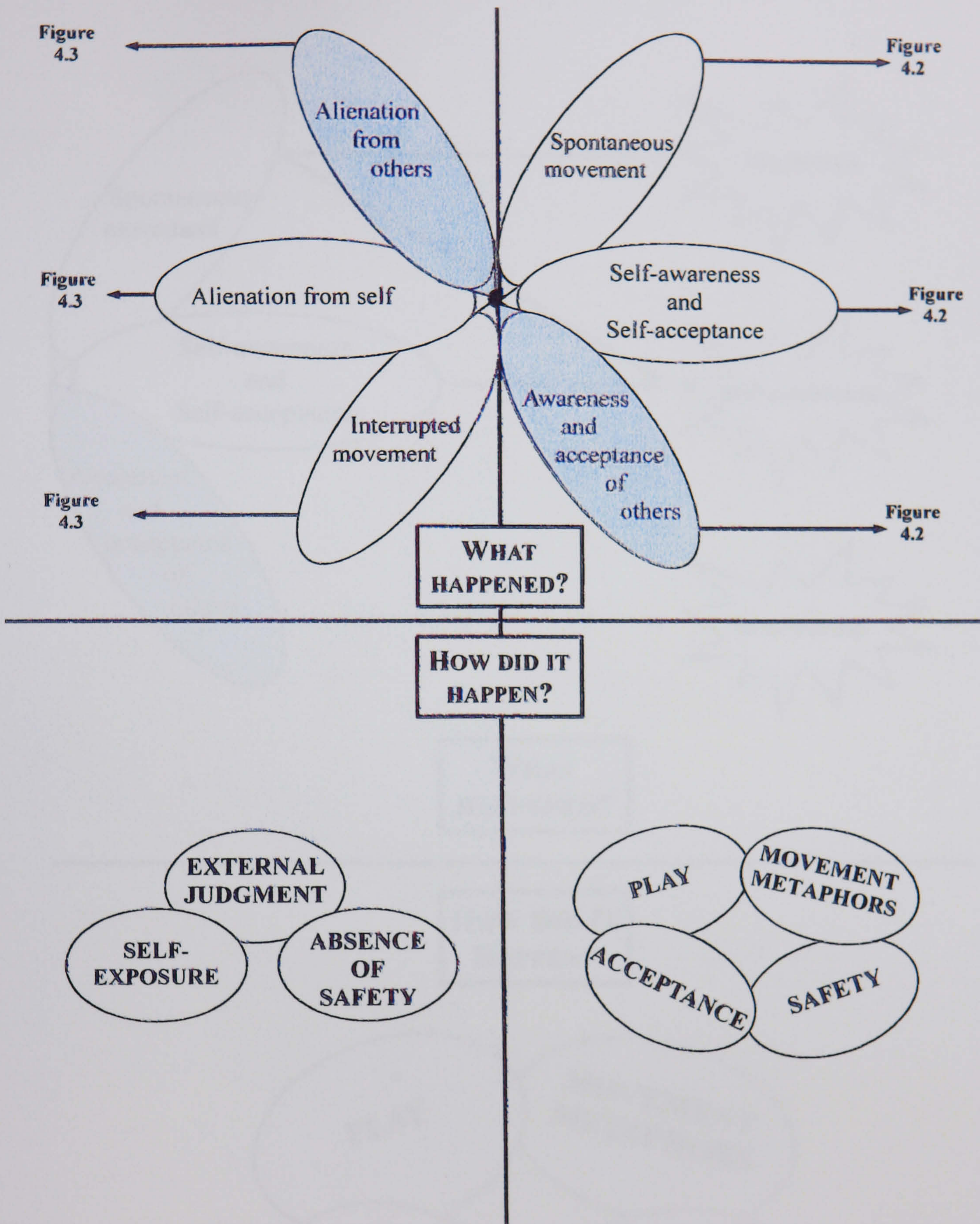
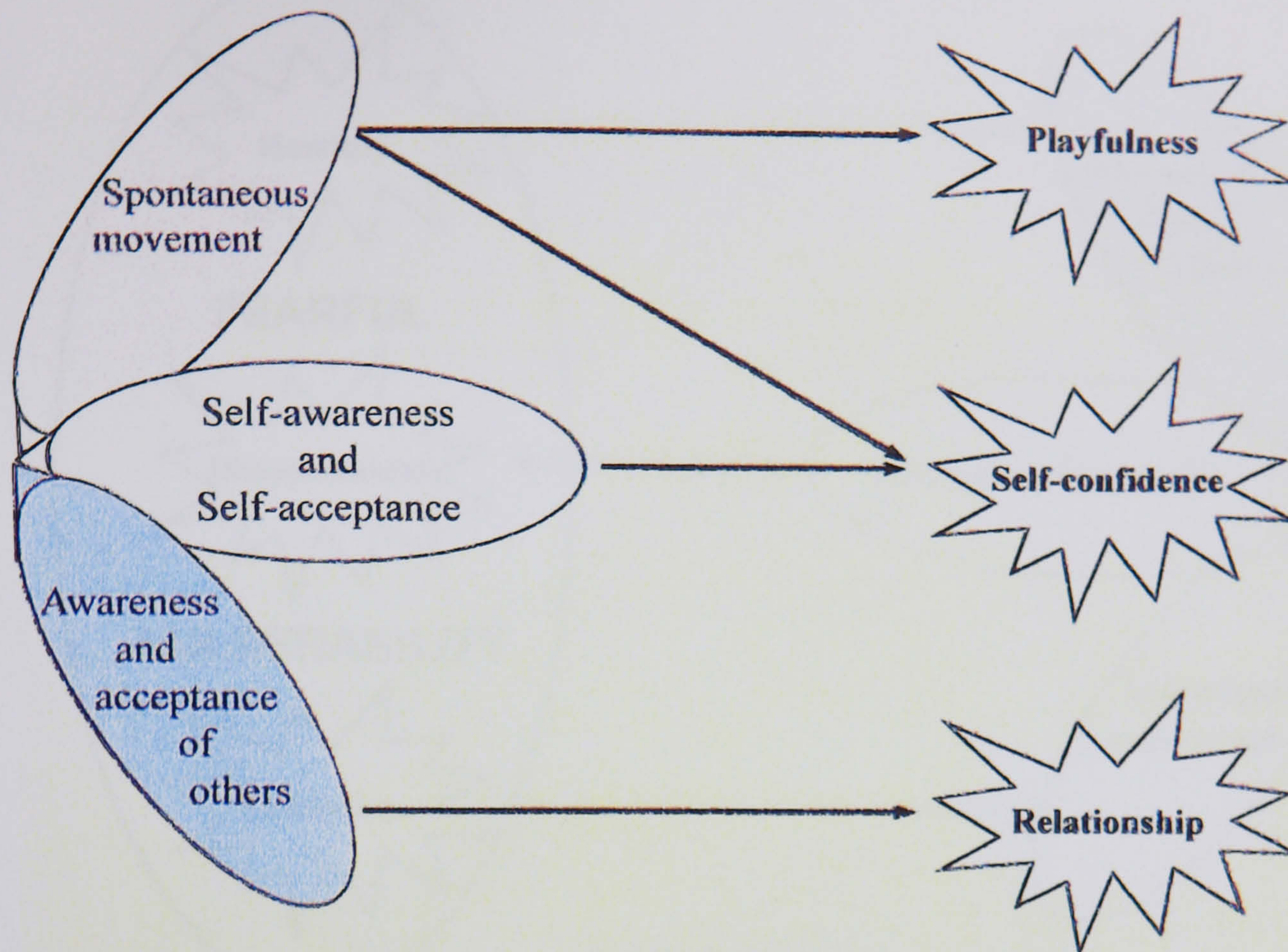


Figure 4.2: Has it affected you personally, and if so, how?



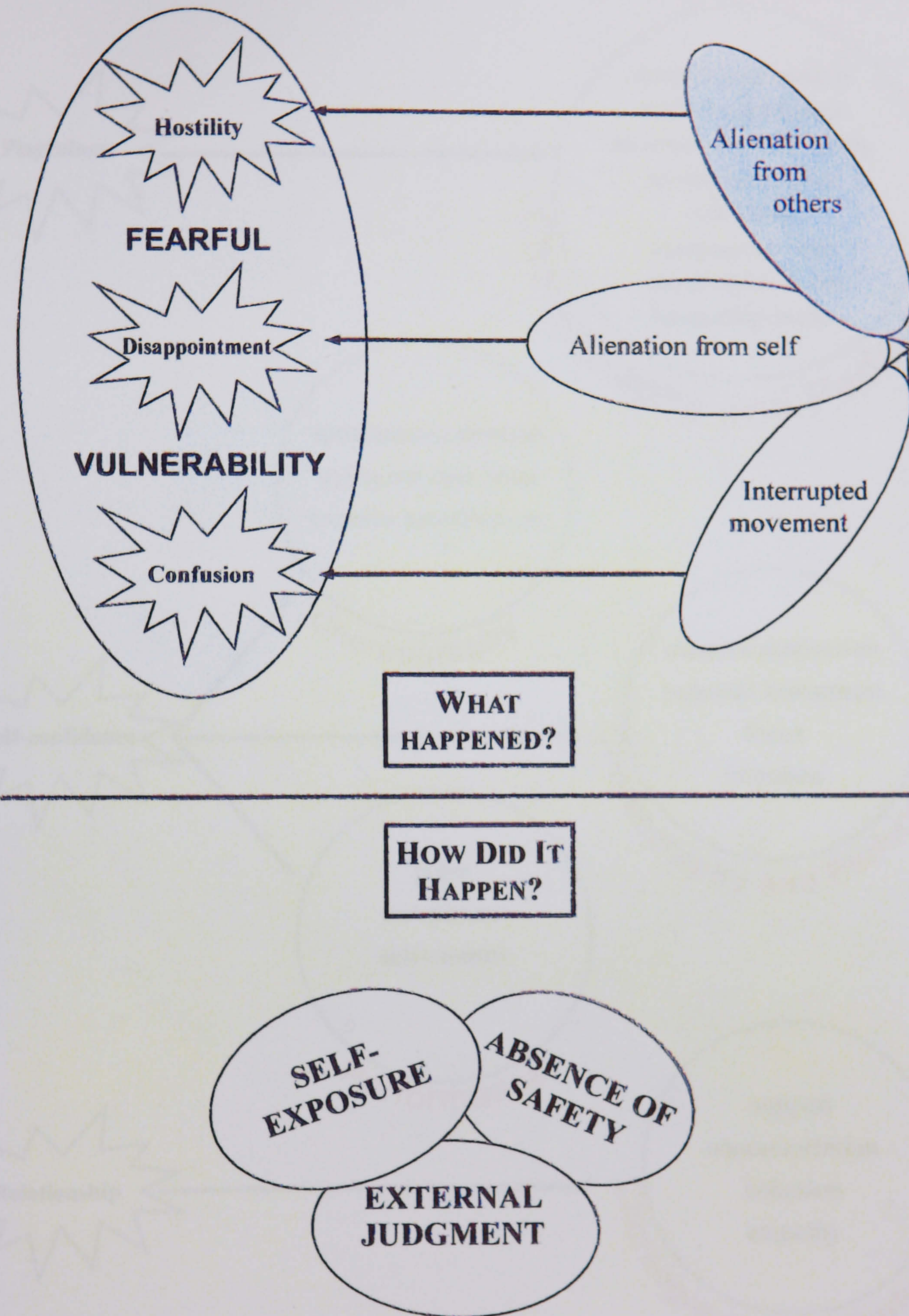
**WHAT HAPPENED?**

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**HOW DID IT HAPPEN?**



Figure 4.3: Has it affected you personally, and if so, how?



**Figure 4.4: Has it affected your creative work at university, and if so, how?**

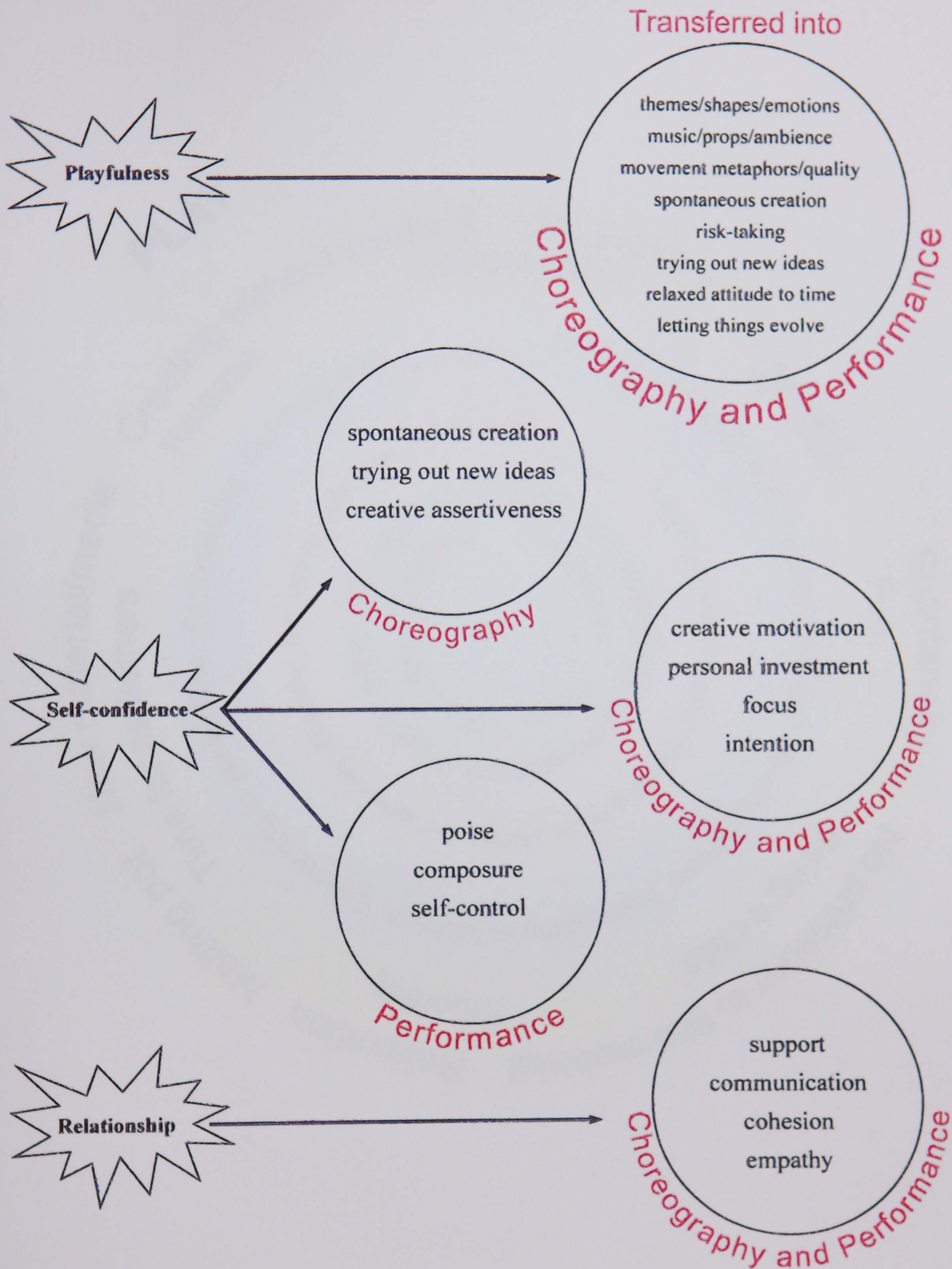


Figure 5 Interconnected aspects of a developing model of DMT

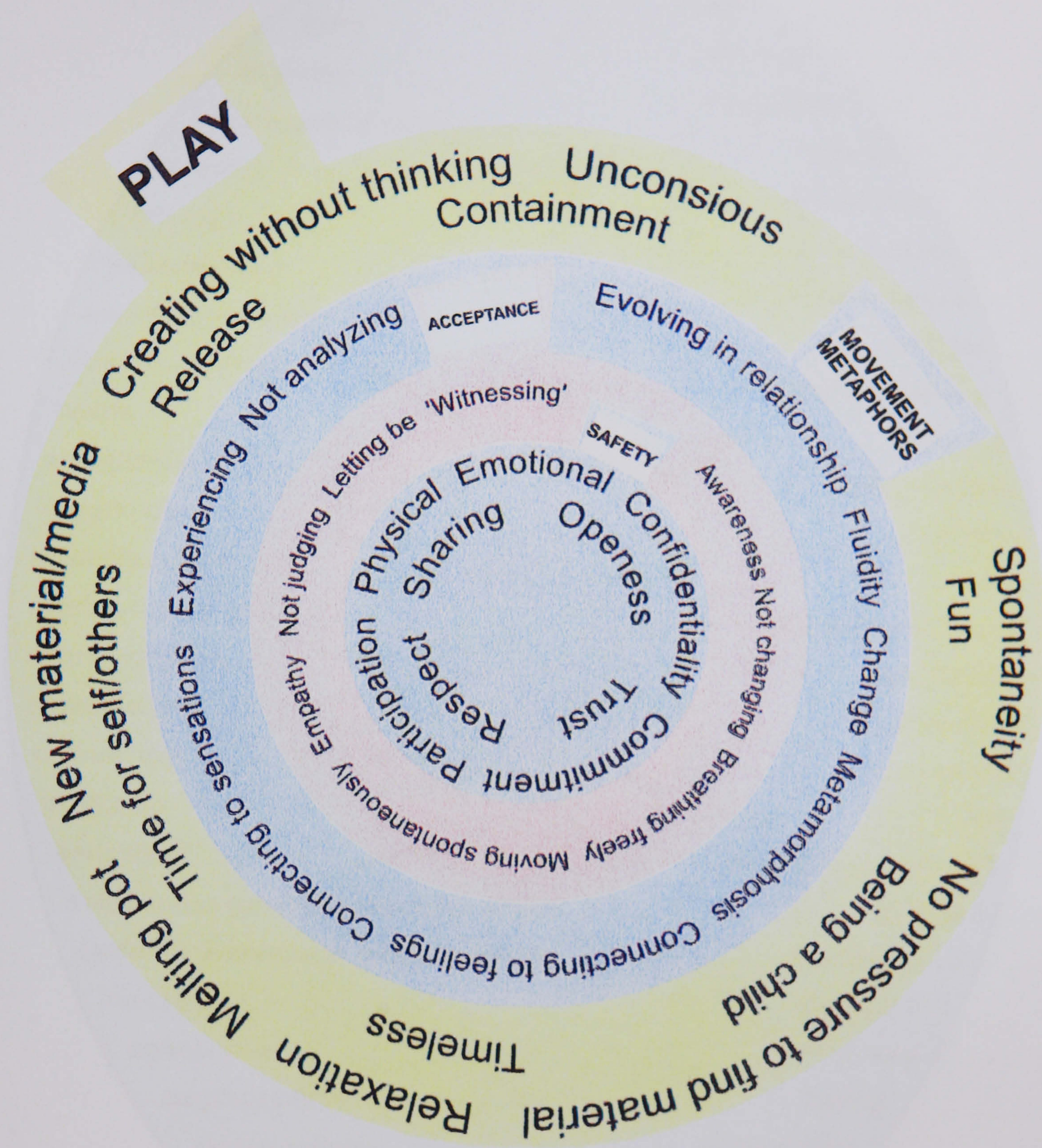
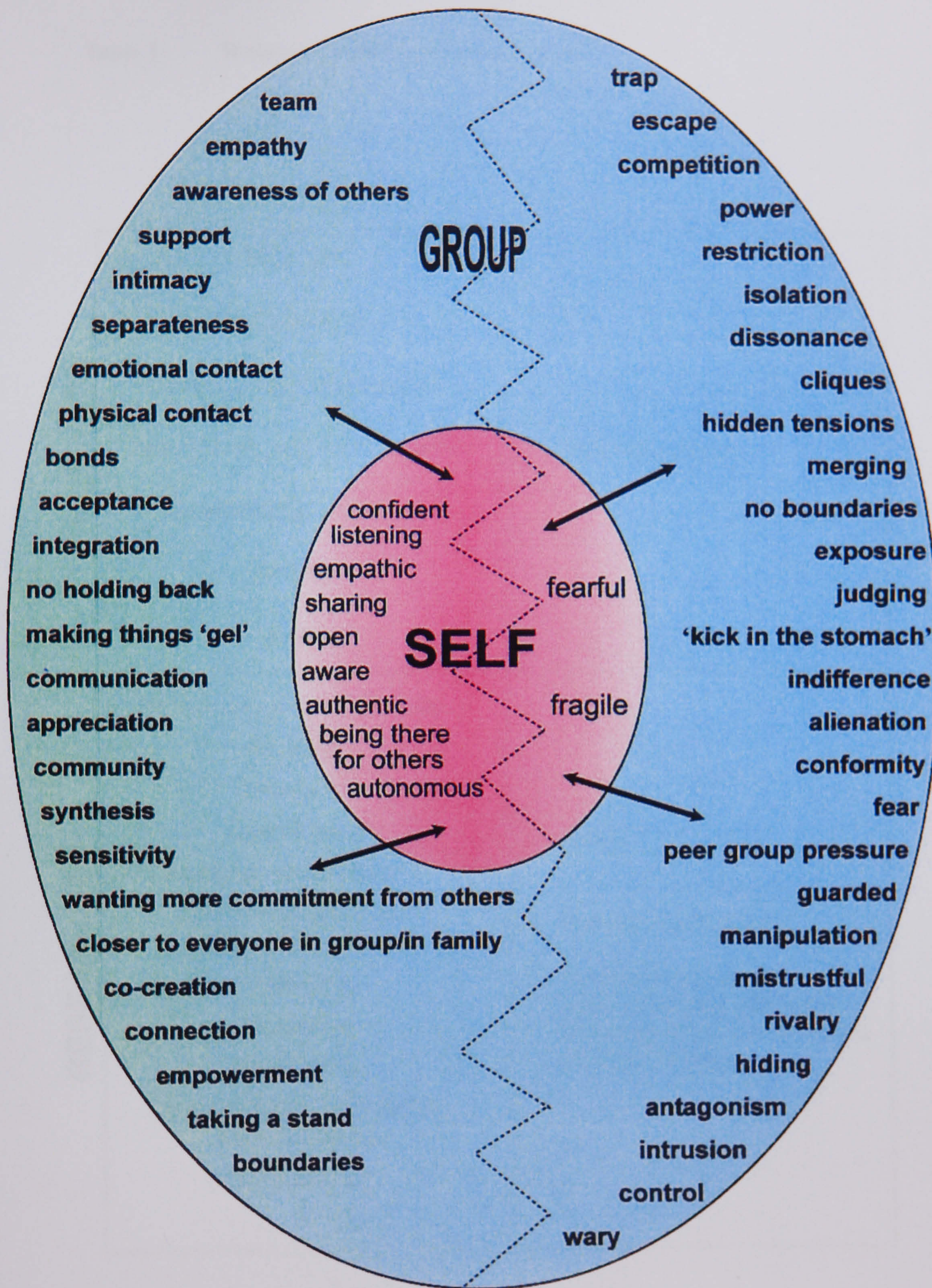


Figure 6: Interpretation of relational processes in DMT



## APPENDIX 10. TABLES

Table 1 Response to DMT process and data

<b>THERAPIST</b>	<p>Moving</p> <p>Participating</p> <p>Developing congruence</p> <p>Developing self-awareness</p> <p>Developing empathy</p> <p>Writing</p> <p>Painting</p>	<b>DMT PROCESS</b>
<b>RESEARCHER</b>	<p>Acknowledging subjectivity</p> <p>Reading</p> <p>Grouping</p> <p>Questioning</p> <p>Seeking contradictions</p> <p>Comparing with data/ research/literature</p> <p>Reflecting</p> <p>Analysing</p> <p>Interpreting</p> <p>Contemplating alternative interpretations</p> <p>Synthesizing</p>	<p><b>DATA:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Process Recordings</li> <li>2. Individual and group semi-structured interviews including group consultations on initial findings</li> </ol>



**Table 2 Relationship themes interpreted from movement metaphors****Table 2.1: Cohort 1**

<b>SESSION</b>	<b>METAPHORS</b>	<b>THEMES</b>
1	Church Blocking Stand or sit? Fast or slow?	Power in relation to others Acceptance/rejection
2	Spinning Lovers Child playing with her hair	Self-absorption Merging
3	Round and round Moving alone Dyads	Distance between people Need for contact Loneliness
4	Squeezing together/breaking apart Fleeting embrace	Fear of/need for contact Merging/separation
5	Nest	Feeling trapped or safe in relation to others Belonging/escaping Nurturing/restricting
6	Womb Being born Caterpillar/cocoon/butterfly Baby Teddy bear Tent Floor Encroaching ball games	Safety/danger in relationship Dependency Separation and loss Fear of others/intrusion Vulnerability and safety Escape from relationship
7	Cyclone/storm Ghost-train Fairground Tunnel Catapult Keeping ball on track Being naughty	Safety/danger in relationship Boundaries in relationship
8	Foetus Jigsaw Moulding Jumping over people Departing	Dependency/separation Self-assertion/empathy Escape and freedom Internal/external boundaries Safety/danger

Table 2.2: Cohort 2

SESSION	METAPHORS	THEMES
1	Edges/periphery	Discomfort with DMT in presence of others
2	Edges/periphery Interrupted movements	Fear and avoidance of DMT in presence of others
3	Bashing percussion instruments Abrasive interaction	Group conflict Challenging others
4	Playground Skipping Fluid movement Fluid relationship patterns	Spontaneous childlike interaction Need for/fear of contact Loneliness Fleeting connection Vulnerability
5	Wrapping Tying Being guided as if blind Getting married	Connection/bonding between people Support/nurturing Co-dependence Security
6	Invisible glass barrier Encroaching ball games Guarding self	Safety and danger in relation to others Vulnerability Self-protection Secrets Feeling scared and alone
7	Knotting Tearing Re-arranging Flitting around	Feeling unsettled Anticipating ending of group
8	Party Circle 'Lets stay together' Stamping feet	Connectedness Feeling annoyed about ending Denial of ending

Table 2.3: Cohort 3

SESSION	METAPHORS	THEMES
1	Clashing movements Interrupted flow	Group conflict
2	Aggressive bunny hops Jarring /clashing	Group conflict
3	Rocking Massaging in pairs	Nurturing self and others
4	Dressing up Parading in mirrors Mimicking/contrasting/amplifying Trying to out-do Flamboyant movement	Showing off to each other and to therapist
5	Massage circle	Nurturing each other Support Obedience/independence Anger Feeling trapped
6	British Bulldogs Massage dyads	Control and vulnerability in group
7	Spinning	Disengagement from group
8	Islands Monkeys Watching Swinging Gazing Static energy 'Held' movement	Alienation and withdrawal from others
9	Covering/hiding Secret creativity under stretch cloth Protecting Witch Rolling on top of each other Squashing Powerful/aggressive/forceful throwing/ kicking red medicine ball Competing for volume	Hiding/power/aggression/hostility in relationship
10	Shouting Staring Warily watching Closed groups	Hurt/embarrassment/hostility in relationship