

## THE ROLE OF CREATIVITY IN INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN DANCE AND MOVEMENT THERAPY: NARRATIVES OF PRACTITIONERS

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**Abstract.** Based on the qualitative data, this paper aims to disclose the role of creativity in the therapeutic process from the perspective of dance and movement therapists in Lithuania. The literature on the concept of creativity and its interlinks with communication and the role of creativity is discussed. Based on the semi-structured interviews with dance and movement therapy practitioners, empirical findings reveal the role and meaning of creativity in the therapeutic process and discuss the elements of creativity in dance and movement therapy: game, spontaneity, and imagination. The practitioners of dance and movement therapy tend to conceptualize creativity broader than the classical definitions suggest. The role of creativity subjectively is interpreted as fundamental in the therapeutic process. It binds all other elements of the therapeutic process (such as movement, dance, and a therapeutic relationship); it is seen as a part of the communicative process between the therapist and a client. More specific identifications of the role of creativity foresee creativity as allowing to make a distance from emotionally painful situations and emotions.

**Keywords:** communication in therapy, creativity, dance and movement therapy, qualitative studies.

### Introduction

Since the founding of the American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA) by Marian Chase (in 1966), there has been an increasing interest in dance and movement therapy (DMT) research. The ADTA has defined DMT as the “use of movement as a process which furthers physical and emotional integration of an individual” (2020). As one of the creative arts therapies, DMT is based on the theoretical interdependence between movement and emotion; movement is used to express inner states, it is used as a means of communication and a way to reveal personality (Acolin, 2016). Ritter and Graff Low (1996, p. 249) categorize psychological and physical effects of DMT into five areas: socialization and integration within a larger group system; nonverbal creative expression for emotional expression; total self- and body-awareness and enhanced self-esteem; muscular coordination, broader movement

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capabilities and tension release; and enjoyment through relaxation. Holistic integration of emotional, spiritual and cognitive selves is usually recognized as the general goal of DMT. A meta-analysis that has been conducted on the effects of DMT suggests positive effects on quality of life and decreased clinical outcomes (depression, anxiety); improved well-being, mood, affect, and body image (Koch et al., 2014).

Despite the increasing number of research on the effects of DMT, the role of the construct of creativity in this form of therapy has not acquired much attention. According to Wen-grower (2015, p. 13), the creativity that unfolds during the session as part of the therapeutic process becomes integrated within DMT. The therapist's role is to encourage the expressive, creative process, to acknowledge and accept it. Purcell (2021) delineated stages of the client's therapeutic process in DMT, such as experience, exploration, development, insight/action, and resolution, discussing in detail how the creative therapeutic process evolves in the DMT, leading to therapeutic change. However, the studies that would allow hearing the DMT therapists' voices on how they interpret the role of creativity in DMT, are rare. Based on the qualitative data, this paper aims to disclose the role of creativity in the therapeutic process from the perspective of dance and movement therapists in Lithuania. Considering that in the therapeutic process, an essential element is an interpersonal relationship, and since communication occurs externally, it can be observed and described as an interpersonal process (Hyatt, 1992), the paper, along with the focus on the role of creativity in the therapeutic process, also catches how creativity manifests in interpersonal communication.

In Lithuania, the profession was established at the beginning of the 21st century. The Lithuanian Dance Movement Therapy Association was founded in 2011. The association has united 20 members who apply DMT methods in their practice. In 2019 a Master's program of Dance and Movement Therapy (one specialization of Art therapy programme) in Vilnius University and Lithuanian Academy of Music Art and Theatre was established.

The paper opens up on the discussion on the conception of creativity, its interlinks with communication, movement and creativity role in therapy. Empirical findings, based on the semi-structured interviews with DMT specialists reveal the role and meaning of creativity in the therapeutic process and discusses the elements of creativity in DMT: game, spontaneity and imagination.

## **1. Creativity, communication and the therapeutic process**

### **1.1. Defining creativity**

Explanations of creativity are numerous. Some definitions focus on intellectual activity and thought processes that generate new ideas to solve existing problems; others focus on individuals' intellectual capabilities and personality traits. For others, in contrast, the central point is more on the results, on the creative product itself. The attempts to define creativity have deep roots. Already in 1960s, Lawrence C. Repucci counted between 50 and 60 definitions extant in the literature on creativity (Parkhurst, 1999). Even though there is no consensus between researchers on the definition of creativity, the standard definition includes the elements of originality and effectiveness (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). The dominant definition that is popular among creativity researchers up today was proposed by Guilford's theory of creativity

in 1950s, suggesting that creativity is related with abilities to envision multiple solutions to a problem (1950); and with the ability to create new patterns, finding new ways to use the functions of objects (1967).

Many believe that divergent thinking is the hallmark of creativity. Divergent thinking involves creating a new, novel, or different idea to solve some problem or foster innovation or change (Deacon, 2000; Kottler & Hecker, 2002). Divergent thinking involves creating a new, novel, or different idea to solve some problem or foster innovation or change (Deacon, 2000). Divergent thinking is oriented toward developing possibilities rather than focusing on data and conclusions (Carson, 1999). Others maintain that it is a combination of divergent and convergent thinking that begets creativity (Rickards, 1993). Convergent thinking employs reasoning that brings together relevant data and allows one to arrive at a conclusion based on the available data (Carson, 1999). Still, others believe that creativity is fueled by intuition, based on information acquired tacitly and perceptually (Bohart, 1999).

A different approach was proposed by researchers who eliminated the element of usefulness in the definition of creativity. Creativity is considered the creation of new ideas or engagement in creative acts, regardless of whether the resultant outcomes are novel, useful, or creative (Cook, 2002; Drazin et al., 1999; Ford, 1996). Despite the focus or ignoring the effectiveness of creativity, most researchers agree that creativity refers to something that is both novel and valuable. Piirto (2021) suggested a broader spectrum of creativity elements. Her model (the seven I's of creativity) include inspiration, imagery, imagination, intuition, insight, incubation and improvisation. Young (1985) encompassed personality traits, deliberation, novelty, insight, spontaneity, originality, method, the actualizing of potential and creative responses. Socio-psychological approach suggests that creativity includes individual characteristics of creators' that interact with their culture and environment (Amabile & Pillemer, 2012).

A new turn in the discussion on creativity is being brought by researchers who acknowledge the processual nature of creativity (Walia, 2019; Amabile & Pratt, 2016). Considering that the creative process is not directly observable, the classical definitions of creativity, instead of actual creativity, allow grasping the perceived creativity (Walia, 2019). The critique is diverted towards the common denominators – novelty and originality. The perception of originality determines the evaluation if the idea is creative. Likewise, the novelty and usefulness of an idea is also judged on perception instead of actuality (Walia, 2019).

After a careful examination of creativity definitions, Kampylis and Valtanen (2010) delineated four components for understanding creativity: creativity is a key ability of individuals; creativity presumes an intentional activity; the creative process occurs in a specific context; the creative process entails the generation of product(s). Based on this conceptualization, Walia (2019, p. 6) develops four elements of creativity, which are included in a dynamic definition of creativity: creativity is an act arising out of a perception of the environment that acknowledges a certain disequilibrium, resulting in productive activity that challenges patterned thought processes and norms, and gives rise to something new in the form of a physical object or even a mental or an emotional construct. Since the article's focus is on the phenomenon of processual and dynamic nature, we employ the dynamic definition of creativity in the article.

## 1.2. Creativity in the communication process

The implicit relationship between creativity and communication was recognized by many scholars (Goldberg, 1986; Hyatt, 1992). Some researchers included its role in the communication process into the definition of creativity: “creativity is making and communicating meaningful new connections” (Isaksen & Treffinger, 1985). Some scholars that analyzed creativity and communication identify their dialectic relationship. Goldberg’s (1986) discussion of creativity identifies creativity as primarily interpersonal and intrapersonal communication. While interpersonal dialogue describes the relationship an individual has with another person, intrapersonal dialogue describes the relationship one has within one’s self, with the subject matter, and with the medium that links one to thought itself. Hyatt (1992) argues that understanding in interpersonal dialogue is fundamentally creative, always resulting in a synthesis of new insight. The internal, creative dialogue identifies the self as one origin and the other as another. If the traditional arguments about creativity often concern themselves with decisions to determine if a given result is creative, in the creative dialogue, more important is in what manner it is creative (Hyatt, 1992). The role of relationships is central in interpersonal communication. The relationship determines the identification of an object, reflecting psychological distance or intimacy in the relationship. Three elements that, according to Hyatt, are central to the creative relationship are responsiveness, risk, and spontaneity. Contrarily, passivity is the antithesis of dialogue and creativity. When the self allows spontaneity to occur, its discovery is often marked with an affective quality; it is often called the *Ahal*.

## 1.3. Creativity in therapy

Kottler and Hecker (2002) delineate three elements of creativity in therapy: the person (including both the therapist and client), the process (the interaction between the client and therapist), and the product (therapeutic change). The authors propose that divergent thinking, convergent thinking, and intuition are all necessary ingredients of creativity in the psychotherapy process. Creativity is considered not as a trait but a learned activity in which therapists engage frequently. Furthermore, it is maintained that good therapy requires creativity. Creativity in therapy can be influenced by the person of the therapist (1), the person of the client (2), or the process of counselling (3). One aspect of creativity in therapy is on increasing client creativity in order for clients to increase their generativity and problem-solving abilities. Thus, therapy is often not so much about developing client creativity but in harnessing it so that the client can solve their problems successfully (Kottler & Hecker, 2002). Part of therapist creativity, however, is good theoretical and practical training. After critically reviewing creativity literature, Gilhooly (2002) maintains that knowledge acquisition is critical for creative work.

## 1.4. Creativity and movement

The traditional assumption of the creativity that individuals first generate an idea in their mind, which is then enacted in behaviour, is challenged by Orth et al. (2017). They criticize the traditional attitude for failing to include action as part or constitutive of creativity. Thus,

rather than focusing on ideas produced by the cognitive system, it is better to use the term creative “as a descriptive for unfolding actions that are original (relative to the individual or group) and functional (*i.e.*, they support task success)” (Orth et al., 2017). In this way, the core theoretical and methodological assumptions in creativity research are challenged. Motor creativity (new ways of acting adaptive or adaptive in new situations) and movement variability are essential aspects of adaptability to any dynamic context. Thus, Orth et al. (2017) argue that creative motor actions refer to rare, original solutions. Murali and Händel (2022) explored the effects of motor restrictions on divergent thinking for different movement states. The scores in the performance in the divergent thinking measuring test (the commonly used Guilford’s Alternate Uses Task was applied) were higher during walking than sitting. The experiment results also proved that unrestrained sitting improves divergent thinking, similar to unrestrained walking. These results are interpreted with the fact of a broader field of attention when no restriction is placed. The authors also overview other studies (Kuo & Yeh, 2016; Leung et al., 2012; Slepian & Ambady, 2012, 2014) that suggested an interlink between movement and one aspect of creativity – divergent thinking. Free walking and other fluid movements can generate associations of bodily states and abstract concepts and thereby improve divergent thinking.

## 2. Methodology

The study is based on seven semi-structured interviews conducted with dance and movement therapists in 2022, January–February. Most therapists have over ten years of experience in DMT. One informant has three years of experience. The interviews were conducted virtually using the *Zoom Video Communications* platform, the average duration of an interview is 45 minutes. The study was conducted according to fundamental ethical principles of anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality. After receiving detailed information about the study, all participants gave their verbal informed consent. Study participants were assured that their information would be kept confidential and anonymous and that they had the right to quit the interview and/or not to answer questions at any time.

The interview guidelines comprised three topics: (1) the conceptions and role of creativity in DMT (how the practitioners understand creativity subjectively; why it is important); (2) what is the role of creativity in the therapeutic process (how creativity manifests in the therapeutic process, how it manifests in the communication between therapist and client, what are the challenges in the therapeutic process, the examples of creativity manifestation), and (3) the effects of DMT on creativity (what is the relationship of DMT and creativity in their practice and what affects they see for the clients).

The inductive coding of transcripts of interviews was conducted in the *MAXQDA* program.

Most of the informants are women (6), and one man was interviewed, from 28 up to 56 years. All informants have higher education (Bachelor and Master degrees, one informant has PHD in Psychology). Most of them live in Vilnius, Lithuania and one informant was from another city. The selected informants are working with a wide range of client groups. Four informants have experience in working with children. One informant has experience working

with adult psychiatric patients, the elderly, and people with disabilities. The others provide individual or group therapy with non-clinical clients. One informant use DMT methods in leaders' competence training. Coded names of informants are provided in the brackets. If the informant provides information from a specific group of clients, this group is being indicated.

### **3. Empirical findings**

The empirical findings are organized into two parts. First of all, the role of creativity in a therapeutic process between client and therapist is discussed, followed by an analysis of manifestation of creativity in interpersonal communication through three elements of creativity: game, spontaneity and imagination.

#### **3.1. The role of creativity in the therapeutic process between a client and a therapist**

The scale how the therapists define creativity could be divided into three groups: spiritual, existential meanings (God's manifestation through an individual – Monika; creativity as an inseparable everyday existence – Elena); personal qualities, traits, emotions, abilities (courage – Elena; spontaneity – Eglė and Sofija; creativity is related with imagination and permission – Jurgita; joy – Sofija; related with curiosity, the joy of discovery – Antanas); and creative products (coming out of usual patterns – Monika; ability to manage the process which carries something new – Antanas). If some definitions fall into traditional conceptions of creativity (such as spontaneity, creative products, imagination, curiosity), existential/spiritual definitions and interlinks of creativity with certain personality traits and emotions such as courage and joy broaden the spectrum of subjective interpretations.

Creativity is interpreted as an inseparable part of the therapeutic process in DMT; some informants even draw equality between the two (Elena). First of all, the sessions are considered a manifestation of the therapist's creativity, taking into account his role in constructing the structure of the group sessions and spontaneous reactions towards the group dynamics (Elena, Monika). Similarly, spontaneity is also common in individual sessions as the therapist follows the processes of a client (Elena, Jurgita, Natalija). The moment of unexpectedness, the spontaneous reactions to the concrete processes with various groups of clients in the DMT work or ability to create specific techniques are acknowledged by the informants:

“So you come with a plan, and the best scenario is if you follow the plan for 5 minutes, and what happens next, it's just total creativity” (Monika, from the practice with refugees);

“So he comes and I see how angry he is, and I see that my story telling about a turnip will not work out. So in this sense, I think DMT sessions is a [manifestation of] creativity” (Eglė, from practice with children);

“The moment of creativity is how I respond to a happening situation now. It is very nice to have a plan, maybe even 3, 4, 5 or 6, but in the session, you react, and creativity is when I choose one of the directions or just suggest what is relevant for the group or an individual. So, it is one of the threads of creativity” (Sofija);

“Creativity takes part when I create something [a technique], and I bring it for a client, like, ‘oh, it suits you!’ <...> I rarely come, and I know what we will be doing. It is very creative, how I understand it, therapeutic process. From A to Z, it is a session of creativity from both my side and the clients’ perspective” (Jurgita).

Chaiklin and Schmais (1993) describe the acute observations and receptivity of Marian Chace, one of the founders of DMT. She usually picked up on affective and interactive cues from her clients to determine how to start, always beginning with the clients themselves. She mirrored her group members’ emotional states and communications to understand, offer acceptance, and begin a process of cohesion with the rest of the group. After creating a sense of safety and community, the group or session could progress into creative exploration (Purcell, 2021). One obvious example of receptivity and how group sessions were adjusted creatively in the group dynamics in work with children is provided by Sofija. The whole structure of the sessions was adopted to the emerged theme, orienting the therapeutic process towards a creative expression of the emotion of anger, at the same time acknowledging effects on clients’ creativity:

“For this group, anger was the most relevant, and we paid enough attention to this topic. The starting point was to find our inner angry animal. We drew it on the sheets, on the board, and the kids liked it so much that they remembered it every time, and if someone joined in later, they also must have found that angry inner animal. Those angry animals, they lived their lives, we created what they feed on, how they defend themselves. It seemed it was very resourceful for the kids. Of course, we acted on those animals, and we experienced how those animals danced, both with and without music. It also served for children’s creativity. At the same time, speaking about this specific case, it’s also about emotions, how we can express them and how we can get some practical effect” (Sofija).

The informants notice that DMT, a process-oriented therapy, has a creative nature. Gintarė names creativity as one of the fundamental pillars in DMT, along with therapeutic relationships and body expression, dance and movement. Namely, creativity takes the fundamental role of the therapeutic process for the transformation while integrating the other DMT segments. The elements of uncertainty, not knowing what symbolic material will appear are considered as aspects of creativity:

“Creativity is an engine for transformation. The change can occur through creativity; it is like oxygen, like air in which everything happens. I have no other idea how without this essential element, therapy could take place. <...> Creativity is one of the essential pillars; there is a therapeutic relationship, movement, and creativity is like a glaze. It binds everything. Moreover, I am really, really driven by this very moment because creativity has no apparent structure, is still in uncertainty, and has that element of wonder, because you never know how and what will unfold in that space between the therapist and what a turn, towards which direction, and what symbols, what metaphors will be born, and so on. Creativity is absolutely like air in this profession (Gintarė).

In this way, DMT practitioners render creativity the fundamental role in the therapeutic process, a connecting character mediating between the dance, movement and therapeutic relationship. Other informants indicate a more specific role of creativity – it is being interpreted as a safe island for a retreat from an intensive deep process. Creativity may be used

to reduce tension or as a means to integrate the ongoing processes (Sofija). Other forms of creative arts are being applied for integration, such as drawing (Monika). According to Purcell (2021), transformation is the goal of the therapy and this is done through conscious integration of the movement experience and the discoveries made – through identification of symbols and their meaning in reality. In this way, the therapy allows one to realize the self through its creative expression fully, creativity expresses the self as a manifestation of one's unique thoughts and feelings.

### **3.2. Manifestation of creativity in interpersonal communication: game, spontaneity and imagination**

Informants acknowledge different ways creativity manifest itself in interpersonal dialogue according to different groups of clients. Children are considered the most creative group of clients (Jurgita, Eglė, Sofija), and the therapist's role is to follow them. In order to follow children, an element of creativity – spontaneity is considered an essential feature of therapeutic work with children, leading to the creative nature of the process. According to Eglė, creative therapists' reactions and spontaneity are essential to connect with children. The therapist shares a case from her practice illustrating how spontaneity and all surroundings in space are employed in the therapeutic process to encourage new patterns of body movement:

“The whole process of working with children is very spontaneous. Moreover, it is constant creativity to adjust to the child, to what I feel at the time and what need [of a child] I see. Well, that includes the environment, and there is suddenly something in space. <...> I worked with an older boy who didn't really want to dance; he would come and say he doesn't like to dance, dancing is a nonsense, but he didn't interpret that we're dancing. He would come straight to some activity, and he wanted to play football with me, some other kind of agile game, and once we went and there was the balloon on the floor, and I saw that balloon and suggested to play such a game, to bounce the balloon not with hands, but with any other parts of the body so that it does not fall to the ground. Well, it became a complete dance for that child with a balloon, and he discovered the movement that was so unexpected. Creativity was born in the process because neither I planned to carry anything there nor offer it somehow, and only while trying did the child discover it was exciting to move somehow, to find some exciting movements (Eglė).

The ability to reach a variety of movements is essential in therapeutic work in DMT, since in this way, the client can unlock unconscious material held at the nonverbal body level. The quality of openness as part of the creative process is necessary (Purcell, 2021). Through broadening one's movement repertoire, personal expansion occurs; individual changes as a result of embodying these new qualities or actions (Purcell, 2021).

Easily observed in therapy with children, the manifestation of the adult client's creativity in the therapeutic work, however, may take time and an effort (Jurgita). Age is not the only factor differentiating the emergence of a client's creativity. Whereas creativity is easily applied and used in the therapeutic process with neurotic clients, the role of creativity with psychotic diagnosis clients is different (Gintarė). The therapeutic purpose with the latter group is to bring a client into the presence of the body, to return to the present reality; thus, creativity in the traditional sense is not so clearly seen in the process. When working with clients with



no diagnosis but who have challenges with spontaneity and creativity, some therapists apply planned techniques of creativity to support the self-expression of a client:

“Still, creativity is about spontaneity. <...> But if I see it is not easy with spontaneity at this point, then we go to planned creativity. We define to some extent some rules how we work now. Even then, it is possible to express themselves in those rules. I would say yes, some people or groups need a little more effort to free themselves and creatively free themselves” (Sofija).

In her narrative, Sofija also uses the term trained creativity. She finds it helpful to name how creativity might be used to pursue individual purposes, make decisions or reduce tensions in our lives, and creatively express emotions.

Creativity in DMT practice is closely related to games and imagination. According to Jurgita, games and the ability to play are indicators of creativity. She defines creativity through the concept of a game. To emphasize the role of game in DMT, Jurgita remembers the idea that one of the signifiers a person is recovering from trauma is his/her ability to play again. One technique she uses in her practice allows a client to see the environment “with fresh eyes”, some clients call it “seeing the world with child’s eyes”. Furthermore, Jurgita relates the awakening of creativity in the therapeutic process with the therapeutic effect. Imagination and permitting yourself are considered indicators of the healing process. A shared example from her practice is on a client who allowed her to create bigger dreams, which was considered a sign of healing. That allows Jurgita to conclude that creativity is about permitting.

Gintarė, who also emphasizes the role of game and imagination in the DMT practice, acknowledges the therapist’s role while creating a safe space that is a necessary precondition for the manifestation of the client’s creativity. Various DMT techniques, practices, visualization, music, and other external tools with therapists’ skills also strengthen and encourage creativity. A few examples of how simple DMT techniques encourage creativity while activating imagination are shared:

“Let’s take the simplest element of warm-up, the first circle of meeting each other, during which we say the name and show the movement, we register with the movement, it is any gesture, any movement can open the space for further creativity. We can reflect on what it is like, how we feel when we see a particular movement, what it invites us to, we can enhance, weaken, expand, narrow it, change the quality of the movement, eventually turn on the imagination, imagine that we are trees or we travel on a certain surface” (Gintarė);

“For me, creativity is related to the imagination; I can imagine something... When children play, they put linen on their heads and they already are queens and kings, and suddenly it seems that the whole space is transforming and changing because they somehow embody creativity. It’s so-called a less creative group of clients (of course, conditionally) they do not have it, and it is different there, but even an elemental touch of something, we can also, to a certain extent, within certain limits, imagine that you are like clay which you can knead. Moreover, an invitation to show a particular movement encourages those sprouts of creativity you can see, and sometimes it surprises you” (Gintarė).

The practitioners highlight the specificity of manifestation of creativity in DMT compared with other forms of art therapy – it is embodied creativity (the term that Jurgita also mentioned). All informants were confident that DMT positively affects clients’ creativity, even if

clients' therapeutic purposes are often named differently. In Gintarė's narrative, it is named that DMT might serve as creating a seed, an impulse for clients' creativity, and an analogy between imagination and ability to play is being made.

Metaphors and symbols are another creative material in the therapeutic process. The metaphor is considered an important segment of DMT, "as it can hold meaning on several levels, revealing the client's deeper thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that were previously unconscious" (Purcell, 2021, p. 96). According to Gintarė, the metaphor that arises together with movement is a sufficient element for the therapeutic process. In other words, it allows the emergence of therapeutic results. The interlink between imagination and movement, the role of improvisation and the interpersonal connection between therapist and a client in the therapeutic space allows doubling or even tripling of creativity. Thus, the positive effects on the clients' creativity are mentioned again:

"For me, movement and imagination are very related... It has a lot to do with improvisation in which it seems the boundaries of possibilities disappear entirely. I can move without any rules, so that kind of free movement comes here again, and I can subdue the imagination too, to which there are no limits. It may be related to my improvisation with no restriction, and I can emphasize that it depends a lot on my inner security, the space I am in. Finally, the interpersonal connections appear, and then creativity is doubled, and when there are other people around me together, that space between me and the other has even more potential" (Gintarė).

A safe interpersonal connection is a necessary condition for creativity to manifest itself. The communication between a therapist and a client, interpersonal contact creates a safe space for creativity. Feelings of safety must be present to engage in improvisation and play. Because two different personalities meet, according to another informant, Monika, the possibility appears to emerge for the "third element" – creativity, in this safe therapeutic space. She acknowledges the role of creative tension and the importance of pausing for something to appear as a result of the creative tension in the therapeutic process.

## **Discussion**

Purcell (2021) delineated the processual stages in DMT, considering the therapy as a creative process. In this aspect, the research results correspond with this idea since the informants consider creativity as an inseparable part of the process, giving a strong emphasis on its role in interpersonal therapeutic communication. Likewise, the elements of game, improvisation, metaphor are acknowledged as bringing to the surface the unconscious material and allowing a client to have a distance from difficult situations and emotions. Creativity in DMT is characterized by spontaneity, imagination, receptiveness and the ability to creatively follow the process. Similarly, Purcell refers to the power of an intervention as a creative process. Most informants emphasize safe interpersonal connection as a critical determinant for creativity to emerge. This finding corresponds with the researchers that noted the connection between creativity and communication (Isaksen & Treffinger, 1985). The role of interpersonal connection in DMT and the effects of this contact towards increased creativity could be named as a finding that attracts attention. That also challenges new questions – what mechanisms foster

the increased creativity? Another avenue for further research could be the effects on the creativity of DMT for the clients. All informants strongly support the idea that DMT enhances the creativity of clients. However, quantitative studies are needed to support this effect.

## Conclusions

The paper addressed a rarely explored area on the subjective interpretations on the role of creativity in DMT from the perspective of therapists in Lithuania. The semi-structured interviews with therapists working with various groups of clients were conducted. The analysis is based on the inductive coding of the interviews. The classical definitions tend to agree on the elements of originality and effectiveness in creativity, but the interviewed practitioners broaden the concept, including the existential/spiritual dimension; they also widen the spectrum of the personality traits and emotions, including courage and joy. The practitioners endow a substantial role of creativity in the therapeutic process. The manifestation of therapists' creativity is seen through the ability to construct the structure and content of the individual and group sessions while leaving enough space for spontaneity, unexpectedness, and receptivity. When speaking about the manifestation of clients' creativity, some practitioners apply the term *trained creativity* to encourage spontaneity and expression of emotions. The term *embodied creativity* differentiates the role of creativity in DMT from other art therapies – it is experienced through the body, expressed through the movement or dance. Imagination and ability to play are considered indicators of creativity and signs of healing, metaphors and symbols – creative material in the therapeutic process, allowing to make a distance and grasping the subconscious. Interpersonal communication in DMT that occurs in a bit different way (compared with other forms of art therapies) with the help of movement is considered a space that strongly encourages creativity. Creativity is considered the third element that emerges between the therapist and a client. In sum, the role of creativity in DMT is subjectively evaluated as the foundation for the therapeutic process. Its connecting character mediating between the dance, movement and therapeutic relationship is noted. Also, more specific functions are delineated, such as allowing to make space for painful emotions.

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