

Rainbow after the Rain:

Healing creatively together through trauma focussed creative art and movement therapy for the rainbow community - ACC Group information for referrers

What is Dance Movement Therapy (DMT)?

Trauma survivors often describe a disconnection from, and lack of safety within their bodies. The goal of body centred therapies is to assist clients in connecting with and making peace with their bodies. Dance/Movement therapy is both a creative art therapy and a somatic psychotherapy. It attends to bodily sensations and works on the principle that the body and mind are inseparable and that body movements reflect emotional states. Traumatic memories are often stored away, inaccessible to language – in sensory, motoric and image-based forms. DMT which integrates somatic sensations and movement as the main language can: promote body awareness, empowerment and self-care as reclaim own body

Our therapists use an embodied approach. The model is as follows (Grey, 2018¹):



What is a Creative Arts Therapy trauma-informed practice

Creative Arts Therapy (CAT) is an umbrella term covering healthcare professions in several disciplines, such as art therapy (Ikigai, as proposed in this group), Dance/Movement Therapy (DMT) and Music Therapy. CAT is characterised by the clinical and evidence-informed use of the arts within a therapeutic relationship that relies on experiential and action-based interventions (De Witte et al., 2020). There is a growing research showing the effectiveness of CAT on promoting physiological, psychological and social outcomes (Koch et al., 2019; De Witte et al., 2020). Creative arts therapists work with kiritaki of all ages, with individuals, dyads, families, and groups across a variety of mental healthcare, medical, rehabilitation, educational, and community settings (Orkibi, 2020). This approach allows individuals to express feelings that may be difficult to articulate through traditional verbal communication.

Creative arts therapy employs several key elements that enhance the therapeutic process, such as symbolisation, creativity, metaphor, playfulness and imagery. Central to this approach is the use of arts as a participatory activity without the requirement for artistic quality.

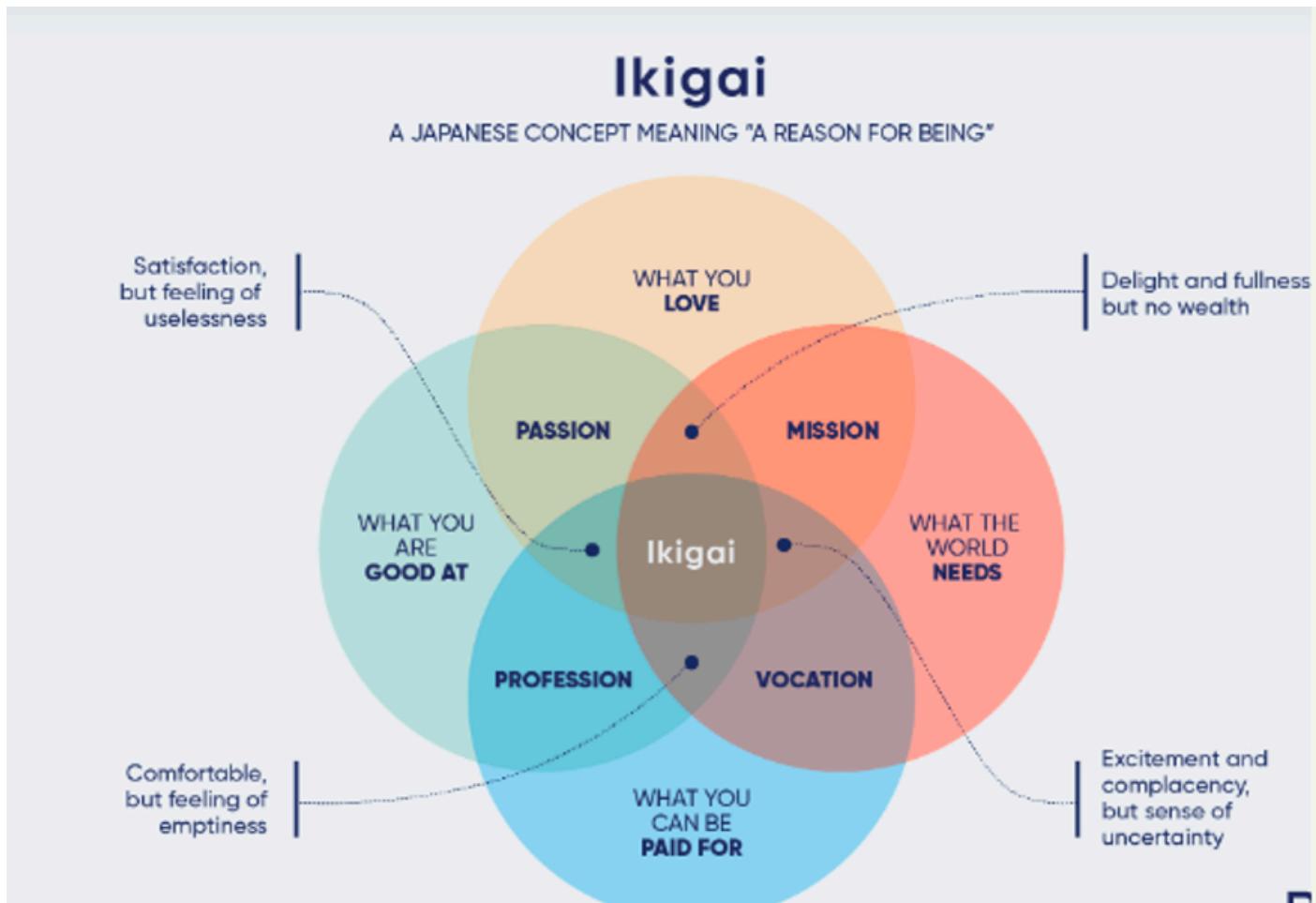
What is Ikigai?

Ikigai is a Japanese word that describes an ancient Japanese philosophy. Perry (2024) explained, "The Japanese concept of ikigai dates back to the Heian period, between 794 to 1185. The idea was further explored by Mieko Kamiya, a renowned

¹ Grey, A. 2018, August. Working with Survivors of Sexual Trauma Dance Therapy New Zealand. Presented at Amber Grey Self Care Workshop, Onehunga.

Japanese psychologist, in her 1966 book *Ikigai-ni-tsute* (About *Ikigai*). Additionally, Héctor, García and Francesc Miralles co-authored the book "Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life," which explores how *ikigai* impacts the everyday routines of Japanese people."

As seen in figure 1, Eatough (2021) explained, "Japanese *Ikigai* is a Japanese concept that means your 'reason for being.' 'Iki' in Japanese means 'life,' and 'gai' describes value or worth. *Ikigai* is not the purpose in life, *Ikigai* can be something that makes you feel happiness too. *Ikigai* can be motivation for a person who is in a challenging time."



Summary of rationale of using embodied therapies – DMT for trauma:

- Abuse and traumatic events are often experienced and remembered in the body
- Implicit memories are hard to be accessed via talking
- DMT works with direct body experience
- Helps to build resources in one's own body (safety, trust, emotion regulation)
- Abuse – often dissociate/disconnect from the body – help to reconnect with their own body, feel safer (in an unsafe environment), develop a healthy body/self-image
- Trauma – growing container (of the body) to hold, contain, process, and release (increase tolerance for challenging feelings from past abuse)
- DMT can be very fun, playful, helps to grow tolerance for positive healthy nervous system arousal e.g., excitement, play, calm, relax, creativity, and spontaneity
- Can help with interpersonal reconnection through non-verbal based relating in a shared and individually defined space
- Client-centered approach where therapist provides options, promotes clients making choices and follows client's lead and their own pacing in recovery. This supports empowerment, strength, sense of self and sense of safety
- Increase sense of control through being able to regulate and control one's own body, as well as respecting each other's space and needs.

What are the aims and objectives of the DMT/Art Therapy group?

Our group will focus on kiritaki who have the following goals:

- Recovering from PTSD and beginning Post Traumatic Growth, Post Traumatic Identity
- Creative Arts Therapy, including Japanese Art Therapy (Ikigai) and Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) to enhance self-regulation, self-identification and self-esteem
- New wisdom, new principles, new behaviours, positive core beliefs (through creative arts therapy)
- Recovery from Abuse – often dissociate/disconnects from the body – helps to reconnect with your own body, feel safe and develop a healthy body image
- Contain Trauma – growing a personal trauma container to hold, contain, process, and release trauma (increase tolerance for challenging feelings from past abuse)
- Make social connections
- Moving from victim to survivor - Using our negative experiences to find positive experiences

Criteria for group

Inclusion:

- Individuals 18 and over who identify as being a part of the Rainbow community
- All genders and orientation welcome
- Open to group embodied approach for resourcing
- Readiness for group work - willing and able to engage in group discussion, comprehend and respect group agreements
- Able and willing to commit to attend full programme
- Able to practice some basic self-regulation skills

Exclusion

- Inability to tolerate group setting
- Unable to commit to all sessions
- Active suicidal ideation, plans or other high risk factors (e.g. unable to identify some triggers)
- Active aggressive behaviours towards others/self
- Children/Youth under the age of 16 years



The therapists: Ai Kihara (NZ Assoc. of Counsellors) and Sergio Dantas de Souza (DTAA) are experienced counselors/DMT therapists who specialise in utilising trauma informed counselling modalities, creative art and dance movement therapy who work extensively in the Rainbow community. Ai Kihara has a Master of Counselling, Post-graduate Diploma in Trauma Response, a Bachelor of Sociology, a Diploma of Counselling. Sergio Dantas de Souza is a registered Dance Movement Therapist with a Certificate in Psychology and Counselling.



Our programme

Content overview:

1. Establish- sense of safety, individual and group goals, orientate safely to accessible, comfortable and structured/expressive movement.
2. Body awareness (interoception - developing awareness of physiological state of the body, including emotional and mood state) mindfulness in movement, awareness and release of tension, befriending the body exercises.

3. Attention to window of tolerance (hypo and hyper arousal) – educating model of brain/ polyvagal system, exploring and facilitating self-regulation tools e.g. grounding, breathing techniques, rhythms, education, play
4. Social connection and enhancing trusting relationships e.g. relating through creative explorations, props, sound, movement, rhythms, games, and reflective verbal sharing.

All sessions have a similar structure:

- Warm up – verbal check in and movement warm up
An introduction/pathway into the therapy itself (to get clients comfortable with moving in their own bodies; asking questions throughout that stimulates and encourages own creative movements; allows therapists to assess the movement qualities that are working with during session; establish rapport and trust)
- Release - guided physically modulate energy e.g. notice and release muscle tension; explore movements among the group, and potentially some level of empathy and interaction between group members.
- Explore themes – use of techniques as above, work with movement metaphors, invite images, symbolic movement, sound, stories, and movement associations. Explore feelings, sensations, and thoughts that surfaced through the direct experience of moving. Include solo, pair, and whole group format as appropriate. Move and explore both verbally and non-verbally, use of art and writing to explore movement meaning.
- Centering and Closure – art and/or verbal processing of the session. Prepare clients to integrate and close the process, ready to return to their daily life. May offer handouts and homeplay (to encourage extension of new skills into daily life).

Our outcome measures

We use a number of measures to evaluate the groups effectiveness:

- At session 2 and 6 we use the Session Rating Scale (*Scott, et al. 2002. Institute for the Study of Therapeutic Change*) to gauge that the programme is meeting the client's needs.
- A pre and post self-group evaluation form is used (this is 6 questions relating to the goals of the group and measured using a likert scale).
- The Personal Wellbeing Index (pre and post group).

Clients are encouraged to discuss their own progress and reflections with their ACC primary provider. In addition, Sergio and Ai will send an email at the conclusion of the group to outline the clients progress and summarise these measures.

What to do next

To get ACC funding for your client to attend the group you need to put the group details onto your clients Wellbeing Plan. Alternatively, (and sometimes to speed the process up), email the clients Recovery Partner the details and a justification of the addition of the group and this can be added directly.

Programme details

Housekeeping

The group is limited to 14 attendees. It runs over 8 weeks. The group will be closed for new participants after the 2nd session.

The next programme will be held:

Date and Time: Mondays 12.30 - 1.30, Auckland Central (8 sessions)

Venue: Central Auckland

PO Details: please contact acc@dancetherapy.co.nz for PO details

On enquiry, or once we receive the purchase order we will send you a Group Screening form to fill out with your client at the next session. The main thing is to let us know of any risks/concerns, and any other matters we need to be aware and mindful of. We

will also send a 'welcome' email to the client (which covers basic housekeeping and the information within the client handout). At this time, we ask for them to confirm attendance. Prior to the group Ai or Sergio will be in touch with your client to organise a Triage session to ensure the group is appropriate for them and to answer any questions they may have before the group.