

Current approaches in drama therapy

JOHNSON, D. R., EMUNAH, R. (2009). *Current Approaches in Drama Therapy*. 2nd ed. Springfield, Illinois, U.S.A. ISBN 978-0-398-07847-8 (hard), ISBN 978-0-398-07847-5 (paper).

(book review)

Reviewed by Jiaojiao Wu

This second edition of *Current Approaches in Drama Therapy* was published in 2009, though not all approaches are included in this book, we are aware of the continued growth of profession and expanding the body of knowledge in the field of drama therapy. As the authors said, the rapid transformation of our local and global cultural environments will continue to challenge our creativity and flexibility in adapting drama therapy methods to the changing needs of clients and society. Each approach in this book is at the same time a unique set of ideas and methods, and a variation of the fundamental processes that underlie drama and psychotherapy. It will be through an active dialogue among these perspectives that our profession will continue to mature.

The approaches were selected on the basis of the fact that they have been taught and utilized at universities and institutes, presented at national conferences, and published in professional journals. Writing of each chapter including theoretical and conceptual premises, as well as case examples is authorized by the founder or a key proponent of that approach.

A total of three sections are included in this book. Section I provides a context for the state of the field of drama therapy. The first chapter describes the history and development of the field in North America. The second chapter discusses stages in professional development and theory building. A third chapter is about the current state of the field, which detailedly examines advances in clinical practice, especially over the past decade, emerging areas of interest, and challenges for the future. To articulate the similarities and differences among various methods, in section II, 14 specific current approaches to drama therapy, including the following: the integrative five phase model of drama therapy; role theory and the role method; developmental transformations toward the body as presence; comparing among ritual, theatre and therapy; drama therapy in collective trauma and intercultural conflict resolution;

narrative approach; omega transpersonal approach; psychoanalytic approach; the developmental themes approach; the enact method of employing drama therapy in schools; the stop-gap approach; John Bergman's creating therapeutic communities in prisons; rehearsals for growth, a therapeutic improvisational activities, particularly the use of interactive theatrical games; and performance in drama therapy, which offers many opportunities for personal growth. Section III describes related approaches, namely, the psychodrama, sociodrama, playback theater and theater of the oppressed, each of which has had significant influence on drama therapy practice despite their founders not identifying as drama therapists. Ultimately, index of drama therapy concepts and subject index are listed in the end of the book.

The book offers experienced practitioners and board certified trainers of drama therapy, as well as students and newcomers to the field, an articulation of theoretical and clinical approaches to drama therapy practice. This is therefore recommended as a basic text to construct the body of knowledge in the field of drama therapy. Simultaneously, we cannot ignore that, for the past few years, drama therapists enlarge the clients group in different kinds of settings, expand approaches to drama therapy, and focus more on assessment in the field.

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