

= Psychodrama =

Psychodrama is an action method , often used as a psychotherapy , in which clients use spontaneous dramatization , role playing and dramatic self @-@ presentation to investigate and gain insight into their lives . Developed by Jacob L. Moreno , M.D. (1889 ? 1974) psychodrama includes elements of theater , often conducted on a stage , or a space that serves as a stage area , where props can be used . A psychodrama therapy group , under the direction of a licensed psychodramatist , reenacts real @-@ life , past situations (or inner mental processes) , acting them out in present time . Participants then have the opportunity to evaluate their behavior , reflect on how the past incident is getting played out in the present and more deeply understand particular situations in their lives . Psychodrama offers a creative way for an individual or group to explore and solve personal problems . It may be used in a variety of clinical and community @-@ based settings , and is most often utilized in a group setting , in which the members of the group serve as therapeutic agents for one another in the enacted drama . Psychodrama is not , however , a form of group therapy , and is instead an individual psychotherapy that is executed from within a group . There are " side @-@ benefits " that the other group members may experience , as they make relevant connections and insights to their own lives from the psychodrama of another . A psychodrama is best conducted and produced by a person trained in the method , called a psychodrama director .

In a session of psychodrama , one client of the group becomes the protagonist , and focuses on a particular , personal , emotionally problematic situation to enact on stage . A variety of scenes may be enacted , depicting , for example , memories of specific happenings in the client 's past , unfinished situations , inner dramas , fantasies , dreams , preparations for future risk @-@ taking situations , or unrehearsed expressions of mental states in the here and now . These scenes either approximate real @-@ life situations or are externalizations of inner mental processes . Other members of the group may become auxiliaries , and support the protagonist by playing other significant roles in the scene or may step in , as a " double " who plays the role of the protagonist .

A core tenet of psychodrama is Moreno 's theory of " spontaneity @-@ creativity " . Moreno believed that the best way for an individual to respond creatively to a situation is through spontaneity , that is , through a readiness to improvise and respond in the moment . By encouraging an individual to address a problem in a creative way , reacting spontaneously and based on impulse , they may begin to discover new solutions to problems in their lives and learn new roles they can inhabit within it . Moreno 's focus on spontaneous action within the psychodrama was developed in his Theatre of Spontaneity , which he directed in Vienna in the early 1920s . Disenchanted with the stagnancy he observed in conventional , scripted theatre , he found himself interested in the spontaneity required in improvisational work . He founded an improvisational troupe in the 1920s . This work in the theatre impacted the development of his psychodramatic theory .

= = Methods = =

In psychodrama , participants explore internal conflicts by acting out their emotions and interpersonal interactions on stage . A psychodrama session (typically 90 minutes to 2 hours) focuses principally on a single participant , known as the protagonist . Protagonists examine their relationships by interacting with the other actors and the leader , known as the director . This is done using specific techniques , including mirroring , doubling , soliloquy , and role reversal . The session is often broken up into three phases - the warm @-@ up , the action , and the post @-@ discussion .

During a typical psychodrama session , a number of clients gather together . One of these clients is chosen by the group as the protagonist , and the director calls on the other clients to assist the protagonist 's " performance , " either by portraying other characters , or by utilizing mirroring , doubling , or role reversal . The clients act out a number of scenes in order to allow the protagonist to work through certain scenarios . This is obviously beneficial for the protagonist , but also is helpful to the other group members , allowing them to assume the role of another person and apply that

experience to their own life . The focus during the session is on the acting out of different scenarios , rather than simply talking through them . All of the different elements of the session (stage , props , lighting , etc .) are used to heighten the reality of the scene .

The three sections of a typical session are the warm @-@ up , the action , and the sharing . During the warm @-@ up , the actors are encouraged to enter into a state of mind where they can be present in and aware of the current moment and are free to be creative . This is done through the use of different ice @-@ breaker games and activities . Next , the action section of the psychodrama session is the time in which the actual scenes themselves take place . Finally , in the post @-@ discussion , the different actors are able to comment on the action , coming from their personal point of view , not as a critique , sharing their empathy and experiences with the protagonist of the scene .

The following are core psychodramatic techniques :

Mirroring : The protagonist is first asked to act out an experience . After this , the client steps out of the scene and watch as another actor steps into their role and portrays them in the scene .

Doubling : The job of the ? double ? is to make conscious any thoughts or feelings that another person is unable to express whether it is because of shyness , guilt , inhibition , politeness , fear , anger , etc ? . In many cases the person is unaware of these thoughts or at least is unable to form the words to express how they are feeling . Therefore the ? Double ? attempts to make conscious and give form to the unconscious and / or under expressed material . The person being doubled has the full right to disown any of the ? Double ? s ? statements and to correct them as necessary . In this way , doubling itself can never be wrong .

Role playing : The client portrays a person or object that is problematic to him or her .

Soliloquy : The client speaks his or her thoughts aloud in order to build self @-@ knowledge .

Role reversal : The client is asked to portray another person while a second actor portrays the client in the particular scene . This not only prompts the client to think as the other person , but also has some of the benefits of mirroring , as the client sees him- or herself as portrayed by the second actor .

= = Psychological applications = =

Psychodrama can be used in both non @-@ clinical and clinical arenas . In the non @-@ clinical field , psychodrama is used in business , education , and professional training . In the clinical field , psychodrama may be used to alleviate the effects of emotional trauma and PTSD . One specific application in clinical situations is for people suffering from dysfunctional attachments . For this reason , it is often utilized in the treatment of children who have suffered emotional trauma and abuse . Using role @-@ play and story telling , children may be able to express themselves emotionally and reveal truths about their experience they are not able to openly discuss with their therapist , and rehearse new ways of behavior . Moreno 's theory of child development offers further insight into psychodrama and children . Moreno suggested that child development is divided into three stages : finding personal identity , recognizing oneself [the mirror stage) , and recognizing the other person (the role @-@ reversal stage) . Mirroring , role @-@ playing and other psychodramatic techniques are based on these stages . Moreno believed that psychodrama could be used to help individuals continue their emotional development through the use of these techniques .

= = Related concepts = =

Moreno 's term sociometry is often used in relation to psychodrama . By definition , sociometry is the study of social relations between individuals ? interpersonal relationships . It is , more broadly , a set of ideas and practices that are focused on promoting spontaneity in human relations . Classically , sociometry involves techniques for identifying , organizing , and giving feedback on specific interpersonal preferences an individual has . For example , in a psychodrama session , allowing the group to decide whom the protagonist shall be employs sociometry .

Moreno is also credited for founding sociodrama . Though sociodrama , like psychodrama , utilizes the theatrical form as means of therapy , the terms are not synonymous . While psychodrama focuses on one patient within the group unit , Sociodrama addresses the group as a whole . The goal is to explore social events , collective ideologies , and community patterns within a group in order to bring about positive change or transformation within the group dynamic . Moreno also believed that sociodrama could be used as a form of micro @-@ sociology ? that by examining the dynamic of a small group of individuals , patterns could be discovered that manifest themselves within the society as a whole , such as in Alcoholics Anonymous . Sociodrama can be divided into three main categories : crisis sociodrama , which deals with group responses after a catastrophic event , political sociodrama , which attempts to address stratification and inequality issues within a society , and diversity sociodrama , which considers conflicts based on prejudice , racism or stigmatization .

= = History = =

Dr. J. L. Moreno (1889 ? 1974) is the founder of psychodrama and sociometry , and one of the forerunners of the group psychotherapy movement . Around 1910 , he developed the Theater of Spontaneity , which is based on the acting out of improvisational impulses . The focus of this exercise was not originally on the therapeutic effects of psychodrama ; these were seen by Moreno to simply be positive side @-@ effects .

A poem by Moreno reveals ideas central to the practice of psychodrama , and describes the purpose of mirroring :

" A meeting of two : eye to eye , face to face .
And when you are near I will tear your eyes out
and place them instead of mine ,
and you will tear my eyes out
and will place them instead of yours ,
then I will look at me with mine . "

In 1912 , Moreno attended one of Sigmund Freud 's lectures . In his autobiography , he recalled the experience : " As the students filed out , he singled me out from the crowd and asked me what I was doing . I responded , ' Well , Dr. Freud , I start where you leave off . You meet people in the artificial setting of your office . I meet them on the street and in their homes , in their natural surroundings . You analyze their dreams . I give them the courage to dream again . You analyze and tear them apart . I let them act out their conflicting roles and help them to put the parts back together again . ' "

While a student at the University of Vienna in 1917 , Moreno gathered a group of prostitutes as a way of discussing the social stigma and other problems they faced , starting what might be called the first " support group " . From experiences like that , and as inspired by psychoanalysts such as Wilhelm Reich and Freud , Moreno began to develop psychodrama . After moving to the United States in 1925 , Moreno introduced his work with psychodrama to American psychologists . He began this work with children , and then eventually moved on to large group psychodrama sessions that he held at Impromptu Group Theatre at Carnegie Hall . These sessions established Moreno 's name , not only in psychological circles , but also among non @-@ psychologists . Moreno continued to teach his method of psychodrama , leading sessions until his death in 1974 .

Another important practitioner in the field of psychodrama is Carl Hollander . Hollander was the 37th director certified by Moreno in psychodrama . He is known primarily for his creation of the Hollander Psychodrama Curve , which may be utilized as a way to understand how a psychodrama session is structured . Hollander uses the image of a curve to explain the three parts of a psychodrama session : the warm @-@ up , the activity , and the integration . The warm @-@ up exists to put patients into a place of spontaneity and creativity in order to be open in the act of psychodrama . The " activity " is the actual enactment of the psychodrama process . Finally , the " curve " moves to integration . It serves as closure and discussion of the session , and considers how the session can be brought into real life ? a sort of debriefing .

Although psychodrama is not widely practiced , the work done by practitioners of psychodrama has opened the doors to research possibilities for other psychological concepts such as group therapy and expansion of the work of Sigmund Freud . The growing field of drama therapy utilizes psychodrama as one of its main elements . The methods of psychodrama are also used by group therapy organizations and also find a place in other types of therapy , such as post @-@ divorce counseling for children .

= = = Organizations = = =

American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama

Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association

British Psychodrama Association

International Association for Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes