

The Israeli Association of Creative and Expressive Therapies

Dance/movement Therapy

Judith Mendelsohn



Judith with friend and former neighbour, Shula Monin, after a session at a home for the elderly in Jerusalem

Judith worked as a dance therapist in psychiatric and special education institutions in Israel for thirty years. During the last twelve years of her career she worked with medically ill children at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem. In 2002 she retired as a government paid dance therapist and continues to lead workshops. Judith has been a member of the Israeli Association of Creative and Expressive Therapies since 1971 and of the American Dance Therapy Association since 1972. Her article describing her work with medically ill patients in Israel was published in 1999 in the American Journal of Dance Therapy.*

(She can be reached at: judimend@yahoo.com)

I.C.E.T., the Israeli Association of Creative and Expressive Therapists (**YAHAT) was founded in 1968 by three pioneer therapists and registered in 1971 as a non-profit organization with a membership of ten music, art and dance therapists. Today the association numbers over 1500 active members of whom 225 are dance/movement therapists. In addition to the original arts disciplines, ICET now includes drama therapy, psychodrama, and bibliotherapy. As the association grew there was a need to create separate branches for each area of specialization, thereby enabling therapists to deepen their knowledge and reinforce their professional identity while maintaining contact with colleagues in other expressive therapies through meetings,

conferences, discussions, courses, workshops, and informal get-togethers.

ICET is a non-profit and non-political association which believes in the peaceful resolution of problems, "in an ethical attitude toward each human being, and in the positive influence of the therapeutic arts on life and on well being". (Sekeles, C. 2004)

ICET promotes professional criteria and provides continuing education.

ICET helps immigrants integrate into Israeli society.

ICET upholds standards for training programs.

ICET officially represents and negotiates for its members.

Dance/movement Therapy programs and credentials:

As of now there are four dance/movement training programs in Israel. All of them are approved by ICET. They are post bachelor programs and grant a diploma upon completion, except for Lesley which awards a Master's degree. The programs are offered by Haifa University, Lesley University, Teachers College Seminar Hakibbutzim, and David Yellin Teachers College. Another college, Levinsky, teaches dance/movement therapy courses in its Music Therapy program. While all programs share similar theoretical material, some specialize in preparing students to work in the school system while others emphasize a clinical approach.

The organization has four membership categories based on professional training, work experience, and clinical supervision. They are Student Member, Professional Member, Registered Member, and Supervisor. Students who complete a program can join the organization at the level of Professional Member. ICET provides guidelines and regulations for therapists in each category.

Since 1981 the Association has been officially recognized by the Ministry of Health and members are obliged to follow rules and the code of ethics set by the Association. The government is in the process of passing a new law that will provide revised guidelines for all of the Expressive and Creative

Therapy programs with the aim of raising them to the Master's level in accordance with the Council for Higher Education. Representatives of ICET are involved in negotiations concerning these changes and we are hopeful that the government will continue to specify these guidelines for all of the arts therapies. This will result in an even higher standard of education for therapists as well as an improvement in the professional status of the field.

The Professional Community

Therapists work in a wide variety of settings. They are employed at psychiatric and general hospitals, neurological rehabilitation centers, educational institutions, geriatric and psycho-geriatric facilities, hospices, child development centers, group and family therapy centers, and crisis and psycho-trauma intervention centers. Dance/movement therapists also work privately with people suffering from emotional, physical, cognitive and social limitations, and with people who would simply like to improve their quality of life.

The profession continues to grow, encompassing therapists from the diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds of Israel's heterogeneous population and bringing services to more people. This tendency is reflected in the increasing number of Arab Israeli and ultra-orthodox Jewish Israeli therapists.

The professional community in Israel is lively and active. People like to come together, exchange ideas, engage in the arts together, and initiate new projects. The close proximity of many therapists in a small country enhances therapists' creativity and innovation and often leads to new approaches. Many therapists in Israel work in co-therapy teams with therapists in complementary disciplines. Centers for expressive and creative arts have emerged in many places around the country. The diversity of backgrounds and approaches, among therapists themselves, offers an opportunity to find common ground and confront different views through the arts. The inherently inclusive philosophy of the association, along with its high professional standards, is indeed a bright spot in the intense life of Israel today.

Publications:

Therapy through the Arts, currently edited by Dr.



Chava Sekeles, is a professional journal published by ICET. The journal publishes articles in Hebrew with English abstracts ICET also issues a newsletter three times a year.

Website:

Detailed information about ICET can be found at: www.yahat.org (It will appear in Hebrew. Click the word "English" which appears on the left hand side.)

Western Wall – formerly 'Wailing Wall' - Jerusalem
(Photograph – kind permission of Romi Grossberg)

Acknowledgements:

The material for this report was compiled from the following sources:

Barkai Y, Lotan, N., and Shaked, Y, (2005) *Dance Movement Therapy Education in Israel*. Unpublished presentation for the ADTA 11th International panel 2005, Dance Therapy Education Around the World.

Sekeles, Chava (2004) *Music Therapy in Israel. Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy*. http://www.voices.no/country/monthisrael_November2004.html (as of February 20, 2006).

Yahat (ICET) website: www.yahat.org

***Mendelsohn, J. (1999).** Dance/movement therapy with hospitalized children. *American Journal of Dance Therapy*, 21, 65-81.

****Yahat signifies ICET in Hebrew.**