

## KIMBERLY RYAN: FEBRUARY DMT SNAPSHOT



*This is a short interview conducted in February 2016 with Kimberly, through a project called DMT Snapshots in which short interviews were conducted by Ezme Webb and Tess Hens to be posted on the DTAA Facebook Group to support networking and sharing of experiences between Australasian DMTs. It provides some insight into Kimberly's DMT work and experiences....*

Having recently relocated from the UK, Kimberly's training (Goldsmiths University, London) and experience provides a unique perspective for the Australasia Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) community.

### CLIENT GROUPS

Building upon her UK experience in mental health, prison settings and with trauma-impacted children, Kimberly currently works in Campbelltown with women and children affected by domestic violence. She shares that her therapeutic approach includes psychoeducation about the physiological and neurological effects of living in violence, as well as the effects of domestic violence on the attachment relationship between mother and child.

*"The work also supports processing trauma and works to support the repair of the attachment relationship between mother and child, as well as sibling reparation where maladaptive dynamics have been fostered. I believe, as many DMPs and trauma therapists do, that it is paramount to work with the body when the body has been the site of the trauma experienced."*

While Kimberly's current role was initially advertised as seeking an Arts Therapist, she has successfully incorporated 'body based' strategies in partnership with her centre and team to support families escaping violent circumstances.

### THE CHALLENGES OF NETWORKING IN AUSTRALASIA

When discussing some of the challenges she has faces in her work, Kimberly focusses on the challenge of moving countries and finding supportive professional networks in Australasia. Contributing factors she cites include the geographical size of Australasia, as well as arts therapies having a smaller profile here (despite growing bodies of research in the field) in contrast with Europe.

*"Since moving, it has been a challenge to connect with other DMPs who are working in NSW. I became interested in this project in the hopes that this would be a way to see what was happening across the country. When working in the UK, I found that the network was so important, and I have struggled to find that so far....I am interested in how a project such as yours can aid in creating a wider awareness of the field and the varied settings that it can be beneficial within."*

### **DMT NETWORKING IN THE UK...**

We were particularly interested to understand what professional DMP networking looked like in the UK. Kimberly outlined the various cross modal training and professional development workshops available, alongside notifications of job opportunities, and calls for research papers and case material to connect those working in similar fields. Kimberly describes a heavy reliance on social media to keep the Dance Therapy community connected. The UK association, ADMPTUK also plays “a huge role in ensuring the community has a heart, a base,” she says. “Furthermore, the European Association is linked to the UK Association so updates from across Europe are shared with the UK community too.”

### **FINDING JOY AND SUCCESS IN DMT WORK...**

Kimberly describes a job that fulfils her and stimulates her:

*‘I get to dance, move and use my body every day in a way that I see supports others to connect and reconnect. Seeing families and children explore and develop is a true privilege and I love seeing children and families discover and rediscover themselves. I also appreciate being able to talk with others about the benefits and necessity of supporting body based therapeutic interventions with those who have experienced frequently extensive and prolonged trauma.’*

### **FUTURE MOVES...**

Kimberly shares her future goals around developing her practice and theory-based focus on trauma and attachment. She discusses several influences on her work including the research and work of Bonnie Meekums, David Harris, Amber Gray, Stephen Porges and Annette Schwalbe. Her attention rests on these practitioners not only for their success in using DMP and body based work to support trauma impacted people but also for their robust and evidence based approach to research in order to contribute to a more resilient DMT profession. Kimberly also hopes to gain LMA and KMP accreditations, so as to teach in the future. She also hopes to “write about some of my experiences to support raising the profile of DMP and arts therapies as a meaningful and full intervention within health.”

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Kimberly’s descriptions of her work and influences were detailed and rich, we have only provided a brief ‘snapshot’ of her professional life here. She is actively using DMP in health and community settings and has a keen interest in writing and research in the field. As she stated herself she is eager to connect with Australasian DMTs and to learn about our profession here so please do comment, question and connect with Kimberly!