



Dance Movement Therapy
Association of Australasia
Incorporated

Official Statement

06/12/2024

The DTAA asks the Government that all creative arts therapies remain as a choice under the Therapy Supports category to ensure participants can choose creative modalities to support their development, wellbeing and quality of life.

The proposed changes to the NDIS Therapy Supports category announced on 26 November 2024 have shocked current NDIS participants, their families, and relevant professionals working in the creative arts therapies industry, in terms of the suddenness of the announcement, the lack of consultation and the absence of consideration for the welfare of participants.

NDIS participants who are clients of Australian Dance Movement Therapists registered with the Dance Movement Therapy Association of Australasia, Incorporated (DTAA), are among those affected. These are people who live with physical, developmental, psychosocial, emotional and relational disabilities and are unable to engage with systematic, structured and cognitive-focused therapies.

The NDIS' core principle of participant choice and control should be upheld by the system. Dance Movement Therapy is evidence-based and addresses various domains including functional capacity (language and communication, self-awareness, mobility and movement, psychosocial functioning, and interpersonal interactions) and emotional wellbeing. Dance Movement Therapy supports people of all ages to work with and integrate both body and mind.

DTAA-registered dance movement therapists are highly trained, uphold professional standards and meet annual registration requirements that include clinical supervision and continuing professional development.

To help you understand the impact of our work, we have included below a range of testimonials from participants who have been supported through dance movement therapy across Australia.

The wellbeing of our participants is our priority. We ask the Government to reverse their decision and to retain creative arts therapies as a choice under the Therapy Supports category, in order to serve the best interests of the most vulnerable NDIS participants.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'R. K. Price'.

Robyn Price
President of DTAA

The Dance Movement Therapy Association of Australasia (DTAA) Inc. has collected the following statements from NDIS participants who have been accessing or utilised dance movement therapy. These statements were expressed by the NDIS participants or their caregivers, or other professionals who engage with them. The statements were collected by the DTAA registered dance movement therapists across the states from June to August 2024. We informed the aims of collecting statements and gained the consent from each participant / concerned persons. They consented to share their statements with the DTAA and that the DTAA submits the collection of those statements to the NDIS and NDIA to support our application of a recognition of dance movement therapy as therapy support.

Acronym

DMT – Dance Movement Therapy

DTAA – The Dance Movement Therapy Association of Australasia, Inc

New South Wales

Dance therapy relieves my stress and makes my body relaxed and more flexible. It provides me with a state of calming in a fun way.

(Participant, 20s, male)

Dance Movement Therapy has been crucial for me in learning to cope with my disabilities and my life. Each session gives me profound hope to keep going and not give up. Dance Movement Therapy has been fundamental in connecting with my body, breath, emotions and life again after being severely disconnected from decades of chronic pain/mental health/trauma. This therapy is improving my ability to function and the quality of my life.

(Participant, 40s, female)

I'm in my mid 30s and I didn't know there's a way to release stored emotions through dance. I really needed the positivity and through dance therapy, I'm so grateful that I get to express myself through dance.

(Participant, 30s, female)

We have been so happy to see such a positive change in our son since commencing DMT. He is so much more engaged and focussed than he has been with other therapies such as OT and child psychology. DMT has been less demanding, and our son has been able to open up and grow without the pressure of it being so task focussed. He has been able to learn how to regulate his emotions much better as well as improved interactions with others. He has also been learning how to express his thoughts and emotions in a much more productive way. I believe this is due to the nature of DMT where my son can still feel in control as the session is relationship based and tailored to his needs and development. He can be creative and use movement while developing important skills that have flowed onto all areas of his life. His teachers at school have even noticed the benefits of our son's improved focus and willingness to attempt new tasks as well as positive interactions with peers. He is also very happy to attend the



DMT sessions which is a big improvement from the battles we had trying to get him to OT and psychology. We could not be more grateful that DMT has been an option for our son.

(Participant's Parent)

Victoria

This participant, who previously struggled to engage in therapy, has been consistently working with the (DMT) therapist for two years now and recently requesting an extra weekly session! DMT sessions have been tailored according to the individual needs including the cultural and linguistic diversities. Dance Therapy is the highlight of the week for many participants.

Not only do these sessions promote physical health and wellbeing for each participant but is evident that A safe space for psychological and emotional expression has been provided by the therapist where participants are able to confide any challenges and positive aspects with her.

(Participant's Care Manger, female, 30s)

DMT is a valued form of therapy for our participants at a hospital. They have been able to utilise this therapy to not only promote physical and mental health and wellbeing, but also connect with their culture and express this through music and dance in a safe and supportive environment alongside the therapist.

(Participant's Care Team Leader, female, 30s)

South Australia

Dance Movement Therapy has made a great impact on my daughter's ability to move through her emotions physically. She has found a freedom in her expression, which releases the emotion in the moment rather than supress it. Therapy has given her permission to connect to her body without fear or judgement.

(Participant's Parent, female)

We have noticed it (Dance Movement Therapy) has given him confidence with movement to express his emotions and feelings.

(Participant's Parent, male)

A lot of time, at school, or in society, I cannot be myself. Dance therapy provides me with a safe space in which I can go and be myself and I can express myself and my feelings. Big body movements help me get out all the jiggles and helps release some of my big emotions. Dance Therapy helps me connect my emotions with my body and helps me to regulate.

(Participant, female, 15)

Queensland

Dance Movement Therapy helped me to experience the joy of moving and understand the strength in my body and the choices I have in the ways I move. This helped me to manage my emotions.

(Participant, female, 17)

I have been having trouble at school and don't have many friends, so I sit alone at lunch time. I love to dance so Mum brought me to see a dance movement therapist and we do lots of dancing to the music I love, and then we talk about my dance. It helps me to feel like I have something good in my life and somehow I am having more fun at school and fighting with my brother less.

(Participant, female, 12)

My Mum took me to Dance Movement Therapy and we did lots of dance and we even made a cubby where I could do anything I wanted. I could jump and be big and also be quiet and it helped me to be quiet. I find it hard to be still and quiet but when I dance, I can be free and don't have to try to get my body to do other things. I can sit still at school easier now.

(Participant, male, 8)

I feel my body moving in ways I haven't known. I feel more present than before, like I'm really here dancing here now. I feel like a new man. I feel my body getting more acquainted with my brain. They feel more in sync than they usually do.

(Participant, male, 40s)

My body always says 'How are you? It's been a while since you visited and I'm really missing the feeling of being a part of your life and not just being driven like a car. It's so hard to be treated like a vessel that isn't even capable of thought. Why do you desert me and leave me berefted of my mind and soul?'

I feel so delighted when I dance, my body goes into a dream state and delights in colour and music and movement. It's so delicious and I want more, more and more. It's amazing that it's take so long to dance when it's so natural and easy when I don't have to have anyone telling me what to do. So, I'm happy, happy and crazy with joy when I finally manage to do my own dance moves! Yeah, for me!

(Participant, male, 40s)

Dance movement therapy is continuing to help Lewis to understand the positioning of his body in the space. Lewis' movement therapy allows him to express himself and regulate his emotions by moving, play and social connections.

(Participant's Primary Caregiver, 9)

I feel good when I am at dance movement therapy session.

(Participant, 20s)



I like DMT as it makes me feel happy and better inside my head, my heart and my body. It's a fun way to exercise and it makes me feel good about myself so I can go out without feeling scared and make new friends.

(Participant, 20s)

Dance therapy has been invaluable to my daughter's recovery from DSRD (a form of Autoimmune Encephalitis). It has played an integral part in re-establishing neuro pathways during her healing process for her cognitive development, speech, and social emotional well-being. I strongly feel not being able to access Dance Therapy would be detrimental to her ongoing remission and ability to function to her full capacity.

(NDIS Participant's caregiver)

Movement therapy has helped me express myself in ways that feel more natural to me and are easy to do through dance and art.

(Participant, 20s)

My client has increased her ability to express herself through movement, which has also increased her balance and coordination skills. The use of 2 sides of her body has increased dramatically too.

(NDIS Participant's support worker)

I like going to Movement therapy because I feel relaxed.

(Participant, 20s)

My daughter enjoys her sessions of Movement Therapy each fortnight. It is helping her to feel more comfortable going out in the community.

(NDIS Participant's Caregiver)

My daughter has gained the ability to attend and actively participate, with peers in a group setting, this is something that she was unable to do prior to movement therapy.

(Participant's caregiver, 30s)

Movement therapy has helped me to be my happiest self and to feel freer when moving my body.

(Participant, 30s)



I don't like other therapies and DMT therapy makes me feel free and more confident. I like to communicate through movement.

(Participant, 20s)

I feel refreshed and free when I am doing DMT, and I only like this therapy. I can express myself and be powerful.

(Participant, 10s)

Other States

There is no judgement (in the therapeutic relationship with my dance movement therapist) and I can express happiness, sadness, excitement, disappointment, achievement, the bad, the good.....I have been learning balance and coordination to keep myself safe. To even trust yourself to move eyes closed with guidance, and feel safe is outstanding and of great help. This therapy really needs to be recognized as a true therapy as it gives you the coping mechanisms to be able to cope with all your challenges. It helps me to better regulate my emotions, discover myself and my body differently. Having it (dance movement therapy) in nursing homes as well and rehab centres in the community is a blessing and for the people of all lifestyles, any disabilities is a must so please this therapy needs to be totally recognized.

(Participant, 40s)