Development of a Dance/Movement Therapy Program in Japan: A Case Study

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Dance/movement therapy (DMT) has become increasingly interesting to Japanese health care providers. In response to this growing interest, the Japanese Association of Dance Therapy was founded in 1992. However, there is not yet an organized system for educating, training, and certifying dance/movement therapists in Japan. In the absence of such a training system, a psychiatric hospital in Tokyo has been developing its own system of training dance/movement therapists, and providing DMT services with the help of an American ADTR supervisor since 1988. Ten years later, DMT has grown to be an integral part of the multidisciplinary treatment team, very much like individual psychotherapy, group therapy, occupational therapy, art therapy, and psychoeducation. The historical background of DMT in Japan, as well as the present system of education and training as it has been adapted to the Japanese hospital environment is de-

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Introduction

The use of dance/movement therapy (DMT) as a therapeutic modality is of increasing interest to Japanese health care providers. Some hospitals and institutes are willing to introduce DMT as one of their methods of treatment or education. However, there is not an organized system for educating, training, and certifying dance/movement therapists in Japan, so that DMT is practiced not only by dance/movement therapists, but also by various professionals like dancers, clinical psychologists, and teachers. Therefore, there is no consistent clinical theory or method of practice. Some practitioners do DMT from their own original theory and perspective, some teach themselves through reading and workshops in DMT, and some individuals have ADTR (Academy of Dance Therapists Registered) qualifications from Western countries.

We consider our training and clinical program in DMT to be unique because our hospital created its own institute-style educational system for clinical staff to be trained in DMT under the supervision of an American ADTR. DMT is now actively used as an integral part of clinical programs provided by the interdisciplinary treatment team at our hospital. In this paper, we would like to present our experience of developing a DMT program as one example of the unique Japanese way of introducing DMT to the health care providers responsible for educational and treatment programs.

The History of DMT in Japan

DMT was first introduced to Japan around 1960. By 1970, a treatment approach with DMT was actually used by a small number of clinicians, an approach based on their experience with modern dance or Japanese traditional dance like Noh or religious dance. DMT was used in scattered locations throughout Japan, and those pioneers faced many trials in their attempts to organize their treatment approaches effectively.

By 1980, Japanese dance began to be widely noticed throughout the