



Empowering Lives through Dance Movement Therapy (DMT)

DMT is an alternative approach to psychotherapy which uses dance and movement for healing, based on the principle that movement reflects an individual's patterns of thinking and feeling.

How DMT Transforms Individuals



DMT extends beyond dance

DMT is not only dance: it is a therapeutic approach utilizing dance and movement which is focused on individual change. Those who practice DMT or have experienced it say that it helped them discover a sense of purpose beyond mundane activities; it helped them become confident, articulate and expressive. It is a

holistic approach which cultivates an individual's inner peace, self-confidence, physical freedom, freedom of thought and creativity. Kolkata Sanved uses Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) for the healing and empowerment of marginalised populations, especially survivors of gender-based violence.

Context	How Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) works	The communities we reach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Violence against women and children is prevalent in India, taking place both in public and private spaces ● Survivors of violence go through physical and mental trauma, leading to a negative attitude towards the body and self ● They also experience guilt and shame because they are often blamed for the circumstances they have found themselves in ● Trauma, guilt and negativity within themselves make it difficult for them to exercise their agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DMT gives participants a free, non-judgemental space to move in the way that comes naturally to them ● DMT is a holistic process: by freeing the body through movement, DMT enables individuals to free the mind. It caters to all aspects of the self: physical, cognitive, emotional and social ● DMT enables survivors to free themselves from bodily stigma, trauma, guilt and other mental and emotional patterns of violence ● Thereafter, they can develop positive self-care mechanisms for the present ● They can also exercise their agency by envisioning and taking steps towards a positive future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Survivors of gender-based violence ● At-risk children and youth living in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Red light areas – Railway platforms – Rural and urban slums – Government and NGO-run shelter homes ● Children in Conflict with Law ● People living with mental illnesses

Impact of DMT

- 1) Creative process connects the body and mind:** When individuals face trauma, especially when it is physical in nature, they often experience a disassociation of mind and body. During DMT sessions, when they are asked to move the body in their own way, they begin to exercise their creativity, leading to a connection of body and mind. Increasing creativity in movement leads to increasing exercise of the cognitive mind. This enables them to reflect on their own selves and understand themselves better. This element of reflectiveness is an integral part of Kolkata Sanved's DMT process, through verbal feedback on what is being felt in body and mind that is taken during every session.
- 2) Releasing and coping with trauma and negative emotions:** An individual's emotions are all reflected in the body. For example, when an individual experiences stress and anxiety, her/his body could become very rigid, or alternatively, could begin to tremble. By understanding these emotions, and by doing different kinds of movements, an individual can release the trauma and negative emotions from the body, and thereby, from the mind. They can also create movement-based practices to manage stress on a day-to-day basis.
- 3) Freedom in the body and positive attitude to the self:** Dance and movement give individuals a sense of freedom and liberation within the body. This is especially significant for women and girls, whose movements are often restricted due to societal norms. By moving one's body in newer and

freer ways, they not only feel a sense of enjoyment, but also begin to cultivate a positive attitude towards the body and, by extension, to the self as a whole.

- 4) Cultivating self-confidence and communication skills:** Through DMT sessions, individuals learn to express themselves both non-verbally through movement, and verbally, through oral feedback. This enables them to improve communication skills and regular practice of this makes them more confident. They reach a place where they can stand up for themselves in an effective manner.
- 5) Creating a vision for life:** After dealing with one's negative emotions, accessing freedom within the body and increasing the understanding of the self, an individual who has experienced DMT can move towards creating a vision for the future. Many individuals from marginalised communities do not have the opportunity to dream and envision the kind of life that they would like because they are either caught up with day-to-day needs or are restricted by societal norms. DMT gives them a space to free themselves and connect with their inner selves in order to understand what they want from life.
- 6) Exercising their agency to realise this vision:** Through a combination of the tools given above, DMT gives individuals the capacity to confidently and freely exercise their agency, in order to attain the vision for their lives. This ultimately enables them to reach a space of good health and wellbeing.



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