



## Editors' Note

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### To our readers,

This issue of the American Journal of Dance Therapy is being released as we continue to usher in a new year (2024). We have transitioned towards releasing a spring issue in our previous volume, and the spring can be a time for looking forward, emergence of new things, and a time to pay homage to things of the past. There is a sense of balance in being able to honor looking forward with expectation and innovation, and to be able to reconcile this with recognizing and honoring the foundations that transformation is built upon.

This issue highlights a diversity of perspectives and viewpoints on approaches to dance/movement therapy work. Whether through the lens of researcher, client assessment and observation, or opportunity for self-exploration, each paper offers a possibility for discovery as dance/movement therapists. Four original papers (one commentary and three original research), one book review, and one conference paper are included in this first issue of the 46th volume of the AJDT. The issue also honors the life of Iris Rifkin-Gainer (1944–2023) who was a seminal figure in the field of dance/movement therapy. Her trajectory is celebrated through reflections from her family, friends and colleagues, tracing her numerous contributions across her lifetime of achievements and positive impact.

A throughline in each of the articles is cultural humility, ensuring that there is acknowledgement and consideration of cultural nuance. The issue opens with an article focusing on the impact on the pandemic on the design of a health equity research study (Hartwell & Aubrey). The article provides outcomes of the study and considerations for future research and post-research reflections for the researchers themselves that center on user-responsive and equitable research practices. The second article in

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the issue brings in reflections on cross discipline focuses and authentic movement (Payne). The article draws upon the foundations of authentic movement and provides an analysis of the potential impact of blending this modality with integrative psychotherapy. The commentary article in this volume (Beardall et al.) provides multiple perspectives and personal reflections on the current evolution of dance/movement therapy through the lens of practitioners at varied career stages and in varied roles in the field. The paper integrates specific reflections on culture with an intention to evoke further dialogue and consideration in the readership. The final original paper in this issue (Robinson, Gilmore & Weatherby) investigates aspects of cultural identity development and methods from dance/movement therapy to inform this practice. The paper provides a framework as an example of how this work can continue to open up new dialogue by challenging our own bias and embracing difference.

The issue is rounded out with a book review (Lo) that explores a contribution from the allied field of drama therapy, and of course, our customary highlights from the conference. The Marian Chace Lecture features Dr. Nalini Prakash, with an introduction by Malini Nagpal. This paper provides insights on diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in dance/movement therapy from the lens of experience of Indian heritage and at the intersection of the Western experience, methodology and practices of the field. The paper explores the journey of the author, including challenges in being the first Indian South Asian dance/movement therapist in her program, which explore moving experiences of serendipity and cultural crossroads.

The journey through this issue, with each paper, offers us an opportunity to explore a sense of balance; balance of time, balance of alternate perspectives, and balance of varied positioning within the dance/movement therapy world. This edition both honors and critiques its foundation and roots, present practices, and provides guidance for the way forward into the future.

We hope that this issue creates space for pause and reflection. Reflecting on our capacity to shift forward creatively and boldly, moves us towards innovation and alternate strategies in approaches to our collective and individual work.

Sincerely,

Aisha and Thania

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