

VIDEO REVIEW

Dance Movement Therapy for Women with Breast Cancer

By Ilene Serlin, PhD, BC-DMT

Length: 11 minute

Reviewed by Olena Darewych, MA, RCAT

This video provides a glimpse into a 12 week dance movement therapy support group for women living with breast cancer. The DT support group was facilitated by dance movement therapist Ilene Serlin and conducted at the California Pacific Medical Center Institute of Health and Healing.

The video commences with a brief history of dance therapy (DT). DT started in the 1960's with dancers working in hospitals providing patients a setting for mind, body, and spirit shifts. DT as a treatment is beneficial for clients who are not visual. Serlin emphasized that the healing process starts with movement. It provides clients an opportunity for "Kinaesthetic Imagining" which allows clients to create images through movement. The kinaesthetic imagining example described in the video was that of the visual image of cancer cells leaving the client's body. Grippingly, the process incorporates all feeling senses.

Clients who participated in the 12 week DT support group emphasized in the video that the experience was "very liberating" and that they gained a sense of universality for no longer felt "alone" and "isolated". Furthermore, it provided them with the opportunity to "become aware of their body". Women with breast cancer no longer feel sexual or beautiful and struggle with their self-image.

Regarding group dynamics, Serlin reminded the viewer and group facilitator the importance of conducting group therapy sessions in a circle and incorporating a beginning, middle, and end component in each group session. In the video, Serlin commenced the DT support group session with a general body warm-up and breathing exercise. The middle component focused on the "theme of the day" that of creating a story

with movement. Finally, the group session ended with members working in pairs.

In summary, I truly enjoyed watching this brief video. It was quite an experience to observe Serlin delicately conducting the DT sessions and providing support for the women with breast cancer. She skilfully integrated the aboriginal medicine stick in her sessions which was handed to each group member when it was their turn to speak.

For further information on the video and dance movement therapy, visit Ilene Serlin's website at www.ileneserlin.com