

Where Do Drama Therapists Practice?

Mental Health Facilities

Schools

Hospitals

Substance Abuse Treatment Centers

Adult Day Care Centers

Correctional Facilities

Community Centers

After-School Programs

Shelters

Adolescent Group Homes

Nursing Homes

Private Practice Settings

Corporations

Theaters

Housing Projects

Medical Schools

Training Organizations

Drama therapy is beneficial for individuals, families, and communities struggling with transition, loss, social stigmatization, isolation, illness, conflict, and trauma. It is an effective option for the treatment and prevention of anxiety, depression, and addiction, amongst other mental health concerns. Drama therapy promotes positive changes in mood, insight, empathy, and facilitates healthy relationships.

How Does Drama Therapy Affect Participants?

The work I did in drama therapy gave me the stability and direction I needed to deal with personal issues stemming from child abuse, assaults and rape, and loss of self.

– CATHY H.
(ABUSE SURVIVOR)

Drama showed me how to interact with others. Most of all, it gave me a way to have excitement in my life without the use of drugs.

– KURT M.
(RECOVERING DRUG ADDICT)

Often our residents do not recognize their aggressiveness or hostility until it is explored in drama therapy.

– DUANE T. BOWERS
DIRECTOR OF SECOND GENESIS
RESIDENTIAL FACILITY

I cannot put into words how wonderful this drama experience has been for my daughter. I have seen the child we knew was inside, but which we rarely saw at home, come out.

– MOTHER OF ADOLESCENT WITH
ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

As someone who is schizophrenic, I've always been told that I shouldn't use my imagination. With drama, I get to use my imagination and it helps me.

– SUE P.
(STUDENT)

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about Drama Therapy &
NADTA



DRAMA THERAPY



Phone: 888.416.7167
www.nadta.org

What Is Drama Therapy?

Drama therapy is the intentional use of drama and/or theater processes to achieve therapeutic goals.



Drama therapy is active and experiential. This approach can provide the context for participants to tell their stories, set goals and solve problems, express feelings, or achieve catharsis. Through drama, the depth and breadth of inner experience can be actively explored and interpersonal relationship skills can be enhanced. Participants can expand their repertoire of dramatic roles to find that their own life roles have been strengthened.

Behavior change, skill building, emotional and physical integration, and personal growth can be achieved through drama therapy in prevention, intervention, and treatment settings.

The North American Drama Therapy Association (NADTA) was incorporated in 1979 to establish and uphold rigorous standards of professional competence for drama therapists. The organization maintains requirements that must be met to qualify as a registered drama therapist (RDT). NADTA promotes drama therapy through information and advocacy.

As a member organization of the National Coalition of Creative Arts Therapies Associations (NCCATA), the NADTA is aligned with professionals in the fields of art, music, dance, and poetry therapies, as well as group psychotherapy and psychodrama.

In the aftermath of September 11th, I witnessed the enormous benefits of these modalities [creative therapies] in helping people to express their emotions and have seen Capitol Hill exhibits illustrating the meaningful gains through artistic process.

– HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

Under the guise of play and pretend, we can — for once — act in new ways. The bit of distance from real life afforded by drama enables us to gain perspective on our real-life roles and patterns and actions, and to experiment actively with alternatives.

– RENEE EMUNAH, Ph.D., RDT/BCT
DIRECTOR, DRAMA THERAPY PROGRAM
CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF INTEGRAL STUDIES

(Drama therapy) values the possibilities of the unadorned encounter between a therapist and a client in the play space. Here, the world of imagination with all its contradictions and mysteries can be revealed through the embodied play of two free consciousnesses.

– DAVID READ JOHNSON, Ph.D., RDT/BCT
DIRECTOR, THE INSTITUTES FOR THE ARTS
IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

A general goal of drama therapy is to increase the client's repertory of roles, a wide repertory of roles implies choice and flexibility; the ability to change one's behavior in relation to differing people and circumstances.

– ROBERT LANDY, Ph.D., RDT/BCT
DIRECTOR, DRAMA THERAPY PROGRAM
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Participants can enjoy the feelings of being in another person's shoes — playing another role — as well as learn the liberating experience of expanding their own primary roles in life.

– PATRICIA STERNBERG, MA, RDT/BCT
FORMER DIRECTOR
DEVELOPMENTAL DRAMA PROGRAM
HUNTER COLLEGE

Playing out a role as an actor can serve as a bridge to mobilizing inner resources in actual life.

– THEODORE ISAAC RUBIN, MD
AUTHOR

What Do Drama Therapists Do?

A drama therapist first assesses a client's needs and then considers approaches that might best meet those needs. Drama therapy can take many forms depending on individual and group needs, skill and ability levels, interests, and therapeutic goals.

Processes and techniques may include improvisation, theater games, storytelling, and enactment. Many drama therapists make use of text, performance, or ritual to enrich the therapeutic and creative process.

The theoretical foundation of drama therapy lies in drama, theater, psychology, psychotherapy, anthropology, play, and interactive and creative processes.



Who Are Registered Drama Therapists?

Drama therapists hold a master's or doctoral degree in Drama Therapy from a program accredited by the North American Drama Therapy Association, or hold a master's degree or doctoral degree in theater or a mental health profession with additional in-depth training in drama therapy through NADTA's alternative training program. Board-certified registered drama therapists (RDT/BCT) train and supervise students in this alternative track.