

An exciting new collaboration between Staffordshire University¹, University of Derby² and Newcastle College³

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and Simone Heyland³



THE CHALLENGE

To find out whether dance movement therapy improves body image in young people

OUR PLANNED STUDY

We are proposing to pilot a study to investigate the impact of a dance movement therapy intervention on young people's body image and experiences of embodiment. There is some evidence from previous work that aerobic dance interventions can improve body image in young women. The proposed study will focus on creative dance instead of aerobic dance and will look at impact on young men as well as young women. There is growing evidence that young men are becoming more concerned with the appearance of their bodies than formerly and it is important to know whether dance interventions impact on body image and embodiment in young men as well as in young women.

Young women and men at Newcastle College will take part in a dance movement therapy intervention and will then take part in focus groups and interviews where they discuss the experience. We will use these accounts to provide process information that will help us to design a dance intervention that can be rolled out to a larger sample of young people in Staffordshire and Derbyshire. At present our key aim is to see whether a dance movement therapy intervention impacts on participants' subjective experiences of body image and embodiment and to see whether there are things that we can do to ensure that dance movement therapy interventions are delivered in ways that have a positive impact on young people's body image. We will also aim to see whether there are aspects that can be built in to maximize positive impact on both young men and young women, as impact of exercise interventions can be gender-linked.

WHO WILL DO THIS?

The project will be managed by Professor Sarah Grogan at Staffordshire University and Dr Jill Bunce at University of Derby who will both be involved at all stages of the study. Simone Heyland will run the dance movement therapy intervention at Newcastle College and two research assistants at University of Derby will run the focus groups and interviews. These research assistants will transcribe the interventions and focus groups. Data analysis will be conducted by everyone in the team assisted by a research assistant at Staffordshire University. Wendy Davies, Chair of Body Image Dance Consortium (BID), will facilitate access to students at Newcastle College, will organise the intervention, and will be involved in writing the grant proposal for the larger study. All researchers hold current advanced CRB clearance.

HOW EXACTLY WILL IT WORK?

16 young people (8 men and 8 women) will take part in the dance intervention and will then take part in focus groups followed by individual interviews. Participants will be aged 16–18 and recruited from Newcastle College, Staffordshire.

The dance movement therapy intervention will involve young women and men viewing a recording of Dance 123 (exploring body image issues and a healthy mind body balance) and engaging in a session of dance movement therapy including exploring feelings, mindfulness and creativity.

After gaining informed written consent, young people will complete the dance intervention in one large group and will then take part in focus groups or interviews which will be audio-recorded.

Participants will be asked to reflect on the experience of completing the intervention and any effect on their body image and experiences of embodiment.

All speech will be transcribed, and data will be coded and submitted to a thematic analysis. These data will be used to inform the procedures to be used in a larger intervention study to look at the effectiveness of this kind of intervention in a large sample of young people in Staffordshire and Derbyshire.

WHAT ARE WE HOPING TO ACHIEVE?

The study will be the first work to investigate the effects of a contemporary dance intervention on young men and women's body image and experiences of embodiment, and the first to look at the impact of dance interventions on young men's body image. We will use the results to inform a larger-scale study and to help us to understand how to make these kinds of dance therapy movement interventions more effective in improving young people's body image.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Wendy Davies on wendy.davies6@mypostoffice.co.uk



© BID 2011. Dance 123 consists of the original score and film of the performance of the work which BID wish to use as a basis for developing workshops to be used in schools, youth groups and Arts for Health programmes. They aim to improve young people's relationship with their bodies by developing positive body image.