

Moving Men in the Patriarchy: A Feminist Intersectional Inquiry in Dance Movement Psychotherapy

This research study is driven by the question: How can Dance Movement Psychotherapy support men to identify, differentiate and express their embodied affective experiences outside the patriarchal/stereotypical norms? The objective of this study was to investigate the impact of DMP on how cis gendered men of Indian and British ethnicity embody and express their emotional affect. In this study, intersectionality acted as an intersubjective lens through which power, patriarchy, and masculinity were investigated, and how these core research themes collided, interlocked and intersected in DMP. A feminist qualitative methodology was adopted to challenge the universal misconception (that feminism is only for women) and provided controlled flexibility to expand on different forms of power and gender relations. Data was produced through semi-structured interviews with two female DMTs who have worked with men in India and two male DMPs in the UK. The interviews consisted of a verbal check-in, four semi-structured questions, improvised movement experiential, and verbal processing. Along with the interviews, the researcher's embodied reflections were also recorded and mirrored through a ten-minute embodied solo performance. Thematic Analysis and Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) were incorporated and highlighted four themes: intersectionalities, gendered therapeutic relationship, gendered emotional expression and DMP taboos. The findings illustrated, (i) The need and want for men to move out of the patriarchal norms to identify, differentiate and express. (ii) It also revealed that inequality, repression and restrictive stereotypical affect expression is as damaging for men as it is for women. (iii) Yet, a great deal of resistance to express and move was observed throughout this investigation. Findings and conclusions of this investigation is relevant to DMP practice as it encourages more male voices and bodies in DMP. Thus, this research study is a step towards recognising and deconstructing the patriarchy in a wider therapeutic context.

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