

Chakra Awareness through Dance Movement Therapy

通过舞蹈动作治疗认识脉轮

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Abstract

This article introduces a novel approach to holistic healing by integrating dance movement therapy with the Indian chakra system. The multidimensional chakra-imbued therapeutic movement sequence model, created by the authors, addresses the intricate balance of and among the seven chakras: root (*muladhara*), sacral (*svadhisthana*), solar plexus (*manipura*), heart (*anahata*), throat (*vishuddha*), third eye (*ajna*), and the crown (*sahasrara*). The model facilitates the awareness of energy centers and has the transformative potential to foster stability and resilience. The article highlights the efficacy of this model by illuminating customized, chakra-specific movement sequences that include body preparatory activities, movements metaphors, embodiment exercises, expressive movement, voice work, tapping, self-massage, eye movement sequence, visual imagery and art, yoga breathwork, and meditation alongside verbal reflection. This innovative approach, which is successfully adapted to online and offline studio spaces, offers a rich potential to build and develop body-self awareness and leads individuals toward sustaining and enhancing physical, cognitive, and emotional wellness within themselves.

Keywords: dance movement therapy (DMT), chakra system, chakra-imbued therapeutic movement, resilience

摘要

本文介绍了一种将舞蹈动作治疗与印度脉轮系统相结合的整体治疗新方法。由作者创建的多维脉轮治疗动作序列模型，解决了七个脉轮之间错综复杂的平衡问题：根轮 (*muladhara*)、骶轮 (*svadhisthana*)、太阳神经丛 (*manipura*)、心轮 (*anahata*)、喉轮 (*vishuddha*)、第三眼轮 (*ajna*) 和冠轮 (*sahasrara*)。该模型有助于觉察能量中心，并具有促进稳定性和复原力的转化潜能。文章通过阐明定制的、针对脉轮的运动序列：包括身体准备活动、动作隐喻、具身化练习、表达性动作、声音练习、拍打、自我按摩、眼部运动序列、视觉意象和艺术、瑜伽呼吸法、冥想以及言语反思，强调了这种模式的功效。这种创新方法成功地适用于线上和线下工作室空间，为建立和发展身体-自我意识提供了丰富的可能性，并引导个人保持并增强身体、认知和情绪方面的健康。

关键词: 舞蹈动作治疗 (DMT), 脉轮系统, 脉轮辅助治疗性动作, 复原力

Introduction

The American Dance Therapy Association defines dance movement therapy (DMT) as “the psychotherapeutic use of movement to promote emotional, social, cognitive and physical integration of the individual, for the purpose of improving health and well-being (American Dance Therapy Association, n.d., Defining Dance/Movement Therapy section, para. 1).”

In India, DMT is defined by the Creative Movement Therapy Association of India (CMTAI, 2018) as follows, “Dance Movement Therapy uses the psychotherapeutic framework to strengthen the mind-body interlink in individuals. Therapists engage with clients by utilising their personal movement language as well as elements from Indian physical traditions to enhance mental health and wellness of people. DMT contributes positively to each person’s physical, emotional, cognitive, social and behavioural facets.”

DMT empowers individuals to delve into and liberate deep-seated emotions and memories, using movement to improve overall health and wellness. This process usually unfolds across five distinct phases within therapeutic interactions: movement seeding, movement exploration, movement as expression, resolution, and finally, integration of the therapeutic model into daily life (Kashyap et al., 2022). DMT provides a holistic and creative mode of intervention for the treatment of mental health issues. As a therapeutic modality, DMT effectively treats adults with depression and anxiety (Ritter & Low, 1996; Karkou et al., 2019). Ryff and Singer (2003) define resilience as “maintenance, recovery, or improvement in mental or physical health following challenge.” Resilient responses to adversity are common across the lifespan—a phenomenon Ann Masten (2001) calls “ordinary magic.” A unique benefit of DMT lies in its capacity to foster resilience through shared movement experiences and improve symptoms such as avoidance and dissociation associated with exposure to trauma (Payne et al., 2019; Tomaszewski et al., 2023).

The chakra system constitutes a seven-level philosophical framework of the human body, representing spiritual energy embodied within its physical realm. Although not physically tangible, chakras significantly impact the body’s functioning, akin to emotions influencing physiological responses. Like emotions affecting breathing and heart rate, chakras influence body composition, persistent physical ailments, cognitive patterns, and behavior. We can influence our chakras and health by employing techniques such as yoga, meditation, and bioenergetics (Judith, 2017). A study by Kumar and Valliamma (2015) focusing on endocrine glands and universal fields was conducted on 11th-grade students. The study showed that after a period of 6 months, people who had been using a nine-center meditation of simplified kundalini yoga (kundalini practices are inherent in advanced chakra system practices) demonstrated improved body mass index, academic achievement, emotional balance, and decreased pulse, blood pressure, and thought frequencies, indicating favorable effects on physiological and psychological processes. However, the studies in DMT have yet to thoroughly investigate the potential impact of integrating chakra exploration, which could enhance our understanding of combining the psychological and therapeutic benefits of the two modalities.

Chakras could be blocked due to trauma, cultural conditioning, or injuries, impacting posture, breathing, metabolism, emotions and beliefs. These blockages impede personal growth, necessitating an acknowledgement for resolution (Judith, 2012, 2017).

The objective is to clean the chakras of old, non-beneficial patterns of functioning so that their actions can have a positive impact on us and our life energy can continue to expand. A closed chakra represents a persistent avoidance of specific energies, whereas an overly open chakra signifies a chronic fixation. These imbalances lead to chakra deficiencies through avoidance and excesses of overcompensation. Addressing this, excessive chakras require energy release, whereas deficient chakras necessitate energy reception (Judith, 2012).

Seasoned yoga and chakra practitioners emphasize the role of targeted physical exercises to balance the chakras. In fact, DMT consists of activities that can be modified and effectively support in relaxing and experiencing the presence of these energy centers. Simultaneously, verbal psychotherapy is pivotal in this process, delving into emotions and values associated with each chakra and subsequently integrating these insights into one's physiology and behavior. To initiate this process, preliminary yoga based warm-ups and movement-building sequences are done as preparation prior to addressing each chakra with customized movement patterns.

Here, it would be essential to make a distinction between ancient and modern ecstatic dance practices that exist in different cultures around the world, and the practices that have been compiled and interwoven by the authors to create the seven-chakra-specific movement experience through DMT. Ecstatic dances then can simply be seen as consisting of freestyle movement where one abandons structure and choreography in favor of music and rhythm as guides in dancing. In the authors' context, the use of movement has been researched through intense bodily practices to experience and become aware of each chakra, individually and in relation to each other. The authors are also not touching upon kundalini practices or meditations and dance, as those are the advanced practices that one undertakes after activating the chakras with the intention of working toward enlightenment and awakening. In our work, we are focusing on the therapeutic possibilities that open up alongside the awareness of chakras through semi-prescribed movement structures. This is done without integrating complexities and obscurities of the ancient Hindu tantric texts, *shashtras*, and so on, which may be difficult and too advanced for a beginner to comprehend. Having made this distinction, it is still important to note that kundalini, meditation practices, yoga *asanas*, and the chakra system are all inextricably linked. They are laid out as interconnected pathways to enlightenment and *samadhi* according to various ancient Hindu texts, Upanishads, Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, and more. The scope of the current article prevents us from going in-depth into each of these.

During the period of undertaking this informal research, the authors after undergoing sitting practices and movement meditation for the seven chakras, physically improvised, created and practiced different sets of movement patterns for each chakra, plotted them in space, layered them with different movement qualities, and finally structured them to be offered to group participants and individual clients. DMT therefore supported the task of accessing the powerful yet subtle chakras embedded in the complex network of energy systems in the body, through a structured and guided improvisation-based practice while leveraging therapeutic, creative, and expressive movement to strengthen the crucial mind-body connection. For example, participants could experience the idea

of “rootedness” in the *muladhara* or root chakra (which is responsible for experiencing oneself as a purely physical being), when the facilitator led them into using their feet, legs, and base of their spine in different movement sequences addressed to the earth.

Through this purely embodied experience, participants felt connected to and supported by the earth they were walking on (just like a tree or plant) with a deep focus on their mind-body-spirit continuum. This is akin to “grounding” in psychotherapy to bring attention to the legs through which one feels the support of the floor. This practice aids clients, particularly patients with trauma, to practice a form of body resourcing to build physical, mental, and emotional resilience. Similarly, the other chakras are engaged through specific movement patterns to become activated and function harmoniously in relation to each other, in turn changing our relationship with our bodies and our environment for the better.

Mindful movement-based activities from DMT bring participants into the present moment, prompting a sense of centeredness. Movements support them in their journey to either travel from inside-out (inner feelings or thoughts being expressed toward space or other people) or outside-in to traverse the body internally, from the toes to the head. Participants have become conscious of each chakra through movement (our universal language that everyone can speak) combined with the stillness of sitting meditative experiences (home-grown on Indian soil through different spiritual practices). In DMT-inspired chakra work, verbal dialogue and introspection are also interspersed with movement experiences to understand the wisdom of the body and consider our body as a somatic resource to learn to listen to what is transpiring within the body.

Chakra System

Chakras are wheel-like energy centers located on the etheric or the subtle body on the spine. They are swirling intersections of vital life forces, and each chakra represents an aspect of consciousness essential to life. Together, the seven major chakras form a profound formula for wholeness that integrates mind-body-spirit. They are the organizing centers for the reception, assimilation, and transmission of life energies. Just as the different centers in our brain have different functions (perception, speech, movement, cognition, and so on) each chakra regulates particular aspects or systems of our physical body (Sharamon & Baginski, 2015).

Chinese medicinal traditions talk about meridians (similar to the intricate system of the *nadis* in yoga), which function as energy pathways, coursing through connective tissue (fascia) and profoundly influencing the well-being of our organs, emotions, and thoughts. In the yogic tradition, chakras serve as controllers of these meridians. If there is an imbalance in the chakra that regulates that meridian, the meridian can come out of balance, which has a knock-on effect on our health (EkhartYoga, n.d.). Some of the major fascial networks coincide with the major chakras and meridians if one were to take out similarities and try to locate them on the body physically.

The human framework contains energy or pranic centers referred to as chakras, which are numerous in each individual. Functioning beyond the realm of ordinary perception, these chakras oversee the intricate circulation of prana (life force) throughout

the entirety of the human body. Although conventionally translated as *wheel* or *circle*, the term “chakra” finds a more nuanced interpretation within the context of yoga as *vortex* or *whirlpool*. These discreet energy centers, often allegorically associated with lotus flowers and occasionally termed *padma*, are strategically situated to regulate the intricate flow of vital life force (Saraswati, 2013).

1. **Muladhara:** Muldhara (root) chakra resides at the spine’s base. It is associated with the color red, the sense of smell, and the earth element. Its seed/beej mantra is LAM. It aims for stability, grounding, and physical health (Judith, 2012; Sharamon & Baginski, 2015). An overactive root chakra can lead to resistance to change, obesity, greediness, or obsession with security and focus on only self with a disregard for others. Conversely, an underactive one can cause indiscipline, underweight, fatigue, inability to accomplish goals, and lack of supportive relationships (Judith, 2017).
2. **Svadhithana:** Svadhithana (sacral) chakra resides below the navel. It is associated with the color orange, the sense of taste, and the water element. Its seed/beej mantra is VAM. It aims for fluidity, pleasure, and sexuality (Judith, 2012; Sharamon & Baginski, 2015). An overactive sacral chakra can lead to poor boundaries, sex addiction, and an overly emotional existence. Conversely, an underactive one can cause impotency, frigidity, fear of pleasure, and emotional numbness (Judith, 2017).
3. **Manipura:** Manipura chakra resides above the navel (solar plexus). It is associated with the color yellow or golden, the sense of sight, and the fire element. Its seed/beej mantra is RAM. It aims for vitality, strength of will, purpose, and self-esteem (Judith, 2012; Sharamon & Baginski, 2015). An overactive solar plexus chakra can lead to dominating, controlling, and aggressive tendencies. Conversely, inadequate functioning can make one feel dejected and discouraged (Judith, 2017).
4. **Anahata:** Anahata (heart) chakra resides in the center of the chest (or heart area). It is associated with the colors green, pink, and gold, the sense of touch, and the air element. Its seed/beej mantra is YAM. It aims for balance, compassion, and self-acceptance (Judith, 2012; Sharamon & Baginski, 2015). An overactive heart chakra can lead to poor boundaries, codependency, and feelings of jealousy. Conversely, an underactive one can cause loneliness, lack of empathy, and feeling shy and critical (Judith, 2017).
5. **Vishuddha:** Vishuddha (throat) chakra resides in the center of the throat. It is associated with the colors pale blue, silver, or greenish blue, the sense of sound, and the ether element. Its seed/beej mantra is HAM. It aims for clear communication, creativity, and resonance (Judith, 2012; Sharamon & Baginski, 2015). An overactive throat chakra can lead to excessive talking, inability to listen, and stuttering. Conversely, an underactive one can cause fear of speaking, poor rhythm, and aphasia (Judith, 2017).
6. **Ajna:** Ajna (third eye) chakra resides in between the eyebrows. It is associated with the colors indigo, yellow, or violet, the sixth sense, and the element of light.

Its seed/beej mantra is OM. It aims for accurate interpretation, imagination, and clear seeing (Judith, 2012; Sharamon & Baginski, 2015). An overactive third-eye chakra can lead to headaches, nightmares, hallucinations, delusions, and difficulty concentrating. Conversely, an underactive one can cause poor memory, vision, and denial (Judith, 2017).

7. **Sahasrara:** Sahasrara (crown) chakra resides at the head's top (roughly the cerebral cortex). It is associated with the colors violet, white and gold, the sense of thought, and the *akash* or universal/astral light element. Its seed/beej mantra is AUM. It aims for wisdom, knowledge, and spiritual connection (Judith, 2012; Sharamon & Baginski, 2015). An overactive crown chakra can lead to dissociation, spiritual addiction, and overly intellectual tendencies. Conversely, an underactive one can cause learning difficulties, limited beliefs, spiritual skepticism, and apathy (Judith, 2017).

With the sahasrara chakra awakening, all other chakra blockages dissolve, and energies vibrate at the highest possible frequencies. The chakras are linked with the science and practice of yoga. The word “yoga” means to connect, unite, or “yoke” (Sharamon & Baginski, 2015). We look to connect to the true self, also known as the “divine essence,” “ultimate self,” *atman*, or soul. In Indian philosophy, the journey of a human is from being a mortal to recognizing the divine within; the goal is to attain *moksha*, meaning liberation or freedom.

The true self is realized when all the chakras are awakened and one becomes one with the divine or the highest universal energy, and the individual ego then transforms into the universal ego (Judith, 2017).

Chakra-imbued Therapeutic Movement Sequence Model

Background and Setting

The proponents of this study, Tripura Kashyap, Anubha Doshi, and Karishma Harlalka, have ingeniously conceived the notion of amalgamating the traditional chakra system with the contemporary domain of DMT. Drawing upon their extensive experiences as practitioners of chakra healing and movement-based expressive arts therapy in India, Kashyap and Doshi have woven their expertise with the profound tenets of Asian philosophies.

The authors worked informally with more than 100 participants across virtual and in-person spaces. In some online modules, participants signed up for the 3-day workshops to experience the unique confluence of movement, art, sound, and meditation to experience their chakras. They have also worked with students of DMT courses and individual clients using the “chakra mediation dance” as part of their teaching and therapy sessions. Each chakra was introduced first through a meditation related to it, followed by a specific warm-up and then a core activity corresponding to the chakra's presence, emotional content, and the psychological manifestations connected to it. Toward the closure of each chakra segment, many

participants felt certain sensations in different body parts corresponding to the location of each chakra on the body. Some felt a relief, while for others, it was overwhelming to work with that particular chakra, indicating a probable imbalance in the chakra. Some symptoms of imbalance as reported by the participants were nausea, an overwhelming feeling, a sense of body disassociation as well as being out of the physical body.

The participants, composed of individuals who voluntarily joined the workshop and a few individual clients of Kashyap, were recruited through informal means, including convenience sampling, between March 2021 and March 2023. Informed consent was obtained from the clients after explaining the informal study and its purpose. The predominant demographic was female, with ages spanning from 20 to 50 years. The participant profile was notably diverse, encompassing varied vocations such as students, coaches, counselling psychologists, yoga instructors, dancers, dance therapists in training, and engineers. Representing middle to upper-middle class income groups, the participants hailed from various parts of India, contributing to a geographically diverse sample.

This informal study drew upon comprehensive verbal reflections and observations documented during the sessions, supplemented by structured post-session open-ended questionnaires to collect written feedback. Participants were verbally informed and consented to the use of their subjective experiences for purposes of this informal research, ensuring confidentiality and data anonymization.

The meticulously designed movement sequences invited participants to go on an immersive journey of self-observation, discovery, and connection, through the lens of the seven chakras. Movement, visualization, and introspection were interwoven to facilitate an in-depth exploration of the intricate interplay between the physical body and the realm of consciousness—to promote balance, resilience, and inner strength. The idea was to use these developed movement sequences as a means of “self-care,” to release stress and anxiety alongside energizing one’s body. The chakra-DMT model can be used as a potent tool for self-regulation and self-reflection. It could become another channel that participants can access to lead calmer lives while enhancing mental alertness and attunement to their inner being enabling centered internal and external interactions.

Body Preparatory Sequences

Following a comprehensive warm-up encompassing isolated body parts movements and cohesive whole-body motions, participants embarked on a series of movement-building and development activities. Within this phase, they accessed their individual movement lexicon by engaging in activities centered around body shapes and transitional motions, adeptly utilizing varying levels and directions in their surrounding space. Additionally, participants explored diverse movement qualities inspired by Laban principles to play with and bring contrasts into their movement language. Throughout, participants were guided to cultivate a heightened state of awareness, maintaining keen observance of the emergent connections in the body-mind continuum.

Root Chakra (*muladhara*)—Grounding with the Earth Element

Commencing with a metaphorical exploration, participants went through a kinesthetic journey embodying the metaphor of a “tree” through movement improvisation. This movement experience was aimed at evoking a profound sense of rootedness and grounded ascension, within the spatial realm, effectively emulating the growth of branches and trunk. Particular emphasis was placed on the dynamic engagement of the lower body, intensifying its connection to the earth’s energy via purposeful movements. After this experiential phase, participants transitioned seamlessly into an artistic expression, encapsulating their journey through the medium of visual art.

In the next segment, participants transitioned into a diverse array of seated postures and configurations—each transition punctuated by deliberate expanding and contracting body shapes. During this phase, participants keenly attuned themselves to the earth’s supportive presence, enabling a heightened awareness of its role in bolstering specific regions of the body. This unity with the earth’s energy was sustained as participants ascended into vertical standing positions and related to the floor in various ways with their feet. Their deliberate motions encompassed slow walks in diverse directions, fluid glides across the floor, attuned body balancing on varied regions of the feet, weight shifts from one leg to another, bouncing their bodies in gentle rhythms with bent knees on parallel feet, and stamping their feet to rhythmic music, all the while befriending the earth. The overarching goal was to bring about an intimate connection with the earth’s steadfast solidity, thus nurturing a profound affinity between the self and the supportive grounding forces of the earth.

This experience has the potential to draw energy from the earth and support a resilient body by instilling a tangible bond with the earth, symbolizing unwavering support and serving as a poignant metaphor for life’s challenges, amid the feeling of belonging in the physical realm and rooting in the physical body. Such embodiment of stability and growth, rooted in mindful movement, holds promise for nurturing inner strength and adaptability.

Sacral Chakra (*svadhisthana*)—Flowing with Water Element

In this segment, participants became the essence of water, commencing with moving their hands gently in a flowy wave-like manner and sequentially extending the same motion to other body parts to embody ripples and waves of different kinds and intensities. With closed eyes, they embodied the fluidity and softness of water, evoking a sense of being encompassed and filled by its presence. Upon reopening their eyes, participants further engaged with this fluidity and let their movements flow into varied directions in space. Subsequently, participants engaged in a free association exercise to harmonize words and movements to express their identity (*Who they were?*), emotions (*How they felt?*), possessions (*What they had?*), capabilities (*What they could do?*), and aspirations (*What they wanted in their lives for themselves?*). This endeavor facilitated an intimate connection with their personal needs and desires while also asserting their place as stakeholders in the world.

The profound synergy between the water element and this activity highlighted the ability to access and purify emotional, physical, and social barriers—facilitating growth. This process of embracing fluidity and transformation enhances resilience by encouraging adaptive self-expression and allowing the release of blockages.

Solar Plexus Chakra (*Manipura*)—Igniting with Fire Element

Participants underwent a creative visualization in which they envisioned warm sunlight enveloping their entire bodies. They embraced this radiance by initially exploring a small kinesphere around them with their hands, akin to an aura, which expanded to a larger kinesphere and eventually to broad, expansive movements. Guided by visualizations such as “the sun shines for you, on you, within you, around you, at you, over you, under you, into you and through you,” they were able to harness the sun’s vitality within their being.

In the latter half of the activity, participants channeled this accumulated sun energy into their movements, propelling it outward in various directions through their palms and fingers, set to rhythmic music. This dynamic enactment highlighted the potent force of sun/fire/heat elements, symbolizing the positive energy radiating into space and shared with others in their lives. Through this process of harnessing and disseminating the fire’s energy, akin to the sun’s metaphorical power, participants fortified their personal power and invigorated their physical bodies.

This embodiment of gathering energy and sharing it echoes the concept of resilience, reflecting the capacity to draw forth inner strength and distribute it outward—especially when life throws challenges at us. Just as the sun’s energy disperses in all directions, participants learn to embrace these challenges, transform them into positive forces, and illuminate their lives and those around them.

Heart Chakra (*Anahata*)—Balancing with Air Element

This segment focused on activating the heart chakra, nurturing self-love, and the expression of love toward others. Initially, participants observed their palms, hands, and fingers, moving them in deliberate slow motion, cultivating a sense of gratitude and love for these functional, creative and expressive parts of their being. Through mindful movement, they developed an ability to cherish their hands, embracing their beauty while in motion, interspersed with stillness.

Participants also used their palms to envelop their bodies in a metaphorical “garment of love.” By touching and feeling each part of their bodies, they associated words like tenderness, kindness, and support, effectively nurturing a profound connection with themselves. This experience culminated with both palms resting on the heart center, breathing in love and breathing out love. After rubbing their palms gently, they made a small, imaginary ball of love energy with their palms and played with it in space, making it bigger and bigger, where it enveloped all the people they loved. This practice of channeling love outward and within, led to the creation of spiraling energy fields with the gentle motion of their arms flowing through space. The group also sent out love

to each person in the group individually, expressing love through their entire bodies, especially using hand gestures and facial expressions.

This practice not only underscores the cultivation of self-love and compassionate energy toward others but also resonates with the concept of resilience through loving kindness. By cultivating an expansive, outward-directed flow of love, participants created a powerful inner strength—a force that can navigate challenges with compassion, rekindle spirits, and support both themselves and others during times of adversity.

Throat Chakra (*Vishuddha*)—Expressing with ether Element

During the initial part of this phase, participants engaged in a series of voice and breath centric activities. To explore their vocal range, they sang the seven basic Indian classical musical notes (sa, re, ga, ma, . . .), delving into diverse pitches and tones. Guided by their palms moving upward and downward, they traversed the “aaroan and avarohan” (Indian musical notes in ascending and descending order of scale), establishing a connection between their voices and breathing patterns. In further vocal exploration, participants ventured into playful improvisation with gibberish sounds, partaking in a “follow the leader” exercise to echo one another’s verbal sounds. They eventually created varied movement patterns in relation to different vocal sounds, creating a landscape of sound-movement sequences. Once they became comfortable with making different sounds, they learned to say “yes” and “no” to each other with different feelings, tones and intensities, involving the body if the need arose. As a culmination, the “triangle of truth” activity emerged, prompting participants to vocalize and share their past, present, and future life narratives through a verbal-physical synchronous activity. This engagement with their individual voices, housed within the throat chakra, illuminated their pivotal role in articulating thoughts, emotions, needs, and desires within the group dynamic.

This kind of voice work combined with body gestures encapsulates a microcosm of resilience-building, enhances creative self-expression and fortifies one’s capacity to communicate and navigate life’s complexities. This empowerment, akin to a resonant note, emerges as a harmonious thread that weaves through the tapestry of personal and collective resilience.

Third-Eye Chakra (*Ajna*)—Illuminating with Light Element

In this segment, after tapping, gently massaging the forehead with their fingers, and developing an awareness of their “third-eye” area on the forehead between the eyes, participants went through different kinds of eye movements, from the Indian classical dance repertoire. As they gained more sensitivity of their forehead and specifically the third eye area, they were requested to close their eyes and let their concentration and focus be only on that area while being aware of any forms, colors, shapes, or images that arose for them. This process of receptive “active dreaming” was sustained with tranquil breathing, followed by translating these inner visuals, produced in the mind’s eye, into expressive movement and verbal reflection, exploring their personal significance and resonance.

In the next stage, they progressed into “space-time” travel, in which they had to lean against a wall with their backs, close their eyes, and experience their current life as objective, detached outsiders. This progressed into envisioning their lives 7 years ahead—visualizing changes in surroundings, interpersonal interactions, and professional roles. Seated on chairs with their feet grounded, this dynamic segment allowed for an embodied alignment with their future vision. The culmination involved sharing personal insights through verbal reflections within the group, resulting in a collective understanding.

This segment taps into inner realms and underscores the potential for resilience development. Through these introspective exercises, participants cultivate a profound connection with their present selves and envisage a future grounded in intention and possibility. This process cultivates an adaptable mindset—a vital facet of resilience—empowering individuals to navigate life’s intricate fabric with heightened awareness and conscious choices.

Crown Chakra (*Sahasrara*)—Transcending with Universal Light

Following the crown chakra meditation, participants laid down on the floor on their backs with their eyes closed and experienced a guided visualization. They envisioned and experienced each body part as light as a feather, capable of floating weightlessly. As they felt their whole body lighten—they had to think of their body as a fluffy cloud floating in the wind—they could decide how high they wanted their body to float in space, like the cloud moving upward gently, feeling the solid mass of their flesh left behind. The idea was to enjoy the liberating experience of an imaginary levitation, body floating, flowing, flying in space, experiencing weightlessness with no gravity to hold the physical self down. After a serene and slow descent, they returned to earth within their bodies, gradually experiencing their weight on the floor. They then felt the heaviness of each part of their body almost sinking into the floor, gradually opening their eyes, sitting up, and verbally processing what they experienced in the imaginary levitation.

This type of experience not only induces a sense of bodily release and liberation but also parallels the journey of resilience. Just as participants shed the constraints of gravity, they metaphorically shed mental and emotional burdens, emerging empowered to navigate life’s challenges with renewed lightness and adaptability.

The Chakra Dance

Concluding the session, participants engaged in a chakra dance sequence, which was a culmination and integration of their entire chakra experience. In the dance, they synchronized their movements with the specific chakra—for instance, moving their feet/legs for the root chakra and their pelvis for the sacral chakra and so on, moving on to a whole-body chakra dance. The chakra dance extended for approximately 10 to 15 minutes, helping them tune to the different energy centers within their bodies, in a flow. Post workshop, the idea was to use these movement rituals in their daily life to embody and enhance their awareness of the chakras, reminding themselves of all that could be

harnessed through the system as a self-care sequence, acting both as a protective shield and as a way to release the stressors and anxieties that they may be carrying.

Discussion

The multidimensional chakra-imbued therapeutic movement sequence model presented in this article offers a pioneering approach to holistic healing, seamlessly combining DMT activities with the chakra system. Integrating these two modalities introduces a dynamic framework that centers around the balance and activation of the seven chakras: root chakra (*muladhara*), sacral chakra (*svadhisthana*), solar plexus chakra (*manipura*), heart chakra (*anahata*), throat chakra (*vishuddha*), third-eye chakra (*ajna*), and the crown chakra (*sahasrara*).

The insights garnered from participants' verbal reflections, meticulously documented, and the collected self-reports after the sessions reveal a consensus among individuals. Their shared experiences shed light on the model's capacity to make the intangible chakras tangible through daily practice of the same. The revelation of heightened self-awareness, the connection between emotions and bodily sensations, and the unveiling of deeper layers of self were recurring themes. Kanika's (to protect anonymity, the names of all participants have been changed) testimony stating, "Understanding Chakras through movement practices is a great way to release emotional responses," resonates with the transformative potential of this integration. This sentiment underscores the notion that chakra awareness through movement practices serve as a catalyst for emotional release and personal growth.

Remarkably, another participant, Rhea stated that "Chakras and movement therapy go hand in hand," revealing that the fusion of chakra knowledge and movement not only expands self-awareness but also nurtures inner emotional strength. This aligns with the fact that nearly half of the participants had a history of mood or anxiety disorders or struggled with boundary-setting and lingering memories. Empirical investigations have revealed that DMT operates as an efficacious therapeutic modality, effectively catering to individuals dealing with anxiety (Ritter & Low, 1996). The present model appears to provide a vital tool to address such challenges effectively, as evidenced by Shruti, a participant who stated that the chakra module provided "a lot of insight into where the roots of most of my physical mental health issues stem from."

A distinct facet of DMT involves its capacity to cultivate resilience through shared movement experiences (Payne et al., 2019). Mayank, a participant from the workshop stated, "Initially my focus centered on the root and sacral chakras due to imbalances in those areas stemming from childhood trauma. Through consistent practice and guidance, I gradually addressed rigidity, instability and a lingering sense of loss. Strengthening these areas was a game-changer, especially during the tumultuous times of the pandemic, aiding in my bounce-back from career setbacks." Another participant, Sara, a client of Kashyap, undergoing chemotherapy for colon cancer, during a individual movement therapy session, articulated that she found chakra-based movement work to be profoundly transformative. She stated, "While exploring different chakras, I uncovered deep-seated issues. I focused on forgiveness with my root chakra,

using grounding techniques and this practice has notably helped me build resilience—mentally, physically, and emotionally. The specific movement patterns for each chakra played a key role in this transformation and the ongoing practice is helping me navigate the challenges of my healing journey with greater strength and clarity.”

Particularly noteworthy is the participants’ expressed intent to continue practicing movements associated with solar plexus chakra (*manipura*) and root chakra (*muladhara*)—underscoring the relevance of these energy centers in facilitating the embodiment of harnessing and sharing positive energy and experiencing grounding.

The participants’ predominantly female composition further highlights the approach’s relevance in addressing their holistic wellness needs. Their preferred chakra associations complemented the model’s impact on the participants’ understanding of the chakras. The sacral (*svadhithana*) and crown (*sahasrara*) chakras emerged as favorites, followed closely by the solar plexus (*manipura*), root chakra (*muladhara*) and throat (*vishuddha*) chakras. This alignment between preferred chakras and embodied experiences reinforces the model’s ability to resonate on a personal and transformative level.

Therefore, the multidimensional chakra-imbued therapeutic movement sequence model not only displays a harmonious convergence of ancient Eastern knowledge systems and philosophies with contemporary therapeutic techniques, which not only brings about a heightened awareness of inner energies but also resonates with resilience-building. Further research and application are warranted to extend the understanding of this promising model’s potential impact on holistic wellness and its contribution to the field of integrated therapeutic practices.

Conclusion

Integrating movement and chakra awareness offers an innovative fusion model that portrays the potential to cultivate stability, inner strength, and heightened self-awareness. Through the experiential exploration of each chakra’s essence within the physical body and its energy centers, participants forge a meaningful connection with themselves and their surroundings, nurturing holistic well-being and self-discovery. The resonance of participants’ expressions and preferences underscores the movement sequence model’s potency in driving transformative growth and promoting wellness by amalgamating movement therapy and chakra awareness. This pioneering approach highlights the profound impact of embodied practices in nurturing resilience and personal development.

Nonetheless, certain limitations are pertinent to this informal study. The subjective experiences were captured within various small groups, limiting the results’ generalizability to all populations. Further formalized research is required to fully comprehend the model’s potential in clinical settings. The model’s promise calls for future investigations involving larger samples and objective measurements within clinical environments, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of its impact on holistic wellness and its valuable contribution to the realm of integrated therapeutic practices.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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