

## **Book Review: Bailey, Sally, and Dickinson, Paige, *The Drama Therapy Decision Tree: Connecting Drama Therapy Interventions to Treatment***

**书评：Bailey Sally 与 Dickinson Paige 合著《戏剧治疗决策树：  
整合戏剧治疗干预与治疗》**

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*The Drama Therapy Decision Tree: Connecting Drama Therapy Interventions to Treatment* (2024, Intellect), written by Sally Bailey, director of the Drama Therapy Program and professor of theater at Kansas State University, and Paige Dickinson, associate professor of the Creative Arts Collegium at Eckerd College in St Petersburg Florida, provides a comprehensive baseline and practical guide for new as well as seasoned practitioners of drama therapy. The text offers solid footing upon which clinicians may climb through and gain foundational access to the various concepts, orientations, models, and approaches of drama therapy. Sturdy branches supporting our unique approaches to the work are specified and strengthened throughout the text, creating opportunity to go out on a limb and consider other synergistic relationships that drama therapy simultaneously engages.

Designed mostly for forming and facilitating groups operating in medical or mental health settings, the text begins by embodying principles of drama therapy within other models of psychotherapy, reminding us that the rhythms, processes, and dynamics of drama are inherently therapeutic and, when applied in treatment, becomes a powerful agent of adaptation, change, and growth. The pragmatic guide draws from Renee Emunah's five-phase model of drama therapy in conjunction with Yalom's five-stage model of group development in psychotherapy, constructing a coordinated outline that engages, exercises, and ideally remediates neurological functions of cognition, emotion, and behavior. The authors methodically demonstrate how establishing concrete frameworks within an understanding of these primary processes allows the drama therapy group to serve as an increasingly powerful vessel, prompting more efficient processing of client-provided content.

For each of the five phases discussed, a different population with a specific diagnosis is presented, providing understanding for how motor, executive, sensory, emotional, perceptual, behavioral, global, and social functions of participating group members may emerge within each phase of treatment in relation to the particular diagnoses under examination. Along with a thorough discussion of how these factors might play out in group and how they can be addressed, ethical and cultural considerations for structuring an effective approach are explored throughout each phase as well.

Sally Bailey's drama therapy pie (p. 34) organizes a number of documented drama therapy models within a manageable context for choosing appropriate interventions, and many of the section headings within chapters are framed by questions regarding what the therapist should or might do, manifesting an informed and active approach toward

putting together a plan of intervention for a specific population. Pragmatic examples for treatment planning are numerous, and the questions that prompt consideration of functional analysis and treatment assessment are extremely helpful as well.

In this light, the text seems like an especially useful tool for new practitioners and students who are training in the field of drama therapy, providing systematic models and considerations for treatment planning, support for choosing which of the various drama therapy interventions to implement, and a methodology for evaluating their impact on treatment. I also found the book to be highly informative and affirming of my 35 years of practice as an individual and group drama therapist.

Included within each phase of treatment are suggestions for warm-up activities and drama games that address the range of neurological, cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioral circumstances likely to be encountered when working with a particular population. Although many of these relatively simple and fun games are easily recognizable to folks who have participated in theater and drama groups, many of those named in the text were not familiar to me, and there is little follow-up in the text on how to facilitate these important games and warm-ups.

Looking toward the detailed appendices summarizing key themes, concepts, and systems discussed throughout the text, I had hoped to find one listing all the warm-up activities and drama games mentioned, followed by simple instructions for each, a sentence or two, describing how to facilitate them. Upon further exploration, I discovered that although no such appendix was included in the text, the publisher offers online access at [Intellectbooks.com](http://Intellectbooks.com), maintaining a site that includes 190 pages describing the aforementioned drama games in detail, as well as a list of de-roling activities also referred to in the book.

Along with the wealth of information regarding criteria for structuring interventions that address the physiological, neurological, cognitive, executive, emotional, and behavioral regulation of group participants, the authors reiterate the need for creativity and spontaneity as a guiding force for using drama therapy as a treatment modality. They state, “We believe everyone is creative, should have the opportunity to experience drama therapy, and feel that they belong in the creative space” (p. 359).

Drama therapy is often thought of as a fun and even whimsical approach to treatment, and it is. The tremendous progress made over the last 30 years regarding research in neuroscience has also demonstrated the ability of drama therapy to directly and positively impact a wide range of neurological and interrelated realms of functioning (Chasen, 2014). *The Drama Therapy Decision Tree: Connecting Drama Therapy Interventions to Treatment* provides specific guidance and support with how to understand and integrate the two, the play and the neuroscience behind it, in the service of structuring an approach to drama therapy group treatment that maximizes impact and empowers its participants to heal.

## About the Author

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## **Reference**

Chasen, L. (2014). *Engaging mirror neurons to inspire connection and social emotional development in children and teens on the autism spectrum: Theory into practice through drama therapy*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.