

## Creative Arts Therapies Practice in Times of COVID-19: An international Survey

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**Introduction:** In March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared that COVID-19 was a pandemic with a global impact. Accordingly, containment measures were adopted in many countries, including the obligation for any citizen to avoid unnecessary person-to-person interactions and social gatherings. Hence, mental health care providers, including creative arts therapies (CAT), had to shift from in-person therapy sessions to remote tele-therapy using telecommunication technologies.

**Aim and method:** The overarching purpose of this survey study was to examine (a) how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted CAT's clinical practice around the world, and (b) what characterizes their practice. Specifically, we aimed to identify reasons for changes in practice, any change in the use of the arts in therapy, helpful sources, and the role of therapists' creative self-efficacy in adapting to changes. The survey included closed questions together with open-ended questions intended to provide detailed examples of the potential and challenges in moving to online CAT practice.

**Results:** 1,330 participated in the survey worldwide, almost half of the sample reported that their therapeutic practice changed significantly, and that prior to COVID-19 their typical clinical work involved their art significantly more than during COVID-19. The results also showed a significant difference between the different modalities in their adaptation to the online practice. Lastly, creative self-efficacy (belief in the ability to be creative) correlated with change in practice so that therapists who scored high on creative self-efficacy reported less significant differences in their online-practice during COVID-19. The level of feeling comfortable with basic computer skill is another significant factor in the adaptation to the online practice. The thematic analysis revealed four major themes concerning online practice during Covid-19 breakout: the potential of Tele-CAT; the challenges of Tele-CAT; adaptations for Tele-CAT; future perspectives. The implications of our findings to practice, training, and research will be discussed.

### Short biography

**Rinat Feniger-Schaal, Ph.D.**, is a lecturer and a researcher at the School Of Creative Arts Therapies and leading the Master's program for Dramatherapy at the University of Haifa. She is also a research fellow at the Center for the Study of Child Development. Dr. Feniger Schaal is a registered dramatherapist and holds a master's in Psychoanalytic Developmental Psychology, and a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology. Her main research interests are in the areas connecting research and clinical work, focusing mainly on play, drama and movement. Dr. Feniger-Schaal has an extensive clinical experience as a dramatherapist in the public and private practice, specialising in working with people with cognitive impairment and mental health problems.

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**Shoshi Keisari**, PhD, is a drama therapist and a scholar in the field of creative arts therapies and clinical gerontology. She is a lecturer and supervisor at Haifa University, Tel Hai Academic College, and the Israeli Institute of Psychotherapeutic Playback Theatre. Her doctoral research concentrated on the integration of drama therapy, playback theatre, and life-review with older adults. These days she is doing her post-doc research at the Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Education and Applied Psychology in University of Padua, Italy. She published several papers in the field, lectured, and conducted workshops in various conferences in Israel and around the world. A co-author of the book: *An Introduction to Psychotherapeutic Playback Theatre: The Hall of Mirrors on Stage*.

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**Hod Orkibi**, PhD, is a certified psychodrama therapist, a tenured Senior Lecturer and the Chair of the Doctoral Studies Committee at the School of Creative Arts Therapies, University of Haifa, Israel. His research areas include psychodrama/drama therapy, creativity, and well-being; therapy process and outcomes; arts-based community rehabilitation; positive psychology; and therapists training. Hod has secured several competitive grant funds, has published over 50 articles in refereed journals, and his work has been presented at international conferences. He is a member of the Israeli Association for Arts Therapies (YAHAT) and Israeli Association for Psychodrama; former Chair of the Israeli Higher Council for Creative Arts Therapies; and currently an Executive Committee member and Council representative of the Society for the Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts (Division 10 of the American Psychological Association).

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