

## **The CoActive Therapeutic Theater Model: Exploring the Script**

**Laura Wood & Dave Mowers**

The CoActive Therapeutic Theater model, occupies a transformative space at the intersection of therapeutic and community theater, bridging traditional medical recovery models with inclusive, alternative methodologies. Channeling Hessel's ethos of 'create to resist and resist to create,' CoATT offers a creative resistance against traditional perceptions around mental health. In doing so, it answers the urgent call for arts therapists to 'take their place' in today's challenging contexts, pushing boundaries, and redefining therapeutic theater's potential.

In this workshop, attendees will be introduced to the manualized model and its six foundational principles. Next, participants will immerse themselves in a staged cold reading of a CoATT play that was co-created with individuals navigating the complexities of schizophrenia and persistent mental conditions and reflect on the embodied experience of reading the play. This exploration into the model's broader implications becomes particularly significant given the historical skepticism of drama therapy's efficacy with schizophrenic individuals. Finally preliminary outcomes from a National Endowment for the Arts funded study on this approach will be shared. By challenging these perceptions and emphasizing theater's transformative potential, this workshop not only showcases the therapeutic power of performance but also propels the field into a new era of understanding and inclusion.

Finally, implications of the CoATT model as a manualized practice will be considered, thus opening avenues for replicability and measurement within the realm of therapeutic theater.

## Biography

**Laura L. Wood**, PhD, is an Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling and Drama Therapy program at Lesley University. With a deep commitment to the field, her global contributions through teaching, lectures, and consultations have advanced the understanding and practice of drama therapy and creativity in counseling.

**Dave Mowers**, MA, trained at New York University drama therapy program under Robert Landy, later joining the faculty. He developed and produced five seasons of therapeutic theatre under the program title ...as Performance. He is the co-creator of the CoActive Therapeutic Theatre Model.

## Recent publications and conference presentations

**Wood, L. L. and Mowers, D. (2023).** Dramatherapy and Recovery: *The CoActive Therapeutic Theatre Model and Manual*. Routledge, United Kingdom.

**Wood, L. L., McAndrew, L., & Frydman, J. S. (2021).** Will to meaning: A pilot study on teaching existential theory through creative techniques. *Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision*, 14(4), 6.

**Wood, L. L., & Mowers, D. (2019).** The Co-Active Therapeutic theatre model: A manualized approach to creating therapeutic theatre with persons in recovery. *Drama Therapy Review*, 5(2), 217-234.

**Wood, L. L., & Mowers, D. (2023).** The Co-Active Therapeutic Theatre Model. Presentation The World Alliance of Drama Therapy Conference. Amersfort, Netherlands

**Cheung, A., Reid-Varley, W. B., Chiang, M., de Villemejjane, M., Wood, L. L., Butler, J. D., & Fan, X.** (2021). Dual diagnosis theatre: A pilot drama therapy program for individuals with serious mental illness and substance use disorder. *Schizophrenia research*, 230, 95-97.