



“No pose no gesture is beautiful in itself. Every movement is beautiful only when it is expressed truthfully and sincerely»

Isadora Duncan

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Newsletter February 2025

# What makes Dance Movement Therapy effective?

What exactly makes dance therapy effective

Research by Prof. Dr. Sabine Koch (Heidelberg) has shown that the body-mind connection, imagination, expression, nonverbal communication, creativity, playfulness, creativity, and transpersonal aspects are important factors. These factors illustrate that dance therapy works on several levels: physical, emotional, social, and cognitive. It makes change tangible, not just conceptual.

Below, we will give you two examples of how effective factors are described (in light color) and how they are experienced by clients

.The body as a means of expression Dance opens up the possibility of expressing thoughts and feelings nonverbally. Movement creates new ways of making experiences visible and encountering oneself on a deeper level.

I stand barefoot on the floor, feeling the coolness beneath my feet. I breathe in. I breathe out. The music begins, a gentle rhythm, and I feel myself swaying to the music. At first hesitantly and very carefully, then more courageously and confidently.

I let my arms speak, my feet tell their own story. I don't need words—my body knows what it wants to express, I feel and understand it! With every movement, something inside me is released. Thoughts that were holding me back just a moment ago fade away or transform into new insights. Feelings that I can hardly put into words become clearer and more tangible.

Joy, sadness, longing – everything has a place in this movement. Suddenly, I am no longer afraid of them. They are simply there, alive within me. I am amazed, touched. Is it because they flow instead of getting caught up in my thoughts? I feel myself, more deeply and clearly than I have in a long time.

This dance allows me to understand myself – by experiencing without having to explain myself. In movement, I find ways to myself. As I express myself, I open up from within in a pleasant, almost gentle way. It's like meeting myself – honest, raw, full of life.

And that is exactly what dance means to me: an expression of myself, a journey inward, a moment of freedom.

Promoting body awareness and self-perception (body mind). Dancing means feeling yourself intensely. Through conscious movement, we learn to perceive our bodies mindfully, recognize tensions, and develop a new body awareness. In this way, dance therapy strengthens self-image and inner balance, creating a connection between body and mind.

And here is a testimonial:

*I step into the room, the air is warm, and soft light streams through the windows. My heart beats a little faster—not out of nervousness, but out of anticipation. I know that a special moment awaits me here: time just for me, to connect with myself and my body.*

*The music begins, I feel the calm rhythm that carries me away, lets me sway. My movements flow – one transitions seamlessly into the next, like a river winding its way through the landscape. It feels like I'm drifting in an invisible stream. Every movement is different – sometimes light, sometimes full of resistance. I feel my feet carrying me safely, my arms widening, my breath flowing deep into me.*

*Then comes a moment of realization. My back is tense, my shoulders are hunched. I wouldn't have noticed if I hadn't been so mindful of my body. So I let go – slowly, consciously. With every movement, the tension flows out of me, as if the dance is showing me how to free myself.*

*It's like rediscovering my body – its strength, its limits, its stories. I feel myself in a way that I often forget in everyday life. No distractions, no thoughts, just this immediate experience.*

*When the music fades, I stand still for a moment. My heart is beating more calmly, my breathing is deep. I feel centered, clear, at one with myself: every part of my body is awake and connected to the others. And I know that I have just learned something valuable – about my body, about myself as a whole person*

#### **TAKEAWAY**

*Dance Movement Therapy has a holistic effect – physical, emotional, social, and cognitive – and enables profound change because it makes experiences not only mentally accessible but also immediately physically tangible.*

*Movement gives rise to new forms of expression, a more intense body awareness, and a stronger connection between*

*body and mind, which promote self-awareness, emotional processing, and inner balance.*

Warm regards from ZOE SCHOOL and welcome to February!

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