

Dancing with Loss

Dance Movement Psychotherapy for Older Persons with Dementia

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Welcome to our DMP Session

- Who are Sean, Peter, Rose, Lily and Amy*?
- Who are Eve and Bridget?
- Why were they selected?
- Who are the DMP, co-worker, CMHT?
- How did the DMP group meet?
- Where? How long was the process?

Key Concepts

- What is dementia?
- Loss in Psychotherapy for Older Persons: Freud, Klein, Abraham, Bowlby, Ardern, Kitwood
- Sharing two definitions for DMP
- DMP and Dementia: Coaten
- The DMP group and Loss: Payne

DMP Clinical Examples

- What were our time and space boundaries?
- Amy: Why can't we remember our names? (4)
- Sean: The machine at work. (4)
- Lily: I want to get up and dance but others will think it is 'a waste of time'. (11)
- Peter: I would like to see what it is. (13)
- Peter: I am not lost, I just feel lost. (16)
- Sean: The people in our group have changed, and also the material that we use has changed. (16)
- Bridget: I lost a pair of scissors (20)
- The group realised that in the experience of loss, some things can be found.

“Peter passed away last night...”

“...you must not tell the group until I have spoken with his family.” (Angela)

The loss was felt by all.



Sean’s arms
moved
like a bird
taking a slow,
sustained flight.

It was as if Peter
was this bird,
taking flight from
the group. (22)

In Memory of Peter



Loss is Heavy

- I moved to start letting this weight go, allowing it to transform.
- The dance was painful. As Payne (2006) suggests, I was exercising the capacity to track my own feelings and movement in the therapeutic relationship, promoting an awareness of my own unconscious somatic countertransference.

Identifying Losses

- **Loss of security** and uncertainty while experiencing a new situation.
- **Loss of memory** and **cognitive abilities**.
- **Loss for performing daily tasks** (Greene, 2004), was visibly evidenced by Sean showing the partial physical loss of his two fingers.
- **Loss of independence** (Ardern, 2004).
- Bridget's loss of a pair of scissors and a wedding gift echo what Kitwood (1999) refers to as an **old grief** erupting to the present that brings **overwhelming** feelings of sorrow and **loss** in the client.
- **Loss of the group space**.
- **Loss of a group member**.

Limitations

- CORE questionnaires instead of CORE-10
- Discharges
- Client's inability to answer questionnaire
- Day applied

Projection

- Qualitative research
- Coping with loss
- Identifying losses
- Consider 'Creative Care' approach
- DCM
- CORE-10

Loss in a DMP group with dementia is experienced on many levels. Both the client and therapist feel it. **Fear of loss** may **touch our deepest fears** and force us, as a group, to observe issues that could have been long neglected. It is very important to create a support network through work with DMP in a multi-disciplinary team to provide adequate **support for clients with dementia** in terms of them adapting to life's challenges and losses, past and present. **Being lost, in a sense, could be an invitation to adapt to the unknown when embarking in a DMP process**, and the therapist needs to develop her skills to be able to respond and support clients with dementia, fulfilling their particular needs.

Garfias, A. S. Dancing with Loss: Dance Movement Psychotherapy for Older Persons with Dementia. Unpublished Master's Thesis. Goldsmiths College, London University, 2010.