



Caring in Motion: DanceCare's Embodied Pedagogies for Socio-Emotional Support and Resilience — An Arts-Based Model for Long-Term Caregiver Education

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This presentation introduces *DanceCare*, a KA220 Adult Education Erasmus+ project funded by the European Union and coordinated by INRCA (Istituto Nazionale di Riposo e Cura per Anziani), in collaboration with the European Association Dance Movement Therapy (EADMT) and other European partners. The project developed and evaluated a hybrid (on- and offline) intermodal educational program integrating conscious and creative movement, somatic practices and neuroscience through Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) and WiseMotion (WM) methods. Its aim is to reduce stress load and support the socio-emotional well-being of long-term caregivers of older adults. Situated within the field of arts therapies education, the *DanceCare* training program is grounded in an intermodal methodology combining DMT, WM method, somatic practices, music, art therapy and neuroscience principles.

Rooted in cyclical processes of repetition and return, the *DanceCare* training program invites caregivers into embodied rituals—breathing, humming, singing, movement sequences, improvisations, story-telling, drawing, working with clay, and somatic reflection—that function both as tools for self-regulation and reconnection with memory, sensation, and meaning. These practices resonate with the conference's thematic connection to *Ithaca*, not only as a destination, but as a metaphor for the inner journey and the transformation through repeated encounters. This cyclical process of return becomes a source of resilience, enabling caregivers to reorient themselves within the demands of care and to reconnect with their own needs and identities.

The mixed-methods evaluation design combined quantitative pre/post measures with qualitative, arts-based and embodied research, allowing for a layered understanding of the



caregivers' experiences. Our hypothesis is that repeated movement-based encounters and art-based approaches enhance stress regulation, body awareness, and relational presence. By framing repetition as both a pedagogical and therapeutic gesture, the *DanceCare* project contributes to current discourses on how arts therapies can support sustainable care practices and embodied resilience in adult and lifelong learning contexts.

Biography

Rosa-María Rodríguez-Jiménez, PhD, is a full professor and senior researcher specializing in experiential learning, dance and embodiment in clinical and socio-educational contexts. She holds a BSc and a PhD in Atmospheric Physics, and degrees in Psychology and Special Education. With extensive training in Dance, she is a full member of the Spanish DMT Association and currently serves as President of the European Dance Movement Therapy Association (EADMT), leading the *DanceCare* Erasmus+ project. She teaches at Universidad Francisco de Vitoria (Spain), and lectures Research Methodology in the Master's Programme in Arts Therapies at Codarts (Netherlands), and Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona (Spain).

Theodora Bareka is a Social Scientist (BSc), Dance Movement Therapist (MA) and PhD candidate in Psychology (UoI, Greece). In recent years she has collaborated as Dance Movement Therapist with public/private institutions in various settings including day care centers, sociocultural centers, universities, and NGOs. She is a private practitioner and co-founder of NiMA-NGO. Theodora works with refugee/migrant teenagers, as well as diverse age groups, addressing mental health issues, intellectual and developmental disabilities and personal development. Her research focuses on Inclusive Dance Therapy Groups to promote refugee children's inclusion in education. She is researcher for EADMT's DanceCARE Erasmus+ project.



Recent Publications

Rodríguez-Jiménez, R.M., Carmona, M., García-Merino, S., Díaz-Ureña, G., & Lara-Bercial, P.J. (2022). **Embodied Learning for Well-Being, Self-Awareness, and Stress Regulation: A Randomized Trial with Engineering Students Using a Mixed-Method Approach.** *Education Sciences*, 12(2). <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12020111>

Rodríguez-Jiménez, R.M., Carmona, M., García-Merino, S., Díaz-Rivas, B., & Thuissard-Vasallo, I.J. (2022). **Stress, subjective wellbeing and selfknowledge in higher education teachers: A pilot study through bodyfulness approaches.** *PLoS ONE*, 17. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0278372>

Rodríguez-Jiménez, R.M. & Carmona, M. (2020). **Mixed methods for evaluating embodied processes in higher education.** In J. Tántia (Ed). *The Art and Science of embodied research design* (pp. 229-241). Editorial Routledge.

Zachou, E., Panhofer, H., & Bareka, T. (2022). **Metaphor and movement: exploring the unspoken with a group of frontline workers.** *Body, Movement and Dance in Psychotherapy*, 17(4), 326–342. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17432979.2022.2052185>

Bareka, T., Panhofer, H., & Rodriguez Cigaran, S. (2019). **Refugee children and body politics. The embodied political self and dance movement therapy.** *Body, Movement and Dance in Psychotherapy*, 14(2), 80–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17432979.2019.1614668>