



EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM OF ARTS THERAPIES EDUCATION



18TH EUROPEAN ARTS THERAPIES CONFERENCE

8-11 SEPTEMBER 2026

PULA, CROATIA

Widening the circle of repetition through the other: Psychotherapeutic Playback Theatre

רהחבת מעגל החזרתיות באמצעות האחר: פסיכותרפיה בתיאטרון לפייב ק

Ronen Kowalsky*

**** This workshop is now facilitated by Shoshi Keisari (see biography on page 3).***

This workshop introduces *Psychotherapeutic Playback Theatre* (PPT) as a group-analytic approach to drama therapy that combines aesthetic enactment with relational depth. In PPT, participants move between 'playing the other' and 'being played by the other', entering into experiential cycles of repetition that carry both personal and collective significance. These repetitions are not simply reenactments of remembered events, but embodied returns that generate a transitional space where trauma, loss, and disconnection can be re-integrated into the group's shared narrative

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The concept of *performative repetition* is central: through mirroring, resonance, and symbolic exchange, the group functions as a living archive of relational echoes. The analytic matrix of PPT transforms individual stories into communal enactments, in which subconscious material emerges, circulates, and is returned in new symbolic form. This process allows for empathic reparation, deepened emotional resonance, and the possibility of revisiting traumatic experiences without re-traumatization.

The workshop will combine theoretical framing with live experiential exploration. Participants will witness and take part in short PPT sequences that illustrate how condenser phenomena, resonance, and role exchange support both personal integration



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and collective transformation. In doing so, the workshop will highlight the therapeutic potential of theatre as a vehicle for intersubjective healing.

We propose that Psychotherapeutic Playback Theatre offers a unique contribution to the fields of drama therapy and group analysis by demonstrating how embodied performance can widen the circle of repetition and create opportunities for repair. By engaging in cycles of 'self through other', participants and audiences alike are invited into a process where the private becomes communal, the unspeakable becomes expressible, and the fragmented is woven back into narrative continuity.

Biography

Ronen Kowalsky Supervising clinical psychologist. Co-Founder and Head of the Israeli Institute of Psychotherapeutic Playback Theater. Head of the Analytic Psychotherapeutic Playback Theater program in Winnicott Center, Tel Aviv. Supervisor & Lecturer at Winnicott Center. Acted, wrote and directed in various theaters. Established The Left Bank Theater Group, Tel - Aviv and Third Generation, a German-Israeli theater project. Won the European ARENA prize for young directors.

Recent Publications

Raz, N., Kowalsky, R., & Keisari, S., (2025). **MacKenzie and Livesley on Stage: Group Development through Psychotherapeutic Playback Theatre.** *The Arts in Psychotherapy* 95, 102344

Kowalsky, R., Raz, N., & Keisari, S. (2022). **An Introduction to Psychotherapeutic Playback Theatre.** New-York & London: Routledge.

Kowalsky, R., Keisari, S., & Raz, N., (2019). **Hall of Mirrors on Stage: An Introduction to Psychotherapeutic Playback Theater.** *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 66,101577.



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Shoshi Keisari, PhD, is Associate Professor at the University of Haifa, directs the Drama Therapy and Psychodrama Graduate Program. She is also a researcher with the Center for Research and Study of Aging, the Emili Sagol Creative Arts Therapies Research Center, and the Drama and Health Science Lab at the University of Haifa. Her research investigates playfulness and its neural mechanisms, drama therapy across the lifespan, playback theatre, and arts-based approaches for aging. Her studies are supported by the Israel Science Foundation and the National Science Foundation NSF–BSF.

Recent Publications

Golland, Y., Ben-David, B.M., Mather, M., & Keisari, S. (2025). **Playful brains: A possible neurobiological pathway to cognitive health in ageing.** *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 19, 1490864.

Keisari, S., Krueger, K.R., Ben-David, B.M., & Hainselin, M. (2024). **New horizon in improving ageing with improvisational theatre.** *Age and Ageing*, 53(5), afae087.