

## **CoActive Therapeutic Theater: A manualized model with five years of findings**

**Laura Wood and Dave Mowers**

Therapeutic theater is the intentional use of playmaking and performance with specific therapeutic goals for an identified population. The CoActive Therapeutic Theater (CoATT) model is the first manualized form of therapeutic theater, creating a unique opportunity for replicability and measurement for the fields of drama therapy, creativity in counseling, arts in health, and other collaborating disciplines. With the international rise of theater in the arts in health movement the need for manualization and clarification of professional roles help provide clear pathways for cross-disciplinary collaboration and protection of participants. CoATT provides a straightforward way for professional collaboration that honors the unique scope of practice of various disciplines.

The model focuses on working with participants in different forms of recovery (substance use, eating disorders, medical trauma, etc.). Like the conference theme, the model moves away from autobiographical exploration of recovery and instead turns the participant focus outward by structuring a performance around the question: what is the theme of recovery you want to embody and share with the community at large? Using metaphor, multiplicity of participant voices, theatrical aesthetics, and manualized drama therapy exercises, public performances are co-actively created with participants and the drama therapist over the course of 14-16 weeks. This paper presentation will describe the theory that underpins the model, discuss the value of manualization, and present the seven movements that comprise the model. Finally, five years of data from various recovery populations will be highlighted. Implications and limitations of manualization will be discussed, as well as strategies for collaborating with various disciplines since as psychiatry, speech language pathology, arts in health, and other creative arts therapists will be noted.

### **Biography**

**Dr. Laura L. Wood, RDT/BC** is an Associate Professor at Lesley University in the Division of Expressive Therapies. Dr. Wood is a registered drama therapist, board certified trainer, licensed clinical mental health counselor, licensed creative arts therapist, and a certified child life specialist. Dr. Wood is the immediate Past-President of the North American Drama Therapy Association (NADTA). She specializes in treating different forms of recovery.

**Dave Mowers, MA, RDT** is a registered drama therapist and the Global Director for People Engagement at White and Case. He specializes in facilitating conversations about organizational and communication challenges. He also has a prominent directorial career spanning 30 years.

### **Recent publications and conference presentations**

#### **Publications**

Wood, L.L., Bryant, D., Sciricco, K., Datta, H., Alimonti, S. & Mowers, D. (2020). Aphasia Park Pilot Study: The CoActive Therapeutic Theater Model with clients in Aphasia recovery. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*.

Wood, L.L. & Mowers, D. (2019). The Co-Active Therapeutic Theater Model: A manualized approach to creating therapeutic theater with persons in recovery. *The Drama Therapy Review*.

#### **Presentations**

2018: (Wood, L.L. & Mowers, D). 'The CoActive Therapeutic Theater Model.' The North American Drama Therapy Conference. Kansas City, Missouri. (October 27,2018).

2018: (Wood, L.L) Keynote Address: 'All the world's a stage: Incorporating drama therapy in counseling practice.' New York State Mental Health Counselor's Association Conference. Albany, NY. (April, 2018).

2018: (Wood, L.L). Keynote Address: 'Me-not-me: Exploring Role in Drama Therapy.' The First Chilean Drama Therapy Encounter. Santiago, Chile. (March, 2018).