



Drama Therapy National Exam - FAQ:

1. Why a national exam? The process of creating a national exam provides a current review of the body of knowledge and competency areas in the field of drama therapy. This is useful for education purposes – whether or not the test is ultimately used. It also provides students who work on the project opportunities for research and test development experience. The NADT is currently researching implementation options. If implemented, a knowledge based exam would

1. Improve the integrity of the credentialing process in a professional environment where knowledge-based exams are the norm.
2. Allow drama therapists to establish the body of knowledge in the field.
3. Potentially allow drama therapists to take a licensure test geared toward the drama therapy knowledge and competencies --rather than taking licensure tests developed by other fields. (Note: this would require advocacy efforts on a state-by state basis.)
4. Increase advocacy options for licensure of drama therapists.

2. Will I have to take the exam? As part of the validity testing, drama therapists will be asked to voluntarily take an exam, but these results are not being scored on an individual level. They are being used to validate test questions. While participation in this is not required, it is greatly encouraged that all drama therapists take the test if they are able, as it is an opportunity to build the knowledge base and further advance the field. No decisions have yet been made about how an exam might be implemented and who might have to take it. Before implementation decisions are made, opportunities will exist for members to give input on these questions via surveys and conversations with the board.

3. Will it cost me anything? There are no costs to membership for the exam development process. There will be minor costs to the NADT organization for items such as postage and copying. The NADT is researching the costs associated with implementation and what costs a member might potentially bear in taking such an exam in their state or province. The NADT will be consulting with our membership before proceeding with implementation.

4. Is the NADT committed to offering a national exam at this time? The NADT board has agreed to the development of an exam test bank that incorporates the current body of knowledge in the field of drama therapy in the United States and Canada. The development process will take several years. During this time, the NADT board and committees will be reviewing past research and will be continuing the research to evaluate

1. Whether the resources and infrastructure exist for NADT to implement an exam and
2. Whether the NADT membership feels a knowledge based exam is in the best interest of the profession.

5. Does the NADT board support the exam process? While there are many questions to be answered in regard to implementation, the board fully supports Paige Dickinson and the research team in the exam development process. The board is committed to seeking solutions to implementation barriers and will continue to follow through in the interests of the members.

6. What is the value of developing an exam if it may not be implemented? The test provides information that will be helpful in determining core content areas that will be useful in guiding future accreditation purposes as well as areas in which we might want to encourage CE's.

7. Will a drama therapy exam allow me to be licensed in my state? We do not know the answer to this question. What we do know is that other creative arts therapy associations have successfully lobbied for members to use their exams to meet licensure equivalency in a few states. If a national drama therapy exam were to be implemented, there is a possibility that agreements could be made in some states that would allow the exam to qualify individuals for certain licenses. However, this would require significant efforts on the part of the RDTs residing in that state as well as members of the government affairs committee. In New York, it would be possible to petition the state to use a different exam in place of the current case study exam if the drama therapy community in that state feels that is appropriate. The NADT Government Affairs Committee is available to answer questions and assist in licensing efforts for all NADT members. They can be contacted at: governmentaffairs@nadt.org. (Licensure is bestowed by a state or providence and is the result of a law which recognizes an individual in a specified profession as qualified to practice. Registration is bestowed by a profession's organization and recognizes that a member has met the criteria of the organization.)

8. What happens when the exam is finished? The NADT board is researching this question. While many NADT members have contacted the board with support, questions and concerns about implementation, NADT plans to use a formal process to gather input from all members. In addition, the board will also be looking at the following questions: 1. What infrastructure is needed to implement an exam? 2. Does NADT have the personnel and financial resources to support the costs of implementation?

9. Does the NADT have the resources and infrastructure to proctor an exam? This is a question that is currently under research.

10. Why is the exam being developed if we don't know how it will be implemented? Discussions about the need for an exam have been occurring among drama therapy educators and NADT members for many years. Previous discussions have concluded that a drama therapy exam would be beneficial, but the NADT lacked the resources to create an exam. It is a multi-step process, with the first step being development and the second step being implementation. Because the development resources are available at this time, NADT has decided to move forward with the process.

11. Who is developing the exam? Paige Dickinson, PhD, RDT/BCT is the primary investigator. Paige has the training and skills in research and test development that are needed to develop an exam. The team will include qualified research assistants, including drama therapy students and at least two drama therapy educators.

12. Will Drama Therapy Educators and BCTs have input into the exam questions? All of the heads of approved drama therapy programs and BCTs will be invited to develop content area questions.

13. Are there other drama therapy exams in existence or development? New York state has a case study exam for drama therapists seeking LCAT licensure. Drama therapists did not develop and do not currently score the New York exam.

The Society for the Arts in Health Care has recently polled its members regarding the possibility of developing a credential and exam for artists to work in the health care field.

14. What If I have more questions? Additional questions can be directed to:
answers@nadt.org

Letter from Paige Dickinson, PhD, RDT/BCT to the NADT membership about the test development process:

7/5/10

Dear NADT Community,

The opportunity to develop a knowledge based exam for drama therapists has arrived. As Principle Investigator, I am enthusiastically writing to invite your participation and inform you of its lengthy and comprehensive process. The success of the exam is predicated on your involvement; however you are not required to take part in any stage. Here are the steps of test development and how you can become involved:

Step One: Assemble the Exam Development Team

Members who are interested in exam development research and want to be a part of the exam development team are asked to contact Paige Dickinson at dickinp@eckerd.edu by Monday July 12th, 2010. The development team will oversee the entire exam development process and will need to be able to make at least a two year commitment to the project. Responsibilities will include: talking with membership, developing survey, editing test questions, test validation proctoring, data entry, statistical analysis, etc. You do not have to have experience in this type of research, but you must have an interest in learning about how to do the research, interacting with many people, and be committed to the project.

Step Two: Develop, Conduct and Analyze the Results of a Practice Analysis

The Development Team will conduct a practice analysis to inform us of the major content areas we will need to address in the exam. A practice analysis includes survey responses only from practicing drama therapists and educators. This allows us to understand what drama therapists do on a day to day basis. This ensures that the exam represents the membership. All responses will be used in the analysis. Active RDTs (based on up-to-date membership and CE status) will be asked to complete an online survey during this step. For those of you who are unable to complete the survey online, we will send you the survey via the USPS upon your request.

Step Three: Test Question Development

All of the approved programs and BCTs will be invited to develop questions for the content areas that were derived from the practice analysis. During this phase, drama therapy trainers and educators will help to construct the exam by writing questions. All questions submitted will be examined for grammatical errors (i.e. double negatives, incomplete sentences). Questions will only be changed to fix such errors. All questions will be used in the validation studies.

Step Four: Construction of Sample Tests

The Development Team will categorize the questions into the content areas based on face validity. The number of questions in each content area is statistically driven and will be determined by the practice analysis. The number of questions in a given area is based on the amount of time that area is used by drama therapists in their work. Our goal is to compile enough questions in order to create at least 5 different sample tests.

Step Five: Validating the Exam

The entire membership will be invited to take the sample exam. This process, known as a validation study, will confirm whether the exam can differentiate between students who are studying drama therapy, graduates and practicing drama therapists, and help to weed out the bad questions so it is impossible to answer every question correctly.

This process is completely confidential, so members are not at risk if they do not do well on the test during the validation process. Our goal is to be able to offer the sample tests at several locations, over an extended period of time to make sure we can have as many members of the NADT take the exam as possible.

At anytime throughout this process, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

We are ready for Step One. If you are interested in working on the development team please let me know. The practice analysis survey will be in your email boxes soon.

Sincerely,
Paige Dickinson, PhD, RDT/BCT
Principle Investigator