





Schedules

NADTA 2026 Annual Conference

DAY- 1
29 October, 2026

Time	Topic
7:30 AM - 9:00 AM	Fireplace Room Registration/Breakfast - Exhibitor/Sponsor Track
7:30 AM - 9:00 AM	Fireplace Room Registration - Registration
8:30 AM - 9:00 AM	Alvarado Ballroom Breakfast - Meals & Breaks
9:00 AM - 10:30 AM	Alvarado Ballroom CHED Opening - CE Session By Chyela Rowe , Abbie Truax
9:00 AM - 10:30 AM	Alvarado Ballroom Table Setup Time - Exhibitor/Sponsor Track Attendees will be in a Welcome Event at this time. Exhibitors and Sponsors are able to set up at this time.
10:30 AM - 10:45 AM	Alvarado Atrium Break - Meals & Breaks
10:30 AM - 10:45 AM	Break - Exhibitor/Sponsor Track
10:45 AM - 1:45 PM	Table Setup Time - Exhibitor/Sponsor Track Attendees will be in a Welcome Event at this time. Exhibitors and Sponsors are able to set up at this time.
10:45 AM - 6:00 PM	Alvarado G

Holding the Whole Story: A Trauma-Informed Playback Theatre Four-Act Model for Collective Healing
– CE Session
By [Roni Alperin](#)

This full-day experiential workshop presents a trauma-informed Four-Act Playback Theatre model designed specifically for performance contexts. Grounded in drama therapy theory, somatic regulation, aesthetic distance, and Therapeutic Spiral Model (TSM) psychodrama principles, the model structures public storytelling through a timeline arc of safety, coping, transforming and meaning making to prevent retraumatization while supporting collective witnessing. Participants will engage in guided performance labs and directing exercises to apply trauma-informed staging practices. While adaptable to clinical settings, the primary focus is ethical, embodied performance with communities impacted by trauma and social disruption.

10:45 AM – 1:45 PM
Alvarado H
Principles of Drama Therapy 1: History, Knowledge Competencies, and Core Processes
– CE Session
By [Chyela Rowe](#), [Abbie Truax](#)

This introductory course will offer participants who are new to the profession of drama therapy, or for seasoned professionals who want a refresher of the fundamental principles, a brief history of the profession, introduction to the knowledge competency areas, and overview of recent developments related to drama therapy core process research. This workshop will be active, experiential, and offer resources for training and/or engagement in association committees and events. Learning Objective 1 Participants will understand a brief history of the profession of drama therapy and how it is similar and different to allied professions Learning Objective 2 Participants will learn the nine knowledge competencies that support professional drama therapy theories and practice in North America Learning Objective 3 Participants will discuss the research and literature related to drama therapy core processes and how the framework can inform therapy practice Reference 1: Orkibi, H., Keisari, S., Sajnani, N. L., & de Witte, M. (2025). Effectiveness of drama-based therapies on mental health outcomes: A systematic review and meta-analysis of controlled studies. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 19(4), 878. Reference 2: Wood, L. L., Reynolds, A., & Savage, M. D. (2022). Designing a model of knowledge competencies within drama therapy: Phase I. *Drama Therapy Review*, 8(2), 175–195. Reference 3: Frydman, J. S., Cook, A., Armstrong, C. R., Rowe, C., & Kern, C. (2022). The drama therapy core processes: A Delphi study establishing a North American perspective. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 80, 101939. CHED Statement: As president and president-elect for the NADTA, we are continuing a long history of facilitating this course for newcomers. While some of the material is similar to what might have been taught in past decades, this proposal is informed by CHED research, theories, and professional development. The inclusion of Knowledge Competencies in this course is new, and will ground the history of the profession and core processes in the context of CHED as a central foundation

10:45 AM – 6:00 PM
Alvarado F
Therapeutic Ritual Processes: The Paradox of Becoming. An all day experiential workshop where we introduce an emerging drama therapy method
– CE Session
By [Ornela Kapetani](#), [Maude Davis](#)

This six-hour experiential workshop introduces Therapeutic Ritual Processes, a ritual-based drama therapy method utilizing the metaphor of “being pregnant” with yourself. It offers an alternative to the linear Hero's Journey framework, proposing a cyclical model for those identifying with feminine transformation. Drawing from Greek theatre, participants embody chorus and coryphaeus—collective witness and individual voice—creating space for authentic self-expression. The ritual explores: What part of you is still forming? How do you trust inner knowing without words? What prompts risk-taking? What fears emerge in becoming? When are you wild? Integrating ancient ritual practices, Jungian theory and archetypes, and embodied approaches, participants will gain experience and practical techniques for working with populations navigating life transitions.

10:45 AM – 1:45 PM
Turquoise

The Empowered Human Quest: Exploring Drama Therapy Intensive Design

– CE Session

By [Nina Garcia](#)

This presentation introduces The Empowered Human Quest as an intensive drama therapy design model integrating role theory, embodiment, narrative reconstruction, and experiential enactment within a trauma-informed framework. Grounded in drama therapy principles of identity, narrative and role expansion, the model applies structured experiential challenges, metaphor, and guided reflection to support emotional regulation, relational capacity, and identity integration. The presentation outlines our parameters of intensive-format work, including containment, pacing, and ethical considerations when translating drama therapy beyond traditional weekly sessions and into the online coaching space as well. The model has been applied with adult populations, particularly high-achieving professionals navigating leadership pressure, relational challenges, and emotional disconnection.

10:45 AM – 1:45 PM

Weavers

Exploring The Drama Therapy Decision Tree: A Textbook for Integrating Drama Therapy Theories, Core Processes, Ethics, and CHED for Educators, Students, and Early Career Practitioners

– CE Session

By [Sally Bailey](#), [Mimi Savage](#)

Drama Therapy students often feel as if they are drinking out of a fire hose when they start their education and training. Educators can struggle with the order of presenting the many complex areas that must be synthesized and used inter-disciplinarily in practice. To address these issues, The Drama Therapy Decision Tree, was written as a textbook to serve as a resource and guide for leading drama therapists through a series of self-reflective and client-centered questions. Drama Therapy theory and practice is integrated with clients’ treatment goals and the intersectionality of their unique diversity-equity-inclusion-belonging needs, so practitioners can make appropriate, effective, and ethical choices. The presenters will share ways to use the book as an inter-disciplinary introduction to the field or for Drama Therapy with Special Populations.

1:45 PM – 3:00 PM

Garden

Networking in the Garden

– Exhibitor/Sponsor Track

Exhibitors and Sponsors are welcome to mix and mingle with the attendees at this networking event. This will not be hosted at the tables so prepare to walk and talk outside in the Garden Verandah.

1:45 PM – 3:00 PM

Garden

Networking in the Garden

– Networking

3:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Potters

Awakening the Affective Voice: Embodied Exploration through Voice and Movement

– CE Session

By [Li Parker](#), [Crystal Bliss Lardy](#)

This experiential workshop introduces Voice Movement Therapy (VMT) as an allied, voice-centred practice that supports expressive exploration within drama therapy and related creative arts contexts. Informed by psychophysical voice traditions associated with the work of Alfred Wolfsohn and Roy Hart, the workshop approaches the voice as a bridge between soma and psyche. Through guided exploration of vocal components, movement, breath, and imagination, participants will engage affective and embodied vocal expression as pathways for expressive exploration and creative process. The session will culminate in a co-created ritual of sound, demonstrating how shared vocal experience can support presence, resonance, and connection across educational, community, and creative arts settings for teenagers and adults from diverse backgrounds and lived experiences.

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Weavers

Beyond the Canon: Decolonial Embodied Timelines in Drama Therapy—Consent as Method, Cultural Humility, and Story Sovereignty

– CE Session

By [Axel Winget](#)

This 1.5-hour experiential workshop uses the conference’s “embodied timeline” to explore drama therapy lineage—what we inherit, disrupt, and transmit. Using role method (aesthetic distance; role expansion) and critical ethnography, it challenges “discovery” narratives that center EuroAmerican founders while erasing Indigenous and community-held story practices. Participants learn a portable structure—Consent as Method—for cross-cultural groups (LGBTQ+ communities, migrants/refugees, neurodivergent participants) without forced disclosure. Activities include Lineage Mapping + accountable citation; consent architecture (ask/offer/opt-out; sensory flexibility); and witnessing without extraction (participant-led meaning-making + repair). Attendees leave with a replicable ethical timeline framework.

3:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Turquoise

Navigating arousal in dramatic reality: A workshop integrating aesthetic distance, window of tolerance, and affect intensity

– CE Session

By [Lauren Anderson](#), [Angelle Cook](#), [Laura Wood](#)

This workshop study invites participants to experientially explore our theoretical model linking aesthetic distance, window of tolerance, and affect intensity in drama therapy. It advances the field by integrating its aesthetic distance roots with emerging psychophysiology to carry forward innovative emotion regulation practices. Attendees will complete a brief affect intensity measure to help locate their optimal arousal range and then engage in puppetry and role-theory exercises that systematically vary distance from evocative material. Through facilitated reflection, participants will examine how adjusting aesthetic distance can brush the edges of their window of tolerance while maintaining sufficient regulation for emotional processing. This would be an IRB-approved research workshop designed for drama therapists, counselors, and students; open to either 1.5-hour or 3-hour formats.

3:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Attendee Sessions

– Exhibitor/Sponsor Track

Little to no traffic at this time as attendees are in sessions. You can continue to setup your table as needed but all open events are done for the day.

3:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Principles of Drama Therapy Part 2: Current Approaches Experiential

– CE Session

By [Chyela Rowe](#), [Abbie Truax](#)

4:45 PM – 6:15 PM

Weavers

Student Board Meet and Greet

– Networking

By [Chyela Rowe](#), [Monica Lopez Gamboa](#), [Nicole Ventura](#), [Carmen White](#), [Michelle Davenport](#) (Yadon), [Melissa Killian](#), [Ramon Guitart](#), [Abbie Truax](#)

6:15 PM – 8:00 PM

Offsite

Newcomers Dinner

– Networking

8:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Turquoise Theater

Imagination Bodies Forth: An Interactive Performance Quest for Spect-actor Adventurers

– Performance

By [Keith Whipple](#)

This performance can build from the creative output of a prior workshop on D&D used in clinical settings. But however the die is cast, consider supporting this interactive performance combining elements of table-top role-play, improv, sociodrama, and forum theatre to make a night where audience/actors adventure together. Quest to fantastic places with heroes & monsters, and journey towards better mental health as we delve into realms unknown, and see thoughts and emotions given clearer shape out of aery nothing to better name and tame fears and challenges. The poet’s pen will be wielded by many authors this night, working together to tell an epic tale in a short time. This work is informed by Improvisational Theatre, Theatre of the Oppressed/Image Theatre, Psychodrama, Sociodrama, and the Bergman Drama Therapy Approach.

8:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Alvarado F

What Gets Remembered: A Drama Therapy Exam in Real Time

– Performance

By [Adama Sall](#), [Adam Stevens](#), [Makaela Antasia Reed](#)

In a society not too dissimilar than our own, two Black women have been summoned for testing to become official, licensed, accredited drama therapists. They represent two lineages: one rooted in canonized texts and white forefathers; the other tapping into an Afro-diasporic lineage, oral and intrinsic, often ignored and pushed into the shadows. But as embodied memories, cultural rituals, and unwritten lineages surface, the timeline begins to fracture. Grounded in Role Theory (Landy), Core Processes of Drama Therapy (Jones), ethnography rooted in the black community, and embodiment-based approaches, this interactive performance invites the audience to become the governing body of history. As the performance unfolds, the audience must confront: What counts as knowledge? Who decides? Which stories secure legitimacy? And whose stories will be forgotten in shaping the future of the field?

DAY- 2

30 October, 2026

Time	Topic
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8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Alvarado Atrium

Registration

– Exhibitor/Sponsor Track

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Alvarado Atrium

Registration

– Registration

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM

Alvarado Ballroom

Breakfast

– Meals & Breaks

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Table Setup/ Session Time

– Exhibitor/Sponsor Track

Attendees are in a session at this time so feel free to setup or leave your station for a while

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Alvarado H

Entering the Elsewhere: Play and the Poetics of Dissociation

– CE Session

By [Fritz Bixler](#)

This experiential workshop introduces the presenter’s original drama therapy method for working with severe dissociative states through play, metaphor, and improvisation. Grounded in Emergent Play,

trauma-informed drama therapy, and mad liberation, this approach challenges paradigms that prioritize symptom reduction and normative states of embodiment over creativity and mutuality. Rather than forcing a return to consensus reality, participants will learn to “enter the elsewhere” of dissociative experience. Through embodied exploration of disembodied consciousness, participants will map dissociative landscapes and cultivate relational presence across dramatic realities. This workshop is designed for mental health practitioners and community members working with chronically dissociative youth and adults, including those labeled with complex trauma and dissociative disorders.

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Alvarado F

The Art of Disruption: Centering the Margins Through Disability Justice

– CE Session

By [Sho Glick](#), [Caitlin McFann](#)

We invite you to step into a shared space where voices from the margins move to illuminate the center. Humans come in a marvelous array of neurotypes and abilities, and together we will explore what it is to be beautifully un-normal. Using the lens of disability justice, and honoring the work of civil rights and queer liberation activists, we will work to dismantle oppressive narratives of supremacy and perfectionism. Rather than striving to “fix” those who are stigmatized, let us come together to disrupt the status quo and shift the world. Our time together will culminate in short devised theatre pieces to share with one another.

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Potters

Drama-Therapy 1917: Evolving the Story

– CE Session

By [Jason Butler](#), [Edward Freeman](#)

In the early-20th Century, America was rife with cultural unrest, new philosophies, and dramatic change. The transient New Yorker Stephen Austin wondered, “If Freud proposes ‘Psycho-Therapy,’ why not ‘Drama-Therapy’?” With that, Austin pondered what he’d inherited, what to preserve, what to change, and how he could bring a new practice into the present. Now it’s our job to transmit forward. Herein, we’ll engage with history, entering the tensions and innovations that shape the relationship between theatre and change. Austin’s book from 1917 is entitled Principles of Drama-Therapy. This is what we’ve inherited. Drawing on original material, we’ll introduce historical context then look at how cultural conditions give rise to practice. An exploration of the multitudes of conceptualizations will allow us to actively devise how we can transform lessons from the past and carry them forward.

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Alvarado G

The Real Talk on Creating Change: How I Built a BIPOC-Centered Drama Therapy Project Against the Odds

– CE Session

By [Marcia Kailian](#), [Yu-Hsuan Yang](#)

This presentation shares my journey of bringing drama therapy, embodied play, and Developmental Transformations to BIPOC communities, centering social justice and healing through creative expression. Drawing from years of visioning, setbacks, and small victories, I’ll offer practical insights on creating accessible, community-centered programs including grant writing tips. Attendees will learn from my successes and challenges, gaining tools to develop inclusive therapeutic arts initiatives that empower their own drama therapy life.

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Weavers

Enacting Subversion: Utilizing Carnival to Overthrow the Cultural and Personal Shadow

– CE Session

By [Maude Davis](#)

What happens to the parts of ourselves that are not welcomed by our environment? They become the shadow we project onto others. Nations and cultures have a shadow side that gets projected onto individuals or groups with diverse identities, beliefs or orientations. What happens to those impacted by this projection? This workshop utilizes Bakhtin’s literary theory of carnival to bring historically

marginalized voices, bodies and taboo subjects to the forefront. After a brief theoretical review we move into action. Participants play theatre games that allow us to embody our shadows. Forming supportive groups we find the audacity to mock oppressive authorities, power structures. Next, we parody our inner critics—taking turns presenting the vignettes to the group. Lastly, we will reflect on how the principles of carnival can be utilized in drama therapy to dismantle internalized oppression.

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Turquoise

Past, Present and Future: Understanding the NADTA Code of Ethical Principles, exploring the changing needs of ethics and imagining (together) a future code

– CE Session

By [Bonnie Harnden](#), [Maria Hodermarska](#), [Kim Cohn](#)

This participatory action workshop will provide our membership with not only the history of the NADTA Code of Ethical Principles and Guidelines on Cultural Response/ability in Training, Research, Practice, Supervision, Advocacy & Organizational Change. We will examine the emerging issues and needs for our Code and Guidelines, and explore together needs that the workshop participants feel are relevant for changes and additions to a future code. The workshop participants will be engaged in a living exploration and inquiry into the future definitions of ethical practice within our organization.

12:00 PM – 12:15 PM

Alvarado Atrium

Break

– Meals & Breaks

12:15 PM – 2:00 PM

Alvarado Ballroom

Keynote Luncheon

– CE Session

2:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Alvarado Atrium

Break

– Meals & Breaks

2:15 PM – 3:30 PM

Alvarado Atrium

Exhibitor Market

– Exhibitor/Sponsor Track

This is a schedule time where attendees are asked to visit the tables. Please be here ready to meet and greet for this event.

2:15 PM – 3:30 PM

Alvarado Atrium

Exhibitor Market

– Networking

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

Alvarado H

Exploring Group Dynamics Through Sociodrama: Pat Sternberg’s Action Method in Practice

– CE Session

By [Carmen White](#), [Lennie Smith](#)

This interactive workshop introduces participants to Pat Sternberg’s sociodrama approach as an action-based method for exploring group dynamics, shared roles, and collective meaning-making. Through guided warm-ups, role exploration, and structured enactment, participants will examine how sociodrama can deepen empathy, reveal hidden social patterns, and support collaborative problem-solving. Grounded in experiential learning rather than performance, the session invites attendees to engage with real-world themes such as conflict, communication, identity, and change. Participants will gain practical tools for using sociodramatic methods in educational, community, therapeutic, and

leadership settings to foster reflection, strengthen relationships, and promote more effective group interaction.

3:30 PM – 6:30 PM

Alvarado F

River of Life: LGBTQ Film & Drama Therapy Workshop — Screening of the award-winning 43-min documentary using drama therapy to explore queer history, internalized oppression, identity, and belonging

– CE Session

By [Grace Walcott](#)

'River of Life, LGBTQ+' is an award-winning 43-minute documentary that uses drama therapy to help queer individuals connect with the roots of trauma related to internalized oppression and identity. Facilitated and directed by Grace Walcott, LMFT, RDT, the film features 13 queer participants, ages 20s–70s, representing diverse sexual, racial, and gender identities. They engage in a 10-week workshop celebrating queer history and evolution while exploring two core questions: Who am I? Where do I belong? The workshop includes a film screening followed by facilitated experiential drama therapy exercises that explore strengths derived from identity. All identities are welcome! These processes are designed for any community at risk of internalizing oppressive or toxic thoughts and self-images.

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

Alvarado G

Reflections from a Hall of Mirrors: An autoethnographic study of invisible chronic illness and pain through performance in drama therapy

– CE Session

By [Sophia Cannata-Bowman](#)

Meghan O'Rourke described the vast community of people living with chronic illness—particularly those with illnesses that are difficult to diagnose and treat—as an invisible kingdom made up of people seeking answers about their symptoms, only to be met with dismissal and confusion by the medical community and the able-bodied masses. Ongoing research into the relationship between invisible chronic illness and psychosocial outcomes further suggests that this experience results in isolation, low self-worth, loss of identity, and trauma. Using the results of a 2026 thesis performance through NYU, the presenters will address the unique experience of isolation and “role disorientation” that can attend invisible illness while examining our wider role as drama therapists navigating embodied approaches for people whose bodies have not always been a safe place to be.

3:30 PM – 6:30 PM

Weavers

Easing Down the Yellow Brick Road with CRTC: Reauthoring Drama Therapy Through Radical Dignity, Youth-Led Grief, Glitter, and Justice Praxis

– CE Session

By [Adama Sall](#), [Adam Stevens](#), [Makaela Antasia Reed](#), [Roslyn Campbell](#)

Grounded in drama therapy theory, dignity-centered care (Hicks, 2011), and therapeutic witnessing, this experiential workshop invites participants into The Wizzie: A Journey of Grief, Growth & Glitter, a yearlong, youth-led drama therapy laboratory for BIPOC high school students navigating grief and systemic inequity. Through embodied timeline mapping, ritual, role work, and devising practices, we explore how inherited Oz narratives are disrupted and reauthored as sites of dignity restoration. Participants will engage core drama therapy mechanisms (Jones, 2021) while examining participatory action research with youth as co-creators and co-researchers. Designed for clinicians, educators, and supervisors across the professional lifespan.

3:30 PM – 6:30 PM

Potters

Sustaining the Storyteller: Integrating Awe, Gratitude, and Research-Creation to Honor our Lineage and Prevent Burnout

– CE Session

By [Bonnie Harnden](#)

How do we 'hold the whole story' of our field and our clients without losing our presence? As drama therapists, we are stewards of a complex lineage embodying both profound healing and systemic

disruption. Chronic stress can dysregulate our nervous systems, disconnecting us from our professional roots and leading to burnout. This experiential workshop bridges the #NADTA2026 retrospective inquiry with neurobiological research. We will explore how awe and gratitude act as restorative bridges between our history and future sustainability. Integrating performance autoethnography and drama therapy, we translate research into clinical tools that honor our foundations while inviting growth. As a site of inquiry, we use a timeline approach, from acknowledging inherited stress to practicing the science of awe, gratitude and nervous system regulation to foster collective restoration and presence.

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

Turquoise

Crossing Borders: Tracing the Story of International Drama Therapy Practice Experiential Presentation

– CE Session

By [Monica Lopez Gamboa](#), [Pam Dunne](#), [Kamran Afary](#)

This session explores the evolving story of international and cross-cultural drama therapy practitioners/students within the field. Grounded in drama therapy theory, narrative, and role, the presentation examines how training across countries, migration, and cultural context shape professional identity and practice. The session includes brief curated story contributions (live or pre-recorded) from international practitioners. These stories may include examples of long-term collaborations in countries such as the Philippines, China and Russia, illustrating how professional identity and drama therapy practice evolve through sustained intercultural relationships, annual abroad workshops, reciprocal learning, and local adaptation. This will be followed by facilitated reflection and embodied exercises. Drawing from early insights of an International Region needs assessment, participants will engage in dialogue to identify shared challenges, resources, and possibilities. Attendees are invited to locate themselves within the field’s evolving story and consider how drama therapy is practiced and carried forward across cultures and contexts.

5:30 PM – 6:30 PM

Alvarado G

My Story Doesn’t End: A Staged Reading on Displacement, Queer Survival, and the Ethics of Witnessing

– Performance

By [Axel Winget](#)

This 60-minute performance is a staged reading of My Story Doesn’t End by the Crossing Pride Collaborative, a documentary/ensemble text shaped by LGBTQ+ refugee and displaced queer/trans voices. Using the conference theme’s “embodied timeline,” the piece moves through Cultural Mapping, Travel Companions, Unsent Letters, and “The System is Failing,” tracing migration as lived time—memory, rupture, resilience, and the pressure of asylum systems. The reading is paired with brief contextual framing on ethical witnessing: consent, story sovereignty, aesthetic distance, and non-extractive representation when performing across cultural and power differences. Designed for drama therapists, educators, and artists, the session invites audiences to reflect on what our field inherits, what we must disrupt, and how we transmit embodied storytelling practices forward with care and accountability.

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Your Choice

Dinner on Your Own

– Meals & Breaks

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Your Choice

Dinner

– Exhibitor/Sponsor Track

Now would be a perfect opportunity to invite attendees out for dinner or or connect on the property if you want to expand your networking time. Some attendees may have to get back for a performance at 8PM so plan accordingly.

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Your Choice

Dinner

- Exhibitor/Sponsor Track

Now would be a perfect opportunity to invite attendees out for dinner or or connect on the property if you want to expand your networking time. Some attendees may have to get back for a performance at 8PM so plan accordingly.

8:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Potters

Witnessing the Void: Narrative Performance as a Tool for Holding Unspoken Stories

- Performance

By Michael Fowlin

What happens when the practitioner realizes the 'unspoken story' on the chalkboard is their own? This performance-based session utilizes self-revelatory performance to explore the transition from silent trauma to empowered witnessing. Through a multimodal framework of ethnodrama, poetry, and humor, international speaker Dr. Mykee Fowlin leads a visceral probe into the irreducible essence of identity. A central crux is the 'painting metaphor' (featured in his 2026 PBS speech), which demonstrates the clinical necessity of aesthetic distance. By moving from a blurred, 'under-distanced' view caused by proximity to trauma, to a balanced perspective, the whole story emerges. Through audience interaction, participants explore how standing at a distance from the 'painting' transforms the externalized void of the past into a site of profound resilience, accountability, and collective hope.

8:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Alvarado H

VOCES Y CORAZÓN: The Goddess Call

- Performance

By Ramon Guitart

This documentary performance presents a historic milestone in Drama Therapy: multiple autobiographical performances centered on the Latina experience. The film follows four drama therapists—representing Mexican, Cuban, and Venezuelan lineages—as they navigate an internal journey into the self. Whether native, born abroad or in the diaspora, each woman stands before the mirror to encounter a Goddess of their choosing, exploring the visceral connection between these divine archetypes and their own individual roots. Through these four distinct stories, the performers move beyond traditional clinical frameworks to answer the call of The Goddess Within. This documentary captures the lived experience of four women witnessing their own Alma y Corazon reflected through the lens of heritage and myth. By centering their own stories, they inhabit a space where they can no longer remain unseen.

8:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Alvarado F

Across the Lineage: A Multi-Generational Playback Ensemble Playback Theatre Performance (with facilitated audience engagement)

- Performance

By Ornela Kapetani, Roni Alperin, Merry Ross

'This Playback Theatre performance offers a live, embodied exploration of lineage, transmission, and evolution within drama therapy and expressive arts practice. Featuring four Playback actors from distinct generations, the ensemble enacts personal and professional stories that illuminate how the field is inherited, questioned, preserved, disrupted, and re-imagined over time. Through story, movement, and relational presence, the performance invites conference participants into a shared reflection on how drama therapy lives not only in theory and training, but in bodies, relationships, and lived experience. Rooted in the core principles of Playback Theatre—deep listening, embodiment, ritual, aesthetic distance, and relational attunement—this performance functions as a living timeline.'

DAY- 3

31 October, 2026

Time	Topic
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8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Alvarado Atrium

Registration/Breakfast
– Exhibitor/Sponsor Track

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM
Alvarado Atrium
Registration
– Registration

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM
Alvarado Ballroom
Breakfast
– Meals & Breaks

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM
Table Setup Time
– Exhibitor/Sponsor Track

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM
Alvarado Ballroom
Board Science Fair
– CE Session
By [Chyela Rowe](#), [Monica Lopez Gamboa](#), [Nicole Ventura](#), [Carmen White](#), [Michelle Davenport \(Yadon\)](#),
[Melissa Killian](#), [Abbie Truax](#)
Come check-in with all your board members! Learn about what it is we do, ask questions, give suggestions, and maybe even sign up for a committee ;)

10:30 AM – 10:45 AM
Alvarado Atrium
Break
– Meals & Breaks

10:45 AM – 12:15 PM
Alvarado H
Play with the Woo-Woo in You and Me: Remembering the Drama Therapists We Had Before the Field Existed for Us
– CE Session
By [Ishu \(Ishita\) Pohoja](#)
This experiential workshop invites participants to trace the dramatic healing practices that existed in their lives before encountering the formal field of drama therapy. Drawing from South Asian traditions—including jhaad phoonkh (spirit-brushing rituals), ladies’ sangeet (wedding festivities with playful cross-gender performance), street theatre, and rituals around mourning, birth, and coming of age—this session explores how ritual, play, embodiment, and storytelling have long functioned as therapy across cultures. Participants will reflect on practices they inherited, what was preserved or transformed, and how some rituals both healed and harmed within systems shaped by colonization, patriarchy, caste, and medicalization. Grounded in Emergent Play, the workshop introduces “animating medicine,” engaging herbs or remedies as dramatic characters while inviting a decolonizing perspective.

10:45 AM – 12:15 PM
Alvarado G
Holding Space in the House: Role Theory Meets Kiki Culture
– CE Session
By [Jahmar Ortiz](#), [Spencer Tyler Olson](#)

This experiential, devised verbatim theatre process emerges from ongoing collaborative work with queer and trans youth at the Hetrick–Martin Institute. Grounded in role theory, witnessing, and developmental transformations, the workshop positions Kiki and ballroom practices as community-authored therapeutic structures of chosen family, identity rehearsal, and collective care. Participants engage in guided enactments, read verbatim narratives generated in partnership with youth, and step into roles of

The Spectator, The Judge, The Commentator, etc., to explore how healing, resistance, and joy are performed and held in community. Situated within an embodied timeline of drama therapy, this work invites participants to consider how culturally specific, youth-led performance environments expand the field's lineage and offer tools for ethical, relational, and justice-oriented practice.

10:45 AM – 12:15 PM

Alvarado F

Group Supervision for Youth and Families

– CE Session

By [Susie Schutt](#)

Looking for new interventions? Have a client you're dying to understand better? Join other drama therapists working with youth (ages 4–18) for a casual peer supervision and case consultation session. We will explore our client's whole stories as we examine our own practices, sharing knowledge, problem-solving, and thinking through those tricky cases. Bring a case, a question, or just come ready to listen and connect with other drama therapists! Before becoming a drama therapist, Susie was the education director at a professional theatre in Rhode Island for a decade. She is now a drama therapist and clinician for the Youth and Family department at Thrive Behavioral Health, a Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC), working with clients ranging from 9–19 and their families. She also works with 2nd Act supporting adults in recovery, while supervising interns and teaching artists.

10:45 AM – 12:15 PM

Potters

Did Robert Landy Plan This? Juggling the Taxonomy of Motherhood and... Well... The Rest

– CE Session

By [Hamutal Posklinsky Shehory](#), [Sally Grazi-Shatzkes](#)

Since the very beginning of my professional journey—bringing my infant to auditions for the NYU program to breastfeed between sessions— I have deeply grappled with the friction of the overlapping identities of motherhood and clinician. Grounded in Robert Landy's Role Method, this experiential and playful workshop invites professionals to spontaneously explore the complex role-play of the drama therapist-mother. Using a mouthful of laughter & the structure of the Taxonomy of Roles, we will 'invent' new subtypes like the Logistics Sorceress or Clinical Reformer to name our lived experience. Through improvisation and role-sculpting, we will physicalize internal conflict to gain insight and play with our narratives. Designed for drama therapy professionals navigating motherhood, this session offers a playful yet radical space for expression.

10:45 AM – 12:15 PM

Turquoise

Tell Your Story: Marketing Yourself as a Drama Therapist

– CE Session

By [Emily Faith](#)

Drama therapists are storytellers, yet many of us struggle to tell the story of our own work. We may worry that marketing feels “salesy,” that we are not good at promoting ourselves, or that people will not understand what makes drama therapy different. But marketing a drama therapy practice does not have to be complicated or feel inauthentic. In this interactive and partially embodied session, participants will explore the stories they tell themselves about marketing and the stories that have shaped their relationship to drama therapy. We will then use those stories as a starting point for developing a clear professional identity and learning how to communicate the value of our work to the people we want to serve. This session focuses on the foundational skill underneath effective marketing: knowing your story, knowing your audience, and knowing how to talk about your work.

10:45 AM – 12:15 PM

Weavers

Paper Session: Emotion Regulation in Drama Therapy & The Eyed Entity Project: Navigating the Grief Experience through a Developmental Transformations Lens

– CE Session

By [Lauren Anderson](#), [Kimberly Koljat](#)

Emotional Regulation in Drama Therapy This paper presents a critical integration of the process model of emotion regulation (Gross, 1998) and the core processes of drama therapy (Frydman et al., 2022).

Grounded in the author’s graduate thesis, it examines how each drama therapy core process maps onto the five stages of emotion regulation: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. The recently validated Emotion Regulation Strategies for Artistic Creative Activities Scale (Fancourt et al., 2019) signals growing empirical attention to this bridge. By connecting these theoretical frameworks, this paper highlights opportunities for psychophysiological insight into how embodied, creative processes enact emotion regulation in therapeutic contexts. The Eyed Entity Project An unorthodox approach in the application of Developmental Transformations principles, The Eyed Entity Project was a one year long experiment in applying the stages of a DvT group in everyday life to reintegrate into relationship following profound loss. This project explores how drama therapy concepts can be practiced in our current lives filled with online and offline relationships, encounter with the other, and encountering the self while carrying the concept of 'absent other' in grief.

12:15 PM – 1:30 PM
Your Choice
Lunch on Your Own
– Meals & Breaks

12:15 PM – 2:00 PM
Alvarado Atrium
Lunch/Exhibitor Exploration
– Exhibitor/Sponsor Track

Attendees have time to grab lunch and explore the tables. This is a prime opportunity to connect with the attendees.

1:30 PM – 2:00 PM
Alvarado Atrium
Exhibitor Exploration
– Networking

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Alvarado H
Central Region
– CE Session
By [Michelle Davenport \(Yadon\)](#)

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Alvarado F
Student Forum
– CE Session

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Potters
Eastern Region
– CE Session
By [Carmen White](#)

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Alvarado G
Western Region
– CE Session

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Turquoise
VIRTUAL AT LATER DATE – Canadian Region
– CE Session

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Weavers

3:00 PM – 3:15 PM
Alvarado Atrium
Break
– Meals & Breaks

3:15 PM – 6:15 PM
Weavers
We Wage Play While They Wage War: Emergent Play for Apocalyptic Times
– CE Session
By [Fritz Bixler](#), [Ishu \(Ishita\) Pohoja](#)

Play is our first language—yet the world we inhabit feels increasingly unplayable. Emergent Play weaves improvisational drama therapy with adrienne maree brown's Emergent Strategy, inviting drama therapists to reclaim play as a practice of liberation. In these apocalyptic times—as systems implode and futures narrow—play is how we adapt, how we connect, how we learn to shape change. This immersive workshop invites participants to strip away assigned roles, challenge inherited norms, and play our way into new possibilities. Through embodied experimentation, we explore how play has been constrained by systems of oppression and how it can be reclaimed as a technology for staying human in inhumane conditions, for holding complexity without collapse, and for co-creating the futures we long for.

3:15 PM – 6:15 PM
Alvarado G
Dramatic Reality as a Healing Bridge Between History, Spirituality, and Imagination in the 21st Century
– CE Session
By [Doug Ronning](#)

A quarter of the way into the 21st century, the rise of fascism, artificial intelligence, psychedelic use, and UFO disclosure has left society teetering between anxiety and awe, as consensus reality itself feels increasingly unstable. Dramatic reality, a core tenet of drama therapy, offers a frame for how to layer and engage the physical, mental, emotional, cultural, imaginal, and spiritual realms simultaneously during an embodied enactment in therapeutic dramatic play to facilitate insight and a path to integration. This presentation will explore the history and value of culturally-sensitive dramatic reality and related techniques to symbolically navigate seemingly inexpressible experiences related to trauma and the anomalous/extraordinary.

3:15 PM – 6:15 PM
Turquoise
The End of the Story: Does Death Have a Place in Drama Therapy’s Timeline? A Case for Inclusion
– CE Session
By [Patricia Jauchler](#)

Work in drama therapy spans the lifetime, but stops at elderhood. This is not unique to our profession. Death and the dying process are omitted in most healthcare studies and training, both clinical and medical, as well as in traditional life stage models. This didactic and experiential presentation argues that death awareness and griefwork are important components in the treatment of all populations throughout the lifespan, and as such, are important inclusions in future curriculums and training. Combining drama therapy with deathwork requires the use of new skills with a different focus and goal. We will explore and practice the foundations for this work, as we will look at the ways to adapt drama therapy techniques and interventions we have learned and practiced throughout our careers into a powerful modality of embodiment within the dying body.

3:15 PM – 6:15 PM
Potters
You Are Not Alone: Autoethnodrama, Solo Performance, and Collective Witnessing
– CE Session

By [Jordan Stewart](#)

This experiential workshop engages Autoethnodrama and Solo Performance to support drama therapists in exploring their personal and professional journeys. Using the NADTA 2018 CHED monologue The Only (Stewart) as a framework, participants examine how being the first/only of a particular identity shapes experiences of disruption, adaptation, and growth within the drama therapy community, while exploring the power of individual storytelling to contribute to collective understanding and belonging. Through guided writing, solo performance, and collective witnessing, participants practice methods for honoring singular narratives while fostering communal connection. This workshop is rooted in Role Theory (Landy), Aesthetic Distance (Landy), and Witnessing & Mutuality (Emunah).

3:15 PM – 6:15 PM

Alvarado H

Attunement and Collaboration in the Creative Arts Therapies

– CE Session

By [Kristin Long](#), [Elena Offerman](#), [Heather Foster](#), [Jamie Adges](#), [Jamie Yasgur](#)

Through the lens of private practice, clinicians will share how they integrate interdisciplinary modalities with diverse clients of all ages. Presenters will highlight case studies demonstrating how art, music, dance, and drama can be woven into psychoanalysis, EMDR, and psychodynamic therapy. The emphasis will be on helping participants understand practical ways to integrate multiple modalities and theoretical frameworks in work with clients who hold complex stories and histories. This presentation invites Creative Arts Therapists to expand beyond their primary modality, build confidence across approaches, and provide attuned, flexible interventions. An experiential component invites participants to engage in art, drama, and dance through a psychoanalytic lens to explore their own personal narratives, hold tension, and use creativity to make meaning, transform, or merely bear witness.

3:15 PM – 6:15 PM

Alvarado F

Evolution of the Soul: Embodying Personal and Collective Narratives of Drama Therapy

– CE Session

By [Sassia Hochberg](#)

Holding the Whole Story requires a dual gaze: looking inward at personal myths and outward at our collective lineage. This experiential session uses Transpersonal Drama Therapy to explore the "Evolution of the Soul," weaving the therapist's narrative into the NADTA's systemic tapestry. Using Omega Transpersonal principles, we move from the "social ego" to the "witnessing Self." Through timeline enactments and archetypal play, participants map their "calling" alongside the field's ancestors. To ground these theories, we present a case of a student with complex trauma. Using Masks, Projective Cards, and Ritualized Enactment, the student externalized their "conditioned self" to reveal an "Essential Soul Self." This mirrors our retrospective theme, honoring the light and shadow of our professional roots—including marginalized and ancestral voices—to move toward a resilient, inclusive future.

3:15 PM – 6:15 PM

Table Breakdown

– Exhibitor/Sponsor Track

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Weavers

Recovery Dharma: A Peer Support Group for those who identify as sober or are struggling with substances

– Support Group

Recovery Dharma is a support group meeting. This is a peer-led, non-theistic addiction recovery program that integrates Buddhist principles, mindfulness, and community support to help individuals overcome addictive behaviors. This is not a workshop rather a recovery dharma meeting supporting all stages of recovery, and addictions are welcomed. There will be a brief intro to recovery dharma, an embodied walking meditation, followed by the meeting. No experience with RD or the 12 steps is necessary.

8:00 PM – 10:30 PM

8:00 PM - 10:30 PM

Alvarado Ballroom

President's Gala

- Exhibitor/Sponsor Track

This is the last big event of the Conference and all Exhibitors and Sponsors are welcome to join! The Gala celebrates the stories of the NADTA members with the Award Ceremony and Tunnel of Love Credential Recognition while the attendees enjoy a festive evening.

DAY- 4

1 November, 2026

Time	Topic
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8:30 AM - 9:00 AM

Alvarado Ballroom

Breakfast

- Meals & Breaks

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Weavers

Moving Through Roles: Using Laban Movement Analysis to Understand Role Theory Through a Post-Binary Lens

- CE Session

By [Sylvia Coopersmith](#), [Ben H. Iosipovich](#)

Our guided discussion and experiential aims to situate Role Theory within the evolving lineage of drama therapy, exploring how inherited models can be thoughtfully re-read in response to contemporary, post-binary clinical realities. Informed by Robert Landy’s Role Theory & Method, our presentation reengages with the concept of Role as a dynamic process. Drawing on Laban Movement Analysis, we propose a shift from identifying roles as labels toward attending to embodied movement qualities (e.g. effort, space, and shape) from which roles may emerge, and from which we can navigate movement between roles. We can see our session as either located within the student forum or as open to all community members. Including a wide range of professional experiences from student to seasoned practitioner will enrich our collective definitions of what Role is and can be.

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Alvarado H

Professional Community Support: A case study of a Jewish therapist affinity group navigating antisemitism. An invitation to reflect upon our support systems as clinicians from all backgrounds

- CE Session

By [Hamutal Posklinsky Shehory](#)

In the wake of rising global antisemitism, Jewish clinicians are increasingly navigating a 'dual-trauma' reality: processing their own experiences of systemic hate while simultaneously holding therapeutic space for clients facing the same narrative. This session presents a case study of a Jewish Therapist Affinity Group that brought together clinicians from across the US and functioned as a hybrid of a peer support circle & a professional laboratory; Learning emergency trauma intervention principles & modules. By growing a collective, the group participants reported increased clinical agency, resilience, & a strengthened professional identity. The proposed session will invite fellow DTs to explore the effects of community strength, professional vs personal identity crossover, & the effects of support systems as clinicians. An opportunity to reflect on our own circles and spaces.

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Alvarado G

The Role-Playing Brain: Evolving the Neuroscience of Aesthetic Distance and Role-Play in Drama Therapy

- CE Session

By [Nisha Sajnani](#), [Anamarija Vuic](#), [Alexandru Berceanu](#)

This presentation traces the evolution of two core processes in drama therapy – distancing and dramatic projection through role – by bridging historical concepts, systematic evidence, and neuroscience. Part 1 presents findings from a rapid systematic review of 80+ peer-reviewed studies to map role-play outcomes across clinical, educational, and community contexts, including empathy, cognitive flexibility, and social functioning. Part 2 presents findings from an fMRI study using role induction with a gradient of distance. Findings show that brain systems involved in emotional meaning-making and self-reflection may respond differently as aesthetic distance shifts, with implications for how therapists select and sequence roles. Differences between trained and untrained actors further illuminate how we might use role-play and aesthetic distance in drama therapy training and supervision.

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Turquoise

"What Are We Doing Here?": Identity, Positionality, and Parallel Processes in Multidisciplinary Inpatient Care

– CE Session

By [Anqi \(Daisy\) Cai](#), [Aarya Singh](#)

On a day in inpatient psych, multiple processes unfold simultaneously: a drama therapist finding footing within a multidisciplinary treatment model; patients orienting themselves to involuntary hospitalization and diagnosis; and early-career clinicians of color negotiating professional and cultural belonging within the U.S. These parallel processes raise a recurring question: What are we doing here? This intermodal presentation, led by a drama therapist in collaboration with a dance/movement therapist and an art therapist is grounded in the drama therapy core process of “multidimensional relationships” and informed by role theory. The presenters will examine how personal, professional, and systemic roles intersect in work with involuntarily admitted patients with drastically varying backgrounds. A brief experiential directive is followed by facilitated dialogue.

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Alvarado F

Drama Therapy & Functional Neurological Symptom Disorder (Conversion Disorder): The Case for Treating a Mind-Body Connectivity Disorder with Trauma-Focused Mind-Body Connection

– CE Session

By [Emily Lunardi](#)

This discussion explores the use of trauma-informed drama therapy in treatment of Functional Neurological Symptom Disorder (Conversion Disorder), (FND). Individuals with FND often have a history of complex trauma, and yet are discouraged by medical professionals from seeking trauma-focused therapy due to concerns of reactivation and increased symptoms. These clients are referred to CBT and asked to minimize stressors. In my clinical experience, some individuals with FND are looking for a new approach. They are often disabled by their symptoms, have found skill-based therapy insufficient, and no longer want to be treated with fragility. They express a pressing desire to process their trauma and rebuild the mind-body connection. This presentation will propose the use of drama therapy in treatment of a misunderstood neurological disorder, and collaboration between the respective fields.

10:45 AM – 12:15 PM

Alvarado Ballroom

CHED Closing

– CE Session

By [Chyela Rowe](#), [Abbie Truax](#)
