

# The North American Drama Therapy Association Western Region Presents: Belonging: Together Under One Sky Seattle Symposium

**Location:** Antioch University Seattle, 2400 3rd Ave #200, Seattle, WA 98121

**Date:** Friday-Sunday, August 16th-18th

**Continuing Education Units:** Registration and attendance are required to obtain CEs and will be recorded. Please note the type of CEs offered with each workshop (RDT, RDT CHED, NBCC). North American Drama Therapy Association (NADTA) has been approved by NBCC as an Approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP No. 6819.



## Learning Objectives

- Participants will be able to learn about trends and current approaches in drama therapy theory and practice
- Participants will be able to expand the diversity of drama therapy approaches in their practice
- Participants will be able to gain knowledge and confidence to widen the diversity of populations they can practice drama therapy with
- Participants will be able to incorporate a social justice lens in their drama therapy approach
- Participants will be able to strengthen their understanding of their current skills and areas in need of further growth

## Friday, August 16th (Pre-Symposium Day)

Session Times	Workshop	Presenter(s)	Room	CE Credits
5-6:15 PM	<p><b>Registration and Networking</b></p> <p>Attendees can check in to the symposium, claim their symposium materials, have their questions answered, get complimentary food and beverages, and socialize with their fellow attendees.</p>		Lobby	
6:30-8:30 PM	<p><b>Nocturne- Healing Grief and Guilt Through Therapeutic Devised Theatre</b></p> <p>This workshop will use the text of <i>Nocturne</i> by Adam Rapp, which is a one-person show about a 32-year-old man living in isolation, guilt, and grief after accidentally killing his younger sister with a car malfunction when he was 17. Ryan Lisman produced and performed this play in 2023, and he will perform the first scene of <i>Nocturne</i>. All attendees will then work collaboratively to devise a therapeutic theatre piece in response, identifying ways to communicate themes of healing, redemption, and forgiveness through drama. This workshop intends to provide a foundation for using transformative theatrical performance methods with clients, identify strategies for healthy and equitable collaboration through the creative process, and explore how to synthesize the theatrical work into applied clinical growth.</p>	Ryan Lisman, MA, LPCC, RDT, PsyD Candidate	Room A	2 CE Hours- RDT, NBCC

## Saturday, August 17th (Symposium Day 1)

8-9 AM	<b>Registration</b>  Attendees can check in to the symposium, claim their symposium materials, have their questions answered, socialize with their fellow attendees, and get complimentary breakfast items.		Lobby	
9-10:15 AM	<b>Opening Ceremony</b>  This opening ceremony will provide a community welcome and introduction to the Seattle symposium. The Kuteeyaa dancers, a Seattle-based Native American dance troupe, will share the Tlingit culture through song, dance, and storytelling. The group is comprised of many clans and will be performing stories of deep resonance to the group. Information will also be provided on navigating the workshop locations and the flow of the symposium.		Room A (All Conference Event)	

10:30 AM-12 PM	<p><b>The Embodiment of Grief: Therapeutic Theater for Advancements in the Care for Grief, Loss, and Bereavement</b></p> <p>This session will include a presentation of Sarah and Virg's recent research investigating the experience and pathology of grief, loss, and/or bereavement, the efficacy of drama therapy for grief processing, and the ability of ethnographic theatrical performance to elicit perceptual change in healthcare providers. This presentation will share the ethnodramatherapy research process, best practices in care for grieving individuals, and applicable drama therapy modalities to the ethnodramatherapy process. Research results, limitations, and future directions will be discussed. Additionally, the session will include a dramatic experiential to provide an opportunity for attendees to explore and witness the impact of drama therapy and witnessing on the experience of grief, loss, or bereavement.</p>	Sarah Velasquez-Olbrantz, MA, LMHCA, P-RDT Virg Augoustatos, MA, LMHCA, P-RDT	Room A	1.5 CE Hours-RDT, NBCC
----------------	--	--	--------	------------------------

10:30 AM-12 PM	<p><b>RDT/P-RDT Application Workshop</b></p> <p>Maggie Yowell Wilson, the current NADTA registry chair, will provide thorough instructions and guidance on the process of pursuing the RDT/P-RDT credential. Your questions can be answered to cultivate confidence with this process.</p>	Maggie Yowell Wilson, JD, MA, LMHC, CMHS, GMHS, RDT/BCT, REAT	Room B	
----------------	--	---	--------	--

12-1 PM	<b>Lunch</b>			
---------	--------------	--	--	--

1-4 PM	<p><b>Roll for Belonging: Tabletop RPGs and Social Flourishing</b></p> <p>Even before the lockdowns of the COVID–19 pandemic, people across the world were challenged by loneliness and isolation. Youth especially have struggled to build social connections; stress, anxiety, and depression have been rising for over a decade. Well-meaning adults and caregivers attempted to help struggling youth by providing direct instruction and deficit-based approaches to support the development of “social skills,” though the sense of belonging that was so crucial may have been further thwarted.</p> <p>There is hope in overcoming this challenge, and it may involve tales of might and magic and multi-sided dice. We’ll explore the drama-therapy approach of DRSADPBNT: Developmental, relational, scaffolded, and aesthetically distanced play-based narrative transference. Come to this workshop to learn about how tabletop role-playing games can be leveraged as sit-down drama therapy to support participants' sense of belonging, not so they can simply “fit in” but so they can be the hero in their own story and flourish socially on their terms.</p>	Adam Davis, MAEd	Room B	3 CE Hours-RDT, NBCC
--------	---	------------------	--------	----------------------

1-4 PM	<p><b>Beyond Shame: A Dramatic Movement to Radical Empowerment</b></p> <p>Shame has been well-studied as a significant inhibitor of growth. Shame often becomes internalized into one's core concept, taking hold of our self-narratives, at times convincing us that we are unworthy of change and joy and deserve to be punished for our past actions. Using the Radical Empowerment model, Ryan Lisman, a Shame-Informed Treatment Specialist, will provide participants with dramatic tools for externalizing deep-rooted feelings and narratives of shame and cultivating</p>	Ryan Lisman, MA, RDT, LPCC, PsyD Candidate	Room A	3 CE Hours-RDT, NBCC
--------	--	--	--------	----------------------

	<p>radical mindset shifts from past faults to current feelings of redemption, forgiveness, and empowerment. Participants will be provided with an array of interventions designed to meet their clients at various stages of their journey through shame, with frequent shame experiences and narratives being explored as examples. Specific focus will be provided on approaches to working with shame derived from being ostracized, othered, and discriminated against for clients of marginalized identities. Participants will leave with inspiration and confidence to incorporate radical empowerment principles into their clinical work.</p>			
--	--	--	--	--

<p>4:15-5:30 PM</p>	<p><b>Western Region Meeting</b></p> <p>All attendees are invited to engage in this community dialogue and information session on the current state of the NADTA western region and what's on the horizon for the community. Attendees are encouraged to prepare questions and recommendations to share in the open dialogue portion of the meeting.</p>	<p>Ryan Lisman, MA, RDT, LPCC, PsyD Candidate</p>	<p>Auditorium (All Conference Event)</p>	
---------------------	--	---	--	--

<p>6-9 PM</p>	<p><b>Honorary Dinner for Bobbi Kidder</b></p> <p>Come celebrate the tremendous work of Bobbi Kidder, a pioneer in the NADTA community at this honorary dinner. Bobbi has provided constant kindness and support to the NADTA community in Seattle and we want to recognize her holistic contributions to bettering our field immensely. Anyone who has been fortunate to work with Bobbi Kidder is welcome to attend. You are welcome to provide a gift for her if you like, but this is not required.</p>		<p>TBD</p>	
---------------	---	--	------------	--

## Sunday, July 23rd (Symposium Day 2)

8-9 AM	<p><b>Registration</b></p> <p>Attendees can check in to the symposium, claim their symposium materials, have their questions answered, socialize with their fellow attendees, and get complimentary breakfast items.</p>		Lobby	
9 AM-12 PM	<p><b>Theater of Possibility – Creating Inclusive Spaces for Neurodivergent Kids, Teens and Adults</b></p> <p>This 3-hour experiential workshop will introduce the theory and practice of Theater of Possibility (“TOP”), a play-based curriculum geared to kids, teens, and adults with autism and other (dis)abilities. It is intended for professionals and students interested in learning how applied theater techniques can serve to foster creative expression, increase self-confidence, build community, and enhance relationship skills among neurodivergent cohorts. Playful and non-didactic, TOP combines introductory acting, improvisation, collaboration, and playwriting, with techniques from Augusto Boal’s Theater of the Oppressed and principles of Relationship Development Intervention (“RDI”), a play-based autism therapy. TOP is indebted to RDI for the premise that successful relationships require dynamic (rather than static) social skills, namely, the ability to respond to shifting circumstances. Relationship building depends on improvisation, rather than following a social script. The workshop will be led by Lauren Goldman Marshall, Founding Director of Theater of Possibility, along with members of the advanced TOP troupe. We’ll cover highlights of TOP, demonstrating how activities are tailored to foster relationship skills, such as non-verbal communication, recognizing social nuances, perspective-taking, flexibility,</p>	Lauren Marshall, MFA	Room A	3 CE Hours-RDT CHED

	<p>collaboration, and leadership. We'll model ways to scaffold learning and build cohesion in an inclusion setting, where abilities differ widely, and touch on particular challenges, such as working with nonspeaking students. We'll discuss applications for group and one-on-one settings, and offer methods for developing ensemble-created scenes. The first half will focus on introductory games, and the second will feature an interactive demonstration performance, utilizing Boal-based techniques, by veteran TOP participants.</p>			
--	--	--	--	--

<p>9 AM-12 PM</p>	<p><b>The Red Thread of Connection: A Tool for Bringing a Sense of Belonging to Groups</b></p> <p>In this experiential workshop, Maggie will begin by sharing her own red thread that was used in a self-revelatory performance. This red cloth with knots has been used in multiple drama therapy workshops, circles, and performances. Maggie will present information on how red thread circles have been used in other contexts. She will also describe the main principles of the red thread: (1) we are all connected; (2) the red thread connects us and has brought us here to this particular place and moment in time; (3) we each carry a part of the red thread – our calling and unique part of the whole; and (4) we each have responsibility for our part of the thread.</p> <p>A red thread will be passed around the circle of the group. As each member of the group receives the thread, they will be the primary speaker (similar to a talking stick). Members will continue to hold the red thread as it is passed, connecting each participant to each other. The thread may be passed around the circle more than once with members sharing each time they receive the thread. In the end, scissors will be passed. Members will cut the thread and help each other to tie the</p>	<p>Maggie Yowell Wilson, JD, MA, LMHC, CMHS, GMHS, RDT/BCT, REAT</p>	<p>Room B</p>	<p>3 CE Hours-RDT, NBCC</p>
-------------------	---	--	---------------	-----------------------------



	thread around their wrists as a way to remember their belonging to this particular group in this particular place and time.			
--	---	--	--	--

9 AM-12 PM	<p><b>Playwriting for Therapists</b></p> <p>In the world of drama therapy where spontaneity is the name of the game, how can you incorporate role expansion through different writing exercises into your practice and self-exploration? We will explore tools for synthesizing playwriting techniques with the healing and growth process of therapy. In this workshop, participants will do writing and experiential exercises that they will be able to take into their clinical and self-care practices. Participants of all comfortabilities with playwriting are welcome.</p>	Erin Stacey Visslailli, BA (Primary Facilitator) Ryan Lisman, MA, RDT, PsyD. Candidate (Secondary Facilitator)	Room C	3 CE Hours-RDT, NBCC
------------	---	---	--------	----------------------

12-1 PM	<b>Lunch</b>			
---------	--------------	--	--	--

1-2:45 PM	<p><b>Charting your Drama Therapy Course</b></p> <p>In this all-conference community experience, frequently occurring challenges in navigating the complex waters of the Drama Therapy profession will be processed and explored with dramatic action. Scenarios will be presented by participants and those witnessing will be able to provide recommendations through embodied role-playing, sharing “what they wish they</p>	Symposium Planning Committee	Room A (All Conference Event)	1.75 Hours-RDT, NBCC
-----------	---	------------------------------	-------------------------------	----------------------

	<p>had done in the past” and “what they would like to do in the future”. This workshop hopes to provide a creative and innovative educational tool to help prepare drama therapists at all levels for traversing the rigors, roadblocks, and joys of being a Drama Therapist.</p>			
--	---	--	--	--

<p>3-4:30 PM</p>	<p><b>The Nervous System in Play: Exploring Polyvagal Theory and Drama Therapy in Trauma Work</b></p> <p>Guided by the wisdom of polyvagal theory, this workshop implements drama therapy techniques in counseling for survivors of trauma. This integration of drama therapy and polyvagal theory can lead to increased safety in session and reduce the overall symptomology of trauma. Participants will learn about the utility of the vagus nerve and the hierarchical response pattern of the autonomic nervous system, to inform their work with clients who have experienced trauma. Current research suggests that trauma narratives are held in the pathways of the autonomic nervous system. Creative arts therapies have been found to reduce symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, a hallmark of trauma symptomology. Researchers have shown drama therapy interventions (e.g., role theory, projective technique, improv exercises, and a relationship lab) are effective at decreasing overall symptoms of PTSD, increasing positive affect, and increasing feelings of safety. In addition, the aesthetic distance of drama techniques used in the therapeutic space can increase treatment safety and client buy-in, even when asking clients to do things they are scared of. This workshop will educate on the utility of polyvagal theory and provide specific examples of drama therapy interventions that can be used when integrating polyvagal theory into work with clients.</p>	<p>Alisha Guthery, PhD, MA, LMHC, CATP Rhi Parent, MA Candidate</p>	<p>Room A</p>	<p>1.5 Hours- RDT, NBCC</p>
------------------	--	---	---------------	-------------------------------------

<p>3-4:30 PM</p>	<p><b>Trauma Drama: Understanding the Effects of Political Action</b></p> <p>During a time in our country recovering from various forms of political action and still experiencing a major divide in ideals/politics, Jonathan Navarro believes that we must begin to prepare ourselves as mental health practitioners for the collective outcry that is to come. According to research, the mental health outcomes following collective actions can be comparable to natural disasters, terrorist attacks, or armed conflicts. Political action is seen worldwide, but as we have seen, the number of demonstrations in the U.S. has increased greatly in recent years. The Armed Conflict Location &amp; Event Data Project (ACLED) wrote that from the start of 2020 to the present, more than 11,000 demonstrations associated with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement have been reported in nearly 3,000 distinct locations nationwide. During a time of political strife, mobilization of action, and a shift of major paradigms, mental health professionals should be prepared to address the needs of the communities and individuals affected by ongoing political actions.</p> <p>This session will help counselors understand the possible reasons people participate in political action and how they are perceived by their community. The presentation will include pictures and videos with personal accounts from people in these situations. This session will serve as an introduction to the different aspects that might lead someone to engage in political action, what happens during and the aftereffects. The session will end with a discussion on how drama therapy can be used for this population and on the difficulties that might arise from working with these clients.</p>	<p>Jonathan Navarro, MA Candidate</p>	<p>Room B</p>	<p>1.5 CE Hours- RDT CHED</p>
------------------	--	---	---------------	---

<p>4:45-5:45 PM</p>	<p><b>Closing Ceremony</b></p> <p>Celebrate the conclusion of the Seattle symposium with reflective dramatic exercises. Attendees will be invited to share themes and ideas they gained from the symposium. The ceremony will end with a closing ritual to provide serenity and closure to the symposium experience.</p>		<p>Room A (All Conference Event)</p>	
<p>6-7:30 PM</p>	<p><b>Post-Symposium Processing Dinner</b></p> <p>An optional offering for those who want to gather for a meal and engage in a group processing of their symposium experience and provide recommendations for future western region events.</p>		<p>TBD</p>	