Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy /
Revue canadienne de counseling et de psychothérapie
ISSN 0826-3893 Vol. 54 No. 3 © 2020 Pages 324–348

Give Me Your Hands: Therapeutic Experiences of Collective Theatre Creation in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside

Give Me Your Hands (*Donne-moi tes mains*) : des expériences thérapeutiques en création théâtrale collective dans le quartier Downtown Eastside de Vancouver

Christopher Cook
University of British Columbia
William Borgen
University of British Columbia

ABSTRACT
In January 2016, a group of community members undertook a theatre project at the University of British Columbia's Learning Exchange in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. For 22 months, group members wrote, rehearsed, and performed a collectively created script entitled *Voices UP!*. This research article casts four of the community members who took part in *Voices UP!* as co-inquirers, exploring their experiences of collective playmaking in terms of benefit to mental well-being. The article presents the study's results in the form of a theatrical script, followed by a discussion that focuses on research outcomes relevant to therapists exploring creative art practices, including social connection through collaborative artmaking, puppetry as a unique theatrical tool for building therapeutic relationships and embodied expression, collective theatre creation and witnessing, and the unique challenges when terminating arts-based projects.

RÉSUMÉ
En janvier 2016, un groupe de personnes d'une même collectivité ont entrepris un projet de théâtre au Learning Exchange de l'Université de Colombie-Britannique, dans le quartier Downtown Eastside de Vancouver. Pendant 22 mois, les membres du groupe ont écrit, répété et présenté une pièce de création collective intitulée *Voices UP!*. Cet article de recherche met en scène quatre membres de la communauté qui ont collaboré à *Voices UP!* en tant que co-enquêteurs, en analysant leurs expériences de théâtre collectif sous l'angle du bien-être mental. L'article présente les résultats de l'étude sous la forme d'un texte de pièce de théâtre, qui est suivi d'une discussion centrée sur les résultats de la recherche susceptibles d'intéresser les thérapeutes qui explorent les pratiques d'art créatif, notamment les liens sociaux établis grâce à la création artistique collective, l'art des marionnettes en tant qu'outil théâtral unique pour favoriser les relations thérapeutiques et l'expression incarnée, la création théâtrale

collective et la présence aux répétitions et représentations, ainsi que les défis particuliers associés à la fin des projets artistiques.

> But what has knowledge to do with art?
>
> —Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*

> If you knew it all it would not be creation but dictation.
>
> —Gertrude Stein, *Gertrude Stein Remembered*

In collective theatre creation, a group of artists or community members come together to explore theatre-based educational practices or play creation. In January 2016, a group of community members in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES) launched a collective theatre creation process at the University of British Columbia's (UBC) Learning Exchange on the traditional territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. Over the subsequent 22 months, the community members at the Learning Exchange developed and performed a collectively created script entitled *Voices UP!* (Cook et al., 2019).

This research article casts four of the community members who took part in the *Voices UP!* creation process as co-inquirers, exploring their participation in collective theatre creation in terms of the benefit to mental well-being. Inspired by *Voices UP!*, we will present the study's results in the form of a theatrical script, entitled *Give Me Your Hands*. Written collectively by the first author and the study's co-inquirers, *Give Me Your Hands* illustrates the shared and individual therapeutic experiences of those who took part in the community-based collective theatre creation process at the Learning Exchange. *Give Me Your Hands* functions as a piece of arts-based knowledge translation emerging from studying community members' experiences of engaging in *Voices UP!*. The discussion following extracts from the script focuses on research outcomes relevant to therapists exploring creative art practices, including social connection through collaborative artmaking, puppetry as a unique theatrical tool for building therapeutic relationships and embodied expression, collective theatre creation and witnessing, and unique challenges when terminating arts-based projects.

A Community, a University, and a Play

Located in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES), the UBC Learning Exchange mobilizes university faculty, staff, and students to join with individuals and groups from the DTES to create a space for sharing knowledge and for contributing to grassroots social change (Towle & Leahy, 2016). The DTES is a collection of inner-city neighbourhoods in which some members of the community grapple with unemployment or underemployment, substance use and

mental wellness challenges, gentrification, as well as stigmatization and erasure (City of Vancouver, 2018; University of British Columbia, Learning Exchange, 2016; Fleming et al., 2019; Somers et al., 2016).

The Learning Exchange initiated *Voices UP!*, a collective theatre creation project, to enable community members to gain skills in theatre and to share personal narratives focused on their educational experiences at the Learning Exchange (Cook et al., 2019). The cast performed four different iterations of the play during the 2-year theatre creation process, sharing their work with audiences at performances open to members of the community at the Learning Exchange and at two academic conferences. The first author, a therapist and a professional theatre artist, was a part-time student employee at the Learning Exchange and facilitated the *Voices UP!* collective theatre creation process while completing graduate training in the counselling psychology program at UBC. This research is drawn from the first author's thesis (Cook, 2017).

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (2012) stated that "poverty, inadequate housing, and problems finding work or getting an education put people at greater risk for developing mental health problems" (p. 80). Counsellors working from a health equity lens (Whitehead, 1992) must consider the contributions of systemic inequity to mental wellness as well as its impacts on access to adequate and appropriate mental health services. Standard counselling approaches that embrace the medical model, centring on change at the level of the individual, focus often on pathology and proceed without "consideration of the social and systemic contributions to … well-being" (Audet et al., 2014, p. 335). Such approaches may be "maladaptive and oppressive" (Audet et al., 2014, p. 335) when working with clients from marginalized communities like the DTES.

Therapists, theatre artists, and scholars have explored the possibilities of using theatre in therapy since the early 1900s. Jacob Levy Moreno (1946) began investigating the potential of group work that utilized drama exercises in the 1920s. The therapeutic approach Moreno developed, *psychodrama* (A. Cruz et al., 2018; Orkibi & Feniger-Schaal, 2019), focuses on "dramatizations of personal experiences through role-playing and enactment" (Kipper & Ritchie, 2003, p. 15). Nicolas Evreinoff (1927), working in the same period as Moreno, wrote of "theatrotherapy" (p. 122) and wondered about the potential of theatre and the imagination to contribute to well-being and health. Alongside psychodrama, numerous contemporary embodied and arts-based approaches offer an alternative to standard mental health treatments. Creative arts therapies, including dance movement therapy (R. F. Cruz, 2016; Jiménez et al., 2019; Koch et al., 2019), music therapy (Lotter & van Staden, 2019; McCaffrey & Edwards, 2016; Windle et al., 2020), art therapy (Regev & Cohen-Yatziv, 2018; Slayton et al., 2010; Van Lith & Beerse, 2019), and drama therapy (Bourne et al., 2018; Feniger-Schaal & Orkibi, 2020; Jones, 2008) have produced significant amounts of research

literature on the use of arts-based and embodied approaches to improve mental health and well-being.

Drama therapy draws on "drama as an experiential medium to facilitate psychological and emotional change" (Armstrong et al., 2016, p. 27) in clients. Drama therapy traces its origins as a specific therapeutically oriented discipline to the 1930s (Jones, 2007). While psychodrama and drama therapy both draw on theatre techniques with therapeutic aims, psychodrama is an approach within counselling psychology, whereas drama therapy is considered a separate field (Feniger-Schaal & Orkibi, 2020; Orkibi & Feniger-Schaal, 2019).

Within counselling psychology, psychodrama is not the only therapeutic approach to make use of embodied narrative sharing, role-play, and witnessing. Particularly in group counselling, several authors have implemented theatre techniques as interventions (Ali & Wolfert, 2016; Belliveau et al., 2019; Westwood & Wilensky, 2005). Counselling psychology researchers and clinicians have explored the benefits of using embodied arts-based techniques in diverse focus areas, from trauma (Westwood & Wilensky, 2005) to chronic pain management (Angheluta & Lee, 2011).

Lomas (2016), writing from the perspective of positive psychology and coining the term "positive art," calls for further research into "the role of artistic expression and appreciation in flourishing … and its potential in helping people lead more fulfilling lives" (p. 172). Arts-based programs such as theatre workshops provide a non-clinical intervention for individuals with unmet needs, offering community-based mental health support (Ørjasæter & Ness, 2017; Torrissen & Stickley, 2018).

The present study contributes to the growing literature on positive arts in counselling psychology by offering an exploration of the potential therapeutic value of collective theatrical creation in a unique community/university educational context, in Vancouver's DTES. This research study posed the question: *What were the experiences of community members who took part in a collectively created theatre project at the UBC Learning Exchange?* The authors explored the gathered narratives using two complementary qualitative approaches: research-based theatre (RBT) and narrative inquiry.

Methodological Approaches

RBT and narrative inquiry are methodological approaches that are rooted in social constructionism, a major tenet of which is that *knowledges* plural are constructed between individuals in interaction (Burr, 2003). Burr (2003) noted that body-centred art forms may express somatic awareness that is "difficult to translate into [the] thought and language" (p. 196) of traditional scholarly discourse. Interestingly, scholars exploring social constructionism have often borrowed the language of theatre and other expressive arts. Using words like performativity and

performance, Burr wrote, "when people talk to each other, the world gets constructed" (Burr, 2003, p. 8). The social constructionist position that "knowledge is … seen not as something that a person has or doesn't have, but as something that people do together" (Burr, 2003, p. 8) reflects this study's research context. The Learning Exchange takes the position that knowledge creation and knowledge sharing are forms of action with the potential to impact change.

Research-Based Theatre

RBT is a collaborative research approach that invites co-inquirers to take part in embodied data collection, analysis, and knowledge mobilization, which encompasses writing, rehearsing, and performing a research-based play (Belliveau & Lea, 2016; J. Gray & Kontos, 2018). Theatre constructs worlds and narratives with languages, voices, bodies, movements, lights, sounds, stories, and rituals. This research project employed theatre's tools as a methodological approach: the art form of theatre is inherent and pivotal to the study process and to resulting knowledge exchange (Belliveau & Lea, 2016).

Joining art and research is still a relatively new practice in counselling psychology. Other disciplines such as education (Belliveau, 2006; Saldaña, 1998) and health (R. Gray et al., 2000; Kontos & Naglie, 2006; Mitchell et al., 2006; Rossiter et al., 2008) have been exploring the intersection between research and theatre for decades. Numerous authors have suggested that RBT may fight against marginalization by engaging individuals with lived experience in the co-construction of research (Baer et al., 2019; Conrad, 2016; Okello, 2016; Wales, 2016), making this an appropriate methodological approach for use in the DTES.

Narrative Inquiry

Alongside RBT, narrative inquiry offered a framework for the project's data collection and analysis. Josselson's (2006) description of narrative research as striving "to preserve the complexity of what it means to be human and to locate its observations of people and phenomena in society, history and time" (p. 3) could also describe the act of playwriting. Lieblich et al. (1998) defined *narrative research* as encompassing all studies that make use of stories. Such a definition may be broad enough to include RBT. Theatre is rooted in storytelling, making stories the focal point of both narrative inquiry and RBT. In terms of process, Saldaña (2011) drew parallels between the search for story content in an interview transcript by a researcher conducting a narrative inquiry and the process of transforming a transcript into a monologue in research-based play. Arvay (2003) stated that re-storied co-inquirers' narratives might take the shape of a scripted dialogue, among other literary forms.

Methods

Co-Inquirers

As a drop-in program, *Voices UP!* involved a rotation of community members throughout the 2-year collective creation process. A Learning Exchange employee distributed the consent forms to the six community members who dropped in to *Voices UP!* in July and August 2017, which was the data collection phase of this study. Four community members consented to become co-inquirers. Of these community members, three were involved in *Voices UP!* from its beginning in January 2016 until its conclusion in November 2017, while one joined *Voices UP!* in September 2016 and took part until November 2017. The co-inquirers had the choice of being credited as a co-author of *Give Me Your Hands* (by name or pseudonymously) or remaining anonymous.

As co-inquirers were members of the cast of *Voices UP!* and performed the show publicly, the first author took care to ensure they understood that, even if they chose a pseudonym or to be anonymous, the stories they shared as part of this research might make them identifiable to others. Three co-inquirers self-identified as men, one as a woman; three co-inquirers identified as seniors; two identified as Chinese Canadian, one as Canadian, and one as Indigenous.

Data Collection

Co-inquirers participated in an individual narrative interview that took place at the UBC Learning Exchange and that lasted approximately one hour. The first author conducted each interview, beginning with an orienting statement:

> I would like you to think about your experience taking part in *Voices UP!* as if you were telling a story. First, think about the parts of the story, from the first thing you remember about the project until now. How would you start telling the story?

Arvay (2003) suggested viewing the narrative interview as a dialogue or a "performance" (p. 166) between interviewer and interviewee.

After sharing the orienting statement, the first author allowed the co-inquirers to direct the dialogue to those elements of their experience of *Voices UP!* that they most wanted to share. All co-inquirers consented to their interviews being audio-recorded, and they could request that the first author turn the recorder off at any time during the interview. Art supplies were made available, and co-inquirers had the option to create a drawing that represented their experience of collective theatre creation. The opportunity to create a visual representation of their experience supplemented the traditional verbal narrative interview format, providing individuals with multiple means of expression. Two co-inquirers chose

to create drawings during the interview, and two used the sock puppets they created for the show as part of their interview.

Data Analysis

The first author transcribed the audio recordings and combined these with handwritten notes from the interviews and from the co-inquirers' drawings. The first author then analyzed the transcripts using the thematic analysis steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), focusing on the meaning-making present in the co-inquirers' words as well as on impressions of what was left unsaid. Thematic analysis is an apt method for pattern identification within social contexts across diverse qualitative approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2006), including narrative inquiry and RBT. The first author's analysis of the drawings created by the co-inquirers included a description of the drawing, a description of its material and of the means used to create it, and an exploration of meaning making surrounding its contents and imagery (Riessman, 2007).

Next, the first author re-storied the narratives present in these data sources as monologues and scenes of a play entitled *Give Me Your Hands*. The first author utilized tools such as poetic transcribing (Gee, 2014; Saldaña, 2003), perhaps more appropriately called poetic re-transcribing, in which stanzas are created in an interview transcript by grouping like-information into chunks and the chunks into larger sections. In addition, the first author engaged in Saldaña's (2003) practice of in vivo scripting, which, similar to in vivo coding, uses words and phrases directly from the transcript as script dialogue. Wherever possible, *Give Me Your Hands* draws on in vivo lines, blocking notes, and scene descriptions taken from the interview transcripts. Even the script's title is a direct quotation from an interview transcript.

However, *Give Me Your Hands* attempts to represent all data sources; as such, the lines in the script are more than just direct quotations from interviews. Motivated by the process used to create *Voices UP!*, the first author held multiple meetings with each co-inquirer to review the interview transcripts and drafts of the script for *Give Me Your Hands*. The first author and the co-inquirers read the monologues and scenes aloud, and the first author rewrote them based on feedback from the co-inquirers. Sometimes co-inquirers arrived at these meetings with dialogue written on scrap pieces of paper, and often the author and the co-inquirers would rewrite a scene or lines of dialogue sitting side by side. In this way, member checking was an inherent part of the drafting process of *Give Me Your Hands*.

Following Belliveau (2007), *Give Me Your Hands* is the result of a "dialectical, hyphenated process" (p. 33): the first author shifted between the perspectives of a researcher working with the tools of a playwright and those of a playwright interacting with research data. The *Give Me Your Hands* script offered a means of arts-based analysis, results sharing, and knowledge mobilization. The script

transforms the narratives in the data into stories delivered by fictional puppet characters, Ehren, Shelley, and Zhan. The *Voices UP!* collective theatre creation process involved puppet making and performance, and the puppet characters in *Give Me Your Hands* highlight the significance the co-inquirers gave puppet creation in their descriptions of taking part in *Voices UP!*. Ehren, Shelley, and Zhan are composite characters that allow the combining of similar experiences into a single character, helping to illuminate the data.

Ethical Consideration in Creating *Give Me Your Hands*

Moving between art and research is a central ethical challenge of RBT (Belliveau et al., in press). The subjective nature of the playwrighting endeavour is both a strength and an ethical consideration presented by the RBT methodological approach. Following the theatre artist and researcher Linda Hassell (Hassall & Balfour, 2016), the first author strove to allow in vivo text to assist rather than to "dominate" the re-storying process. Generating a script that goes beyond the words captured in interview transcripts can create a text that can "represent the complexities of the findings" better (Bird, 2016, p. 144). Importantly, however, Saldaña (1998) and other research-based theatre practitioners advised continually refocusing on the study purpose rather than on the portions of data that may be the most theatrical, taking care to share the whole research picture "authentically" (O'Toole & Ackroyd, 2016, p. xiii).

As a student employee at the Learning Exchange as well as an actor and a co-writer of *Voices UP!*, the first author had to balance multiple relationships with co-inquirers, which also presented an ethical consideration during this study. Another Learning Exchange employee first told *Voices UP!* cast members about this study. The employee informed them that their choice to contribute to the study would not impact their participation in any program or activity at the Learning Exchange. Using Ortlipp's (2008) work as an example, the first author kept a reflexive artist/researcher journal throughout the project to explore biases and preconceptions during the process and to support the navigation of different relationships with co-inquirers and roles at the Learning Exchange.

Results

The first author (Chris) and the co-inquirers (Jay, Ken Lee, Eagle Sky, and Teresa Shu-Tak Wong) wrote *Give Me Your Hands* collectively. The following excerpts are focused on themes relevant to therapists exploring creative arts practices in their work. The play is set in a room at the UBC Learning Exchange. In a play script, stage directions appear often in italics or in brackets and summarize what an audience would see in a fully staged production. The authors have edited the script selections for length and clarity. The full script is available online as part of the first author's thesis (Cook, 2017). For results pertinent to

and a discussion of adult learning through theatre in a community setting, see Cook and Belliveau (2018).

In the play's prologue, as audience members enter, the three performers encourage them playfully "to try making a sock puppet … in ten minutes or less" (Cook et al., 2017, p. 52). The performer playing Ehren guides the audience through the process while the performers playing Shelley and Zhan support audience members as they try making the puppets. "After 10 minutes or so, the performers pull on their sock puppets and begin" (Cook et al., 2017, p. 53).

Excerpt 1: We Are Like a Family

EHREN. (*to audience*) You know, you can meet quite a few people making a sock puppet …

SHELLEY. I never imagined that a puppet can be like a little bridge.
We are building a bridge.
For both sides. Me. And the other people …
Everyone, I'd like you all to try something.
If you haven't already—
think up a name for your puppet …

ZHAN. (*to audience*) It can be any name you want.

SHELLEY. Now turn to the person beside you—
let your puppet introduce itself …
So this is how it all started.

ZHAN. Everybody has a puppet now, right?
It means we have a big family.
Because if I am cutting something for the puppet—
my cutting is not good—I turn for help.
(*to SHELLEY*) Will you cut this for me?

SHELLEY. (*to ZHAN*) Of course.

ZHAN. (*to audience*) That's why I said,
"We are like a family …"

SHELLEY. (*to audience*) Building a bridge.
The creation of relationships.

ZHAN. … We help each other.

(Cook et al., 2017, pp. 55–56)

Theme 1: "A Puppet Can Be Like a Little Bridge"

To convey the importance of making, rehearsing, and performing with puppets in the co-inquirers' narratives of the collective theatre creation process, the prologue to *Give Me Your Hands* invites audience members to try their hands at creating puppets. In their interview transcript, one co-inquirer likened the experience of creating puppets to naming a newborn child: "After, when we finish making the puppet, we give [it] a name … Almost like people when they have babies—they give [them] a name too. It looks like [the puppets are] born—'Oh! Everybody has a puppet,' and it means we have a big family." The descriptor of family suggests that the co-inquirer experienced a sense of belonging through creating *Voices UP!* collectively. In this co-inquirer's narrative, the puppets are a symbol of belonging and of the ability of the *Voices UP!* team to work together.

The puppets offered the co-inquirers a new medium of self-expression, and pulling on their sock puppet characters gave them a new-found freedom. As one co-inquirer stated, "Every time when we are practising, if one of the puppets doesn't like [an] idea [in the script], they can change it right away." Puppets, it seems, offered the co-inquirers the chance to speak their point of view through a safe other, an embodied character they created for themselves whenever they rehearsed or performed with them:

ZHAN. It feels like we are real puppets.
We're not people—
You are not you, I am not me—
we are into the puppet.
In the show, we live in the puppet's world.
I don't know if that is the idea or not,
but that's my feeling.

(Cook et al., 2017, pp. 55–56)

In the second script excerpt, below, the character of Zhan shares experiences of the theatre creation process, and the character of Shelley takes on the role of a woman on the river bank in Zhan's story.

Excerpt 2: How to Make a Needle

ZHAN. Oh we've been working on this play
for months and months and months.
It takes a lot of dedication.
Every time we practice, we change,

every time we change the script, we practice—
and in the end, still, we're asking:
"Do we want to change something?"
At the end of each rehearsal,
everyone gets to answer that question …

That's the process. We keep learning and changing.
The whole thing takes time—
But that's okay, right?

I'll tell you, a story goes:
There was this boy who was
always skipping school.
One day, he saw an old lady
with a long iron rod
at the bank of a river.
She was rolling the rod
in the water—back and forth with her bare hands.
(*as if to the woman*) "What are you doing?"

SHELLEY. (*from audience*) "I'm making a needle!"

ZHAN. "Oh! But that rod is huge!"

SHELLEY. (*from audience*) "If you roll it long enough,
it will be what you will it to be."

ZHAN. How many months—years—decades—did it take?
The little boy never found out
because he never skipped school again …

Persistency, will-power, patience—
You need all these qualities to create.

It takes time to make a needle or a poem or a script.
You have to be able to put in the time.
I never had time before I retired.
Never learned about plays,
I didn't have much schooling in China.
When I came here, 30 years ago, I stepped
off the plane, and I didn't know English.
It was like I was a new born.

They said, "How are you?"
I just laughed—no idea.
They said, "You are stupid!"
Just laughed—I didn't understand …
The plays here are in English
and I'm just working till now, anyway.
I never had time to learn something like this before.
(Cook et al., 2017, pp. 60–61)

Theme 2: "Not One Person … the Group"

The above excerpt speaks to the multiple ways the co-inquirers acknowledged that the collective theatre creation process was rooted in long-term group work. As stated by a co-inquirer, "If you are by yourself, you can't do those things." The excerpt also points to the challenges around consensus co-inquirers faced engaging in this group work. One co-inquirer stated that *Voices UP!* was an accurate title for the show, saying, "We really can voice up our ideas, our opinions, and everything."

Another co-inquirer spoke of at times keeping their "feelings to themselves" in the scriptwriting process, "in case someone blows up." The potential for arguments to develop over certain aspects of the creation process harkens back to the earlier image of the collective as a family—as in any family, conflicts happen. The co-inquirer, who at points felt the need to stay silent during the collective creation process, stated that they still enjoyed the experience overall. The theme of "not one person … the group" suggests that in some instances, co-inquirers may have prioritized the group ahead of themselves.

The above excerpt also captures a co-inquirer's experience as a newcomer in Canada and the racism they encountered. The co-inquirer shared these experiences alongside a story they learned as a child, of a woman making a needle, offering this story as a metaphor for their experience of the collective theatre creation process. Several co-inquirers implied it was meaningful for them to pass on knowledge and stories from their life through the play-building process.

The script excerpt also points out that even though the rehearsal was a drop-in process and required no long-term obligation on the part of community members, choosing to attend the weekly rehearsals was still a substantial time commitment. Furthermore, the rehearsals took place on weekday afternoons, and several co-inquirers stated that they could take part only because they were not currently working or because they were retired.

In the following script excerpt, the character of Shelley shares what it meant to be part of the theatre creation team.

Excerpt 3: Blue Tales

SHELLEY. Actually—this is going back again—

I wish I could mention more about
my first-time dropping-in for one of the workshops.
It was just really remarkable.
I came in with the sort of the feeling that,
"Okay let me drop in and see what is happening—
if I like it, I'll stay, if not, maybe I'll do something else."
But I'd never realized or imagined that I would stick to it for two years.
Two years!
And I have been very regular in coming,
I don't drop out right in the middle,
because I don't want to miss any part of it …

Actually I consider myself very fortunate
because I happen to meet the right people—
the people that I feel comfortable with.
So I wanted to be part of the team.
And I also had the chance to do things on my own.
A little skirt for my puppet, for example,
so it would cover my arm—
and I am not a sewer!—
I finally made one out of a gift bag.
It's a little costume for the stage.
It seems you can make things out of everything!
It's a matter of trying,
It may work, it may not.
If you don't try you never know.

Because, when I was a kid,
I painted a picture—it was a dog,
I put blue color on the tail—
and the teacher told me, "Dogs don't have blue tails!"
Then I was a little upset.
"Gee, I really did something wrong."
Here, if I put a blue nose on my puppet,
I am sure no one is going to say,
"Hey, how come the nose is blue?"
And I guess now I would think—
"How come the dog can't have a blue tail?"

(Cook et al., 2017, pp. 66, 69)

Theme 3: "A Footprint"

The final theme refers to the lasting impact co-inquirers described the experience having on them. All four co-inquirers spoke of an emotional impact, stating the experience made them "happy" and "proud" and gave them "a feeling of accomplishment." One co-inquirer remembers thinking after a performance, "I've done it! I can do it!" and spoke of an increased sense of self-esteem.

Another co-inquirer spoke of gaining confidence through the process. Despite the group members' lack of experience in theatre creation, the show was a success and gave the co-inquirer confidence to try new things. The script excerpt above reflects this courage, as Shelley re-stories a moment from their experience in a childhood art class by declaring, "How come the dog can't have a blue tail!"

Several co-inquirers also described different ways that they hoped *Voices UP!* left an impression beyond the collective, impacting their audiences. One co-inquirer spoke of hoping the audience would recognize that the cast was in "close relationship" with one another while performing. They described wanting the audience to see a group contributing collectively to the performance, from putting up the set to answering questions during the post-performance conversation with the audience. This co-inquirer expressed their belief that there was an impact on audience members, based on what they saw when they looked out during a performance, describing those watching as amazed, engaged, and appearing to have an "eagerness to … understand." Another co-inquirer recalled the audience's applause and the fact that they asked questions after the performance as evidence of the show's success, saying, "It means [through] our hardworking … we can make people happy too."

In the final script excerpt, from the last moments of the script, all three characters speak about the ending of the collective theatre creation process.

Excerpt 4: "And Afterwards—Star Dust"

SHELLEY. (*to EHREN*) "Oh, it's over. Oh, boy this is over."
(*to audience*) It's just "Oh!" At the end – you draw the curtain.
I miss it —I miss that little spark.
But the spark doesn't go on forever,
like the stars in the sky.
They always have a bright moment,
the sparkling, the brightness, and afterwards—stardust.
But then tomorrow the stars will shine again.
(*to EHREN*) I think we should end with:
"Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart."

EHREN. Who said that?

SHELLEY. William Wordsworth.
That's what the play was: the breathings of our heart.

ZHAN. "Fill your paper …"
Let's say stages instead of paper. We make theatre!

EHREN. Okay. Do you want to say that together?

ALL. (*to audience*) Fill your stages with the breathings of your hearts.

(Cook et al., 2017, pp. 70–71)

Termination: After the Star Dust

The final excerpt explores how the ending of the project has impacted the co-inquirers. During an interview, one co-inquirer asked, "Are we going to do it next year? I don't want to miss *Voices UP!* for 2018." Another said, "I hate to see that the project is over," adding, "I wish it could go on and on and on and on." Interestingly, the co-inquirer framed the ending of the project as temporary, using the image of a spark and starlight. The starlight returning tomorrow night suggests the aspiration that relationships built between the collective members will extend beyond the project's conclusion.

Discussion

Based on co-inquirers' descriptions of their experiences, *Voices UP!* provided the opportunity to develop social relationships, group membership, and a sense of belonging; tools for storytelling, communication, and self-expression; and creative skill development. The mental wellness benefits that are implied by this list are plentiful. The following discussion focuses on research outcomes relevant to therapists exploring artistic practices in their work with individuals and groups, including social connections through collaborative artmaking, puppet making and puppet play as theatrical tools for building therapeutic relationships and embodied expression, collective theatre creation and witnessing, and unique challenges when terminating collective arts-based projects.

Social Connectedness and Belonging

Co-inquirers' narratives suggest that the contribution opportunities created through *Voices UP!* encouraged social support and a sense of belonging. After creating a piece of art together, co-inquirers expressed connectedness with their fellow members of the collective. This corresponds with Bourne et al.'s (2018) finding from a systematic review of drama therapy group work that drama therapy supported relationship building among group members. Social connectedness

and group membership are impactful on health and well-being across age groups (Heinze et al., 2015) and across cultural and ethnic identities in Canada (Puyat, 2013; Richmond et al., 2007; Syed et al., 2017). Chinese immigrants facing change within the work sphere have pointed to social support as beneficial in navigating this transition (Zheng et al., 2013).

Researchers have linked social support and group membership to a range of health and wellness impacts. Recent research has pointed to group membership contributing potentially to an individual's sense of self-determination (Greenaway et al., 2015), self-worth (Jetten et al., 2015), and personal identity (Haslam et al., 2014). A sense of group membership may also mitigate experiences of depression (Cruwys et al., 2013; Cruwys, Haslam, et al., 2014) and rework maladaptive beliefs (Cruwys, Dingle, et al., 2014).

Skill Building, Efficacy, and Self-Esteem

Creative expression is a core component of *Voices UP!* and of many other workshops and activities at the Learning Exchange. *Voices UP!* is unique, however, in that it offered such a range of creative experiences to members of the collective. Instead of being a workshop on acting or on set design, *Voices UP!* allowed community members to explore the multiple forms of artistic expression inherent in theatre production, from writing the script to drilling set pieces to performing with sock puppets. *Voices UP!* also gave creative control to the community members, and Cassidy et al.'s (2014) model of meta-therapeutic processes in drama therapy highlights giving clients "choice and control" (p. 357).

Reflecting on the results of the current study, research points to drama therapy (Bourne et al., 2018) and psychodrama (Orkibi & Feniger-Schaal, 2019) contributing to self-esteem. Furthermore, Moore et al. (2017) found that older adults reported "positive changes in self-esteem and confidence" (p. 7) after taking part in a drama workshop. Co-inquirers described gaining courage and self-esteem as they moved through the process of creating and performing *Voices UP!*. As self-confidence may increase the capacity to manage change (Koert et al., 2011), the self-confidence co-inquirers reported gaining through *Voices UP!* could help them navigate the transition in various areas of their lives.

As Westwood and Gordon (2016) proposed, co-inquirers reported that rehearsing allowed them to develop a sense of competency before performing publicly. Public performances then brought a sense of achievement and efficacy, as performance allowed them to recognize their success in putting on a production. Skill building is often a focus of counselling psychology interventions, particularly in career counselling. For those individuals who may not access traditional individual or group counselling services due to a range of social, mental, and economic barriers, what are alternative approaches to skill building and to reflexivity building that may support a career? Creative expression and skill building through projects such as *Voices UP!* may offer meaningful engagement

and contribution opportunities in communities that are underserved by more traditional counselling approaches.

Puppetry, Therapeutic Relationships, and Embodied Expression

Puppet making and puppet play offer a unique theatrical tool for building therapeutic relationships and embodied expression. Within counselling psychology literature, a limited amount of research explores the use of puppetry with adults (Greaves et al., 2012), although the field of drama therapy has written about the use of projective objects and puppets in working toward therapeutic goals (Gerity, 1999; Jones, 2007; Swanepoel, 2011). Similarly, in psychodrama, A. Cruz et al. (2018) identified working with intermediate objects such as props and puppets as a standard intervention to support communication and self-expression.

One of the unique contributions of the current study was to explore the experiences of adults in a community setting who created puppets, learned puppetry skills, and performed with them publicly. Based on the co-inquirers' reported experiences, several pivotal elements led to the puppets acting as a tool for embodied communication and relationship development within the group: engaging in a shared sense of play and fun through puppet creation, helping other group members make their puppets, embracing the freedom to create a puppet in whatever way they wanted, and taking on the character of the sock puppet during script creation, rehearsal, and performances.

As Bernier (2005) noted in his work on therapeutic puppetry, puppet characters may be viewed "as an extension [of] aspects of self" (p. 110), suggesting that the puppets allowed the co-inquirers to express themselves within the safety of a character. A common element across a range of therapeutic modalities is what Wampold and Imel (2015) termed the "real relationship" (p. 55) between therapist and client, a relationship that supports genuine emotional connection. For some, communicating through a puppet character may promote the development of a bond allowing free expression and authenticity.

Collective Theatre Creation: The Community's the Thing

The etiology of the word theatre is "a place for viewing" or "to behold" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2019). The creation of a space to behold or to witness may allow for what theatre critic Jill Dolan (2005) described as the "the pleasure of a utopian performative" experience, stating that "even if it doesn't change the world, [performance] certainly changes the people who feel it" (p. 19). The co-inquirers' narratives demonstrate that they felt witnessed or seen throughout the collective theatre creation process by their fellow group members. Several group therapy approaches point to the witnessing of participants' narratives in a group setting as a core element of the therapeutic process (Ali & Wolfert, 2016; Westwood & Wilensky, 2005).

Jones (2008) included witnessing as one of the core therapeutic processes in drama therapy. In the context of a therapeutic theatre creation space, witnessing can occur in many ways (e.g., group members witness each other rehearse and perform alongside seeing one another's responses and reactions to their embodied narratives). They also witness each other's contributions to the creation process and skill development over time. Co-inquirers' descriptions indicate that their experiences of being witnessed by fellow group members, as well as by audiences during performances, offered an acknowledgement of their contributions and the possibility of passing on meaningful narratives from their lives.

"And Afterwards—Stardust": Termination in Arts-Based Therapeutic Work

Counsellors may face unique challenges when terminating or concluding arts-based therapeutic work, particularly in communities like the DTES. Although the theatre practitioner Augusto Boal (1992) viewed community-engaged theatre work as having "no end, because everything which happens in it must extend into life" (p. 246), termination is a reality in all counselling work. It is ethically imperative for counsellors to consider how an arts-based therapeutic process will conclude. Co-inquirers' narratives suggest the emotional impact of endings of the collective creation process as well as the limited availability of opportunities to access programs such as *Voices UP!*.

Dolan (2005) described theatre as a place of "ephemeral maybes" (p. 4); like so many live art forms, a play performance and the overarching journey of a theatre production from creation to stage are transient experiences. To support community members as *Voices UP!* concluded, the Learning Exchange invited participants to contribute to a comic about the theatre creation process. The comic offered community members a tangible memento as well as a summary of the process (Cook et al., 2019). The comic is accessible online as a resource for individuals and groups interested in learning more about collective theatre creation in the community (Voices UP! Collective, 2017).

Research Significance

Expanding our conceptions of therapeutic work to include a variety of settings and practices (such as transforming community meeting rooms into rehearsal spaces and theatre stages) supports our efforts as clinicians and practitioners to make relevant counselling experiences accessible to a higher number of Canadians in a range of communities. Collaborative theatre creation allows for the freedom to adapt the creation process to the individuals taking part, and RBT offers an appropriate modality for working with communities and groups who have faced stigmatization, given that community members can shape the telling of their narratives collectively.

Few counselling psychology authors have drawn on research approaches and tools for knowledge mobilization that live in the gathering place between art

and research, where the RBT methodology resides (Belliveau & Lea, 2016). As an arts-based research methodology, RBT offers new possibilities for knowledge sharing between counselling psychology researchers, practitioners, and community members.

Future Directions

Considering the experiences of the co-inquirers who took part in *Voices UP!*, future projects could investigate the impact on staff and students who participate in such projects. Further studies could also contribute to the limited research that exists on the uses of puppetry and puppet creation with adults in therapeutic contexts, especially in community settings with a collaborative model.

Give Me Your Hands was shared with community members and staff at the UBC Learning Exchange but did not receive a public presentation. Future projects could also explore staging research-based theatre productions emanating from counselling psychology research (Westwood & Gordon, 2016), including the possible benefits and the associated ethical considerations.

Limitations

The authors conducted this research in at the UBC Learning Exchange, and the co-inquirers who took part were willing to engage in a theatre-based learning opportunity. These data do not represent all community members accessing programming at the Learning Exchange or in the DTES. *Give Me Your Hands* is only one of the many possible means of artistic interpretations of the data in this study. Like any play, this script is not offered as the final word on the voices and stories that it shares, but rather, as the impetus for other creative reactions and interpretations.

Conclusion

Through script excerpts, this article demonstrates art as a means of knowledge sharing by presenting research findings through characters and dialogue. The authors hope this study will inspire other researchers, clinicians, artists, and community members to explore the therapeutic potential of creating communal theatre projects and of making art as a means of knowledge mobilization within the field of counselling psychology. Although reading excerpts of *Give Me Your Hands* provides insight, the script is only a starting point that could lead to a live, witnessed story sharing in a communal gathering. Theatre is created to be performed. One possible aspiration for RBT and narrative inquiry is to ignite dialogues, or "conversation" (Josselson, 2006, p. 7), connecting individuals and communities in interactions that transmit, share, and create knowledge. Staging RBT projects such as *Give Me Your Hands* publicly may help to start such dialogues, encouraging other researchers, clinicians, artists, and community members to explore the therapeutic potential of creating collective art.

References

Ali, A., & Wolfert, S. (2016). Theatre as a treatment for posttraumatic stress in military veterans: Exploring the psychotherapeutic potential of mimetic induction. *Arts in Psychotherapy*, *50*, 58–65. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2016.06.004

Angheluta, A.-M., & Lee, B. K. (2011). Art therapy for chronic pain: Applications and future directions. *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, *45*(2), 112–131. https://cjc-rcc.ucalgary.ca/article/view/59289

Armstrong, C. R., Rozenberg, M., Powell, M. A., Honce, J., Bronstein, L., Gingras, G., & Han, E. (2016). A step toward empirical evidence: Operationalizing and uncovering drama therapy change processes. *Arts in Psychotherapy*, *49*, 27–33. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2016.05.007

Arvay, M. J. (2003). Doing reflexivity: A collaborative narrative approach. In L. Finlay & B. Gough (Eds.), *Reflexivity: A Practical Guide for Researchers in Health and Social Sciences* (pp. 163–175). Wiley. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470776094.ch12

Audet, C., Collins, S., Jay, M., Irvine, K., Hill-Lehr, A., & Schmolke, C. (2014). Poverty, mental health, and counsellors for social justice: Reflections on an interactive workshop. *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, *48*(3), 321–342. https://cjc-rcc.ucalgary.ca/article/view/60036

Baer, P., Salisbury, J., & Goldstein, T. (2019). Pairing verbatim theatre and theatre of the oppressed to provoke startling empathy. *Educational Forum*, *83*(4), 418–431. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2019.1626961

Belliveau, G. (2006, July 27). Engaging in drama: Using arts-based research to explore a social justice project in teacher education. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, *7*(5), 1–15. http://www.ijea.org/v7n5/

Belliveau, G. (2007). Dramatizing the data: An ethnodramatic exploration of a playbuilding process. *Arts & Learning Research Journal*, *23*(1), 31–51.

Belliveau, G., Cook, C., McLean, B., & Lea, G. W. (2019). Thawing out: Therapy through theatre with Canadian military veterans. *Arts in Psychotherapy*, *62*, 45–51. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2018.11.001

Belliveau, G., Cox, S., Nichols, J., Lea, G. W., & Cook, C. (in press). Examining the ethics of research-based theatre through *Contact! Unload*. In T. Prentki & A. Breed (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to applied performance* (Vol. 1). Routledge.

Belliveau, G., & Lea, G. W. (2016). Introduction. In G. Belliveau & G. W. Lea (Eds.), *Research-based theatre: An artistic methodology* (pp. 1–13). Intellect.

Bernier, M. (2005). Introduction to puppetry in therapy. In M. Bernier & J. O'Hare (Eds.), *Puppetry in education and therapy: Unlocking doors to the mind and heart* (pp. 109–115). AuthorHouse.

Bird, J. (2016). An ethnographic performance for professional learning. In G. Belliveau & G. W. Lea (Eds.), *Research-based theatre: An artistic methodology* (pp. 163–174). Intellect.

Boal, A. (1992). *Games for actors and non-actors*. Translated by Adrian Jackson. Routledge.

Bourne, J., Andersen-Warren, M., & Hackett, S. (2018). A systematic review to investigate dramatherapy group work with working age adults who have a mental health problem. *Arts in Psychotherapy*, *61*, 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2018.08.001

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Burr, V. (2003). *Social constructionism* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Cassidy, S., Turnbull, S., & Gumley, A. (2014). Exploring core processes facilitating therapeutic change in Dramatherapy: A grounded theory analysis of published case studies. *Arts in Psychotherapy*, *41*(4), 353–365. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2014.07.003

City of Vancouver. (2018). *Downtown Eastside Plan*. https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/downtown-eastside-plan.pdf

Conrad, D. (2016). The lives of incarcerated youth in *Athabasca's Going Unmanned*. In G. Belliveau & G. W. Lea (Eds.), *Research-based theatre: An artistic methodology* (pp. 43–58). Intellect.

Cook, C. (2017). *Voices Up!* Experiences of collective playmaking [Master's thesis, University of British Columbia]. UBC Library Open Collections, https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0361127

Cook, C., & Belliveau, G. (2018). Community stories and growth through research-based theatre. *LEARNing Landscapes*, *11*(2), 109–126. https://doi.org/10.36510/learnland.v11i2.950

Cook, C., Camman, C., Leyland, A., O'Shea, S., & Towle, A. (2019). Dramatizing learning, performing ourselves: Stories of theatre-based evaluation in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, *34*(2), 255–271. https://doi.org/10.3138/cjpe.44172

Cook, C., Jay, Lee, K., Sky, E., & Shu-Tak Wong, T. (2017). *Give me your hands* [Unpublished manuscript]. Learning Exchange, University of British Columbia.

Cruwys, T., Dingle, G. A., Haslam, C., Haslam, S. A., Jetten, J., & Morton, T. A. (2013). Social group memberships protect against future depression, alleviate depression symptoms and prevent depression relapse. *Social Science & Medicine*, *98*, 179–186. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2013.09.013

Cruwys, T., Dingle, G. A., Hornsey, M. J., Jetten, J., Oei, T. P. S., & Walter, Z. C. (2014). Social isolation schema responds to positive social experiences: Longitudinal evidence from vulnerable populations. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *53*(3), 265–280. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjc.12042

Cruwys, T., Haslam, S. A., Dingle, G. A., Jetten, J., Hornsey, M. J., Chong, E. M. D., & Oei, T. P. S. (2014). Feeling connected again: Interventions that increase social identification reduce depression symptoms in community and clinical settings. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, *159*, 139–146. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2014.02.019

Cruz, A., Sales, C. M. D., Alves, P., & Moita, G. (2018). The core techniques of Morenian Psychodrama: A systematic review of literature. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *9*, Article 1263. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01263

Cruz, R. F. (2016). Dance/movement therapy and developments in empirical research: The first 50 years. *American Journal of Dance Therapy*, *38*, 297–302. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10465-016-9224-2

Dolan, J. (2005). *Utopia in performance: Finding hope at the theater*. University of Michigan Press.

Evreinoff, N. (1927). *The theatre in life* (A. I. Nazaroff, Ed.). Brentano's.

Feniger-Schaal, R., & Orkibi, H. (2020). Integrative systematic review of drama therapy intervention research. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, *14*(1), 68–80. https://doi.org/10.1037/aca0000257

Fleming, T., Damon, W., Collins, A. B., Czechaczek, S., Boyd, J., & McNeil, R. (2019). Housing in crisis: A qualitative study of the socio-legal contexts of residential evictions in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, *71*, 169–177. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2018.12.012

Gee, J. P. (2014). *How to do discourse analysis: A toolkit* (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315819662

Gerity, L. A. (1999). *Creativity and the dissociative patient: Puppets, narrative and art in the treatment of survivors of childhood trauma*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Gray, J., & Kontos, P. (2018). An aesthetic of relationality: Embodiment, imagination, and the necessity of playing the fool in research-informed theater. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *24*(7), 440–542. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800417736331

Gray, R., Sinding, C., Ivonoffski, V., Fitch, M., Hampson, A., & Greenberg, M. (2000). The use of research-based theatre in a project related to metastatic breast cancer. *Health Expectations*, *3*(2), 137–144. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1369-6513.2000.00071.x

Greaves, A. E., Camic, P. M., Maltby, M., Richardson, K., & Mylläri, L. (2012). A multiple single case design study of group therapeutic puppetry with people with severe mental illness. *Arts in Psychotherapy*, *39*(4), 251–261. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2012.03.002

Greenaway, K. H., Haslam, S. A., Cruwys, T., Branscombe, N. R., Ysseldyk, R., & Heldreth, C. (2015). From "we" to "me": Group identification enhances perceived personal control with consequences for health and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *109*(1), 53–74. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000019

Haslam, C., Haslam, S. A., Knight, C., Gleibs, I., Ysseldyk, R., & McCloskey, L.-G. (2014). We can work it out: Group decision-making builds social identity and enhances the cognitive performance of care residents. *British Journal of Psychology*, *105*(1), 17–34. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjop.12012

Hassall, L., & Balfour, M. (2016). Transitioning home: Research-based theatre with returning servicemen and their families. In G. Belliveau & G. W. Lea (Eds.), *Research-based theatre: An artistic methodology* (pp. 147–162). Intellect.

Heinze, J. E., Kruger, D. J., Reischl, T. M., Cupal, S., & Zimmerman, M. A. (2015). Relationships among disease, social support, and perceived health: A lifespan approach. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *56*(3–4), 268–279. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-015-9758-3

Jetten, J., Branscombe, N. R., Haslam, S. A., Haslam, C., Cruwys, T., Jones, J. M., Cui, L., Dingle, G., Liu, J., Murphy, S., Thai, A., Walter, Z., & Zhang, A. (2015). Having a lot of a good thing: Multiple important group memberships as a source of self-esteem. *PLOS ONE*, *10*(6), Article e0131035. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0124609

Jiménez, J., Bräuninger, I., & Meekums, B. (2019). Dance movement therapy with older people with a psychiatric condition: A systematic review. *Arts in Psychotherapy*, *63*, 118–127. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2018.11.008

Jones, P. (2007). *Drama as therapy: Vol. 1. Theory, practice and research* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Jones, P. (2008). Research into the core processes of drama therapy: Vignettes and conversations. *Arts in Psychotherapy*, *35*(4), 271–279. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2008.06.004

Josselson, R. (2006). Narrative research and the challenge of accumulating knowledge. *Narrative Inquiry*, *16*(1), 3–10. https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.16.1.03jos

Kipper, D. A., & Ritchie, T. D. (2003). The effectiveness of psychodramatic techniques: A meta-analysis. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, *7*(1), 13–25. https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2699.7.1.13

Koch, S. C., Riege, R. F. F., Tisborn, K., Biondo, J., Martin, L., & Beelmann, A. (2019). Effects of dance movement therapy and dance on health-related psychological outcomes: A meta-analysis update. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *10*, Article 1806. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01806

Koert, E., Borgen, W. A., & Amundson, N. E. (2011). Educated immigrant women workers doing well with change: Helping and hindering factors. *Career Development Quarterly*, *59*(3), 194–207. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2011.tb00063.x

Kontos, P. C., & Naglie, G. (2006). Expressions of personhood in Alzheimer's: Moving from ethnographic text to performing ethnography. *Qualitative Research*, *6*(3), 301–317. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794106065005

Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R., & Zilber, T. (1998). *Narrative research: Reading, analysis, and interpretation*. SAGE Publications.

Lomas, T. (2016). Positive art: Artistic expression and appreciation as an exemplary vehicle for flourishing. *Review of General Psychology*, *20*(2), 171–182. https://doi.org/10.1037/gpr0000073

Lotter, C., & van Staden, W. (2019). Verbal affordances of active and receptive music therapy methods in major depressive disorder and schizophrenia-spectrum disorder. *Arts in Psychotherapy*, *64*, 59–68. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2018.12.002

McCaffrey, T., & Edwards, J. (2016). "Music therapy helped me get back *doing*": Perspectives of music therapy participants in mental health services. *Journal of Music Therapy*, *53*(2), 121–148. https://doi.org/10.1093/jmt/thw002

Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2012). *Changing directions, changing lives: The mental health strategy for Canada*. https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/MHStrategy_Strategy_ENG.pdf

Mitchell, G. J., Jonas-Simpson, C., & Ivonoffski, V. (2006). Research-based theatre: The making of *I'm Still Here!*. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, *19*(3), 198–206. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894318406289878

Moore, R. C., Straus, E., Dev, S. I., Parish, S. M., Sueko, S., & Eyler, L. T. (2017). Development and pilot randomized control trial of a drama program to enhance well-being among older adults. *Arts in Psychotherapy*, *52*, 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2016.09.007

Moreno, J. L. (1946). *Psychodrama*. Beacon House.

Okello, B. F. (2016). *The ink murderers can't hold it any longer*. In G. Belliveau & G. W. Lea (Eds.), *Research-based theatre: An artistic methodology* (pp. 27–42). Intellect.

Ørjasæter, K. B., & Ness, O. (2017). Acting out: Enabling meaningful participation among people with long-term mental health problems in a music and theater workshop. *Qualitative Health Research*, *27*(11), 1600–1613. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316679954

Orkibi, H., & Feniger-Schaal, R. (2019). Integrative systematic review of psychodrama psychotherapy research: Trends and methodological implications. *PLOS ONE*, 14(2), Article e0212575. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0212575

Ortlipp, M. (2008). Keeping and using reflective journals in the qualitative research process. *Qualitative Report*, *13*(4), 695–705. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol13/iss4/8

O'Toole, J., & Ackroyd, J. (2016). Foreword. In G. Belliveau & G. W. Lea (Eds.), *Research-based theatre: An artistic methodology* (pp. xi–xiv). Intellect.

Oxford English Dictionary. (2019). Theatre. In *Oxford English Dictionary*. Retrieved June 27, 2020, from http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/200227

Puyat, J. H. (2013). Is the influence of social support on mental health the same for immigrants and non-immigrants? *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, *15*, 598–605. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-012-9658-7

Regev, D., & Cohen-Yatziv, L. (2018). Effectiveness of art therapy with adult clients in 2018—what progress has been made? *Frontiers in Psychology*, *9*, Article 1531. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01531

Richmond, C. A. M., Ross, N. A., & Egeland, G. M. (2007). Social support and thriving health: A new approach to understanding the health of Indigenous Canadians. *American Journal of Public Health*, *97*(10), 1827–1833. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2006.096917

Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. SAGE Publications.

Rossiter, K., Kontos, P., Colantonio, A., Gilbert, J., Gray, J., & Keightley, M. (2008). Staging data: Theatre as a tool for analysis and knowledge transfer in health research. *Social Science and Medicine*, *66*(1), 130–146. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2007.07.021

Saldaña, J. (1998). Ethical issues in an ethnographic performance text: The "dramatic impact" of "juicy stuff." *Research in Drama Education*, *3*(2), 181–196. https://doi.org/10.1080/1356978980030205

Saldaña, J. (2003). Dramatizing data: A primer. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *9*(2), 218–236. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800402250932

Saldaña, J. (2011). *Ethnotheatre: Research from page to stage*. Routledge.

Slayton, S. C., D'Archer, J., & Kaplan, F. (2010). Outcome studies on the efficacy of art therapy: A review of findings. *Art Therapy*, *27*(3), 108–118. https://doi.org/10.1080/07421656.2010.10129660

Somers, J. M., Moniruzzaman, A., & Rezansoff, S. N. (2016). Migration to the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood of Vancouver and changes in service use in a cohort of mentally ill homeless adults: A 10-year retrospective study. *BMJ Open*, *6*, Article 3009043. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2015-009043

Swanepoel, M. (2011). Meeting with the metaphor: The impact of the dramatic metaphor on the therapeutic relationship. *Dramatherapy*, *33*(2), 101–113. https://doi.org/10.1080/02630672.2011.582778

Syed, M. A., McDonald, L., Smirle, C., Lau, K., Mirza, R. M., & Hitzig, S. L. (2017). Social isolation in Chinese older adults: Scoping review for age-friendly community planning. *Canadian Journal on Aging*, *36*(2), 223–245. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0714980817000101

Torrissen, W., & Stickley, T. (2018). Participatory theatre and mental health recovery: A narrative inquiry. *Perspectives in Public Health*, *138*(1), 47–54. https://doi.org/10.1177/1757913917723944

Towle, A., & Leahy, K. (2016). The Learning Exchange: A shared space for the University of British Columbia and Vancouver's Downtown Eastside communities. *Metropolitan Universities*, *27*(3), 67–83. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1120575

University of British Columbia, Learning Exchange. (2016). *Student Orientation Materials*. https://learningexchange.ubc.ca/ubc-student-learning/student-orientation-materials/

Van Lith, T., & Beerse, M. (2019). Examination of contemporary and promising research strategies in art therapy. *Art Therapy*, *36*(3), 141–148. https://doi.org/10.1080/07421656.2019.1645499

Voices UP! Collective. (2017, November 23). *Voices UP! The comic*. Learning Exchange, University of British Columbia. https://learningexchange.ubc.ca/2017/11/23/voices-up-the-comic/

Wales, P. (2016). Temporarily yours: Foreign domestic workers in Singapore. In G. Belliveau & G. W. Lea (Eds.), *Research-based theatre: An artistic methodology* (pp. 147–162). Intellect.

Wampold, B. E., & Imel, Z. E. (2015). *The great psychotherapy debate: The evidence for what makes psychotherapy work* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Westwood, M. J., & Gordon, A. (2016). Solace in theatre after war: Facilitating therapeutic change through theatre performance. In G. Belliveau & M. J. Westwood (Eds.), *Soldiers performing self in CONTACT!UNLOAD: Innovations in theatre and counselling psychology* (pp. 79–84). UBC Faculty of Education.

Westwood, M. J., & Wilensky, P. (2005). *Therapeutic enactment: Restoring vitality through trauma repair in groups*. Group Action Press.

Whitehead, M. (1992). The concepts and principles of equity and health. *International Journal of Health Services*, *22*(3), 429–445. https://doi.org/10.2190/986L-LHQ6-2VTE-YRRN

Windle, E., Hickling, L. M., Jayacodi, S., & Carr, C. (2020). The experiences of patients in the synchrony group music therapy trial for long-term depression. *Arts in Psychotherapy*, *67*, Article 101580. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2019.101580

Zheng, L., Amundson, N. E., Borgen, W. A., & Butterfield, L. D. (2013). The experiences of Mainland Chinese immigrant professionals who believe they have made a successful transition: Strategies that help or hinder. *Canadian Journal of Career Development*, *12*(2), 48–57.

About the Authors

Christopher Cook is a registered clinical counsellor, a theatre artist, and a Ph.D. candidate in counselling psychology at the University of British Columbia.

William Borgen is a professor of counselling psychology at the University of British Columbia. His main research interests are career counselling, career/life transitions, developmental approaches to counselling, and group counselling.

The authors express their gratitude to the community members involved in *Voices UP!*. Without their support, this study would not have been possible.

Many thanks go to the UBC Learning Exchange and its staff, who work tirelessly to offer an incredible range of learning and research opportunities—including this one.

This research study received ethical approval from the Behavioral Research Ethics Board at the University of British Columbia, certificate number H17-00101.

This research and learning took place on the traditional territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

Address correspondence to William Borgen, University of British Columbia, Educational and Counselling Psychology and Special Education, Vancouver Campus, 2125 Main Mall, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6T 1Z4. Email: william.borgen@ubc.ca