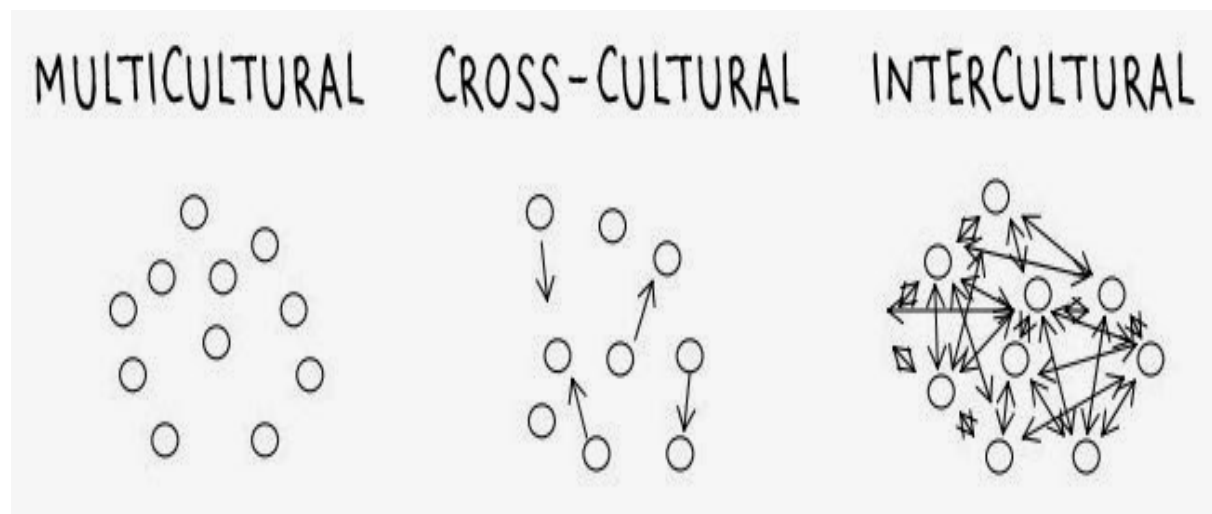


# British Association of Dramatherapists

## Intercultural Good Practice Guidelines



July 2016

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## **BADth Intercultural Practice Guidelines**

### **Introduction**

“Dramatherapists should monitor their practice to ensure that they are not making discriminatory decisions based upon a client’ race, culture, nationality, gender, marital status, physical or mental ability, physical appearance, religion, political opinions or sexual orientation.”

British Association of Dramatherapists (BADth) Code of Practice on [www.badth.org](http://www.badth.org)

The BADth Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee has developed guidelines for intercultural practice as part of continuous professional development training over the last decade. In 2012, draft guidelines were first formulated in a CPD workshop at the BADth conference at the University of Oxford. Since then the need has been identified to further develop and ratify these guidelines which commit to inclusivity and developing awareness and knowledge of difference in self and others. Dramatherapists aim to develop their understanding and skills to address cultural differences with regard to touch, diverse communication styles and the emphasis on a playful approach, as well as openness and empathy towards a multiplicity of narratives and meanings. This may mean incorporating systemic thinking and reflection on the impact of external systems (such as environment, religion, unconscious political / historic and current contexts). The practice of Dramatherapy acknowledges and respects diversity. Dramatherapists are therefore encouraged to be open to the variety of human experience and cultures, to challenge their own assumptions and views when necessary, and to strive towards a non-racist and non-discriminatory identity.

These guidelines do not constitute a change to the Code of Practice, but aim to extend/ complement it. Whilst they aim to be comprehensive, they also are designed to evolve over time to reflect change, pertinent issues and diverse contexts. BADth members are invited to collaborate creatively to make this a living document!

The guidelines are divided into five categories:

1. Cultural Awareness and Knowledge of Self and Others
2. Practice and Supervision
3. Training and Continuing Professional Development
4. Research
5. Advocacy, Professional Relationships and Systemic Change

Warm thanks are offered to Sarah Bilodeau and Dr Ditty Dokter, who have put in an enormous amount of work into developing these guidelines. Also to members of the BADth Training and Equality and Diversity Sub-Committees, the BADth Executive Committee, the NADTA Diversity Committee and the many other organisations which have been involved in the consultation.

**Mandy Carr, Convenor of BADth Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee**  
**5<sup>th</sup> August, 2016**

## **Guideline 1: Cultural Awareness and Knowledge of Self and Others**

*Dramatherapists, supervisors and trainers are advised and encouraged...*

1. ...to recognise that as cultural beings, attitudes, beliefs and biases are held that may influence perceptions of and interactions with individuals who are different and similar to themselves.
2. ...to reflect on how their own cultural backgrounds may influence attitudes, values and biases, for instance towards how certain behaviours may be interpreted eg help-seeking, expressions of distress, touch, roleplay etc. Also to reflect on their own and their clients' sources of comfort and discomfort with cultural differences and commonalities which may exist.
3. ...to actively seek out knowledge and understanding about how cultural oppression may affect them personally and in their work.
4. ...to assess how they may have been impacted by and /or have indirectly benefitted from interpersonal, institutional and cultural forms of bias.
5. ...to consider personal, social, organisational, financial, environmental, cultural, gender or political contexts that may impact on asymmetries in a therapeutic relationship.
6. ...to develop awareness of culturally specific resources for support to be provided to the client (ie. an interpreter with cultural knowledge and appropriate experience, for other referral possibilities).
7. ...to familiarize themselves with the art forms, imagery, creative traditions, festivals, customs/rituals and creative processes of the clients' culture and to be open to working with these and exploring the values and meanings this may hold for the client, in a secular or non-secular context.

## **Guideline 2: Dramatherapy Practice & Supervision**

*Dramatherapists and supervisors are advised and encouraged...*

1. ...to practice with respect and dignity, being inclusive of the client's race, ethnicity, class, culture, geographic location, language, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family structure, physical, mental or developmental ability/disability, appearance, religion/spirituality, political affiliation, socio-economic or immigration status and historical experiences with a dominant or minority culture.
2. ...to recognize the value in interacting in the client's preferred language, working sensitively with interpreters, when needed.
3. ...to take responsibility for developing awareness of barriers that may prevent clients from utilising the therapeutic services (ie. opening hours of services, finances, transportation, child care, stigma towards mental health services) and seek to develop accessibility in collaboration with their employing organization, if needed.
4. ...to recognise that help seeking behaviours, healing practices, communication patterns, preferred methods of treatment, expression/manifestation of distress/pain, perspectives on touch and Dramatherapy activities may be influenced by culture and to adapt their approach to meet the clients' needs. Also to be responsive to cultural experiences and social bias that may affect a client eg. appropriation, acculturation, discrimination, racism, oppression, heterosexism, classicism, ageism and trans-generational trauma.
5. ...to adapt informed consent procedures where necessary. This may include translation, interpretation, addressing client concerns, taking into account a dynamic in which trust may or may not be impeded.
6. ...to work with clients to explore their rights and responsibilities in the collaborative therapeutic process and where necessary, to raise cultural factors which may influence the therapeutic process eg the cultural context (at micro-macro level), power dynamics, internalised privilege and oppression of both the therapist and client.
7. ...to be prepared to sensitively address practices/beliefs that may be harmful to the client, remaining mindful of their civil and human rights whilst respecting religious/spiritual and community views including attributions, taboos, rituals and traditions, preferred methods of treatment and helping networks.

*Dramatherapy supervisees are advised and encouraged...*

8. ...to bring their self-enquiries, feelings and preconceptions to supervision, as suggested in these guidelines and to be self-reflexive and open to challenging/suspending/shifting ones' views and approach(es) for the benefit of the client.

*Dramatherapy supervisors are advised and encouraged...*

9. ...to refer their supervisees to further consultation, training and educational resources that may help them in understanding the cultural considerations of their clients, if needed.

10. ...to remain aware of how issues of diversity may affect their relationship with their supervisees and their understanding of the supervisee's clients. Also to remain curious and open to those aspects of cultural identity that may be important to the supervisee and to model how supervisees may engage in similar conversations with clients eg. by exploring differences and commonalities that may exist between supervisee and supervisor.
11. ...to aim to support supervisees in engaging with any cultural prejudice in themselves or their clients.
12. ...to support the development of intercultural good practice within supervision.

### **Guideline 3: Dramatherapy training and continuing professional development**

*Dramatherapy trainers are advised and encouraged...*

1. ...to ensure that courses reflect the HCPC standards of proficiency which includes the need for Dramatherapists to understand the cultural background to health and to be aware of influences on the therapeutic relationship, particularly:
  - the importance of variations within cultures
  - the assessment of intercultural relations
  - cultural differences in understanding metaphor and symbolism
  - the ability to address the dynamics that may result from cultural differences
2. ...to assess which worldviews are privileged and which are missing in the contexts of training and to aim to incorporate and include these perspectives within the training.
3. ...to aim to attract and retain students and staff members from diverse backgrounds.
4. ...to include critical perspectives in every aspect of the course (theory, experiential, placement supervision, research) in order to prepare the students to better identify, analyse and evaluate personal assumptions as well as the social, economic and political factors that may influence the provision of care through Dramatherapy.
5. ...to refer students to resources that may aid in their understanding of the cultural considerations relevant to clients in their care.

*Dramatherapists and Dramatherapy students are advised and encouraged...*

6. ...to seek educational and consultative opportunities to enrich their understanding and effectiveness in working with clients who have historical, cultural backgrounds and experiences that are different from their own.
7. ...to take responsibility for educating themselves about relevant identity development models, historical and current discriminatory practices at a societal level and global socio-political and intergenerational issues that may affect the psychological welfare of clients.
8. ...to continue professional development through consultation, training and education in order to adapt services to effectively meet differing cultural needs.
9. ...to recognise the limits of their competencies and when needed, refer to a more appropriately qualified professional.

#### **Guideline 4: Research**

*Dramatherapy researchers and research supervisors are advised...*

1. ...to aim to use culturally and developmentally appropriate language on the consent form that is understandable to the person providing consent.
2. ...to acknowledge the significant role research can play in effecting social change.
3. ... to aim to conduct culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate and collaborative research, especially with those whose voices are seldom included in the creation of policies and practice affecting their lives.
4. ...to familiarise themselves with relevant research and the latest findings regarding the impact of discrimination and oppression on mental health, as well as critical perspectives in Dramatherapy that may be helpful when considering the clients served.
5. ...to consider monitoring cultural backgrounds of therapist and client when undertaking Dramatherapy research.



## **Guideline 5: Advocacy, Professional Relationships and Systemic Change**

*Dramatherapists are advised and encouraged...*

1. ...to be aware of systemic factors which may affect clients, professional relationships, employing organisations and relevant communities. These may include institutional barriers, political organisation of societies, discriminatory practices at social and community levels and global geo-socio-political contexts/issues eg. wars, natural disasters, legalised discrimination in same sex relationships.
2. ...to take responsibility as agents of change in promoting dialogue about diversity, bias and social justice within professional relationships, employing organisations, the profession of Dramatherapy and any related area.
3. ...to contribute their knowledge and skills to their professional association, where possible, in order to support the growth of BADth as a culturally responsive organisation.
4. ...to support culturally informed organisational policy development and practice, when relevant to the Dramatherapy profession, at a systemic level in order to enable effective intercultural work.
5. ...to support any development towards more accessible provision of services, where possible.
6. ...to involve themselves in acts of solidarity with communities on a personal and professional level where possible and appropriate, including social justice and advocacy work. This may help further address a community's issues and assist the Dramatherapist's understanding.

## Cultural Competency and the Challenge of Defining 'Culture'

'The concept of culture is so indeterminate that it can be easily filled in with whatever preconceptions a theorist brings to it' (Halford, 2006: 9). Krause (1998: 174) acknowledges that culture is dynamic 'always changing and shifting and in the process of being created'. People can be seen as belonging to several or indeed many cultures (Gil, 2005). From a therapeutic point of view, Blackwell sees culture as 'the symbolic universe of its members' (2005: 38) and the organization of collective human life and its meanings, as individually and collectively derived. People are not necessarily aware of their own cultural values and assumptions (Dokter, 1998: 147) 'we see the world and each other through our own cultural filters.' In defining culture, Stuart Hall describes it as 'those patterns of organization, those characteristic forms of human energy which can be discovered as revealing themselves [...] within or underlying *all* social practices' (Hall 1986: 36).

The North American Drama Therapy Association (NADTA) defines culture as a fluid and dynamic embodiment of a worldview through learned and transmitted beliefs, values, norms and social institutions, including psychological processes (Fiske et al, 1998). In Europe, interculturality also derives from the understanding that cultures thrive only in contact with one another, not in isolation. (Council of Europe, 2014) Intercultural psychotherapy is a term used in the UK context (Kareem & Littlewood 1992) to indicate the interactive element in cultural dynamics between the different parties involved in therapy. Cultural differences refer to variations in attitudes, values and perceptual constructs that result from different cultural experiences (Zane et al 2004).

The Council of Europe (COE, 2014) contrasts interculturalism with assimilationist approaches, which seek to obscure and ultimately eradicate diversity. However, the NADTA stresses that cultural identity is based on membership of multiple groups that continuously interact and influence each other (Sajnani et al 2015: [www.nadta.org](http://www.nadta.org)). Identity within these groups is adapted and changed throughout life in response to political, economic, educational and social experiences that either alter or reinforce one's position in society. Membership in some cultural groups may take on more importance than others at different periods of one's life (Johnson et al, 2005).

Cultural competency comprises awareness, knowledge and skills that increase the ability to notice and work with implicit biases as well as to serve diverse individuals (Arredondo et al. 1996) and these guidelines aim to complement existing HCPC and BADth policies in encourage all Dramatherapists to strive towards further developing their awareness, skills and knowledge with respect to intercultural good practice.

## Consultation Process

BADth: Executive Committee, Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee, Training Sub-Committee. NADTA Diversity Committee (including involvement in consultation to NADTA guidelines), launch of draft at BADth conference 2016 with follow up ratification and publication. Culturally-sensitive guidelines and codes of ethics from 10 associations in related fields were selected, reviewed and developed, in close conjunction with NADTA's multi-cultural guidelines.

NADTA – Code of Ethical Principles (2013) & Guidelines on Cultural Response/ability in Training, Research, Practice, Supervision, Advocacy & Organizational Change (2016)  
UKCP (2009) Ethical Principles and Code of Professional Conduct  
ADMP (2013) Code of Ethics and Professional Practice Association for Dance Movement Psychotherapy  
HCPC- Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (2008) & Standards of Proficiency- Arts Therapists (2013)  
BAAT (2014) Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Practice for Art Therapists  
BACP (2013) Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy  
AMTA- American Music Therapy Association Professional Competencies (2015), Standards of Clinical Practice (2013), Code of Ethics (2015)  
AMCD (1996) Association for multi-cultural counseling & development -Multicultural counselling competencies  
APA (2002) Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists  
American Art Therapy Association (2011) Art Therapy Multicultural/Diversity Competencies