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## Group Dance-Movement Practices as a Factor of Socio-Psychological Well-Being

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### ABSTRACT

Group dance-movement practices through the integration of embodied, emotional, and relational approaches are an effective and increasingly relevant strategy to promote socio-psychological well-being by considering how embodied, emotional, and relational approaches to integration in dynamic movement are also becoming increasingly important and increasingly applied practice in relation to socio-psychological and social aspects. In particular, through collective movement environments, the paper explains how they promote the creation of belongingness, interpersonal trust, emotional regulation, and reduction of social isolation. Based upon research in contemporary advances in the fields of dance movement therapy, somatic psychology, and embodied cognition, theoretically and practically relevant in present-day dance movement, theoretical and in-depth analysis of shared movement experiences in dance movement therapy allows study of the effect of shared movement together for which movement experiences are presented; the study links together theoretical and applied theories based on data up to October 2023. The results suggest that group dance practices serve as a multi-level intervention, involving interoception, affect processing, and social interactions on a parallel basis. These mechanisms support empathy, strengthen nonverbal communication, and create a shared emotional field that contributes to psychological resilience and well-being. As an authorial contribution, the three-phase model of group dance-movement interaction (regulation, interaction, and integration) describes how embodied stabilization, interpersonal synchronization, and reflective consolidation collectively buttress socio-psychological gains. Group dance-movement practices can be a promising approach to community-based mental health care based on social adaptation and development of sustainable well-being for adult populations.

### KEYWORDS

group dance-movement practices, socio-psychological well-being, embodiment, emotional regulation, social connection, interpersonal synchronization, loneliness reduction, interoception, dance movement therapy, group dynamics, identity formation, nonverbal communication.



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## Групові танцювально-рухові практики як фактор соціально-психологічного благополуччя

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| СТАТТЯ                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | АНОТАЦІЯ                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| <p><b>Дослідниця</b></p> <p><b>DOI:</b><br/><a href="https://doi.org/10.70651/3041-248X/2026.5.04">10.70651/3041-248X/2026.5.04</a></p> <p><b>Отримана:</b><br/>26.03.2026 р.</p> <p><b>Прийнята:</b><br/>30.04.2026 р.</p> <p><b>Опублікована:</b><br/>04.05.2026 р.</p> <p><b>Авторське право</b> ©<br/>2026 автора</p>  <p>Цей твір ліцензовано на умовах Ліцензії Creative Commons «Із Зазначенням Авторства – Некомерційна 4.0 Міжнародна» (CC BY-NC 4.0).</p> | <p>Групові танцювально-рухові практики через інтеграцію втілених, емоційних та реляційних підходів є ефективною та дедалі актуальнішою стратегією сприяння соціально-психологічному благополуччю, враховуючи, що втілені, емоційні та реляційні підходи до інтеграції в динамічний рух також стають дедалі важливішими та все частіше застосовуваними практикою стосовно соціально-психологічного та соціального аспекту. Зокрема, через колективне рухове середовище у статті пояснюється, як воно сприяє створенню приналежності, міжособистісної довіри, емоційної регуляції та зменшенню соціальної ізоляції. Ґрунтуючись на дослідженнях сучасних досягнень у галузі танцювально-рухової терапії, соматичної психології та втіленого пізнання, теоретично та практично актуальних у сучасному танцювальному русі, теоретичний та поглиблений аналіз спільного рухового досвіду в танцювально-руховій терапії дозволяє вивчити вплив спільного руху, для якого представлений руховий досвід. Дослідження пов'язує теоретичні та прикладні теорії, засновані на даних станом на жовтень 2023 року. Результати показують, що групові танцювальні практики служать багаторівневим втручанням, що включає інтероцепцію, обробку афекту та соціальну взаємодію паралельно. Ці механізми підтримують емпатію, зміцнюють невербальне спілкування та створюють спільне емоційне поле, що сприяє психологічній стійкості та благополуччю. Як авторський внесок, трифазна модель групової танцювально-рухової взаємодії (регуляція, взаємодія та інтеграція) описує, як втілена стабілізація, міжособистісна синхронізація та рефлексивна консолідація колективно підтримують соціально-психологічні переваги. Групові танцювально-рухові практики можуть бути перспективним підходом до психіатричної допомоги на рівні громади, що базується на соціальній адаптації та розвитку сталого благополуччя дорослого населення.</p> |



### КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА

групові танцювально-рухові практики, соціально-психологічне благополуччя, втілення, емоційна регуляція, соціальний зв'язок, міжособистісна синхронізація, зменшення самотності, інтероцепція, танцювально-рухова терапія, групова динаміка, формування ідентичності, невербальне спілкування.

## 1. Introduction

Rising levels of social isolation, emotional dysregulation, and psychological distress in daily life point to the necessity for more integrative and accessible mental health practices. Although the same cognitive and verbal interventions still play a central role, they may not engage the embodied and relational aspects of human experience.

Consequently, increased focus has been placed on movement-based practices as potent agents of psychological and social health, especially when done in group settings. Group dance-movement methods belong to the boundary area between moving as a group, a space located at the cross-section between physical activity, emotional expression, and socialization.

However, where one-on-one exercise may emphasize individual exercise, the collective movement contexts allow individuals to connect for rhythmic reasons that collectively create shared rhythmic moments and experience the bonds of coherence, synchronization, connection, and awareness in rhythmic rhythms, which help to achieve a mutual awareness, unlike individual forms of exercise.

Those activities not only serve individual emotional regulation, but can lead to the formation of interpersonal trust and social cohesion as well as social trust. The beneficial effects of movement-based intervention on mood, cognitive functioning, and relationships are supported through empirical findings confirming that the movement-based interventions can have a positive effect on mood and related aspects of cognition, and affective and relational functioning, further emphasizing their effectiveness for a positive outcome for well-being [1; 5].

The theoretical foundation of these effects can be supported by the embodiment framework whereby cognitive-emotional processes are rooted in bodily experience [2; 17]. Mind is based on the interoceptive aspect of self-regulation and resilience [8; 12], meaning that body perception of internal bodily sensations is the sensing of internal bodily states.

In group settings, such embodied processes are enhanced by methods of social synchronization, nonverbal interaction, and common affective experience. In this manner, group dancing is broader than personal self-regulation, for it produces relational and communal implications.

Further, involvement in group dance environments caters to fundamental psychological needs in relation to connection and sense of belonging grounded in Self-Determination Theory [13]. According to identity-based motivation theory, engaging in a meaningful group activity can help in the development and reinforcement of social identity [11].

These theoretical perspectives underscore the role that collective experience can play in both psychological well-being and persistent behavior involvement. While more research is on dance and movement interventions, it still lacks proper conceptual frameworks to understand how group processes directly impact socio-psychological effects.

This gap was filled by the present study, in which a three-phase model of group dance-movement interaction consisting of regulation, interaction, and integration is proposed. This model offers a systematic approach to analyzing the interaction between embodied stabilization, social synchronization, and experiential consolidation in the group context to increase emotional well-being, decrease social isolation, and facilitate identity development.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Dance Movement and Mental Well-Being

Dance-movement practices have been studied as one of the popular ways to improve psychological well-being. From previous research, dance movement therapy, or DMT, has been continuously associated with improving depressive symptoms and mood, as well as positive affect [4; 5].

They derive their rewards from the integration of physical activity, emotional expression, and social interaction that, in combination, produces a total therapeutic influence. Recent studies also suggested that movement-driven interventions enhance mood and support the reduction of stress by involving the body and brain [6; 15].

Dance can help the cognitive process of emotional responses, meaning, through the body when words are no longer available in speech for some individuals.

## **2.2. Embodiment and the Role of the Body in Emotional Processes**

Embodiment implies we are bound to bodily experiences and emotions. Emotions are also influenced by movement, posture, and movement alone [1]. Body position, or movement pattern, can enhance mood and sense of confidence, for instance.

Interoception—awareness of internal bodily sensations—also plays an important role in emotion regulation. This was related to improved emotional awareness and self-regulation [8]. Somatic approaches to therapy work with the body towards processing emotions and regaining psychological balance [12].

Movement practices in the mindfulness approach facilitate this as well, bringing the observer into awareness of real bodily experiences in the present here and now [2; 17]. This kind of awareness reduces stress and improves emotional stability.

## **2.3. The Social Dimension of Group Movement**

A fundamental benefit of a group dance practice is that it helps social interaction. The act of moving in a group helps build non-verbal communication, joint history, and group bonding.

Sievers et al. (2013) have found in their research that a synchronised sense of movement provides an opportunity for participants to better experience feelings of togetherness and emotions related between people [14]. With music and movement, they deliver them a sense of togetherness across emotions and an ability to have a shared emotional resonance without having to be verbal with one another [16].

The movement in our groups also builds confidence and helps to build cooperation. They learn to react to each other's actions, establishing both awareness and empathy. This process reinforces social relationships and teaches them what is socially acceptable.

## **2.4. Reduction of Loneliness and Social Isolation**

Reduction of loneliness and social isolation is becoming more important in today's society, which is highly related to negative psychological problems. Group dance-movement and dance-learning provide a stage for people to interact with each other in a substantial and supportive way.

Research indicates that dance participation mitigates loneliness and facilitates a sense of belonging [18]. These effects are especially salient for adults who are less likely to regularly have social interactions. And finally, movement in a group fosters shared feeling in community; this contributes to personal identity and connectedness.

This feeling of belonging is an essential aspect of psychological well-being and supports emotional resilience [10].

## **2.5. Emotional Regulation and Psychological Stability**

Mental health relies deeply on emotional regulation, mental health relies upon emotional regulation. Regulating emotion is a key aspect of your mood and mental health.

Movement-based techniques promote this by permitting people to be able to practice exercises helps move, express and get up and escape emotions through movement that helps to a great extent by acting as a form of action. Empathy therapy is about a variety of things [6]: it can help people better manage their emotions, and stress levels are reduced.

From the theoretical point of view, emotion regulation aims to regulate emotions by managing them and therefore be better affected [3]. Dance and movement come naturally to an individual in this way—engaging with the body allows the user to clear out any physical tension and emotions flow naturally.

Neurobiological research backs the role of movement in emotional regulation. Physical activity impacts mood- and stress-related networks in the brain, creating better psychological functioning [18].

## **2.6. Motivation, Identity, and Participation in Group Practices**

This study of motivation and identity and participation in group dancing helps elucidate motivation, identity, and participation in Group Practices. The involvement in group dance skills forms a relationship with the motivation and identity of participants.

Based on self-determination theory, people are more likely to pursue such activities that fulfil their fundamental psychological needs of being related and of belonging than others [13]. Participation

in group dance settings results in opportunities for social integration and joint ambitions, which stimulates motivation based on intrinsic elements.

People engage not just physically but for emotional and social satisfaction. Identity-based motivation theory better explains the role of involvement in meaningful group activities in shaping self-presentation [11].

Through continued participation, individuals come to see themselves as part of a group, which increases their investment and sense of belonging. Movements are often seen as activities that offer an outlet for people to express their identities and the many facets of how they come to know themselves.

This can be a crucial process for personal development and psychosocial growth [7].

### **2.7. Somatic and Mindfulness-Based Approaches in Group Contexts**

Somatic and mindfulness-based practices are integrated into movement practices. These orientations are grounded in awareness, being and the relationship between body and mind.

Active mobility prompts people to notice themselves physically and emotionally in the moment (Stuhr et al., 2022). Trauma-informed frameworks focus on establishing the safety and comfort of participants [9].

Appropriately organized group dance practices can provide this environment in which it is possible to explore emotions unencumbered by worry of being judged or shamed. Somatic interventions also foster resiliency and recovery through supporting a person's ability to regain contact with their bodies and self-regulate their nervous system [7].

This is particularly important for individuals affected by mental stress or trauma.

## **3. Problem Statement**

Although numerous studies have demonstrated the psychological benefits of dance and movement interventions, there is still no comprehensive conceptual framework explaining how group dance-movement practices facilitate socio-psychological well-being through embodied, emotional, and interpersonal mechanisms.

## **4. Methods and Materials**

The following research uses a conceptual-analytic research design to interweave with existing empirical evidence and theories to explore the role of group dance-movement practices as part of socio-psychological well-being. The study does not collect primary empirical data but rather combines interdisciplinary research from dance movement therapy, somatic psychology, and social cognition to understand the primary mechanisms of psychological and social influence of collective movement.

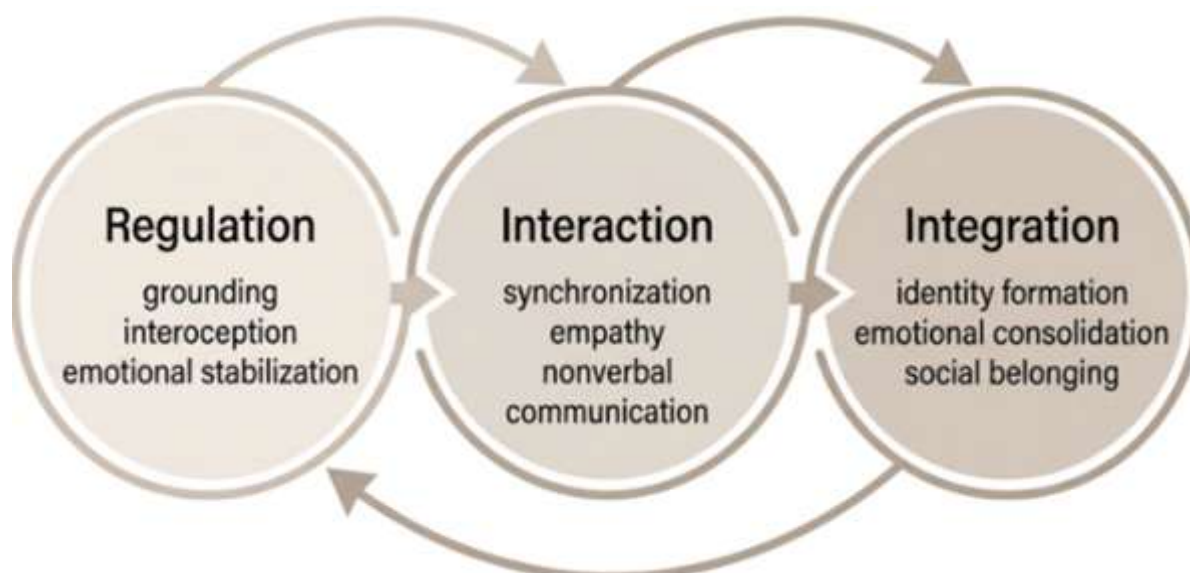
The methodological basis is embodied and relational, where psychological processes are conceived as being inseparable from bodily experience and interpersonal interaction [2; 12].

The theoretical framework within which group dance is constructed describes it as a well-organised environment in which emotion regulation, interoceptive awareness, and social connectedness coexist and reinforce one another.

This study presents a three-phase integrative model of group dance-movement interaction, a contribution that formalizes the observed mechanisms authoritatively (See Figure 1):

1. Regulation Phase – Grounding and rhythmic movement to establish physiological and emotional stability. This is guided by somatic regulation principles and interoceptive awareness [8].
2. Interaction Phase – Participants enter into synchronized and responsive movement patterns, engaging nonverbal communication, empathy, and interpersonal attunement [14].
3. Integration Phase – Emotional and relational experiences are internalized through reflective awareness, aiding identity development and psychological consolidation [11].

Comparative synthesis of the findings from selected studies was involved in the analysis, with an emphasis on repeated outcomes such as emotional regulation, reduction of loneliness, and enhancement of social connectedness as reported by Koch et al. (2019) and Zafeiroudi et al. (2025) in the current study [5; 18].



**Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Group Dance-Movement Interaction**

Source: Formed by the author.

## 5. Results and Discussion

According to the findings, group dance-movement techniques have implications for socio-psychological well-being through networked embodied, emotional and social factors, which are consistent with the proposed three-stage model (Regulation–Interaction–Integration).

Engaging with organized group movement facilitates emotional modulation through the use of the body. These rhythms and repetitions stabilize the nervous system and mitigate physiological arousal, resulting in a more balanced state of emotional well-being. This strengthens interoceptive awareness, enabling participants to more easily see and modulate emotional response [8; 12]. Movement-based interventions are also empirically shown to reduce stress and improve mood, especially in conjunction with mindful engagement of body sense [6; 15]. Our findings demonstrate that emotional regulation, particularly in dynamic contexts of group dance, is rooted in embodied rather than cognitive (perceptual) action pathways.

Meanwhile, group dance practices promote social interaction through coordinated action and shared physical experience. Group dance participants participate in acts combined in unison with movements and rhythm that develop empathy, trust and awareness. This synchronization, in turn, triggers the activation of methods of social attunement and emotional resonance which can enhance relational connection between participants [14; 16]. This non-verbal transmission decreases our dependence on verbal communication and makes the connection even more emotionally expressive among the group.

The results likewise confirm that perceived loneliness and social isolation reduction were consistently observed amongst participants. Participative experience in group dance also offers multiple chances for socialising and is associated with a stronger sense of belonging and inclusion. An important consideration in the context of social interaction is the use of a more robust environment for structured group interaction, found to be especially relevant for adults, who are less likely to experience social contact [18]. Moreover, when supportive interpersonal networks are developed, psychological resilience and social integration are also enhanced [10].

Group dancing practices also contribute positively to general emotional well-being. Members of a group report feeling better and self-assured, experiencing more emotions and emotional expression. Dance being embodied allows for expressions and emotions to be released, supporting a balance in emotional states [4; 5].

Finally, the incorporation of these experiences serves to facilitate the development of an identity and motivates commitment. The repeated activities of group movement, for example, strengthen feelings of belonging, also leading to the creation of an in-group identity rooted in social relations [11]. Meanwhile, satisfying relational needs boosts intrinsic motivation, inducing continuance participation in group practice [13].



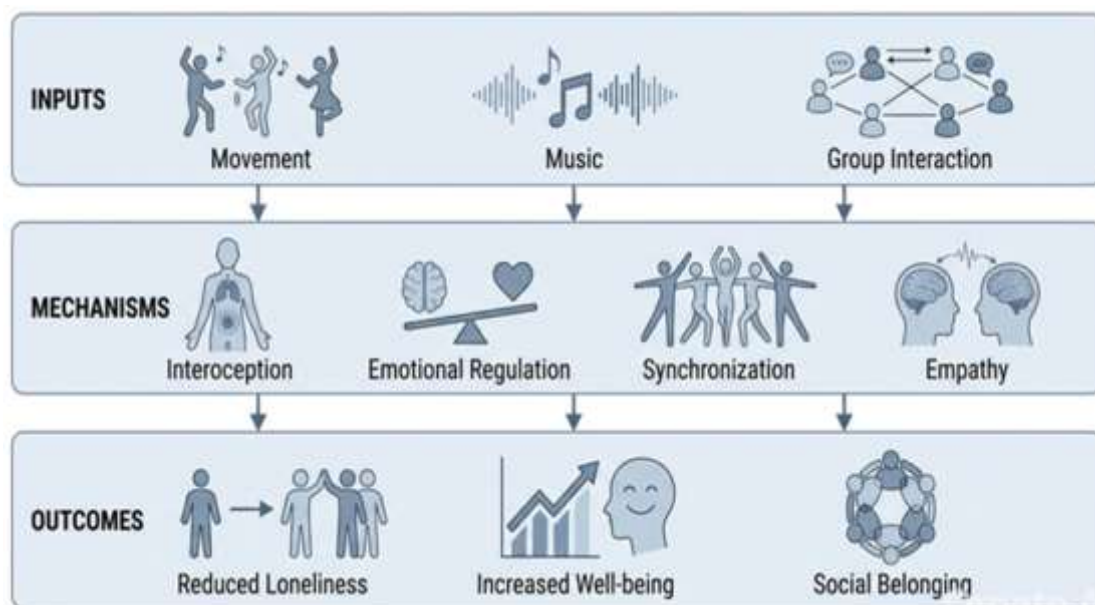
**Table 1. Key Findings Summary**

| Mechanism                      | Description                                                     | Psychological Outcome               | Supporting Sources                                |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Emotional regulation</b>    | Rhythmic movement stabilizes physiological and emotional states | Reduced stress, improved mood       | Lee et al. [6]; Spaccapanico Proietti et al. [15] |
| <b>Interoceptive awareness</b> | Increased awareness of internal bodily sensations               | Better emotional control            | Mehling et al. [8]; Payne et al. [12]             |
| <b>Social synchronization</b>  | Coordinated group movement enhances relational attunement       | Increased empathy and trust         | Sievers et al. [14]; Thompson & Vuoskoski [16]    |
| <b>Social interaction</b>      | Nonverbal communication within group context                    | Stronger interpersonal connection   | Nickel et al. [10]                                |
| <b>Group belonging</b>         | Shared experience fosters inclusion and acceptance              | Reduced loneliness                  | Zafeiroudi et al. [18]                            |
| <b>Emotional expression</b>    | Movement allows release and processing of emotions              | Enhanced well-being                 | Koch et al. [5]; Karkou et al. [4]                |
| <b>Identity formation</b>      | Repeated participation shapes social identity                   | Increased motivation and engagement | Oyserman [11]; Ryan & Deci [13]                   |

Source: Formed by author.

## 6. Discussion

The results of this study provide strong theoretical backing for conceptualising group dance-movement practices as a multidimensional intervention that enhances socio-psychological well-being through the integration of embodied, emotional, and social processes. Drawing on a previous synthesis of the literature and using the three-phase model proposed (Regulation–Interaction–Integration), we show that group movement is not an isolated mechanism in action; rather, it relies on their dynamic interaction within a structured collective environment.

**Figure 2. Mechanisms of Socio-Psychological Well-Being in Group Dance**

Source: Formed by the author.

From an embodied viewpoint, the role of the body in emotional regulation is shown as a fundamental mechanism. The Regulation Phase, as outlined in the methodology, is supported by evidence that illustrates the influence of rhythmic movement and bodily engagement for stabilizing the nervous system and emotional balance (See Figure 2) [8; 12]. This links with larger theories of emotion regulation which highlight the need for noticing and regulating inner states [3]. Crucially, the results indicate that such regulation is more effectively experienced through embodied practices than purely cognitive strategies, especially in situations with limited or dysregulated emotional awareness.

**Table 2. Comparison: Individual vs Group Movement Practices**

| Dimension                     | Individual Movement  | Group Dance-Movement Practices            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>Emotional regulation</b>   | Primarily internal   | Internal + co-regulated through group     |
| <b>Social interaction</b>     | Minimal or absent    | High (nonverbal + relational)             |
| <b>Motivation</b>             | Often extrinsic      | Strong intrinsic (shared experience)      |
| <b>Communication</b>          | Limited              | Rich nonverbal communication              |
| <b>Sense of belonging</b>     | Low                  | High                                      |
| <b>Psychological outcomes</b> | Moderate improvement | Holistic improvement (emotional + social) |
| <b>Identity development</b>   | Individual-focused   | Socially reinforced identity              |

Source: Formed by author.

The Interaction Phase adds a vital social component that differentiates group dance practices from movement interventions performed by individuals. The results imply that synchronized movement promotes empathy, trust, and interpersonal attunement [14; 16]. This further confirms that a social connection can be established through nonverbal communication, through shared rhythm, coordination of action, and other embodied communication components. From this point of view, group dance can be regarded as a “relational field,” in which those involved co-regulate emotional states and arrive at common awareness. This process is particularly relevant in contemporary contexts characterized by reduced face-to-face interaction and increasing reliance on digital communication, which often lacks embodied engagement.

In addition, it is reflected by the decrease in loneliness, which also adds to our appreciation for the group setting. The results suggest that dance-movement practice-based participation provides a sense of belonging and social inclusion, addressing one of the primary challenges to modern psychological health [10; 18]. This effect is consistent with the model’s overarching view that both Regulation and Interaction phases occur sequentially, where stability should be achieved within the self and then come before the engagement, leading to substantive social connectedness (See Figure 3). The sequential nature of this process underscores the need for designing group experiences where safety and iterative relational engagement are of central importance.

**Figure 3. Group Dance as a Social Interaction Field**

Source: Formed by the author.

The Integration Phase links present experiences with future psychological consequences. According to the findings, repeated participation in the dance practice group contributes to the formation of identity and maintenance of motivation [11; 13]. This is consistent with identity-based motivation theory.

According to this view, people will be more likely to preserve behaviors which are consistent with their self-concept. In doing this, group movements help people come to terms with their own identity as part of a group (in the sense of belongingness to the group of others), but as such, people do create more identity as a member of a group, which can help to establish psychological stability and keep behavior continuity in motion.



A profound effect of the current study has been derived from this work is the understanding that group dance-movement techniques play a role as a unitary rather than separate technology system. Bringing together somatic awareness, emotional expression and social engagement gives the potential of both elements together to synergistically enhance the impact of any one part of human activity.

This view aligns with present-day treatments for somatic and mindfulness-oriented interventions that are more oriented to the body and mind being one cohesive whole [2; 17]. In addition, the addition of principles of trauma sensitivity highlights the need for safety, predictability, and gradual involvement from a group perspective [9].

In practical terms, the study found that group dance-movement practice could well be integrated not only into a community program, but can also be applied to therapeutic settings and health promotion interventions. Such tools are widely available and noninvasive, so may be of assistance to most ethnically marginalized groups or to individuals who do not respond well to traditional talk interventions. Furthermore, the focus on nonverbal communication means that they are open to people in diverse cultures, both native and non-native speakers of this language, so their utility is also possible.

At the same time, the findings suggest that a thoughtful framework is required for the design of group movement practices. The proposed three-phase model provides a framework to structure sessions so that they can be organized in a way that maximizes psychological value. Without such structure, participants run the risk of failing to explore the deeper emotional and relational processes that foster well-being.

That being said, facilitators need to be trained not just in movement techniques but also in somatic awareness and group dynamics and emotional regulation. In its conceptual framing, this study provides a thorough summary of the existing research, but it also highlights the necessity for continued empirical validation.

Future studies may test the proposed model in a controlled environment, evaluate long-term effects of participation, and identify differences between populations. However, these findings do have some limitations, but they serve as a strong theoretical and practical basis for identifying group dance-movement practices as a valuable tool for enhancing socio-psychological well-being.

## 7. Conclusions

Group dance-movement practices are considered a strong and integrative means of promoting socio-psychological well-being. Through integrating embodied awareness, emotional expression, and social interaction, these modes of action engage with multiple facets of the human condition simultaneously.

The results show that the spaces of movement together generate belonging, reduce loneliness, enhance emotional regulation, and strengthen interpersonal relationships; the research demonstrates that working on group movement experiences helps us achieve not only individual, but also group, belonging, lower loneliness, emotional regulation and interpersonal relationships.

The three-phase model described provides a structured framework to integrate those practices in different contexts. These include large group dance practices, which have proved accessible and scalable to addressing contemporary psychological challenges in the form of social isolation, emotional distress and burnout.

Their role is to stimulate people holistically—physically, emotionally and socially. Further studies should support the empirical validation of such structured models and the formulation of standardized protocols for their integration.

However, we now have strong evidence that group dance-movement practices are an important aspect of community-based mental health and well-being.

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