



Therapeutic Dance for Healing Sexual Trauma: A systematic review



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Learning Objective

- To review the existing literature on the effectiveness of therapeutic dance in the treatment of sexual trauma.

Background

- Sexual violence** is a significant and profound global health concern that includes sexual abuse, sex trafficking, rape, and sexual assault.
- Sexual violence has **destructive consequences** on physical and mental health¹⁻⁶.
- The **psychotherapeutic use of dance and movement**⁷ has been increasingly recognized as a **treatment modality for sexual trauma**, but literature on its effectiveness has not been catalogued.

Methods

- Peer-reviewed literature published in the English language was identified using *PubMed*, *PsycINFO*, *Web of Science*, *Education Source-EBSCO*, and *Google Scholar*.
- A combination of keywords related to: dance therapy, movement therapy, creative movement, sexual exploitation, sexual trauma was used.
- Study quality was assessed using the Hawker bias checklist.
- Data was systematically identified and extracted based on emergent domains.

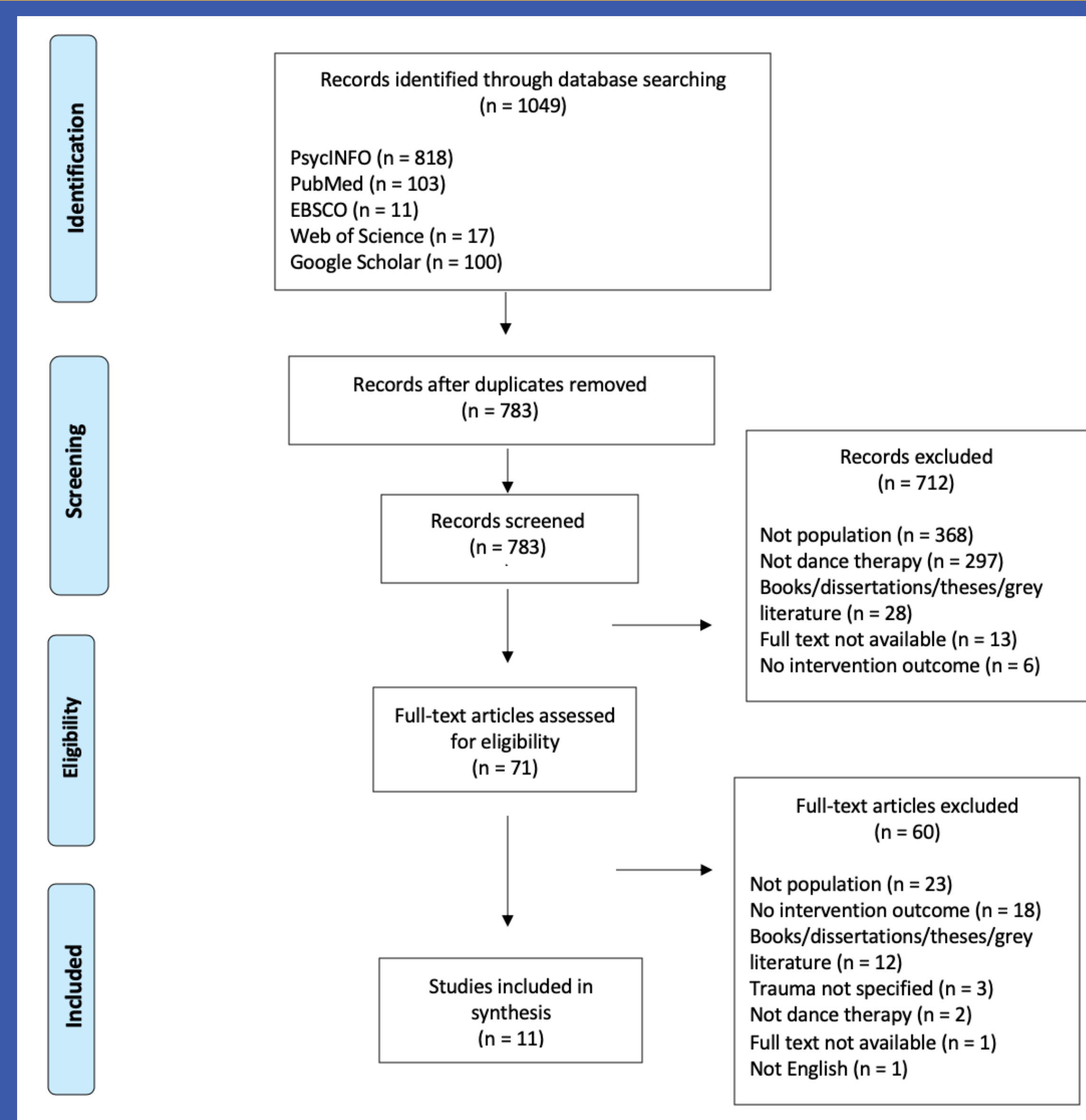


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram of articles included and excluded

Results

Table 1. Therapeutic dance effects on *relationships*

Study	Boundary formation	Improved interpersonal relationships and intimacy
Frank (1997)	✓	✓
Goodill (1987)		
Harris (2019)		
Ho (2015)*	✓	✓
Hopper et al. (2018)	✓	✓
Leseho (2010)		
Margolin (2019)	✓	✓
Mills and Daniluk (2002)		✓
Portokaloglou (2018)		✓
van Westrhenen (2017)		✓

Table 3. Therapeutic dance effects on *self*

Study	Sense of freedom and security	Improved self-esteem	Improved body awareness and body image	Improved grounding	Positive future orientation
Frank (1997)	✓	✓	✓		
Goodill (1987)					
Harris (2019)	✓				
Ho (2015)*	✓		✓	✓	✓
Hopper et al. (2018)	✓		✓		✓
Leseho (2010)	✓		✓	✓	
Margolin (2019)	✓	✓	✓		
Mills and Daniluk (2002)	✓		✓		
Portokaloglou (2018)	✓				✓
van Westrhenen (2017)					

Table 2. Therapeutic dance effects on *affect*

Study	Improved expression of emotion	Improved self-awareness of emotion	Improved regulation of emotion
Frank (1997)	✓	✓	✓
Goodill (1987)	✓	✓	
Harris (2019)	✓	✓	
Ho (2015)	✓	✓	
Hopper et al. (2018)	✓	✓	✓
Leseho (2010)	✓	✓	✓
Margolin (2019)	✓	✓	
Mills and Daniluk (2002)	✓	✓	✓
Portokaloglou (2018)		✓	
van Westrhenen (2017)	✓		✓

Conclusion and Future Directions

- The emerging literature suggests that **DMT is an effective therapeutic intervention for those who have experienced sexual trauma**.
- Study will be disseminated in an academic journal article.
- This summary and synthesis will also be presented to our community partner, Swan Within, to further their impact in the local community.

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