

THE PSYCHIATRY OF STORY THEATRE

Eden Almasude, MD, MA
Yale Child Study Center
New Haven, CT

Marc Andrew Hem Lee, MFA, MAT, MS
Drexel University College of Medicine
Philadelphia, PA

Storytelling and listening are key elements in the practice of psychiatry. As clinicians, we are fortunate to learn these elements in both a professional setting and also from people's experiences and multifaceted lives. Inspired by the rich history of political and community-engaged theatre in the global South, we explore different dimensions of narration in clinical work, allowing a shift in perspective and opening space for creativity and adaptation in- and outside of the clinic.

This project is an experiment in self-reflection and community connection: what happens when the 'clinician' steps out of this role and enters into a different relationship with the 'patient,' as both are now 'actors' with equal agency? Our frameworks were formed by experiences outside of medicine such as Theatre of the Oppressed, Improvisation, and Movement Theatre, as well as integrating theatre into our medical practice. We intend to combine elements from each theatre style into our method of delivery for this workshop. By the end of the workshop participants will be able to 1) identify two aspects of their relationship to culture, narrative, and the space in the clinical setting 2) apply examples 'play' to their adult psychiatric practice 3) examine outcomes and ideas tied to definitions of 'success' in their community and 4) evaluate novel thinking centered around nonverbal communication.

This workshop provides an experiential journey into these themes, while also fostering interpersonal connection and appreciation of both individual and collective experiences. The structure of games allows us to organically co-create a new narrative of devised theatre through both words and embodiment. that can be easily applied to the clinical setting.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Evaluate novel thinking centered around nonverbal communication. Participants will be exposed to various movement theatre techniques that can be immediately applied to their psychiatric practice, for example in group therapy sessions.
2. Examine outcomes and ideas tied to definitions of success in their respective community. Participants will use a combination of storytelling, both verbal and non-verbal, that will challenge their notion of successful clinical psychiatric outcomes.