



**HOW WE MOVE WHEN WE FEEL: KINESTHETIC EMPATHY THROUGH MIRROR
NEURONS**

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This work examines the commonly accepted notion of dance/movement therapy that mirroring another person's movement will increase both participants' levels of empathy. Mirroring involves a participant creating expressive dance; in a therapeutic setting, the therapist mirrors their movements to establish a relationship and gain insight into their physical and emotional experience. This connection most likely results from the activation of mirror neurons in the premotor and parietal cortices. In this study, I examined the relationship between the mirror and the dancer, specifically regarding the relative increase in their empathy levels. Although qualitative data from video footage and interviews suggested an increase in empathy or strengthened interpersonal relationships among participants, our tests were not conclusive or significant due to the high number of confounds in a typical DMT session, including perceptual challenges, unclear prompts, and dance experience. Further research should attempt to fill these holes. This study only studied eight participants; further research should expand to a broader sample. Increased control over the unstudied variables in this practice would make it more reliable and ethically recommendable as a treatment for psychosocial disorders.