

The sound of dreams

Caroline Georgiou
introduces a multi-sensory
sound healing modality

There has been a recent curiosity and focus on the use of plant-based or synthetic psychedelics in the psychotherapeutic community as a pathway to know yourself. I would like to introduce you to a practice which bypasses the need for these by supporting our innate capacities to achieve expanded consciousness. This approach is rooted in the therapeutic elements necessary for growth and change. The global practice of innerdance is an evolving, multi-sensory sound healing modality, synthesising neuroscience and spirituality.¹ Its transferable frameworks and transformative processes could enhance the way therapists approach their practice and self-care routines, and revolutionise therapy toolkits, making safe and immediate self-healing widely available to the general population.

Blended state of awareness

In brief and simple terms, innerdance consciousness is experienced as an eyes-closed, lying down, internal journey, where purposefully sculpted sounds and vibrations are used as tools to stimulate brainwaves, generating patterns which occur during the stages of REM sleep cycles. The aim is to reunite the left and right brain hemispheres, initiating a blended state of awareness. Facilitators learn how to create unique soundscapes, inspired by the innerdance 12-stage process, similar to a sonic hero's journey (see Figure 1 on p8).² Currently, many facilitators are researching how to interweave layers of arrhythmic sound and noise to support and evoke dimensions of unity. Sounds are chosen to intentionally co-activate the branches of the nervous system, enabling somatic arousal and a return to deep rest to be experienced within the body simultaneously. This serves to remind participants and their bodies of how to experience heightened states, such as fear, without becoming scared. Underpinned by the fear-avoidant model by Lethem et al.,³ the innerdance process creates safe conditions for participants to face their deeply held fears through their dream journey, facilitating integration and long-lasting change. This, in turn, re-establishes an embodied sense of trust in yourself and the world.

As electricity spreads, stimulating brainwave spiking and cross-coupling, increased cerebral capacity is potentiated, which can manifest as multi-sensory perception. Awareness returns to the body and somatic realms of experiencing, which supports a non-dual state of being, healing the impact of our Cartesian-inherited mind-body split. In some contexts, such as in groups or one-to-one sessions with adult participants who give informed consent, the use of skilful and ethical touch is also used as a mechanism for entrainment and nervous system re-patterning.⁴ This rebalancing process supports a return to flow states within the body where energy has become frozen or stuck; and through the facilitation of a hybrid state of consciousness, usually experienced when dreaming, participants relearn how to potentiate their unique synesthesia and self-healing capacities. Integration is supported by time for rest and, in my sessions, participants engage in active imagination by bringing their experiences from the body onto the page through drawing or writing. This enables them to come into conscious contact with their own processes, while illuminating any shared experiences and themes from within the collective dream.⁵

Neuroscientific and spiritual lenses

Facilitating throughout Scotland and online, I meet many colleagues from different training backgrounds within the therapy community, whose curiosity is piqued and who are trying innerdance for their own self-development. Consistent feedback from therapists describe observable and transformative shifts in their counselling practice, sometimes after only one innerdance session. They report feeling more present and congruent with less fear, alongside

a renewed sense of self. They feel more equipped to hold deeper therapeutic explorations with their clients. Struck by their innerdance experiences, a growing number of qualified therapists are training to become facilitators so they can support others to work with this powerful consciousness. They also recognise the potential to integrate the neuroscientific theories and philosophies into their toolboxes, further enriching their therapeutic work.

I was introduced to innerdance consciousness five years ago by my friend who is an esteemed internal family systems (IFS) trainer and innerdance facilitator. They invited me to attend another practitioner’s session and, keen to try something new, I was delighted to go with them. Arriving that evening, I had no idea I was walking towards a profound awakening, which would irrevocably change me and my life’s course. As a group, we sat briefly in circle, listening to

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descriptions of innerdance and how we would be facilitated. There was an emphasis on autonomy and personal responsibility, with the choice to receive intuitive touch for those who consented. Permission could be revoked at any point by letting the facilitator know, verbally or by raising a hand in a stop gesture.⁴ I was studying for a master’s in somatic movement education at the time and touch was a central element, particularly for autonomic nervous system repatterning. I was curious to experience it within this context. Overall, that day, the introductory conversation about innerdance made little sense from my narrow perspective, yet I noticed an ineffable shift in my energetic state. We then laid down on yoga mats. The lights were dimmed. We closed our eyes and music began to play. My body was surprised and activated by the jarring and unexpected sounds, and changes in the music; I mused how clever it was and I tracked how I was somatically responding to the stimuli. At one point, when I was stuck in a pattern of repetitive thinking and micro-movement, the facilitator approached me, gently placing their hands on my shoulders, turning them in another direction. As my breathing deepened in response, I felt a

sense of surrender and acceptance softening my mental focus. New pathways and choices began to open within me, including an impulse to stand up and interact more fully with the energy. Electricity spread through my occipital lobe, generating an image of what I understood as the divine feminine, in the form of a purple-clothed goddess floating in the corner of the room, beckoning to me with her hands. My whole body came alive as I understood, with clarity, I was being initiated into something vitally important which I needed to pursue. I signed up for the next available training in the UK, which was postponed due to lockdown, so I waited and dreamed of innerdance, never forgetting this divine, lucid dream that I couldn’t logically explain. Last year, in-person training resumed and, without hesitation, I attended. I have been deepening my practice ever since, studying directly and continuously with the founder and elders within the innerdance community. Through my studies, I can understand my experiences from a neuroscientific and spiritual lens and, in much the same ways as my embodied person-centred therapeutic practice, innerdance is becoming a way of being for me.

Since the end of lockdown, innerdance’s popularity and reputation as a consistent and compelling healing modality is accelerating, as a result of the work being developed within educational curriculums, healthcare and psychiatric settings. Current examples include the implementation of innerdance within the educational curriculum in the Philippines. There are upcoming developments to create therapeutic programmes in prisons following the success of existing projects. In Colombia, there are also collaborations with mental health clinics to provide research-based therapeutic programmes for individuals living with addiction and sexual trauma. The founder, pi, is currently in talks with doctors, and leaders in the music industry, to explore innerdance’s place in the future of sound medicine, particularly for managing stress, supporting sleep hygiene and increasing attention span. There are also prototypes for innerdance platforms and apps in the early stages of design.

An imaginative psychoeducational resource

The diverse range of work initiated and undertaken by innovative and passionate facilitators is receiving consistently positive feedback, demonstrating the scope of innerdance as an alternative to plant medicine experiences for those who are curious to explore

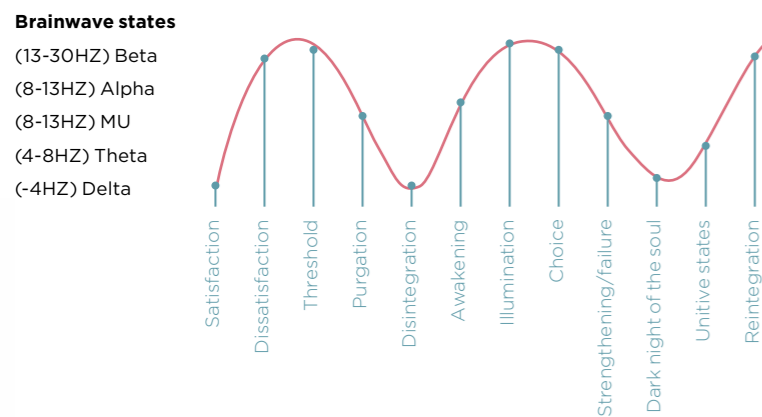
consciousness. Facilitators undertake in-depth studies that enable them to hold discussions which integrate both science and spirit, satisfying individuals and organisations who prefer or require a scientific and trauma-informed understanding of the process.

Presently, my position within the work includes developing innerdance throughout Scotland by means of facilitation and supervision, and I am one of four UK trainers invited to support local and regional learning within this year’s global intensive training (www.life-1a.com). To know this consciousness intimately and to hold safe and deep spaces for others, I journey with innerdance every few days; I attend supervision to explore my work and I write a blog with the aim to demystify the process, and create a simple language for what can feel beyond words (www.innerdance-scotland.co.uk/innerdancediaries). Many insights arise for me during my own waking dreams and, inspired by a recent innerdance, I am developing ideas for a children’s story based on my innerdance journeys, interweaving basic neuroscience and somatic movement practice, to create an imaginative psychoeducational resource.

I was recently invited to assist on a psychosynthesis essentials training course in Findhorn, Scotland. Whilst there, I took the opportunity to offer evening innerdance sessions in the community. Several participants signed up for both the essentials training and the innerdance sessions. Sharing feedback spontaneously, they named striking links between the creative psychosynthesis practices, which supported them to reflect imaginatively on their identity, and their experiences within innerdance. They saw innerdance as a modality that could be used to explore and integrate material, which arose from the training in deeply embodied ways. They also described how unexpected insights arose within their innerdance, initiating healing and a renewed sense of who they are, arising within the dream state.

This year, the innerdance community are in the preliminary stages of research using electroencephalogram (EEG) machines to observe and record the brainwave activation, and patterns of facilitators and participants when in innerdance consciousness. We are also collecting anecdotal accounts from participants to monitor long-term results, which include reduced symptoms of anxiety, depression and trauma, increased attention span

Figure 1. 12 Stages of awakening – innerdance waves



and memory recall, improved sleep patterns and a restored sense of wellbeing.

Spiritual experiences

Separate neuroscientific research undertaken by Kevin Nelson, indicates that spiritual experiences happen within a blended consciousness between dreaming and wakefulness, which is the state we are inducing within innerdance.⁶ His studies focus primarily on what happens in the brain during near-death experiences, which stimulate spiritual awakenings. His findings correlate with feedback from innerdance participants where they describe their internal journeys, illuminating consistent themes which include shifts in time perception, life reviews, feeling joy and unity with the world, seeing future scenes and entering other dimensions — all of which are included in the Greyson near-death element table, cited in Nelson's research.⁶ These similar and persistent features validate our evolving understanding of what is happening in the brain during innerdance, to enable expanded consciousness and transformational healing, and change in people all around the world. With the support of trained and insured facilitators who study the neuroscience and philosophies which underpin the work, participants are undertaking this powerful practice of rebirth and integration. This takes place under careful and safely curated conditions which include completing pre-requisite health forms, and following UK contraindications which include not working with individuals who are pregnant, who are in crisis or have epilepsy.

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As a qualified counsellor and innerdance facilitator, I bear witness to how innerdance can accelerate personal growth by swiftly repatterning embedded conditions of worth and survivalism encoded within the autonomic nervous system, enabling participants to discover their authenticity and sense of freedom. Innerdance is transforming my life and work as I help myself and others to discover autonomy with immediacy and longevity. Developing innerdance alongside my therapy and supervision practice, I see with increasing clarity the theory

and applications which position innerdance and therapy as allies in the field of mental health, wellbeing and spirituality. As therapists, regardless of our modality, we specialise in creating relational containers underpinned by the person-centred qualities of unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence, which enable clients to feel safe enough to explore what matters most to them. These key tenets are at the heart of innerdance, and their essence enables individuals to surrender in trust to the innerdance process, letting go of what no longer serves them. I believe that all qualified counsellors and therapists who have a spiritual therapeutic practice, have the embodied knowledge and transferrable skills to train to become innerdance facilitators, bringing a depth of expertise to the work which would assist in the evolution of innerdance as an accessible and reputable modality for self-healing. My hope is that this article might stir something in you, be it curiosity or calling to follow the innerdance invitation to learn more and experience it for yourself. Please trust that the global community warmly welcomes you, and is excited for how you might be inspired to co-develop this phenomenal practice within the UK and beyond. ●

Look out for Caroline's *ten minutes with...* interview at *Thresholds* online: www.bacp.co.uk/thresholds

Biography



Caroline Georgiou is a BACP registered counsellor, supervisor, innerdance facilitator and trainer, and registered somatic movement educator and therapist. Caroline recognises the body as home. She is curious about what the body knows and she is passionate about helping people to come home to themselves, interweaving innerdance into the essence of both her personal and professional practice. www.innerdancescotland.co.uk

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