

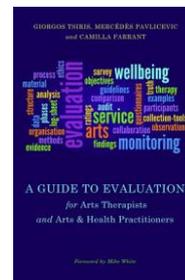


SPECIAL ISSUE

Music, drama, dance movement and art therapy: Interdisciplinary dialogues

## Book review

# A Guide to Evaluation for Arts Therapists and Arts and Health Practitioners (Giorgos Tsiris, Mercédès Pavlicevic & Camilla Farrant)



Reviewed by Philippa Derrington

**Title:** A Guide to Evaluation for Arts Therapists and Arts and Health Practitioners | **Authors:** Giorgos Tsiris, Mercédès Pavlicevic & Camilla Farrant | **Year:** 2014 | **Publisher:** Jessica Kingsley | **Pages:** 176 | **ISBN:** 978-1-84905-418-8

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This book provides a comprehensive overview of evaluation in the arts therapies and offers clear and practical steps in evaluating clinical practice. The authors, Giorgos Tsiris, Mercédès Pavlicevic and Camilla Farrant (from the Nordoff Robbins Research Department at the Nordoff Robbins Centre in London, UK) have successfully created a user-friendly guide that is suitable for students and practitioners from the arts therapies, wherever they are working.

Based on their own considerable experience, the authors take the reader through the evaluation process in clearly constructed and logically explained phases, beginning with how to plan and develop appropriate data collection tools and going on to cover how best to manage this data and present the evidence meaningfully.

After setting out the reasons for evaluating clinical work in the arts therapies, the first phase is given over to planning evaluation. This 'Phase 1' is explicated fully with relevant practical information to

guide the reader. The following Phases, 2 and 3, detail the how and why of data collection. The authors present a useful introduction to statistics in Phase 4. Some references for further reading would have been helpful, particularly for those who want to pursue the use of specific quantitative evaluation tools. The final Phases 5 and 6 explain clearly how data can be drawn together and, importantly, disseminated.

The extremely informative, clear and engaging style makes this book easily accessible to those who have no experience of evaluation. The way that the authors have presented the chapters makes it easy to navigate and locate specific issues. Although the length of the book is attractive for such a guide, more illustrative examples added to each chapter and to each phase, such as case studies, would have been welcomed. These would have added colour and further helped the novice researcher grasp key concepts.

The authors focus on relevant details and, whilst there is some repetition, the key points are made very clearly and the reiteration helps to remind the evaluator of each important step.

In some instances, the print within some figures and tables is very small and therefore unclear (for example, figures 1 and 14). As a result, some examples are impossible to read (for example, figures 8, 12, 23 and 24) and therefore do not add to the text as they could.

Ethics is not covered fully in this guide, although the authors clearly emphasise the importance for research ethics board approval for any project. It is therefore worth highlighting to the reader that *A Guide to Research Ethics for Arts Therapists and Arts and Health Practitioners*, also published by Jessica Kingsley in the same year and by the same authors, is a companion text.

On its own, *A Guide to Evaluation for Arts Therapists and Arts and Health Practitioners* answers many questions and will be helpful to all arts therapists across contexts and client groups. Masters' level students in the UK, in particular, will find this an invaluable guide as they are expected to evaluate work and understand evidence-based practice during an HCPC arts therapists' pre-registration programme, and it should be highly recommended as required reading.

I also expect this book to generate further interest in the practice of evaluation amongst arts therapists working in many different clinical contexts. I look forward to hearing of its constructive impact on the expansion of clinical practice across the arts therapies.

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