

Rowan Tree Dramatherapy

Annual Report 2024



Who we are

Founded in 2013, Rowan Tree Dramatherapy Community Interest Company provides a Dramatherapy Service across Kent. Rowan Tree Dramatherapy is committed and dedicated to working within the community to ensure Dramatherapy is both accessible and useful. We formed the CIC, soon after graduating, to help promote Dramatherapy as a provision in Kent and our commitment remains resolute to our practice.

All our Dramatherapists are fully qualified, and state registered with the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC). Our Lead Dramatherapists having extensive experience working with young people in a range of settings. We have three directors, two of which are included in our team of five dramatherapists. Our third director leads on website design and tech support. We also have three experienced and specialised consultants to support us in developing the company business, ensuring continued and consistent ethical practice, and to support our clinical and relational dynamics.

What we do

Dramatherapy aims include, but are not exclusive to:

- To build confidence, self-awareness and enhance self-esteem
- To offer different perspectives
- To reduce feelings of isolation and anxiety
- To encourage a sense of wholeness
- To externalise inner conflicts or dilemmas
- To gain insight into behaviour
- To explore relationships and personal stories
- Specific aims are created according to the inclinations of the group or individual

The therapy is fully inclusive and invites clients of all ages and abilities to work spontaneously, using a variety of techniques from a more familiar talking therapy to working more creatively if useful. The therapeutic relationship is fundamental to the process, and we work in person to build and nurture this trust with the people we work with either in a group or individually. We offer a physical space for expression and reflection in a safe environment, where we can work not just cognitively but with the whole body, using movement, verbal, and non-verbal communication, to explore where feelings and experiences are held and to promote change.

As a CIC, we are established as a permanent part of the therapy teams in three additional needs schools and one mainstream secondary across Kent and Medway. In addition, young people are referred to us by schools, children's services, Virtual Schools, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, fostering agencies, and private referrals from family members or young people themselves.

Our Impact in 2024

Individual face to face dramatherapy in 3 primary schools, 3 secondary schools, 7 SEN schools, and 4 privately referred young people.

Group face to face dramatherapy: we ran 6 groups this year including a group to support transition into secondary school, 3 groups to support leaving secondary school, one group struggling with anxiety, and one group to support care experienced 18-25 year olds.

Supervision: we have provided face to face or online clinical supervision to staff teams including Designated Safeguarding Leads, individual supervision to educational support staff, bereavement family workers within a charity, CAMHS practitioners, teachers, senior leaders, therapists, and trainees.

CPD: we have provided staff training in schools bespoke to their needs. This year we have explored attachment, developmental trauma and safe relationships between staff and students.

In Total

- Rowan Tree has provided dramatherapy to 94 people between the ages of 5-22 years old in 2024
- 50 new referrals in 2024
- 35% of those we have worked with in 2024 were care experienced
- 95% of those we have worked with in 2024 year have SEN needs

News

Rowan Tree has attuned experience in creating **robust evaluation** enabling us to create an overview of hard data, observational feedback and written reviews, aimed at measuring the outcomes and experiences to meet the needs of partner organisations, to evaluate and inform our own practice and, at the center of our thinking, hold meaningful evaluation for the people we work with. We have reviewed this process to ensure we have consistency across all our therapy work. This has been embedded in 2024 and we look forward to using the more extensive data next year to inform our annual report and feedback outcomes to our permanent placements.

Project work: we were delighted to receive funding from **Colyer Fergusson Charitable Trust** (www.cfct.org.uk) for a two year project to provide group dramatherapy to care experienced young people aged 15-18 years old and 18-25 years old. This project is in collaboration with the University of Kent, Canterbury and the Gulbenkian Theatre to support aspiration into higher education. We were very pleased to start the adult group and receive referrals for the younger group. Along with the groups, we have our Creative Arts Day in early 2025 supporting and promoting the creative roots of our therapy work. We look forward to sharing news of this day in our next annual report.

Children's book collaboration: we were offered the wonderful opportunity to write a book in collaboration with Talya Bruck, founder of **Savannah Therapeutic Stories** (www.savanna-therapeutic.org.uk) to create a book for care experienced young children. We have worked with care experienced young people to advise on the

book to ensure its message and content is meeting the needs of those who listen to, look at or read the book. We have taken our time to understand and craft this book and now await the illustrations to complete it ready for launch in 2025.

Belongings continued its tour in 2024 visiting Plymouth, Exeter, Brighton, Reading, Bath, Leicester and Newry, Ireland. With a sprinkling of award ceremonies, including being nominated for two Off West End Awards (Best Production, Best Performance by an Ensemble) and receiving some great reviews such as “inspiring, engaging, beautifully evocative production” (Everything Theatre), the show begins new adventures in 2025. Keep an eye on our website or visit Tangled Feet for the latest updates and to find out more about how this show came to be **Belongings - Tangled Feet**

Social Media: we have developed our social media presence and hope you have enjoyed the posts, with thanks and huge appreciation to **Alice Waters** for her creativity and sensitivity within her role as Social Media Manager.

Finance: Justine and Bryony are furthering their financial know how under the excellent guidance of our new accountant at **Envision Partnership Ltd** (www.envision-uk.com) This change is empowering us to develop our Community Interest Company to ensure we continue to grow and support needs of the community we serve.

What People Say about us

“It’s (therapy) been good, given me insight into my past in detail. It’s helped me to open up a bit more with my feelings. It’s been a good place to talk about what’s happened over my weekends and my day. We’ve broken down stuff to understand important parts of my past.” (Young person in therapy)

‘It’s changed my way of thinking.’ (15 year old in therapy)

‘I like Dramatherapy. It helps me. It makes me calm and it makes me be myself.’ (11 year old in therapy)

Partner Schools

'We (a Kent SEMH school) have worked with Rowan Tree for over 5 years and in that time have never failed to be impressed by their professional, understanding and knowledgeable approach to the work they do with our pupils. Pupils at our school have a variety of needs and life experiences and the therapeutic intervention led by Rowan Tree therapists has a huge impact on their emotional health which in turn aids their engagement in their schooling. The therapists are proactive in liaising with staff teams including, classroom and safeguarding, as well as wider professionals and linking with parents/carers. I would have no reservations in recommending the work that Rowan Tree therapists do to all. Thank you Rowan Tree for all you do with and for our pupils.' (Member of SLT)

'Rowan Tree provide a fantastic service throughout our school provision. They offer a safe and secure environment for the students to develop, maintaining clear and positive communication with both the staff and families to support the young person. The team are always accommodating to the needs of the pupil and the school and have become an integral part of what we offer as a whole at our school.' (Member of SLT)

Supervision

'I so look forward to my monthly supervision slots with Bryony - it varies month to month how I use the time, and I enjoy that flexibility. It is a confidential space to discuss my clinical case load, talk through any worries or concerns with managing my team, or upcoming projects. It's such a treat to have it, and I do not take it for granted. Bryony has a wonderful manner - over our time together she really understands now what makes me tick, and is reassuring, challenging and supportive. Thank you so much!' (Supervisee)

'I look forward to my supervision session each month. I feel that I am listened to, supported and come away so much lighter after! My supervisor has a wealth of knowledge and can call upon this bank to suggest possible ways of working with my young people.' (Supervisee)

Looking Forward

Anxiety amongst our Kent young people is increasing with great personal and societal impact. We are looking to develop bespoke provision to support young people and their network including home and educational settings to develop understanding and strategies to reduce the overwhelm. If you are interested in collaborating or funding this work then do get in touch so we can share our plans further.

Supervision in Education Package- We see first hand the importance of every member of the school community in offering reparative interactions. However, the impact of high demands, government initiatives, stretched resources, relentless cuts, and the sheer emotional weight of workload often goes ignored, leaving the moments that bring staff into their professions uncelebrated and unappreciated. With a growing understanding of staff wellbeing and the strength of impact well facilitated supervision can have on individuals and teams, we are promoting our flexible online supervision package to school trusts. If you are interested in finding out more, then please do email Bryony at contact@rowantreedramatherapy.co.uk

Inspiring Resources

Our team would like to recommend the following to you as they have inspired us to play, think, reflect and review in 2024

Kael's Story- a story celebrating the transformative process experienced by one young person in therapy, www.rowantreedramatherapy.co.uk

'Demon Copperhead' by Barbara Kingsolver- a fiction novel that illuminated survival and the impact every interaction can have on every vulnerable young person.

'The Grand Hotel of Feelings' by Lidia Brankovic- offering a metaphor for the transience of feelings as well as the notion that we can welcome in and listen to whichever feeling comes to visit, as they each have something to tell us.

'The Anxious Generation' by Jonathan Haidt- an eye opening and eye watering read that takes the reader through the impact of the tech generations and the rewiring of childhood with robust research evidencing the change.

'Helping Teenagers Talk about their Lives Cards' by Margot Sunderland and Nicky Armstrong- a pack of cards to open curiosity and communication about being a teenager.