Ayala Bresler Nardi

Personal Statement

Born and raised in the Israeli suburb of Kfar Saba not far from Tel Aviv, I am the first child of Yona and Hanoch, and the older sister to Hila and Ofer. During my childhood and adolescence, I danced professionally, played the piano, and became a member and guide in the Scouts youth movement. After completing high school with full honors, I enlisted in the IDF, serving as a detonation and explosives instructor. In this role, I trained 14 detonation and explosives units of the Nahal Infantry Brigade’s Batzelet Battalion. Following my army service, I began studying for an undergraduate degree in theatre at Tel Aviv University. Tel Aviv has become my home, where I live today with my husband Eyal and my children Noam, Ziv, and Lavi.

During my studies, I volunteered once a week for the “Perach” (Flower) project, a national mentoring program aimed at children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, where I developed storytelling theater performances with Arab children from Jaffa. At the same time, I worked with at-risk youth at the Yuvalim boarding school in Kfar Saba. After finishing my studies, I worked at the Children’s Museum in Holon as part of the training and content development team, while also working in theater productions. Some two years after completing my first degree, I began studying for my master’s degree in movement therapy. My final project, “A Model of Kinetic-Verbal Processing for Transmission and Counter-Transfer Content,” focused on a model I developed for preventing secondary traumatization among therapists from a variety of disciplines.

At the beginning of my career as a therapist, I worked in anthroposophic schools, treating children experiencing a range of difficulties. I was soon invited by the “Aviv” association to establish a therapeutic center, which I founded in 2015 and managed until. 2020. During that time, I also taught therapists in the “Shaar HaNefesh” (Gate to the Soul) training program in anthroposphic methods for art therapists and conducted workshops for movement therapy students at the Kibbutzim College in Tel Aviv. One of my lectures was attended by the head of University of Haifa’s movement therapy department. She then suggested that I conduct a research study using my clinical materials as the basis for developing a therapeutic model. From this arose my thesis, “Treatment Diary Analysis: Processes and Interventions in Movement Therapy for Children with Anxiety Disorder,” based on my therapy diaries documenting treatments between 2013–2018. I published the research results in two articles as the primary author, and showcased the model in conferences in Israel and around the world, as well as to teams and clinics at the Shalvata Hospital for Mental Health not far from Tel Aviv.

Today, I am part of the research team at Shalvata Hospital where I am leading a study applying the therapeutic model I developed within a therapeutic a group of women coping with eating disorders. Next year, I will begin training movement therapists at the Children and Youth Department of Geha Mental Health Hospital to use the model I developed in clinical practice.