



4th Global Conference on Psychology

21 - 23 August 2026

Oxford, United Kingdom

Psychological Healing in Feminist Time-Spaces: A Chronotopic Study of Martial Arts for Women After Trauma

Dr. Hannah Intezar, Dr. Nazanin Shiraj, Dr. Peter Branney

University of Bradford, The United Kingdom

Abstract

This paper offers theoretical and methodological innovation in feminist research by utilising a Bakhtinian dialogical-chronotopic framework in order to examine the experience of participants engaging in a women-only martial arts programme, *Healing Moves*. Drawing on six in-depth qualitative interviews with women who chose to engage with *Healing Moves*, following experience of trauma, we argue that a distinctive configuration of time and space creates a *feminist chronotopic time-space*. Here, *Healing Moves* itself is the chronotope locus, that supports trauma recovery through embodied practices and dialogical connections. In doing so, the study explores how a shared feminist chronotopic *time-space*, through martial arts training, carves out a space for participants to not only re-negotiate their self-perception, but also re-claim their bodily agency (embodiment), and cultivate resilience.

Under a feminist chronotopic lens, the analysis revealed four inter-connected *genres* which promoted individual and collective recovery: (1) the establishment of a physical safe-space, (2) the re-claiming of embodiment through physical movement, (3) collectivity experience via dialogue, (4) and the re-shaping of personal narratives beyond the *Healing Moves Chronotopic time-space*. For example, participants described the practice space as a site where physical strength and psychological empowerment could unfold simultaneously, allowing them to experience themselves differently, and often more positively, than in everyday life.

Therefore, the study positions *Healing Moves* as more than simply a physical intervention. Rather, it functions as a psychological and cultural (feminist) *Chronotopic time-space* of healing. Where temporal and spatial community-based structures, potentially, contribute to recovery from trauma in a manner that traditional therapeutic settings may not. Hence, broadening psychological understanding of trauma recovery and offering researcher insight into how to contextualise such experiences.

Keywords: Bakhtinian Chronotope; Embodiment; Trauma recovery; Feminist inquiry; Martial arts.