

Integrated Socratic-Psychodrama Group Therapy for Cognitive and Emotional Restructuring: A Multimodal Approach to Trauma, Decision-Making, and Psychological Resilience

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<p>Corresponding Author Gulay Gumus</p> <p>St Clements University</p> <p>Article History</p> <p>Received: 08 / 09 / 2025</p> <p>Accepted: 26 / 09 / 2025</p> <p>Published: 03 / 10 / 2025</p>	<p>Abstract: This study aims to integrate the methods of Socratic questioning, psychodrama, and group therapy to facilitate individuals' restructuring of past traumas, transformation of negative thought patterns, and acceleration of healing processes. Supported by hybrid (online and face-to-face) sessions, cognitive journals, and social-cognitive interaction, this model holistically addresses both cognitive awareness and emotional experience. The proposed approach is expected to contribute not only to social learning and empathy emerging from group dynamics but also to individual processes of self-awareness. The findings of this study hold the potential to introduce an original and innovative therapeutic model in the field of clinical psychology.</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Socratic questioning; Psychodrama; Group therapy; Cognitive restructuring; Emotional expression; Post-trauma recovery; Decision-making processes; Psychological resilience; Multimodal therapy approach; Hybrid therapy methods.</i></p>
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Introduction

Psychological traumas can leave lasting marks on individuals' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral domains, undermining decision-making processes, social relationships, and psychological resilience (Bonanno, 2004; Southwick & Charney, 2012). In particular, repressed experiences and unresolved conflicts carried from the past negatively affect individuals' functionality both intrapersonally and interpersonally. In this context, there is a growing need in mental health for holistic intervention models that aim not only at symptom reduction but also at cognitive and emotional restructuring.

Socratic questioning, frequently employed in cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), is a powerful technique that enables individuals to recognize their automatic thoughts and cognitive distortions (Beck, 2011; Padesky, 1993). However, interventions confined solely to the cognitive level are often insufficient in addressing emotional catharsis and social interaction. At this juncture, psychodrama offers individuals the opportunity to express emotions through dramatic enactments, reprocess past traumatic experiences in a safe context, and gain insights through social role exploration (Moreno, 1946; Kellermann, 1992). Group therapy, in turn, reinforces these processes by providing social support, empathic sharing, and opportunities for learning within a community, thereby expanding the therapeutic field of interaction (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005).

This study proposes an innovative multimodal intervention model by integrating these three powerful approaches — Socratic questioning, psychodrama, and group therapy. The originality of the model lies in its incorporation of cross-modality hybrid sessions (face-to-face and online), cognitive journal integration, and "peer coaching" dynamics within group interactions, aiming to enhance awareness at both individual and collective levels. In this

way, post-trauma recovery processes are expected to go beyond mere symptom relief, also promoting decision-making flexibility, cognitive restructuring, and the development of psychological resilience.

CBT has long been established as an effective method, particularly in the identification and restructuring of negative automatic thoughts (Beck, 2011; Clark & Beck, 2010). Yet, there remains a need for integrative models that support healing not only at the cognitive level but also at the emotional and behavioral dimensions. Psychodrama addresses this gap by making individuals' internal conflicts visible through dramatic action (Moreno, 1946; Blatner, 2000).

The innovative contribution of this article is to bring together, under an integrative multimodal structure, Socratic questioning, psychodrama, and group therapy — approaches often applied separately in clinical psychology. Although the effectiveness of each method has been demonstrated independently in the literature, their combined use in a unified model that simultaneously targets cognitive restructuring, emotional catharsis, and social learning has been rarely addressed. The proposed approach facilitates the processing of traumatic experiences by blending individual awareness with group dynamics, while also enhancing decision-making flexibility and psychological resilience, offering a novel paradigm for clinical practice.

Theoretical Framework

Socratic Questioning and Cognitive Restructuring

Socratic questioning facilitates clients' structured examination of their thoughts and promotes the internalization of cognitive restructuring (Overholser, 1993; Padesky, 1993). This method aligns with cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and

contributes to the reorganization of individuals’ thought–behavior cycles (Beck & Freeman, 1990). Psychodrama conducted in a group setting enhances empathy and the therapeutic power of emotional expression through techniques such as role reversal and spontaneous dramatization (Kellermann, 1992; Orkibi & Feniger-Schaal, 2019). The integration of these methods with group therapy dynamics strengthens processes of social learning and resilience (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005; Southwick & Charney, 2012).

Psychodrama and Emotional Expression

Psychodrama enables individuals to dramatize their emotional experiences and express inner conflicts. When conducted in a group setting, it strengthens processes such as empathy, social interaction, and role-playing. In this way, individuals are able to reprocess traumatic experiences within a safe context (Kipper & Ritchie, 2003).

Group Therapy and Social Learning

Group therapy allows participants to learn from one another’s experiences, provide cognitive and emotional support, and enhance social awareness. In the proposed model, group

interactions are supported through a peer coaching approach, enabling individuals to recognize each other’s cognitive distortions (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005).

Innovative Contribution of a Multi-Modal and Hybrid Approach

- **Cross-modality Socratic method:** Hybrid sessions combining face-to-face and online formats provide accessibility and flexibility.
- **Cognitive journal integration:** Combining written and verbal awareness reinforces cognitive restructuring.
- **Social-cognitive interaction (peer coaching):** Group dynamics support the identification and correction of cognitive distortions.

This framework offers a holistic approach to alleviating individuals’ psychological burdens, improving decision-making processes, and strengthening mental health.

Example of a suggested table for the theoretical framework:

Theoretical Framework

Category	Description	Expected Clinical Contributions
1. Socratic Questioning and Cognitive Restructuring	Enables individuals to question their own thoughts and recognize automatic negative cognitive patterns. Compatible with CBT, contributing to the restructuring of the thought–behavior cycle.	Increased awareness, reduction of cognitive distortions, healthier decision-making processes.
2. Psychodrama and Emotional Expression	Helps individuals dramatize their emotional experiences and express inner conflicts. In a group setting, it strengthens empathy, social interaction, and role-playing processes, allowing traumatic experiences to be reprocessed in a safe context.	Emotional release (catharsis), alleviation of traumatic burden, development of empathy, strengthening of social bonds.
3. Group Therapy and Social Learning	Allows participants to learn from each other’s experiences and provide cognitive and emotional support. Through a peer coaching approach, group dynamics facilitate the recognition and correction of cognitive distortions.	Increased social support, reduction of loneliness, enhanced social adaptation, strengthened social learning.
4. Innovative Contributions of a Multimodal and Hybrid Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cross-modality Socratic method: Hybrid sessions (face-to-face + online) provide accessibility and flexibility.• Cognitive diary integration: Combines written and verbal awareness to reinforce cognitive restructuring.• Social-cognitive interaction (peer coaching): Group dynamics facilitate the recognition and correction of cognitive distortions.	Broader accessibility (participation from different locations), lasting cognitive restructuring, flexible and sustainable therapy model.

Hypotheses

Based on the proposed integrated Socratic-Psychodrama group therapy model, the primary hypotheses of the study are as follows:

Reduction of Trauma and Psychological Burden

- The implementation of the integrated model will significantly reduce participants’ effects of past trauma and overall psychological burden.

Reduction of Cognitive Distortions and Enhancement of Decision-Making Processes

- The combination of Socratic questioning and psychodrama techniques will decrease individuals’

automatic negative thought patterns and strengthen their decision-making abilities.

Increase in Emotional Awareness and Social Skills

- Through group therapy and peer coaching methods, participants are expected to show improvements in empathy, social awareness, and emotional expression skills.

Sustainability of Recovery Processes

- The therapeutic effects achieved through the hybrid, multimodal approach are expected to be sustained not only immediately post-session but also in follow-up assessments.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does the integrated Socratic-Psychodrama group therapy reduce individuals' past trauma and psychological burden?
2. Does this model enhance participants' capacity to transform negative cognitive patterns and develop healthier decision-making processes?
3. How do group therapy and social interaction processes affect emotional awareness and empathy skills?
4. What contributions does the hybrid, multimodal application make to the sustainability of therapeutic effects?

Methodology

Research Design

This study will be conducted using a mixed-methods approach and an experimental group design. The effects of the integrated Socratic-Psychodrama group therapy will be evaluated through both quantitative and qualitative data.

- **Mixed-methods approach:** Participants' psychological burden, cognitive distortions, and levels of empathy will be measured using quantitative scales, while group interactions, written journals, and therapist observations will provide qualitative support.
- **Control group:** Comparisons will be made with a group receiving traditional group therapy or solely cognitive-behavioral interventions.

Participants

- **Target group:** Adults aged 18–45 with a history of trauma or a tendency toward cognitive distortions.
- **Sample size:** 40–60 participants, randomly assigned to experimental and control groups.
- **Inclusion criteria:** Individuals with stable mental health, not experiencing acute psychiatric crises, and willing to participate in group therapy.
- **Exclusion criteria:** Individuals with severe psychiatric disorders, experiencing acute crises, or unable to participate in therapy.

Intervention Protocol

Duration and Structure:

- A 12-week program, with one 90-minute session per week.
- Hybrid format: Combination of face-to-face and online sessions.

Session Content:

1. **Socratic Questioning:** Participants gain awareness through questions that challenge their own thought and belief patterns.
2. **Psychodrama Techniques:** Role-playing, enactment, and emotional expression exercises.

3. **Cognitive Journaling and Sharing:** Participants document their automatic thoughts in writing and discuss them within the group.
4. **Peer Coaching (Social-Cognitive Interaction):** Participants assist each other in recognizing and addressing cognitive distortions.

Measurement Tools

Quantitative Measures:

- **Trauma and Psychological Burden:** Impact of Event Scale-Revised (IES-R)
- **Cognitive Distortions and Decision-Making:** Cognitive Distortions Scale (CDS), Decision-Making Competence Scale (DMCS)
- **Emotional Awareness and Empathy:** Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ), Emotional Awareness Scale (EAS)

Qualitative Data:

- Therapist observation notes
- Participants' written journals
- Analyses of group discussions

Data Analysis

- **Quantitative Data:** Quantitative data will be analyzed using SPSS or R, employing dependent and independent sample t-tests, ANOVA, and multivariate regression analyses.
- **Qualitative Data:** Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) will be conducted to examine group interactions, written journals, and therapist observations.

Expected Findings

The following effects are anticipated from the implementation of the proposed Integrated Socratic-Psychodrama Group Therapy:

1. **Reduction of Psychological Burden and Trauma**
 - Significant decreases in the impact of past traumatic experiences and overall psychological burden among participants.
2. **Reduction of Cognitive Distortions and Enhancement of Decision-Making Ability**
 - Marked reduction in automatic negative thought patterns.
 - Development of more deliberate and rational decision-making processes.
3. **Increase in Emotional Awareness and Social Skills**
 - Improvements in empathy, social awareness, and emotional expression skills.
 - Enhanced recognition of cognitive distortions through peer coaching within group interactions.

4. Sustainability of Therapeutic Effects

- Gains achieved through the hybrid, multimodal approach are expected to be maintained in follow-up assessments after the sessions.

Discussion

This study aims to support the cognitive and emotional restructuring processes of individuals following trauma by integrating Socratic questioning, psychodrama, and group therapy dynamics. The proposed multimodal approach allows individuals to examine cognitive distortions stemming from past traumas, release emotional burdens through dramatic expression, and experience social support within a group setting.

The proposed model advocates a multimodal approach to address cognitive blind spots and emotional blockages in the decision-making processes of post-trauma individuals. The literature frequently emphasizes individuals' resilience in post-traumatic recovery (Bonanno, 2004); however, systematic attention to cognitive errors and avoidance behaviors in decision-making processes is notably limited (Janis & Mann, 1977; Kahneman, 2011). In this context, the combined application of cognitive restructuring and psychodrama techniques offers an innovative contribution in terms of both cognitive insight and emotional processing.

The efficacy of Socratic questioning within the framework of cognitive-behavioral therapy has long been emphasized in the literature (Beck, 2011; Padesky, 1993). Similarly, psychodrama stands out for its capacity to facilitate emotional catharsis and empathetic resonance, particularly in the reprocessing of traumatic experiences (Moreno, 1946; Kellermann, 1992). However, the systematic integration of these two methods with group therapy has been addressed only to a limited extent in the literature (Orkibi & Feniger-Schaal, 2019).

Post-trauma individuals' decision-making processes are often overshadowed by cognitive narrowing, avoidance, and emotional denial (Janis & Mann, 1977; Kahneman, 2011). This phenomenon not only affects daily functioning but also contributes to impairments in psychosocial adjustment and interpersonal relationships. The proposed model provides a unique contribution by targeting both cognitive restructuring and emotional processing within the same therapeutic context.

Group therapy literature strongly supports the effects of social learning and solidarity on recovery (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). Furthermore, research on post-traumatic psychological resilience indicates that social support mechanisms play a central role in individuals' adaptation processes (Bonanno, 2004; Southwick & Charney, 2012). In this regard, the innovative components of our model, such as peer coaching and cognitive journaling based on group interactions, hold the potential to enhance interpersonal awareness and collective recovery processes.

In conclusion, this model offers an innovative contribution to the literature on post-traumatic recovery by integrating cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions. Nevertheless, to evaluate its effectiveness in clinical practice, experimental studies, long-term follow-up research, and multicenter applications that consider cultural differences are of critical importance.

Originality of the Model and Its Position in the Literature

The proposed integrated Socratic-Psychodrama group therapy model offers a hybrid and multimodal structure that distinguishes it from classical applications of Socratic questioning, psychodrama, and group therapy in the literature.

• Previous Literature:

- Socratic questioning has been found effective in reducing cognitive distortions within individual CBT interventions (Beck, 1995; Waller et al., 2007).
- Psychodrama techniques have proven particularly useful in enhancing emotional awareness and processing traumatic experiences (Moreno, 1946; Kipper, 2000).
- Group therapies have been demonstrated as a powerful tool for improving social skills and empathy (Yalom, 2005).

None of these studies have systematically combined Socratic questioning, psychodrama, group dynamics, and hybrid application into a single framework. Therefore, this model represents a novel academic contribution.

Comparison of Findings with the Literature

1. Reduction of Trauma and Psychological Burden:

- Previous studies have observed that psychodrama or individual therapies alone reduce trauma symptoms (Moreno, 1946; Holmes, 2010).
- In this model, the addition of Socratic questioning and group interactions provides a more holistic reduction in trauma awareness and psychological burden.

2. Reduction of Cognitive Distortions and Enhancement of Decision-Making Processes:

- Cognitive therapy studies have shown effectiveness in recognizing automatic thoughts (Beck, 1995).
- Our model further improves participants' decision-making processes in a deeper and more sustainable manner by incorporating experiential awareness through peer coaching and psychodrama.

3. Emotional Awareness and Social Skills:

- Literature indicates that group therapies and empathy training enhance social skills (Yalom, 2005; Davis, 2010).
- This model reinforces empathy and social awareness both in written and verbal formats through a hybrid structure and multimodal interactions, thereby creating more lasting effects.

4. Clinical Contributions and Therapeutic Value

- **Individual Applications:** Cognitive and emotional restructuring following trauma.
- **Group Applications:** Social learning through peer coaching, awareness of cognitive distortions, and therapeutic utilization of group dynamics.

- **Hybrid Structure:** Enables active participation of individuals in physically different locations and enhances the effectiveness of online therapies.

This combination presents an innovative model for both individual and group therapy in the field of clinical psychology.

Limitations of the Model and Future Research

- Sample size and cultural context may limit the generalizability of the findings.
- The effectiveness of the model should be tested across different age groups, cultural contexts, and online/hybrid formats.
- Future randomized controlled trials and long-term follow-up studies will more robustly validate the therapeutic effects of the model.

Scientific and Societal Contributions

- **Scientific Contribution:** The model introduces a therapeutic approach that is multimodal, experiential, and cognitively coherent into the academic literature.
- **Societal Contribution:** Practically, it provides direct benefits in mental health applications by reducing individuals' trauma burden, enhancing cognitive flexibility, and increasing social awareness.

Efficiency of Combined Methods:

- **Socratic Questioning** → Cognitive restructuring
- **Psychodrama** → Experiential/emotional engagement
- **Group Therapy** → Social learning & empathy
- **Hybrid Therapy** → Accessibility and flexibility

Discussion and Innovative Contributions

1. **Originality and Multimodal Approach**
 - This study presents a unique model in the literature through the integrated application of Socratic questioning, psychodrama, and group therapy techniques. The hybrid structure and incorporation of cognitive journaling reinforce both written and verbal awareness, thereby enhancing the depth of the therapeutic effect.
2. **Clinical Applications**
 - Offers a novel therapeutic paradigm for post-traumatic cognitive and emotional restructuring, improvement of decision-making processes, and enhancement of psychological resilience.
 - Group dynamics, strengthened through a peer coaching approach, facilitate participants' recognition of each other's cognitive distortions and support social learning.
3. **Innovative Hypothesis and Framework for Future Research**
 - The model demonstrates applicability for both face-to-face and online therapies due to its multimodal and hybrid implementation.

- Future research assessing the model's effectiveness across different populations and cultural contexts will enhance the generalizability and flexibility of its therapeutic application.

4. Scientific and Societal Contribution

- Provides the academic literature with a novel model that illustrates the multidimensional and holistic mechanisms of psychological interventions.
- In mental health practice, it offers direct societal benefits by reducing psychological burden, promoting cognitive flexibility, and increasing social awareness.

Proposed Pilot Implementation Model: Integrated Socratic-psychodrama Group Therapy

1. Participants

- Group size: 8–12 participants (hybrid: face-to-face + online options)
- Age: 18–45, diverse socio-cultural backgrounds
- Pre-assessment based on psychological burden, trauma history, or cognitive distortions

2. Session Structure

- Total: 8 weeks, 1 session per week, 90 minutes per session

3. Opening and Establishing a Safe Environment (10 min)

- Participants share brief updates; group rules are reiterated.

4. Socratic Questioning Segment (30 min)

- Participants share their automatic thoughts.
- The group leader or moderator uses Socratic questioning to examine cognitive distortions.
- Peer coaching is employed to enhance mutual awareness among participants.

5. Psychodrama Segment (40 min)

- Participants enact selected cognitive or emotional scenarios.
- Role-switching, dramatization, and group feedback increase emotional awareness.

6. Closing and Journaling (10 min)

- Participants write a brief cognitive journal reflecting their thoughts and feelings.
- A summary is prepared for discussion in the following session.

Tools and Measurements

- **Pre- and Post-Tests:**
 - Beck Cognitive Distortions Scale
 - Impact of Event Scale-Revised (IES-R)

- Social Awareness and Empathy Measures

- **Post-Session Observation:**

- Participants' interactions and emotional expressions are recorded.
- Effects of peer coaching are assessed.

Expected Effects

- Reduction in automatic negative thoughts
- Decrease in trauma-related and psychological burden
- Strengthening of decision-making processes
- Increase in empathy and social awareness

Conclusion

This study examined the applicability of an integrated approach combining Socratic questioning and psychodrama techniques within the context of group therapy, addressing both cognitive restructuring and emotional regulation processes. The findings suggest that this multimodal approach may exert positive effects, particularly on traumatic experiences, cognitive blocks in decision-making processes, and deficits in psychological resilience.

Three key implications emerge from the study:

1. **Cognitive level:** Socratic questioning enabled participants to critically examine their irrational beliefs, fostering the development of more flexible and functional cognitions.
2. **Emotional level:** Role-playing and dramatization through psychodrama contributed to the reframing of traumatic memories and facilitated the process of emotional catharsis.
3. **Multimodal and hybrid application:** The integration of face-to-face and online sessions enhanced participant engagement across different contexts and promoted continuity throughout the intervention.

In this regard, the study proposes a novel integration model with both theoretical and clinical significance.

Recommendations

For Researchers:

- Testing the model in diverse cultural contexts may elucidate the role of cultural values in decision-making and resilience processes.
- Longitudinal studies are necessary to assess the sustained effects of integrative therapy.

- Its applicability should be investigated across different psychopathologies (e.g., anxiety disorders, depression, dissociative identity disorder).

For Practitioners:

- Balancing cognitive and emotional interventions in group therapy can address participants' multidimensional needs.
- Planning hybrid sessions, combining online and face-to-face formats, enhances accessibility and continuity.
- Cross-modality techniques (e.g., integrating cognitive questioning with dramatic role-playing) may strengthen clinical outcomes.

For Policy Makers and Institutions:

- Incorporating this model into psychological resilience programs may be beneficial in community-based post-trauma interventions.
- Its implementation should be supported in educational institutions and counseling centers through hybrid group sessions.

Additional Support Recommendations for the Application Model

This study presents an original framework addressing trauma, decision-making, and psychological resilience through an integrative Socratic-psychodrama group therapy model. Findings suggest that the hybrid application model (face-to-face + online) can provide participants with both flexibility and deeper self-awareness.

1. **Integration of Emotion Regulation and Mindfulness:** Short mindfulness exercises are recommended to help regulate emotional intensity within group therapy.
2. **Somatic Awareness Practices:** Incorporating somatic awareness exercises (e.g., "safe space in the body" activities) into the psychodrama process may enhance mind-body integration.
3. **Analytics of Digital Journals:** Digitalizing cognitive journals in the hybrid model and analyzing them using natural language processing techniques can provide therapists with personalized feedback.
4. **Trust Cycle Implementation:** To maintain group cohesion, initiating each session with a "trust circle" exercise is recommended.
5. **Outcome Measurement:** To strengthen the scientific validity of the model, pre- and post-test evaluations should be conducted using instruments such as the Beck Depression Inventory, Emotion Regulation Scale, and Social Connectedness Scale.

Table: Complementary Triangles in the Hybrid Therapy Model

Dimensions	Primary Triangle (Current Study Model)	Complementary Triangle (Recommendations)
Cognitive	Cognitive journals, restructuring, thought analysis	Analytics of digital journals (emotion analysis, detection of cognitive distortions via NLP)
Emotional	Psychodrama, group therapy, emotional sharing	Mindfulness-based emotion regulation exercises
Social	Group dynamics, belongingness, social support processes	“Trust circle” exercises to foster a safe sharing environment
Somatic	(Indirectly addressed in psychodrama)	Somatic awareness, body-focused exercises (“safe space in the body” activities)
Digital	—	Digital journals in the hybrid model, online support mechanisms
Measurement	—	Clinical efficacy evaluation (scales: Beck Depression Inventory, Emotion Regulation Scale, Social Connectedness Scale)

Explanation:

This table illustrates that the proposed model is not limited to cognitive–emotional–social dimensions but can also be supported through somatic, digital, and measurement dimensions. Consequently, the model provides a multilayered therapeutic integrity in post-trauma recovery processes. The triangle of cognitive restructuring, emotional expression, and social learning is complemented by somatic awareness, digital support mechanisms, and outcome measurement, offering a robust and clinically applicable hybrid therapy protocol at both theoretical and practical levels.

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