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The development of the URI system and philosophy began from Michele Lemolo's work with children with autism and related disabilities

as well as her own experiences with dance and rhythm as being a catalyst for change, communication and insight.

Michele began her career as a behavior therapist and Lead teacher at The Victory Center (a year-round one-to-one student/teacher ratio school-program, based on the science of Applied Behavior Analysis), where she started to investigate the properties of rhythm as a tool for communication, rapport building and educational training.

She discovered that the rhythmic behaviors, otherwise known as “stereotypic movements” being displayed by her students where not “behaviors” to be ignored or extinguished but rather opportunities to build language and socialization.

While at the Victory Center, she developed a movement program that was implemented as an extra-curricular/specials activity for all of the students attending the school. The program incorporated goals derived from the Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS) such as receptive and expressive language, as well as goals that addressed self regulation, awareness of self and others, socialization, motor coordination and flexibility.

Michele went on to become a behavior specialist for Broward County Public Schools, servicing the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) population, K- 12, where she created and implemented positive behavior intervention plans (PBIPs) that integrated behavior, social/emotional and educational goals.

After four years with Broward County Public schools, Michele accepted a position at Nova Southeastern University as a Behavior Analyst

for their pre-school autism program. While there, Michele recreated and implemented her movement program, this time with more of an emphasis placed on nurturing the natural rhythms and creative potential of each child. She again saw positive outcomes regarding teaching through the use of rhythm, movement and unconditional interactions, rather than training through conditioning with the use of rewards and punishments.

These initial experiences along with a growing desire to focus more on holistic approaches to education, health and wellness as well as her own personal awakenings, has laid the foundation and fertile soil for the URI program to grow and take shape.

Currently Michele works at [Sunflower Creative Arts](#), a teaching center that offers a unique and diverse collection of enrichment programs for children and families that emphasize intrinsic motivation and conflict resolution. Programming is designed to nurture the creative spirit through music, art and drama. Michele assists the director in several programs including a mommy and me class, theater improv for children and adolescents and story time drama for preschool aged children. She is also a teacher for the day program; ages 3 to 6 years old.

Michele has been instrumental in the development of Youth Expressions (YE), a non-for-profit out reach organization for at-risk youth that utilizes the arts. She currently serves as president of the YE board. Michele also works with Brian Piergrossi, of [The Big Glow](#) Cooperative, where she offers URI's MP3 program at workshops, seminars and retreats. Michele and Brian have collaborated on various projects and have created a venue called "Club Now". "Club Now" is an organic music and

dance jam that brings young conscious adults together in a drug free environment, where their authentic expression is nurtured.

Michele is a Certified Associate Behavior Analyst (BCaBA), an ESE K -12 certified teacher and has a master's degree in psychology. Michele is finishing her doctorate degree in psychology with a concentration in neuropsychology. Michele is also completing her master's degree certification in dance/movement therapy at [Kinnections](#) in Rochester, New York.

Michele has been a professional dancer since the age of 8 years old and has been trained in tap, ballet, jazz, ballroom, hip-hop and break dancing.

Michele is dedicated to the development of the URI program and continues to share its message.





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