

MUSIC THERAPY: ANALYZING CONCEPT, TECHNIQUES, AND APPLICATIONS

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Abstract

Music Therapy is a burgeoning field, proving highly effective in treating various psychological conditions. It holds particular promise in supporting individuals with neurological disorders like dementia and Parkinson's disease, utilizing sound and music to forge crucial connections within the brain. Unlike pharmaceutical interventions, Music Therapy significantly addresses the behavioural and emotional dimensions of conditions like dementia. Its historical roots trace back to the late 18th century, evolving into a formal clinical profession with diverse theoretical foundations. Diverse techniques within Music Therapy, such as song writing and collaborative group sessions, cater to individual needs, while the integration of technology broadens its accessibility, especially in times of restricted physical access. The field is poised for growth, emphasizing diversity, inclusion, and a pivotal role for technology in shaping its trajectory. In essence, Music Therapy stands as a dynamic and evidence-based approach, offering a versatile tool for enhancing mental, emotional, and physical well-being, with a promising trajectory for continued development and application.

Keywords: Music, Therapy, Technology, Health, Disorder

INTRODUCTION

Music Therapy is an increasingly popular approach for addressing various psychological conditions. It has proven to be a potent method for individuals to regulate their emotions and enhance their general state of health.

In addition to its application in end-of-life care, Music Therapy has shown impressive effectiveness in aiding those dealing with neurological disorders such as dementia and Parkinson's disease, benefiting their physical, mental, and social well-being. This therapeutic modality harnesses the power of sound and music within a patient-therapist relationship, tapping into a multisensory and motor network in the brain. This, in turn, induces profound changes and establishes vital connections between brain regions, ultimately aiding in the therapy and rehabilitation of neurological disorders.

For certain conditions such as dementia, the need for effective interventions has never been more pressing. While pharmacological approaches have primarily targeted cognitive symptoms, they have shown limited effectiveness in addressing the behavioural and psychological aspects of dementia. Music Therapy has emerged as a cornerstone of these interventions, demonstrating significant positive effects on behaviour, emotion, and cognition.

WHAT IS MUSIC THERAPY?

A clinical intervention, Music Therapy uses music to achieve individualized goals. It is an evidence-based therapy that has been well-established in the health community. Music

Therapy can help reduce negative stress and burden, improve mood and self-expression, and provide a non-verbal outlet for emotions. Music Therapy experiences may include listening, singing, playing instruments, or composing music, and one does not need any musical skills or talents to participate.

Music Therapy techniques encompass a range of interventions like spontaneous music creation, attentive music listening, composing songs, discussing lyrics, combining music with imagery, singing, performing music, educational approaches through music, integrating music with other arts, using music for relaxation, educating patients through music, employing electronic music technology, customized music interventions, and incorporating movement with music. The objectives, goals, and potential approaches of Music Therapy services are customized to meet the individual needs of the client and the specific context in which it is delivered.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MUSIC THERAPY?

Music Therapy has been studied in various contexts, including cancer treatment, hospice and palliative care, and learning disabilities. Findings have successfully demonstrated how Music Therapy can be used as a supportive and creative method of treating psychosocial-related impacts of cancer disease. It can be effective in reducing depression and anxiety disorders among people with cancer.

Music Therapy can also be used as a distraction tool to manage emotions and divert an individual's attention from an unpleasant condition to a more pleasant and happy moment, thereby reducing the risk of psychological discomfort.

In hospice and palliative care, Music Therapy has been found to be significant in improving the quality of life of patients. It has been proved that Music Therapy can help reduce pain, anxiety, and depression among patients in hospice and palliative care.

Next, the therapy has been found to be useful in language, speech, auditory, and learning recovery for cases with learning disabilities. Studies have shown that it can be a useful aiding factor in rehabilitation therapy of reading and phonological awareness disorders.

HISTORY OF MUSIC THERAPY

The concept of Music Therapy can be traced back to 1789, when it first appeared in an article titled "Music Physically Considered" in the Columbian Magazine. Over the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries, Music Therapy gained recognition within healthcare settings, often administered in conjunction with other forms of therapy. Additionally, it found a place in educational institutions, particularly for individuals with disabilities. In 1903, the National Society of Musical Therapeutics was established by Eva Augusta Vescelius, marking a significant milestone in the formalization of this field.

During the early 1900s, veterans played a crucial role in pioneering the profession of Music Therapy. In the 1920s, music found its way into hospitals, becoming an essential tool in treating World War I veterans who were grappling with both physical and emotional trauma. The 1930s saw Willem van de Wall leading the way in integrating Music Therapy into state-funded facilities. He also authored the first instructional text on the subject, "Music in Institutions".

The 1940s witnessed the emergence of three pivotal figures in the development of Music Therapy as a structured clinical profession: psychiatrist and music therapist Ira Altshuler, along with Willem van de Wall and E. Thayer Gaston. This period also saw the inception of formal Music Therapy college training programs. In 1950, the establishment of the National Association for Music Therapy (NAMT) played a crucial role in providing clinical training, defining standards, and certifying music therapists. The year 1956 marked the introduction of the Registered Music Therapist credential.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF MUSIC THERAPY

Music Therapy draws upon a diverse range of theoretical foundations to inform its practice. One such foundation is Behavioural theory, which posits that human behaviour can be comprehended through the analysis of their actions. This theory underscores the understanding of individuals in terms of their behaviours.

Another influential framework is the Psychoanalytic theory, which asserts that unconscious thoughts and emotions exert a significant influence on behaviour. Within Music Therapy, experiences and techniques are employed to illustrate the benefits of this theory, showcasing how deeply rooted emotions can be addressed through musical interventions.

Communicative musicality theory emphasizes that music serves as a powerful form of communication, asserting that musical interactions lie at the core of human relationships. This theory has gained traction within Music Therapy research, providing a valuable framework for practitioners to build upon.

Family-centred theory, on the other hand, places the family as the primary context for personal growth and development. Music Therapy researchers have effectively applied this theory to inform the development of approaches centred around the family unit. The theory of Music, mood, and movement asserts that music has the capacity to induce psychological responses, ultimately leading to improved health outcomes. This theory is actively integrated into Music Therapy practices to harness its potential for enhancing overall well-being.

The Selective mutism theory proposes that this complex anxiety disorder significantly impacts a child's ability to speak in specific situations. Within Music Therapy, a theoretical framework has been established based on this theory to guide the treatment of selective mutism in young children, offering a specialized approach to address this unique challenge.

MUSIC THERAPY TECHNIQUES AND INTERVENTIONS

In Music Therapy, practitioners employ a diverse array of methods and approaches tailored to address the unique requirements of their clients. One such approach is song writing, a process that involves the creation and performance of original songs. This method serves as a powerful outlet for clients to articulate their emotions and thoughts in a uniquely creative manner.

Through song writing, individuals find a means to express themselves beyond conventional conversation. The practice fosters the development of creativity and self-expression, providing clients with a unique channel to explore and communicate their innermost feelings.

Music listening is another valuable technique, involving purposeful engagement with music to achieve specific therapeutic objectives. This method is harnessed to induce relaxation, alleviate anxiety, and uplift moods. By selecting music tailored to individual needs, therapists guide clients towards a state of emotional equilibrium.

Integrating music and movement, therapists employ a technique aimed at leveraging rhythm and melody to facilitate physical coordination and motor skill development. Through this approach, clients experience a harmonious fusion of auditory and motor experiences, resulting in improved physical dexterity.

Now, music-assisted relaxation is another technique wherein music serves as a catalyst for relaxation and stress reduction. By carefully selecting and delivering music, therapists guide clients towards a state of heightened tranquillity, leading to reduced anxiety levels and an overall improvement in well-being.

In the collaborative setting of Music Therapy groups, multiple clients come together to participate in shared sessions. This collective approach fosters the development of social skills and enhances the ability to work effectively within a group dynamic. Through music, clients forge connections and experience the therapeutic benefits of communal interaction.

MUSIC THERAPY IN PRACTICE

Music Therapy practitioners employ a diverse array of techniques clients in reaching their therapeutic objectives. This begins with a meticulous assessment conducted by the music therapist, wherein the client's unique needs, strengths, and areas for improvement are discerned. The evaluative process lays the groundwork for crafting a bespoke treatment plan precisely tailored to the client's individual requirements.

Subsequent to the assessment, the music therapist collaborates closely with the client to establish specific, measurable goals. These objectives are intricately aligned with the client's distinct needs and strengths, forming a roadmap towards the realization of their desired

outcomes. Through this collaborative process, a structured framework is established to guide the therapeutic journey.

Within the scope of Music Therapy, an extensive repertoire of interventions is employed to propel clients towards their therapeutic goals. These encompass an array of techniques, including song writing, music improvisation, music listening, music and movement, music-assisted relaxation, Music Therapy groups, as well as specialized interventions designed for dementia and children. Each intervention is thoughtfully selected and applied based on the client's individual profile and desired therapeutic outcomes.

A critical facet of the therapeutic process involves ongoing evaluation by the music therapist to gauge the effectiveness of the interventions utilized. This continuous assessment serves as a metric for progress, determining whether the client has successfully met their therapeutic objectives. In cases where these goals remain unmet, the therapist may adapt the treatment plan and interventions, ensuring a more tailored and effective approach.

Furthermore, music therapists engage in fruitful collaborations with a spectrum of healthcare professionals, including physicians, psychologists, and occupational therapists. This multidisciplinary approach ensures clients receive comprehensive care, drawing on the collective expertise of various specialists to address their diverse needs.

The crucial aspect of applying Music Therapy lies in the music therapist's unwavering commitment to an ethical code that guides their professional behaviour. This code emphasizes key principles like maintaining confidentiality, obtaining informed consent, and providing care that is both skilful and morally sound.

APPLICATIONS OF MUSIC THERAPY BASED ON AGE AND CONDITION

Music Therapy is a clinical use of music to accomplish individualized goals such as reducing stress, improving mood and self-expression. It is an evidence-based therapy that can benefit people of all ages and from all walks of life. Here are some applications of Music Therapy for different categories:

APPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN:

Music Therapy can aid in fostering communication abilities and social skills in children suffering with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and improve attention and behaviour in those with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Moreover, it can be particularly impactful in easing anxiety and discomfort for children undergoing medical and dental procedures.

APPLICATIONS FOR ADULTS:

Music Therapy is an invaluable therapeutic method that can alleviate anxiety and depression in adults who are facing mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Furthermore, it can be utilized to assist adults contending with substance use disorders, including opioid addiction.

Additionally, Music Therapy can help adults with cancer by significantly reducing depression and anxiety disorders among breast cancer, lung cancer, prostate cancer, and colorectal cancer patients.

FOR SPECIFIC POPULATIONS:

Music Therapy is a beneficial therapy that can help individuals with dementia and Parkinson's disease. For people with Dementia, it helps improve cognitive function and for people with Alzheimer's disease, it reduces agitation, anxiety, and depression. The therapy can help improve motor function in individuals with Parkinson's disease and reduce depression. It can provide a sense of rhythm and timing to individuals with Parkinson's disease, which can help improve their overall movement and coordination.

REAL-LIFE APPLICATIONS OF MUSIC THERAPY

Following examples illustrate how Music Therapy has been used by in real-life to achieve positive outcomes:

The American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) shares personal stories about the transformative power of Music Therapy, including poignant, insightful, or humorous stories that show the power and effect of Music Therapy.

The AMTA underscores endorsements of Music Therapy from artists like Renee Fleming, who acknowledges the profound impact of music, including its therapeutic benefits for individuals dealing with conditions like autism, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, and others.

PositivePsychology.com shares 15 Music Therapy activities and tools for kids and adults, including listening, communicating, and understanding.

Music Therapy is a widely employed technique in hospitals, educational settings, and various clinical environments to provide comfort and relaxation for clients. Psychologists hold the view that Music Therapy enhances overall quality of life.

The National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) describes the use of Music Therapy in consultation-liaison psychiatry conditions such as schizophrenia.

Similarly, Humana highlights the benefits of Music Therapy, including improving overall physical rehabilitation, reducing anxiety and depression, and improving communication and social skills.

And The Cleveland Clinic also describes the types and benefits of Music Therapy, including reducing stress, improving mood, and self-expression. Music Therapy can be used to help people of all backgrounds, ages, and cultures, including military service members and veterans, individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and people with Parkinson's disease and dementia, as we saw earlier.

MUSIC THERAPY AND SELF-CARE

Music Therapy is a form of therapy that uses music to achieve individualized goals such as reducing stress, improving mood, and self-expression. It can be a potent tool for self-care, helping individuals to manage their emotions and improve their overall well-being. Music Therapy can be used in various ways for self-care, including writing or drawing to music, playing an instrument, listening to music, singing, and attending Music Therapy sessions.

Writing or drawing to music can be a form of self-expression and can help individuals to process their emotions. It can be a therapeutic way to release emotions and can be used as a form of self-care. Playing an instrument can be a form of self-care and can help individuals to relax and reduce stress. It can also be a way to express emotions and can be used as a form of self-expression.

Listening to music can be a form of self-care and can help individuals to relax and reduce stress. It can also be a way to improve mood and promote positive emotions. Singing can be a form of self-care and can help individuals to express their emotions. It can also be a way to improve mood and promote positive emotions.

Engaging in Music Therapy sessions can serve as a self-care practice, aiding individuals in emotional regulation and enhancing their overall wellness. These sessions can be customized to address the specific requirements of each individual, aiming to accomplish various therapeutic objectives.

Music Therapy can help individuals to improve their mental and physical health, reduce anxiety and depression, and improve communication and social skills. It can also be used to support psychological health and well-being during the first wave of the corona virus pandemic.

TECHNOLOGY IN MUSIC THERAPY

Music technology has been used in Music Therapy to enhance the therapeutic experience. Music therapists and music technologists create prototype software and systems based on the specific needs of clients and researchers. Applications are then developed to meet the needs of clients and researchers. Music technology can be used to improve communication and social skills in individuals with autism.

Music Therapy has been adapted to use technology to continue providing services to clients. This trend gained momentum amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Many music therapists have used smart devices (iPad) and apps, recording technologies, electrical instruments as well as streaming services, to provide services to clients across the lifespan in medical and educational programs.

Some tools in Music Therapy help co-create mental health. In music production, computer-generated music-making, randomizers, generative or adaptive music generators, and automated audio mastering have been used. Technology has not merely been an “instrumental” tool or a medium for expressing musical ideas; rather, it has been considered as an “organic” musical partner that contributes to the therapeutic experience.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF MUSIC THERAPY

The field of Music Therapy is constantly evolving, and there are several trends to expect in the coming years. One of the most significant trends is the increased popularity and demand for Music Therapy.

The popularity of Music Therapy as an effective treatment for various psychological conditions has been on the rise, indicating a growing demand for therapists in this field. Over 5,000 board-certified music therapists were registered in the U.S. in 2020, which is a testament to the growing popularity of Music Therapy as a form of treatment.

Another trend to expect in Music Therapy is the integration of technology. Technology has had a notable impact on the evolution of Music Therapy, and this influence is anticipated to persist in the coming years.

Music therapists are increasingly using technology to enhance the therapeutic experience and improve outcomes. Music technology instruments have been employed in collaborative efforts for mental well-being, and they have also been harnessed to enhance communication and social aptitude in individuals with autism. Music Therapy sessions have been adapted to use technology to continue providing services to clients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Diversity and inclusion are also expected to be a significant trend in Music Therapy. The field of Music Therapy is increasingly prioritizing diversity and inclusivity. Practitioners are urged to take into account their clients' cultural backgrounds and life experiences, tailoring interventions to be culturally sensitive. Additionally, there is a rising focus on promoting social justice and fairness within the realm of Music Therapy.

CONCLUSION

Music Therapy is a recognized healthcare discipline designed to assist individuals facing challenges in social, physical, mental, and emotional domains. Employing music as a central tool, interventions have demonstrated tangible enhancements in the mental well-being of individuals diagnosed with mental disorders. This adaptable therapy finds application in

diverse environments such as hospitals, schools, nursing homes, addiction treatment centres, and mental health clinics.

Music therapists are increasingly using technology to enhance the therapeutic experience and improve outcomes, as the future of the therapy is expected to be shaped by technology integration and research. Thus, the field is witnessing positive changes that are expected to extend the therapy's use for bettering health.

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