



AMTA2020

46th National Conference and PDS
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Connection: Evolving, Reflecting, Responding

ABSTRACTS



Australian
Music
Therapy
Association

PDS Program

Vocal sustainability in change of climate

Associate Professor Debra Phyland

These current COVID times have had a large impact on our vocal load and the way we use our voices, whether due to use of masks or online communication modes. This session will focus on specific strategies and exercises to increase vocal fitness and improve vocal delivery to optimise clinical and creative outcomes and communication success.

Unlocking melody on the guitar

Oliver O'Reilly

For many of us growing up playing piano or melodic instruments like the violin or flute (or the tuba come to think of it), guitar was a difficult though necessary musical challenge during the early stages of our training. With so much to learn and so little time we tend to pick up a handful of chords and a couple of strumming patterns so we can get stuck into placement. However it can be challenging to find the time and headspace to expand beyond this as we settle into our music therapist's careers. In this workshop participants learn how to navigate the notes on the fretboard, then put this to use and explore melodic ways to enhance their guitar work by adding a little flare to an ostinato pattern, adding some light and shade to the harmonic accompaniment, adding the melody to accompaniment and for those who are a little more game, exploring the joys of melodic improvisation.

Musical insights: Identifying internal barriers to success and flourishing

Katrina Skewes McFerran

In this workshop, Kat will share some of her more recent online work with successful people who are nonetheless struggling to navigate these uncertain times. The focus will be on using music and imagery to work with unconscious material, processed privately through drawing and narrative. The workshop will be gentle and supportive, but with potential for personal insights and growth. A classic opportunity to re-engage internally or share aesthetic pleasure through music journeys.

Let's get Technical: Technology and Music Therapy

Rachael Mackay

A practical, interactive and accessible workshop on the implementation of technology for assessment, evaluation and practice as we continue to hurdle the modern age of gadgets and gizmos. This workshop aims to provide an overview of technologies/resources current being used in music therapy practice (telehealth and face to face) and tips and tricks for effective and goal specific implementation in sessions to support client goals and objectives.

How to stay pain free in music therapy

Yves Silveira

Have you experienced pain whilst working as a Music Therapist? Wouldn't it be great to develop a skillset to tap into during these moments? If so, we have just the workshop for you! By delving deep into the common causes of pain and dysfunction, this practical workshop will equip music therapists with some tangible techniques to help alleviate pain or niggles whilst working.

“Fostering Connection in The Therapeutic Relationship” - Counselling Skills

Libby Sherring

Libbys approach to counselling is pluralistic and draws on a range of modalities including: PEEFT, Existential, Transpersonal, C.B.T, Narrative and Expressive Arts therapies.

About the online workshop:

Libby's style of presentation is focused on providing a supportive environment grounded in theory and current principles of best practice. With opportunity to reflect, share, discuss and ask pertinent questions, the session offered will include exploration of the relevance and translation of skills presented into music therapy settings. On completion of this workshop you can expect to come away with greater personal awareness and sound practical tips to further equip you in applying fundamental principles of counselling in your work as music therapists.

Conference Program

Keynote: Building Connections: Radical Imaginations in Music Therapy

Dr Marisol Norris

Radical imagining asserts the ability to conceive socio-political possibilities not as they are but as they could be. This keynote will explore radical imagining within music therapy contexts as a political, sensorial, and strategic act towards social justice aims. While music therapists are part of a vibrant profession that explores the broad and dynamic impact of musical relationship on health and well-being, like many helping professionals, we collectively diminish the effects of racial justice and equity on practice and exist on a continuum of help and harm that often wages against marginalized communities. Grappling with these realities, the speaker will recenter the freedom dreaming efforts of marginalized people and the calls to critically examine how music therapy practices may produce, perpetuate, reduce, and eliminate cultural harm. The speaker will discuss the radical repositioning and transformation of music therapy and explore opportunities for building connections that uphold justice and equity in our work.

Paper: Telehealth in the time of Covid 19- reflections on providing group music therapy online to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Helen Cameron, RMT; Jolin (Tang Fong) Lee, RMT

Since the beginning of the Covid19 pandemic in Melbourne, Australia in March 2020, the private music therapy practice, JAM, adopted telehealth as the principle mode of delivery for group sessions. Telehealth represented a steep learning curve for the participants, families, service providers and the therapists. However a commitment to continue to connect with our participants through music underpinned the process to make a success of this transition in delivery of healthcare.

This paper will explore how we implemented telehealth and the measures we took to make it as successful as possible. We will discuss advantages and disadvantages of providing telehealth for our JAM groups, based on a survey of participants. Reflections on how our JAM group members, their carers and families found the online version of JAM and how we as RMTs experienced this long period of providing telehealth during the long lockdown in Melbourne, will be provided.

References: Baker, F., & Krout, R. (2009). Songwriting via skype: An online music therapy intervention to enhance social skills in an adolescent diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome. *British Journal of Music Therapy*, 23(2), 3-14.

Buono, S. & Citta, S. (2007) 'Tele-assistance in intellectual disability'. *Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare* 13: 241-24

Fuller, A.M., & McLeod, R.G. (2019). The Connected Music Therapy Teleintervention Approach (CoMTTA) and its application to family-centred programs for young children with hearing loss. *Australian Journal of Music Therapy*. Advance online publication. Retrieved from <https://www.austmta.org.au/journal/article/connected-music-therapy-teleintervention-approach-comtta-and-its-application-family>

Willis, J. (2018). VR therapy research transforming perspectives - and improving lives. Retrieved from <https://news.aarnet.edu.au/vr-therapyresearch-transforming-perspectivesand-improving-lives/>

Perspectives: Responding to families' needs: reflections on the factors that allow families to engage in Sing & Grow's innovative alternate service delivery options

Jessica Higgins-Anderson & Lorna Berry

Sing&Grow will present the perspective that the COVID-19 lockdown allowed us to adapt our model, allowing for a more universal access of music therapy services for Australian families.

A manager from a partner Host Organisation will discuss how targeted online music therapy services further cemented existing barriers for many families during the COVID-19 lockdown, and the many challenges families faced when engaging online.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Sing&Grow suspended all in-person services. The national team developed therapeutically-informed content in the areas of telehealth, pre-recorded material, and written material. Weekly content for delivery included:

- Live Zoom Group and Individual Family sessions
- Pre-recorded sessions
- Pre-recorded Craft & Sing videos
- Pre-recorded videos by Sing&Grow RMTs of songs from *Let's Sing&Grow* CD
- YouTube playlists for children and parents/carers
- Relaxation versions of familiar songs
- Other related links to crafts and activities
- Facebook 'Live' broadcast (available to public audience)

Anecdotal evidence suggests that for many families, telehealth and other online services afforded them greater ability to engage and connect with both the music therapist, the support organisation and other families. However, other partners and families described the challenges of engaging through these platforms and shared concerns that providing online-only services further cemented existing barriers for families to engage in music therapy.

Plan

We will briefly describe how Sing&Grow adapted our services during the COVID-19 lockdown. The music therapist and a partner from a Host Organisation will then each present a case study of a family that Sing&Grow worked with during the lockdown period, describing the differences in experience and some of the challenges and benefits of this new way of working. The two speakers will then dialogue and debate:

- Systemic constraints that influence families' ability to engage in online services
- The widening gap for families to access support when provided online
- The resources and strengths that facilitated increased engagement for some families
- How music therapists can impact upon these systemic factors
- Strategies that can be used to overcome barriers for engagement online
- The role of the music therapist when building a family's capacity to be their own therapist

This debate will encourage the music therapy community to think about the benefits and risks of providing alternate service delivery options. We will pose questions relating to the boundaries between music therapy and music performance within pre-recorded online sessions, and discuss the ethical and practical implications of delivering online therapeutic services.

Paper: Music Therapy and NDIS planning in a sub-acute hospital setting: A case study about the role of the music therapist in supporting an adult patient's transition from hospital to community following neuro-rehabilitation.

Carena Khoo

Following the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in recent years, Australians who have acquired permanent disabilities from neurological conditions have been able to access funding for music therapy services in the community under the support cluster 'Capacity Building for Improved Daily Living'. However, Registered Music Therapists (RMT) may have limited knowledge about the process a music therapist working in a sub-acute hospital undertakes to gain approval for music therapy services in their patient's NDIS plan. Furthermore, the inclusion of music therapy in a patient's NDIS plan is not always guaranteed which may disadvantage individuals who could otherwise benefit. This case study outlines the key steps implemented by a music therapist to support an adult patient's transition from hospital to the community following neuro-rehabilitation. It highlights the evolving nature of music therapy and NDIS planning required to successfully gain funding. The key milestones in the funding approval process included (a) a music therapy referral and treatment plan (b) interdisciplinary collaboration (c) multidisciplinary team report writing and meetings (d) communications with NDIS support coordinator and (e) post admission input - handover to community music therapist. This retrospective clinical case report will reflect on the implications music therapy input had on the outcomes for this patient, and serve as a model for other clinicians to consider, particularly those working in similar settings. Ultimately, by forging closer connections with the NDIS, the music therapy profession can look towards a future of better outcomes for our clients.

Panel: Moving forward as a profession: Understanding the Music Therapist's experience of racialised unconscious bias

Tanya Marie Silveira (Moderator), Marisol Norris, Delphine Geia, Asami Koike & Mai Abe

The current climate of the world has really pushed us as individuals to think deeply about the importance of advocacy, as a result of adversity. It seems to be a common conception that conversations surrounding racialised unconscious bias lead to feelings of discomfort and unease for those who have not experienced such adversity. The purpose of this panel discussion is to encourage dialogue about the impact of racialised unconscious bias in Music Therapy by the drawing upon the unique lived experience of the panel members. We encourage delegates to think deeply about their role in continuing these conversations to push for change and thus work together to move forward as a profession.

Paper: Collaboratively designing autism-friendly music making workshops to support social connection

Dr Grace Thompson

Reducing isolation and increasing social networks appear to be protective factors that support mental health and wellbeing for all young people, including those with a lived experience of disability. However, social activities in the community that are accessible to a diverse range of people are challenging to find. While music participation can be tailored to accommodate a range of abilities, autistic people report having limited opportunities to join inclusive community music groups. This project aimed to better understand the type of social opportunities autistic people want in the community. Using a co-design, participatory approach involving autism advocates and autistic young people, an online survey and follow up interviews sought to amplify consumer perspectives. Questions focused on how autistic young adults use music in their everyday life, what might motivate them to join a music making workshop, and what they believe would improve access and engagement. The knowledge gained from this first phase will contribute to a larger project which seeks to determine whether inclusive community-based music making workshops can strengthen the social networks of autistic young adults and thus contribute to increased wellbeing and quality of life. This paper will report on the survey findings and the qualitative interview themes, as well as reflect on the process of collaborating with autistic people in the design of the research.

Paper: Carers Count

Jessica Archbold & Tamina Levy

Carers Count is a newly formed group on an inpatient stroke rehabilitation ward. It is a part of a doctoral study that is researching stroke survivors adherence to exercise. The aim of Carers Count is to involve carers in patients exercise programs to one, increase patient engagement during their exercise programs, and two increase carers confidence in facilitating care supports both in and post hospital discharge.

In Carers Count patients were asked to attend a 45 minuet group program three times a week with their primary carers (eg spouse, family member, friend). This program is run by both Music Therapy and Physiotherapy. Music Therapy was used to facilitate patient's physical goals (through methods such as rhythm auditory stimulation) and foster connectedness between the carer-patient dyad and within the larger group. Physiotherapy provided formal education for carer's and managed patients physical rehabilitation needs.

Results: Both patients and caregivers were given a survey during their hospital stay and undertook a follow up interview post discharge. Patients and carers both reported the Carers Count group helped to motivate patients with their exercise and supported their physical rehabilitation. In addition, carers reported feeling increased emotional support from being able to connect with other carers and reported having increased confidence in providing care to patients after discharge.

Conclusion: As stroke rehabilitation patients are often quite reliant on their care givers both during their hospital stay and post discharge increased care support has the potential to have a big impact on patient's rehabilitation. This is particularly importance since care givers can also be dealing with grief and loss of their loved ones capacity. The Carers Count program could be a beneficial way of both improving patients physical rehabilitation and supporting carers emotionally through facilitating supportive connection with other carers.

Paper: Connecting parents and their children through online music groups: Affordances and constraints in the face of crisis

Dr Vicky Abad, Margaret Barrett & Helen Shoemark

All parents have the potential to engage and connect with their children through music, and have traditionally done so in their homes as a part of their everyday parenting. This century has witnessed changes in the ways parents use music as access to digital music and formal music programs outside of the home have widened options. While little is known of the influence of such experiences on the presence of music in the home, there has been concern that programs and apps may potentially side-step the less understood place of music and its role of connection within the parent-child relationship, and the parent in the music-child relationship.

In March 2020, the Australian Government placed drastic social distancing laws in place to help flatten the curve of the quickly spreading Covid-19 virus. This resulted in some families participating in an evolving music program, as it transitioned from a venue outside of the home to a music group quite literally in the home via live online music sessions streamed via technology.

This paper investigates how this experience impacted the use of music in the home, the role of music in the parent-child relationship, and the role of the parent in the music-child relationship. It reflects on how the process of collaboration as the basis of championing and sustaining the parent and therefore parent-child musical life resulted in greater connection between parent and child, and greater access and equity to services.

This paper also reports on how a multi-faceted team of music therapists, community musicians and communications experts transitioned face to face live music groups to an online platform to ensure connection during the Covid-19 lockdown. Understanding the affordances of and relationship between music and human connection was paramount to this process. Finally, the anticipated and unanticipated outcomes for three families, who participated in semi-structured interviews, are presented in case vignettes.

These online groups provided connection by evolving, reflecting and responding to the ever changing needs of the families, the community and the pandemic.

Paper: I thought CYMHS was someone called Kim: Young peoples' lived experiences of mental health assessment and suggestions for music therapy assessment in a Child and Youth Mental Health Service

Kate Aitchison

Introduction: Music therapists are increasingly being employed in multidisciplinary mental health services. Assessment is one of the first experiences a person has in a mental health service. However, little has been published about how people experience mental health assessment and even less about how people perceive and experience music therapy assessment.

Method: Focus groups were used in this qualitative study to explore three past consumers' experiences of mental health assessment in an Australian child and youth mental health service (CYMHS). Based on their experiences, two of these young people provided recommendations for sensitive implementation of music therapy assessment in CYMHS.

Results: Thematic analysis revealed four key themes: not understanding; coming out feeling worse; getting through somehow and finally getting help. Based on these themes, participants suggested music therapy assessment should be thoroughly explained and appropriately timed, rapport should be developed before asking personal questions or using quantitative measures and assessment tasks should be based on what young people are comfortable with.

Discussion: This research fills a gap in the literature regarding young peoples' lived experiences of mental health assessment and perceptions of music therapy assessment. Young people overwhelmingly indicated a preference for individualised, conversational approaches rather than standardised measures. Assessment conversations should include provision of appropriate information to promote autonomy and prevent young people submitting unwillingly or using subversive means to get their needs met. Findings from this study indicate that experiencing positive interpersonal connections during the assessment phase of therapy may be more important than information gathering.

Masterclass: Connecting research to practice: The future of music therapy

Professor Katrina Skewes McFerran

This masterclass is designed for anyone interested in researching their practice. We will focus on how to manage the tension between what research you think is needed in your field, and what has already been done. We will discuss how to align your beliefs and values with the kind of research question you might be interested in answering. Together, we will brainstorm projects based on examples from participants to demonstrate how to step from interest to consideration to planning. The goal is to generate a clear sense of what you would investigate if you did choose to undertake a research project about your music therapy practice.

Paper: Using of music and music therapy to address anxiety for women undergoing gynaecological and fertility treatments

Alison Short & Natasha Andreadis

In numerous applications in music therapy, music can be effectively used to address stress and anxiety associated with medical treatment. However, scant evidence exists about the efficacy of music in reducing anxiety experienced by women undergoing gynaecological procedures, with no literature located looking at music and the significant anxiety experienced by women undergoing fertility treatments. This documented anxiety typically relates to the nature of procedures and examinations, concerns around invasiveness of the procedures, uncertainty around what to expect, and exposing intimate parts of the body. It is important that this anxiety is addressed, as physiological and psychological consequences induced by anxiety affect the outcomes these medical procedures via the sympathetic nervous system. Music is known to be effective in distracting from worries and concerns, allowing for relaxation and the release of mood-altering chemicals in the brain. This presentation outlines a funded collaborative research project investigating uses of music and music therapy by women attending a fertility specialist, specifically examining the effects of music listening on anxiety before and during gynaecology and fertility procedures, and a further role for facilitated music therapy sessions. Women attending office, day surgery and other hospital procedures completed validated self-report surveys before and after procedures, and listened to specific music via devices including the Music Star (Lund, Bertelsen & Bonde, 2016). Results and broader impact of this ethics-approved pilot study and the staged approach to the unfolding of further research are discussed in light of understanding the complex needs of women undergoing fertility treatments.

Biographies:

Dr Alison Short, PhD, MT-BC, FAMI, RGIMT, RMT, is an internationally accredited music therapy academic and an experienced health services researcher.

Dr Natasha Andreadis, MBBS, MMed, FRANZCOG, CREI, INHC, is a qualified and experienced gynaecologist and fertility specialist based in Sydney, Australia.

Paper: From Lullabies to Life: An Evolving Therapeutic Connection with a Preterm Infant and his Parents

Verena Clemencic Jones

Neonatal music therapy is a well-established therapeutic intervention, with professional literature demonstrating benefits for preterm infants' neurodevelopment, parent-infant bonding, and reduction of parental stress and anxiety (Bieleninik et al., 2016; Haslbeck et al., 2020). A significant objective for neonatal music therapists (MTs) is to facilitate connection between hospitalised infants and their parents using therapeutic techniques, such as singing lullabies or infant-directed vocal improvisation. In order to do so, neonatal MTs build, and maintain, evolving therapeutic relationships with parents, in which they transition from educator to support person.

Research also indicates the necessity for continuing health care-related programs with families of preterm babies after discharge for both infant and adult wellbeing. However, there is minimal information about the implementation of music therapy as a therapeutic tool for former preterm infants and their parents (Ghetti et al., 2019).

This case study demonstrates how a registered music therapist (RMT) created therapeutic connections with the family of a premature baby, which evolved within, and beyond, the hospital environment. Initially, the RMT will discuss the effects of hospital-based music therapy on 'Arjun' (pseudonym), a preterm infant born at 24 weeks gestational age, and his parents. Specific inpatient interventions, such as writing a personalised lullaby, will be highlighted. Following this, reflections on – and responses to – Covid-19's effect on music therapy service delivery will be considered in light of early intervention sessions for 'Arjun' and his family delivered via telehealth.

The presentation includes photos and videos demonstrating how music therapy interventions have empowered 'Arjun' and his parents to take an active role in promoting his neurodevelopment. Telehealth benefits and challenges will be discussed. Finally, the RMT will demonstrate music therapy can be an integral component of care for preterm infants and their families, both in a neonatal setting, and at home.

References:

Bieleninik, Ł., Ghetti, C., & Gold, C. (2016). Music therapy for preterm infants and their parents: A meta-analysis. *Pediatrics*, 138(3). <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2016-0971>

Ghetti, C., Bieleninik, Ł., Hysing, M., Kvestad, I., Assmus, J., Romeo, R., Ettenberger, M., Arnon, S., Vederhus, B. J., Söderström Gaden, T., & Gold, C. (2019). Longitudinal Study of music Therapy's Effectiveness for Premature infants and their caregivers (LongSTEP): protocol for an international randomised trial. *BMJ Open*, 9(8), e025062. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2018-025062>

Haslbeck, F.B., Jakab, A., Held, U., Bassler, D., Bucher, H.-U., & Hagmann, C. (2020). Creative music therapy to promote brain function and brain structure in preterm infants: a randomized controlled pilot study. *NeuroImage: Clinical*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nicl.2020.102171>

Perspectives: With a Little Help From My Friends: when a Social Worker joins a Music Therapist to work with young people experiencing mental health issues in an adolescent inpatient unit

Joanne McIntrye & Nina Mather

When collaboration between a Music Therapist and Social Worker occurs, what results is a combination of non-verbal and verbal techniques that promote communication, connection and a broader engagement in therapy.

At an adolescent inpatient unit in Sydney, a multi disciplinary team approach has been utilized since it's earliest beginnings in 2009. Since then, the Allied Health team has continued developing ways of working with the young people to assist them with their wellness outcomes. Collaboration between modalities in Group sessions, Family sessions and Individual Therapy sessions is part of the way in which therapy is delivered at this setting. The diversity of this approach adds to the depth and effectiveness of the therapeutic outcomes for the young person during their admission.

This Perspectives session will centre on a shared music therapy group experience between a Music Therapist and a Social Worker. The conversation will include how the two modalities work together within a session and how the two approaches when combined can assist the young person to engage in the therapeutic process. The use of music in an adolescent inpatient unit and it's broader application in day to day functioning will also be discussed within the framework of each approach. The differences in approach to individual and group work and the expected outcomes will also be examined.

Panel: Queer Theory and Coming Out Stories: Making Connections between Australia and the US

Annette Whitehead-Pleaux, Dr Michele Forinash, Kirsten Hillman & Bronte Arns

This presentation will focus on the coming out process and Queer Identity Theory. Queer people around the globe continue to face discrimination, harassment, and hostility. Education is key to combatting this. The coming out process will be explored through individual stories, music by queer artists, and through queer identity theory. We will present details on Queer Identity Theory to help participants understand the processes of coming out, understand where their clients may be in this process. Participants will gain insight into the LGBTQIA+ population of therapists, students, and clients. We also hope to make connections with folks in the LGBTQIA+ communities in Australia.

Paper: Reflecting on the role of the Music Therapist in Infant Mental Health

Louise Miles

This paper will present findings from a research study being completed in November 2019 which seeks to understand how registered music therapists in Australia are describing their work with infants, what is influencing their clinical practice and how RMT's are addressing the relational needs of infants and their caregivers in the context of their clinical work.

Music therapy is intrinsically relationship based – its outcomes are underpinned by the development of a therapeutic relationship in the context of music making (expressive) or music listening (receptive). Music therapists regularly work alongside Perinatal and Infant Mental Health (PIMH) specialists with shared responsibilities for addressing the relational needs of infants and their caregivers. Increasingly, music therapy literature makes use of the language and terminology common in PIMH Edwards (2011) suggested that further exploration of “relationship” within the context of music therapy and “how this is established, fostered and maintained” (p. 194) would contribute to broader promotion of the potential of music therapy in the field of IMH.

An exploratory study design was used to spotlight ways in which music therapists are working in the relational space with infants and their caregivers. 8 registered music therapists working with children aged 0-5 in a variety of contexts from acute care through to private community groups were interviewed for the study. Overall, participants regarded the parent-infant relationship to be a key consideration in their clinical practice. Parent-inclusive practice was also highlighted as an emerging trend and time and space for reflective practice was identified as a key challenge in the pace of the work. Study findings include how the term “attachment” and other concepts common to IMH health, are being understood by Australian RMTs within their everyday clinical practice. This presentation spotlights the music therapists’ story and will also highlight ways in which Australian music therapists are contributing to the field of IMH practice.

References:

Edwards, J. (2011). The use of music therapy to promote attachment between parents and infants. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 38, 190-195.

Paper: Adapting, creating and implementing online resources: How to support clients to connect, communicate and engage in Telehealth Music Therapy during a global pandemic

Nerida Taylor

Connection, communication, and engagement are important elements in the therapeutic space. As the world has transitioned to being more online through a global pandemic, these are the elements of a therapeutic relationship that need a little more care and attention than usual. As therapists, we can't always just pick up a guitar and sit in front of a device and expect a child with a disability to engage in the same manner that they would in the therapy room.

This presentation aims to share visual resources found to be beneficial in supporting clients to continue reaching their individual goals while sessions were required to transition online. Case examples will be shared and evaluated on the following: client's backgrounds and goals, therapeutic outcomes, communication and engagement, the resources used and how they were implemented, and the overall strengths and limitations to using visuals and online resources in Telehealth Music Therapy.

As therapists, we can be the providers of a new and creative way of connecting with our clients. Using a variety of visual resources on a telehealth platform can encourage clients to engage and connect in a different way.

Paper: Creating lasting connections: Reflections on experiences of music therapy at the end of a child's life.

Roxanne McLeod

Music therapy has a valuable role in paediatric palliative care services in enhancing well-being of children and their families, and providing opportunities for families to recall, create and retain memorable moments together. The importance of such interventions is supported by the continuing bonds theory of grief and bereavement which acknowledges the need to maintain connections with a loved one after they have died (Klass et.al, 2014).

Research is limited in relation to music therapy in palliative care, with the literature base predominantly focused on adult populations. One paediatric study conducted into bereaved parents' experiences of music therapy identified five global themes, including the importance of music therapy in altering perceptions, being a significant component of remembrance, and enhancing communication and expression (Lindenfelser et. al, 2008).

After a particularly intense period of conducting music therapy sessions during several children's end of life phase, the presenter became increasingly reflective about how interventions addressed the changing needs of the child and their family. This led to a growing curiosity about the family's experiences of music therapy during the highly emotional final weeks of their child's life. To gain some initial insight, bereaved parents of children who had previously received music therapy within a paediatric palliative care service were invited to participate in an online survey.

This presentation will incorporate the reflections of the Registered Music Therapist and insights from literature on the responsive and supportive work undertaken with families during the final weeks of their child's life. This will focus on the evolving nature of interventions that sought to connect with the child and family's needs, connect the family with past memories with their child, and create meaningful memories as goodbyes were said. Alongside this, themes identified by survey responses of six bereaved parents will be outlined and compared to themes identified in the literature.

Commonalities in experiences include the memorable nature of sessions, the value placed by parents on seeing their child happy or peaceful, and appreciation for the way sessions could be accommodating to respond to the particular needs of each day. There is further scope for more in-depth investigation of families' experiences of music therapy in the end of life period to inform future practice.

References:

Klass, D., Silverman, P. R., & Nickman, S. (Eds.). (2014). *Continuing bonds: New understandings of grief*. Taylor & Francis.

Lindenfelser, K.J., Grocke, D. & McFerran, K. (2008). Bereaved parents' experiences of music therapy with their terminally ill child. *Journal of Music Therapy*, 45, 3, 330-348.

Masterclass: Collaborative Songwriting Online

Carlin Mclellan

With many RMTs now utilising telehealth to deliver music therapy, a sound understanding of music technology is more important than ever. Telehealth challenges us to develop new and innovative ways of connecting, sharing and interacting.

This Masterclass will teach participants how to use Soundtrap to create music collaboratively online with a range of population groups.

There exists a huge range of resources, apps and programs for online music making. It can be time-consuming and overwhelming sorting through the plethora of information available to find and develop telehealth activities which are engaging, accessible and appropriate to our client's needs.

Therapeutic songwriting can address a range of goals including expressing and exploring emotions, developing self-identity, rehearsing social skills and identifying coping strategies (Baker, 2015; McFerran, 2010). In the developmental context songwriting may be used to work on skills such as turn-taking, impulse control, experiencing mastery and communicating preferences (Baker et al., 2009).

Soundtrap is a website which allows for real-time collaborative songwriting including use of loops, sound effects, audio editing and recording. Soundtrap is free and requires no equipment or software to use, it runs directly in a web-browser.

By the end of this Masterclass participants will learn how to:

- Create loop-based music collaboratively.
- Record vocals or instruments using the in built microphone on your computer.
- Basic audio editing.
- How to export and share your projects.
- Utilise collaborative songwriting in a range of clinical contexts.

The structure of the Masterclass will be:

- 30 minutes introduction and explanation of Soundtrap.
- 30 minutes break-out rooms. Create a composition using Soundtrap (in pairs).
- 30 minutes group discussion and questions.

This Masterclass is suitable for anyone who would like to use songwriting in their online (or face-to-face) sessions. No previous experience or knowledge of recording software is required to attend. By the end of this Masterclass you will have completed your own original composition in Soundtrap and learned the skills required to use Soundtrap in your own practice.

Paper: Connecting practice with standards: reflections on a survey of music therapy effectiveness in a multi-population clinic setting

Joe Thompson & Rachael Mackay

As music therapy grows in Australia, practitioners need to form new connections between the subjective meaningfulness of music therapy and new expectations for funding and accreditation. This point of connection between the experientialism of a musical relationship and the drive for functional gains was the genesis of this study, and for the reflective evolution of the broader approach of the clinic where it was conducted.

To ascertain the relevance and effectiveness of a self-developed assessment framework, goals bank and measurement tool, the researchers developed a series of surveys to track client progress towards identified goals. Registered music therapists in the clinic were asked to report successful or unsuccessful goal attainment across the different functional domains at several intervals in the year. Upon analysis, this information provides noteworthy insights into the effectiveness of music therapy for different goals, populations and timespans.

As well as contributing to the ever-growing evidence bank for the effectiveness of music therapy, these insights have continued the practice evolution of the clinic in question; refining how music therapy practitioners can connect the value of their work with the needs of clients, their families and the organisation bodies which support them.

Paper: As Batten's Disease disconnects, music therapy connects (A case study)

Dave Anthony & Matthew Breden

Background: For the past year, a 10 year old female client (Sally*) with Batten's Diseases (aka Juvenile Dementia) has received weekly songwriting music therapy sessions as part of an interdisciplinary therapy team comprising 2 RMTs, a Speech Therapist, an Occupational Therapist, a Physiotherapist and assorted other supports.

Aim is to create an audio journal of Sally's life. Additionally, the known neurological benefits of music therapy suggest that they will help embed connections to feelings, memories and experiences, speech and movement, spatial awareness and environment, family, friends and community, and to her whole self. Songwriting also offers opportunities for word association, cognitive "stressing and growth", and decision making - all of which involve creating important neurological connections. Innovation: The use of songwriting to journal a life with the intention of use in late stages of Batten's Disease is an innovative use of music therapy.

Description: With hearing the last sense retained, it is anticipated that Sally's songs will maintain connection to feelings of familiarity and comfort in the otherwise, potentially terrifying time of her decline. They are also anticipated to provide comforting memories to her family and friends, for when she has passed; allowing them to maintain connection to their daughter, sister and friend in ways that are anticipated to involve both emotional and physiological responses to the music. Sally's songwriting acts as an anchor point, by which we capture her connections to people, colours, smells, sounds, touch textures and tastes. The songwriting process has also invited contributions from all of her immediate family. This has allowed their experiences of this journey to be documented, and in doing so, has offered a safe structure to place each person's individual experiences in the context of the collective experience.

Outcomes: By developing Sally's emotional intelligence and her skills of creative expression in the therapy sessions, she has begun to explore some difficult feelings around loss of memory and vision during both independent and structured therapeutic songwriting. By embedding songwriting as a now consistent form of communication for Sally and her family, we are capitalising on the neurological benefits of music to support her self-regulation, self-awareness, self-expression and cognitive development, as well as her connection to herself and others.

As her decline progresses, it is expected that Sally, her family and friends will find comfort in their individual and collective connections to the songs we have written. If connection is a response to isolation, then music might offer the most comprehensive response to the isolation that comes with Juvenile Dementia.

**not her real name*

Paper: Singing With Grief: Accepting your own grief in the facilitation process of group singing

Kate Fletcher

This presentation will reflect on an RMT's personal experience of processing her own grief and managing the grief of others while facilitating a group singing program.

The group program is a choir-based program for adolescents and adults with Down syndrome. Many of the group members have been attending for up to ten years together. This year the choir transitioned online due to Covid19 restrictions and have shown resilience and flexibility to enable their connection with each other to be maintained. During this time a long-term group member went into palliative care and passed away.

Connection through music and people is a huge part of being a music therapist, especially in community groups. In a time where people are already confused and stressed out from a global pandemic, having additional emotional events can be very overwhelming for adults with disabilities who are already feeling vulnerable.

The paper includes reflections from the music therapist around accepting and managing her own grief; reflections from individual choir members; the importance of showing choir members that it is human to be sad; and the creative result of a memory making session.

Paper: The Transformation of Entrainment: Online Co-therapy During Lockdown

Annabelle Keevers & Gy Wen Ho

Working as co-therapists in a multidisciplinary team with children who have complex health issues and developmental disabilities requires a capacity to blend one's therapeutic skills with those from another discipline. Music therapists and child life therapists each use the principle of entrainment to engage and connect with children. While the responses of children are answered musically by a music therapist, a child life therapist relies more upon the use of proximity and touch.

When the co-therapy sessions were transferred to an online delivery model during the Covid-19 lockdown, communication between co-therapists became challenging and proximity and touch were no longer available to the child life therapist. A new approach was needed.

With the therapists themselves working from separate geographic locations and the families logging on from a third, connection had to be maintained not only with the child and parent but also between therapists. Daily planning and debrief sessions were held by phone and internet. These frequent discussions allowed time for reflection on the constraints of internet delivery.

It soon became apparent that the process of entrainment needed to evolve. The child life therapist needed to take cues from the songs introduced by the music therapist, matching these with movement and puppetry rather than touch. The entrainment was therefore visually developed. The music therapist learnt the need to pause and give the child life therapist the space to interact with the child and then respond musically to the child and child life therapist. For this to and fro flow between therapists to function seamlessly, increased reciprocity in the communications between the music therapist and the child life therapist during sessions became an imperative.

This pattern of reciprocity was then observed to be replicated in the communications between the therapists and the parent who was assisting the child at home and yet again in the interactions of the parent/child dyad. This created a strong sense of positive energy during sessions.

How music held the therapeutic space and entrainment was adapted to the visual medium of internet therapy will be outlined and demonstrated by short videos. The presentation will also cover techniques used to maintain the connection between the co-therapists and also the co-therapists and parent/child dyad.

Paper: An Original Musical Drama by a Community of Survivors: A Case of Disaster Trauma Alleviation through Music Intervention

Alegria Ferrer

This paper will present a community-based case study of psychosocial intervention in Tacloban City, ground zero of typhoon Yolanda, through action research and participative governance. Lunop han Dughan literally means, surge of the heart, and metaphorically means, surge of love. The study sought to combine an inquiry on musical drama as a psychosocial tool for trauma alleviation and the involvement of public administration in establishing and strengthening programs for psychosocial intervention. The researcher argues that public administration vis-à-vis participative governance can help facilitate non-material rehabilitation through policies that will include non-material service delivery during and after disaster

This paper presents a study based on the real experiences of a community of survivors in the City of Tacloban, Philippines. The tragedy of Super Typhoon Haiyan in November 08, 2013 with the local name of Yolanda claimed the lives of approximately ten thousand. The researcher immersed with a particular community and together, came to the composition and production of a musical drama entitled, “Lunop Han Dughan” or Surge of the Heart. The audience will be transformed into the actual place of disaster and will experience how a community of non-musicians are able to come up with a full musical and learned from rote. This study will look into a community-music-based case of psychosocial disaster trauma alleviation and intervention through music. More so, it will discuss the role of public administration in disaster trauma alleviation and why music can be a first aid response during disasters. The study is pioneering and is based on the proponent’s immersion with a community of survivors. Lunop Han Dughan is an original musical based on the experiences of a community of survivors during typhoon Haiyan, written in their own Waray language, composed, directed, sung and acted upon by the survivors themselves. The proponent believes that trauma mitigation should be a balance between the material and non-material aspects of intervention, that there should be an emotional purging to decrease the impact of the trauma for the survivor to be able to function normally and be able to go back and participate in community functions. Along with the performers and cast, the audience who are survivors themselves was able to express their emotions, pain, sorrow, and came out purged from the trauma and begun a process of overdue healing while transforming the victims to survivors. This study will be significant for the training of service deliverers in all areas of public administration, policy makers in the delegation of authority and resources, stakeholder’s attribution of roles and responsibilities that includes a collective participation of the academe, business and medical groups, church organizations, non-government organizations and the target clientele, the victims themselves. It is also significant for reassessment of programs related to disaster trauma preparedness.

Keywords survivors, Typhoon Haiyan, musical drama, trauma alleviation, purging

Paper: PROJECT-CONNECT: Keeping New Grad RMTs Connected Through a Global Pandemic

Lauren Khalil-Salib & Emilia Spragg

As a new graduate in any profession, navigating your way into the workforce can be tough. This is even more apparent as a new graduate RMT, in a profession which can already be quite isolated. The first year in the workforce is crucial for professional development, networking opportunities, and clinician identity, and many of us are one of very few in our cities. When the COVID-19 global pandemic hit, and working from home became the new reality, it became evident that the new graduate RMTs were in search of an innovative solution to this desperate need for connection.

We all know about the affordances that engaging in music can offer our clients, but we found that many of our colleagues were lacking the motivation and support to evaluate their own wellbeing through music. While, as music therapists, we use music to support physical and psychological needs to enhance the wellbeing of our clients, PROJECT-CONNECT provides an opportunity for music therapists to engage in creative musicking (Small, 1998) and modified music therapy interventions in ways that support their own wellbeing.

PROJECT-CONNECT is an online group where three different interventions run in alternating weeks, with the aim to provide connection, professional development, peer supervision, and self care. Participants are new graduate RMTs from around Australia, participating on a voluntary basis, in either one, two or all three of the groups. The three interventions that participants engage in are peer supervision, improvisation (virtual) and songwriting. Using these adapted and personalised interventions to suit the needs of the participants and the goals of the project, the groups are able to work through clinical cases and workplace difficulties, support professional and personal journeys, engage in creative musicking (Small, 1998), and engage in self-care in creative and critical ways. The project is committed to creating authentic experiences with outcomes similar to face-to-face programs. In a collaborative way, the group reflects on, evolves with, and responds to the pressing need for connection.

This presentation will explore the interventions used, how these were adapted to suit the needs of the participants and the constraints of an online platform, and the outcomes of both individuals and the group.

Keywords: Peer supervision, professional development, improvisation, songwriting, self-care, online, connection

Paper: Singing and Seeking Synchrony Through Screens: Adapting methods to support meaningful rapport development within a short-term telehealth music therapy program

Brede Davis

For many RMTs and music therapy students, responding to the sudden need for telehealth services in 2020 involved rapidly shifting established methods of practice to a setting which had been scarcely addressed in music therapy literature. A crucial consideration here is how to develop or maintain therapeutic rapport in this context. Also relevant is considering how meaningful interpersonal connection can be experienced by participants in telehealth music therapy, and how to facilitate this without shared physical presence.

This presentation explores therapeutic rapport in terms of what it is, why it matters, what makes it meaningful, and how that translates to an online setting. Further reflections consider the experiences within music therapy methods that typically support rapport development. Examples from practice provide suggestions for translating these essential experiences to a telehealth setting by adapting methods. Final reflections consider implications for future practice, including how rapport established or developed through telehealth music therapy may lead to enhanced interpersonal connection and therapeutic potential in-person.

Theoretical considerations within this presentation are explored in relation to general telehealth music therapy. Practical examples demonstrate how these considerations applied to six telehealth sessions and one in-person closure session between a final year music therapy student and an individual living in residential aged care during Melbourne's initial COVID-19 lockdown period.

Masterclass: Connecting in and reaching out: evolving with nurture, knowledge and support through COVID-19

Minky van der Walt

Stress interferes with our ability to remain connected to ourselves and each other. With the strain of COVID-19 pandemic, our individual and collective exposure to threat has been enormous. Yet, remaining present and connected to ourselves in the face of multiple stressors is essential for us personally and at work. We can't be there for others if we are disconnected from ourselves.

Our ability to respond to stressful situations with care, clarity, competence and empathy requires a host of supports at a personal, organisational and societal level. Whilst we often can't control the constraints of the systems in which we work, we can develop a practice of compassion, connection and presence to support ourselves.

This masterclass will invite participants to connect with themselves and their peers, to reflect and explore their needs with a sense of nurture and open inquiry.

Themes will explore

- The importance of presence and connection with ourselves and others
- Creating space for inquiry
- Opening yourself up to other perspectives
- Responding with compassion for yourself and others
- Finding a healthy balance for your needs
- Creating a daily practice of connecting with yourself

This masterclass will include a mix of theoretical and experiential learning through:

- discussion in groups and in pairs
- individual reflection
- nourishing music and imagery experience/s

Some of the questions we will consider include:

- What communities of support do you have access to?
- Are there other ways you would like to reach out and build connection with others?
- What is a daily practice that would support you to stay connected with yourself?

Paper: Who Are You...Who Who, Who Who: Exploring Identity Through Music Therapy with Young People at The Forensic Hospital, Sydney

Joanne McIntyre & McAuliffe & Peter Tsagaroulis

Many young people experiencing mental health issues struggle with and lose sight of their identity. For these young people, listening to music, playing a musical instrument and/or writing songs often becomes a way of exploring who they are and what they believe about themselves.

In May 2020 funding was granted to conduct a 10 week Music Therapy Programme with the Adolescent Unit patients at The Forensic Hospital in Sydney, Australia. The 5 patients in this high secure facility at the time of the project had experienced complex mental health and trauma issues as well as contact with the Juvenile Justice System. Isolation from their family, friends and everyday teenage life had also created its challenges. As a result, their sense of self, their self-esteem and their identity had become negatively affected.

From the outset, the aim of the 10-week programme was to challenge the negative self-beliefs and to provide opportunities for positive experiences and thoughts about self to occur. To achieve this, instruments such as an acoustic guitar, a cello, a violin, an electric guitar, a piano, a button accordion, ukuleles, hand chimes and African Drums were utilised. The participants had no experience of playing a musical instrument, so being able to play something was an immediate positive they had not experienced before. Playing together as a group also gave them a new experience of themselves as well as enjoyment and connection with each other. Song writing and RAP also assisted with tracking the way the young people were thinking about themselves and their circumstances.

This paper will discuss the way in which the young people connected and responded to making music, improvising and song writing as a way of reflecting on their sense of self and identity. It will also examine how their self-talk began to evolve into more positive thoughts about who they are and where they found themselves.

Paper: Recovering connections: The power of persistence and collaboration during telehealth music therapy

Lisa Dowling

The COVID-19 pandemic has required music therapists to augment the potentials of the music therapy profession: to evolve our practices and tool kits, to reflect upon our beliefs and values, and to respond to the needs of families and individuals during a global crisis. Accordingly, several questions arise as clinicians and students embark on a telehealth journey with families – one where the concept of ‘connection’ is multifaceted and fluid.

- 1) How can I effectively utilise technology to best serve families with diverse needs?
- 2) How can I adjust my practice to build rapport?
- 3) How can I adjust my practice to build and maintain therapeutic presence amidst internet outages and sound/visual delays?
- 4) What does therapeutic presence even look like in telehealth music therapy?
- 5) What methods can I use to increase engagement and mitigate the effects of internet fatigue?
- 6) How do I adapt as a student with limited instruments and resources, and where do I access support?

These questions and more will be answered during this presentation. Drawing from the student music therapist’s recent clinical work with an Australian family and recent psychology, social work and music therapy research (Galae, 2020; Guan, 2019; Glover, 2020; Khalaf, 2020), this case study exposes the necessity and ethical value of re-examining the concepts of therapeutic presence, reflexivity and flexibility at each stage of a telehealth music therapy program to consider how a robust working alliance can support a family with complex needs. Further, it delineates how, when meaningfully reconsidered and applied, these concepts can positively contribute to client safety, the therapeutic relationship, achievement of client goals, and professional growth, despite the challenges of a one-dimensional and unpredictable therapeutic experience. The presentation also highlights what these concepts may look like to support families during telehealth music therapy and enunciates which therapeutic methods, theoretical orientations/approaches and tools were successful in addressing and evaluating a range of individual and family psychosocial goals. This discussion of successful outcomes of the music therapy student’s clinical encounter offers encouragement to clinicians at any stage of their career to develop a telehealth practice. It also invites further research into the efficacy of telehealth music therapy to support families before, during and after times of crisis.

Paper: An exploration into the use of music therapy to improve holistic health, wellbeing and community of support for persons living with Diabetes

Phoebe Thompson-Star

Management of diabetes mellitus (diabetes) is an extraordinarily complex, relentless and lifelong commitment. With 218 Australians diagnosed every day, it carries a heavy economic burden and is believed to be one of the world's fastest growing chronic conditions.

Receiving a diagnosis at any stage of life requires an immediate and very regimented lifestyle change, which can often lead to feelings of isolation, confusion, and denial. It is a time when making connections to build a strong network of support is more important than ever, as failure to accept and adapt can be detrimental to one's physical and mental health. There has been very limited exploration into the use of complementary therapies to address these issues, thus the need for investigation into the potential use of music therapy arose.

With the aim of exploring how music therapy can be used to improve holistic health and wellbeing outcomes and build a community of support for persons living with diabetes, a literature review was conducted. Areas such as stress reduction and its effect on glycaemic control, as well as behavioural issues and acceptance strategies were explored further in detail. This knowledge, combined with the authors lived experience as a person with type 1 diabetes, was then collated to discuss how music therapy interventions could be implemented. Particular attention was given to group interventions to help in building a community of support, allowing those living with diabetes to work together towards improving their health and wellbeing.

Whilst the literature revealed minimal existing research specific to music therapy and diabetes management, it did highlight the benefits of music on stress reduction and the effects this has on improved glycaemic control. Also brought to attention was the prevalence of negative self-care behaviours amongst diabetics and how lack of diagnosis acceptance and sufficient support can lead to such behaviours. The client-centred and strengths-based approach of music therapy has the capacity to provide an environment suitable to addressing these issues. Furthermore, support and acceptance can be gained through implementing group music therapy interventions, aimed at building connections and a sense of community to work together towards common goals in diabetes care.

Using music therapy to address the needs of people living with diabetes offers further opportunities to extend care and research in this important and growing area.

Panel: Utilisation of the Connected Music Therapy Teleintervention Approach (CoMTTA) with diverse populations during Covid19

Allison Fuller (Moderator), Roxanne McLeod, Rachel Mackay & Sydney-Rella Pihema

Interpersonal connection during this time of global pandemic has been one of the most reported concerns, with potential ongoing consequences for individuals, families and communities across a range of areas, including mental health (Tan et al., 2020). The Connected Music Therapy Teleintervention Approach (CoMTTA), was established and utilised prior to the pandemic to improve accessibility to music therapy services for geographically isolated families, providing opportunities for connection with other families and targeted therapeutic interventions. (Fuller & McLeod, 2019). This approach brings together the four focus areas of: 1) Delivery models, 2) Session plan, 3) Technology practice features, and 4) Additional considerations in order to address the unique challenges of delivering music therapy via online platforms. While CoMTTA was originally applied to group music therapy sessions with young children with hearing loss, due to the pandemic, it has now been applied across a range of individual and group populations.

This presenting panel is made up of four RMTs from different backgrounds, with a wide range of career-experience across music therapy practice, the training of music therapists, and within music therapy program/team management. Each panel member utilises aspects of CoMTTA within their current music therapy approach during this time of Covid19. This collaborative presentation weaves the theme of 'connection' throughout as panel members share their learnings from the application of this approach to their work across a range of population groups. These include 1) families with complex needs, 2) children within the palliative care paediatric hospital setting, 3) adults diagnosed with mental health issues, and 4) people living within aged care settings. Case vignettes, video footage, survey results and practical tips will be presented along with suggestions for the further development of this approach. Of the four focus areas of CoMTTA, technology practice features will be prioritised, as panel members seek to address these issues for the benefit of conference attendees to be able to apply to their current online music therapy services. The CoMTTA framework has formed an essential springboard for the adaption and application of teleintervention during this time of restrictions and lockdowns. This panel presentation will reflect on how RMTs have responded to a range of needs and populations in adopting this approach, and will discuss the potential evolution of practice beyond the pandemic.

Biographies:

Moderator: Allison Fuller (AI), RMT

AI has been a music therapist for 24 years, focusing on children and family-centred practice. She is currently on staff at Western Sydney University where she lectures into the Master of Creative Music Therapy and is completing her doctorate in the use of aided visual supports within music therapy practice across face-to-face and telehealth platforms. AI is also the owner and director of MusicConnect, a group music therapy program for families with complex needs.

Panellist: Roxanne McLeod (Rox), RMT

Rox specialises in early intervention and paediatric music therapy. She currently works with children and families through The Children's Hospital at Westmead and MusicConnect. Rox is involved in music therapy research, and student training and supervision through Western Sydney University.

Panellist: Rachael Mackay (Rach), RMT

Rach is a graduate of Western Sydney University, and has a specialised training background in electronics. She is passionate about the efficacy of technology and its benefits to music therapy practice. Rach works with a wide range of client population groups and is currently the Clinic Practice Manager at NORO Music Therapy.

Panellist: Sydney-Rella Pihema (Syd), RMT

Syd currently works with children and families with MusicConnect, and is establishing her own business working with adults in Mental Health at WSLARS Parramatta, as well working with children and adults with disabilities at Music Therapist Pty Ltd. She is a recent graduate of the MCMT at Western Sydney University.

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Paper: "Can you hear me?" : Navigating the 'expert model' and power dynamics created by technological facilitation in telehealth music therapy

James Wheller

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, RMTs, students, support workers, carers, families and clients had to transition to online models of service access and service delivery. For registered music therapists and music therapy students on placement, this meant rapidly acquiring, testing and implementing new skills in music technology, digital communication and distance facilitation. For carers, families and clients, this meant engaging in music therapy in new and emergent ways. Depending on our previous uses of technology in practice, as well as our capacity to access new resources, this was either a straightforward transition to guide clients through or a monumental task requiring problem-solving and creativity from both sides of the therapeutic relationship. As my own placements began to involve telehealth elements, I was struck by how technological facilitation had the potential to reinforce or subvert power dynamics within the therapeutic relationship. This seemed to be influenced by the ease with which the affordances of technology could be harnessed for therapeutic endeavour and frustrations and disruptions were assessed and overcome.

Discussions around power dynamics within the therapeutic relationship, directive interventions and the benefits of music technology are part of contemporary discourse regarding face-to-face clinical practice – however the distinction of telehealth approaches requires ongoing contextual application of these factors combined with reflexive practice. Reliance on technology has created new barriers for music therapy practice, however addressing these barriers can give insight into approaching technological facilitation which supports therapeutic connection.

This presentation aims to explore some of the issues around power, the therapeutic alliance and the therapist's position as the 'expert' from the perspective of a music therapy student involved in telehealth services during Melbourne's initial restriction period in April and May 2020.

Paper: Connecting the generations during unprecedented times. The benefits of intergenerational music therapy, for older adults aged 65 years plus

Heidi Hutchison

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in suspension of face to face services for older adults living in residential aged care facilities (RACF). As a consequence, residents in RACFs are being isolated from community contact, including immediate families. As these restrictions continue, how do we foster connectivity for our aged care community?

The historical foundations of intergenerational programs are formed on connection. Although intergenerational music therapy programs continue to rise, there is limited evidence-based programs available. As the number of older adults and children receiving care from formalised establishments grow; the role of intergenerational programs warrants exploration to identify mutual learning benefits.

This motivated the presenter to conduct a systematic review of the literature; focusing on intergenerational music therapy programs for older adults aged sixty-five years plus. The purpose was to examine whether intergenerational music therapy programs could have a significant effect upon health and wellbeing for older adults. This conceptual framework was used to inform the presenter about the practical components of this topic.

As of June 2020, there has been nine peer reviewed articles published relating to the role of intergenerational music therapy programs. With the exclusion of one study, all were conducted in the USA. By employing an intergenerational music therapy program, studies have shown that older adults are able to experience reciprocity, enjoy new learnings, and embark on improved health and wellbeing outcomes. Even when expanding the search to other allied health professions, scant literature exists. Whilst there is consistency in the applications of intergenerational music therapy programs; continued demand for evaluation of studies is needed.

As an evidence-based profession how do we move forward during these challenging times? The presenter has begun to conceptualise a new approach to addressing these issues. Telehealth has been a vital service for routine appointments over the pandemic. Could a telehealth intergenerational music therapy program be the key to supporting connectivity, whilst addressing health and well-being outcomes?

Music is the ideal intervention for fostering connection, as its appeal is universal. Music is also a collaborative process, grounded in relationships. Based on anecdotal experience, the presenter wishes to extend and develop outcomes connecting across the generations, using music therapy in a proposed telehealth study. By stimulating best practice and continual growth for our profession, there is an aim of building upon the body of evidence known; and paving the way for further research.

Paper: If my heart was wood, I'd set it on fire: Connecting to an adolescent's emotional world via songwriting collaborations

Verena Clemencic-Jones

Songwriting is a well-established music therapy intervention for adolescents and young people experiencing challenges in socio-emotional development, with professional literature indicating benefits for self-perception, self-regulation and confidence (Derrington, 2005; McFerran, 2010).

This case study will illustrate how a registered music therapist (RMT) utilised songwriting to address socio-emotional issues with 'Grace' (pseudonym), an adolescent girl living with long-term physical and psychosocial effects of brain cancer, as she transitioned from primary to high school.

The presenter will discuss how initial collaborative activities – such as songwriting games, co-writing lyrics/melodies, and learning ukulele – established a safe therapeutic environment in which 'Grace' could practise independence and build resilience. As the therapeutic connection between 'Grace' and the RMT evolved, so did the nature of the songwriting interventions, i.e. from family-based to a more community-oriented perspective.

This presentation includes short audio recordings demonstrating the benefits of extending 'Grace's' experience of collaboration as the RMT facilitated creative connections between 'Grace', herself and HRM, a young talented singer/songwriter who recorded some of 'Grace's' songs in early 2020.

Covid-19 has enabled this musical partnership to continue as HRM provides ongoing creative input into 'Grace's' vocal and songwriting development during online Zoom music therapy sessions. The benefits of collaborating with a young person, such as HRM, will be discussed in the context of music therapy service provision.

A brief lyric analysis will also demonstrate how the songwriting process enabled 'Grace' to construct stories in which she could safely express strong emotions via the creation of characters experiencing trauma and conflict in their lives. The RMT's role in facilitating this will be mentioned.

Finally, telehealth advantages and challenges will be highlighted, e.g. 'Grace' learning to sing/play both familiar and original songs independently and/or with others, and latency issues.

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Paper: "Virtual Wise Wellness": online day program for older adults who suffer from mental health problems, an integrative therapeutic approach

Vannie Ip-Winfield & Jedda Tomkins

This presentation will discuss how 'Virtual Wise Wellness (VWW)' promotes connectedness with others and within oneself for a group of community-dwelling older adults who suffer from mental health problems. This program is one of the many day programs offered to outpatients at Northpark Private Hospital (Victoria, Australia), now online due to the COVID pandemic. The presenters Jedda (OT) and Vannie (RMT) bring together techniques from mindfulness practice, diversional therapy, occupational therapy and music therapy via Zoom (online conferencing software.)

Our clients who suffer from mental health challenges are particularly vulnerable due to decreased community support this year. VWW adopts a flexible yet structured approach to promote social engagement and emotional expression through arts and music, based on individual strength, preference and needs.

In the presentation, we will discuss both challenges and positive outcomes through the client's words, their songs, letters and photos. Despite the limitations associated with Melbourne lockdown, we found our clients more ready for reflection and more connected with one another. Last but not least we found joy in interdisciplinary collaboration.

It's our contention that VWW promotes both social and spiritual connection for this group of vulnerable older adults, enabling them to manage their mental health condition independently.

Masterclass: Developing and adapting music therapy assessment tools

Dr Gustavo Gattino

Assessment practices in music therapy involve procedures to gather information, analyse data and make decisions on how to carry out the music therapy process. This masterclass will work on how to develop and adapt assessment tools in music therapy. The masterclass is organised in four sections:

1. Some necessary steps to create an assessment tool in music therapy
2. Creating an assessment tool (draft version)
3. Adapting music therapy assessment tools
4. The take-home message for delegates and final questions and reflections

All these four steps will be modelled virtually based on short time for lecturing and practical tasks. The first section will be a lecture (15 minutes) on the steps needed to create an assessment tool in music therapy: statement of purpose and intended uses, content and format specifications, length, item development, administration and adaptations. These steps are based on the Standards for Education and Psychological Testing (AERA, APA & NCME, 2014). In the second section (35 minutes), the delegates will create a draft of their own assessment tool. The teacher/facilitator will guide this process, suggesting what they need to focus and what are the requirements that they need to follow. During this section, the delegates will make questions in the chat or speaking directly to the teacher. At the end of this section, each delegate will need to write what is the “draft” title of their assessment tool. The third part of the master class (20 minutes) is on how to adapt music therapy assessment tools. The facilitator will present different assessment tools in music therapy, and he will find out together with the delegates possible ways to adapt each of these assessment tools in the clinical practice. The participants will participate especially suggesting adaptations to the presented tools, writing in the chat and also talking to all the participants. The last part of the masterclass will be a closing moment, including the take-home message for delegates and time for the final questions and reflections (20 minutes). The main take-home message is: creating and adapting assessment tools is part of the everyday practice in music therapy and is not something exclusive for the research context.

Paper: Reflections on adapting and creating in online music therapy spaces during COVID19 – perspectives from two music therapists and NDIS participants in an online music therapy group

Zara Thompson & Lauren Khalil-Salib

Background: The COVID-19 Global Pandemic has necessitated many music therapists take their practice online. Working in the context of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Australia, music therapists and other allied health professionals have had to adapt service delivery to support NDIS participants to continue to work towards their goals during a time of global crisis.

For NDIS participants, there have been both challenges and benefits in accessing Allied Health support via telehealth (1), with many reporting increased accessibility of service with the increase of telehealth options. However, for many adults with a cognitive or intellectual disability, access to regular activities that are not primarily ‘therapeutic’ (such as social or community-based activities) has been restricted.

Summary: This paper presents reflections from practice by two registered music therapists and participants of an online music therapy group that was formed in response to the lack of social opportunities for adults with cognitive or intellectual disability. The groups were initiated following conversations with NDIS participants that the music therapists were working with on an individual basis, and designed collaboratively with participants through a process of trial and error as we all became familiar with the possibilities and limitations of the online group format.

Method: The two music therapists reflect on their experiences of establishing and facilitating the groups using a retrospective, first-person reflexive method (2). Participants of the groups and their family members and carers were invited to participate in an anonymous online survey to evaluate the program and share insights into their experience of being involved in the groups.

Results: Data collection is still in progress at time of submission, results will be presented in full during this presentation. However, initial reflections centre around adapting music making to an online format, the importance of the ‘visual’, barriers and facilitators to accessing the program, and the importance of staying connected.

References

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2. Bruscia K. First-person research. In: Wheeler B, editor. Music Therapy Research, 2nd ed Barcelona: Gilsum; 2005. p. 379-91.

Panel: Connection within Acute Adolescent Mental Health

Ali Blundell (Moderator), Jenna Murphy, Emma Fitzgerald & Catherine Garner

“Connection in Acute Adolescent Mental Health” will focus on the current collaborative works occurring within the Saunders Unit, an Acute Adolescent Mental Health Unit at the Sydney Children’s Hospital, Randwick. Working collaboratively within both a group and individualised therapy setting is an important facet of the Saunders Unit Model of Care, and the depth of clinicians on this panel will deliver an exciting discussion on the importance of collaboration to build connection on a locked Mental Health Unit.

The Panel includes members of the Allied Health team, including panel members Jenna Murphy (Music Therapy Masters Student); Emma Fitzgerald (Art Therapy Masters Student); Catherine Garner (Peer Support Worker); and Moderator Ali Blundell (Senior Occupational Therapist).

The panel will reflect on the addition of both music and art therapy to the Saunders Unit group and individual therapy program and how, in addition to other allied health, peer support work and nursing interventions, this encourages connection and collaboration between the young people who spend time on the ward.

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Paper: Remaining connected: Reflections of a music therapy team during a global pandemic

Kate Fletcher, Tara Cronin & Dr Vicky Abad

Being part of a team, working together and connecting with each other in the same physical space is often taken for granted. Feelings of connectedness, validation and support are all important and vital aspects of a cohesive working environment. During a global pandemic, rapid changes can threaten to isolate individual staff. There is a need to be flexible, proactive, and creative in order to adapt and evolve to maintain staff wellbeing and feelings of connection.

Music Beat is comprised of an energetic and passionate team of music therapists, music and early learning group leaders, music teachers and support staff. The team offers individual and group music therapy, community music groups, and instrumental lessons. As Covid-19 spread and restrictions became increasingly strict in Queensland, the working environment was severely impacted. The Music Beat team had to work creatively together to adapt modes of service delivery, maintain therapeutic relationships and continue to provide excellent services. A variety of strategies, processes and policies were developed to enable staff and clients to feel connected and supported during periods of required isolated work.

This paper will review these strategies, processes and policies through the lens of the lived experience of the staff. A staff survey helped to identify what strategies and processes were most effective in ensuring connection, and what systems could have been improved. Anecdotal staff feedback indicated that they felt more connected during the pandemic, and team spirit was strengthened, though there were many overwhelming changes to working conditions. Results will be further discussed in light of the changes implemented during the lockdown.

This information can inform future team responses for Music Beat and other clinical teams who face potential challenges that threaten cohesive team work, support and connection in the post Covid-19 world and beyond.

Panel: Cancer Care in a Covid-19 Context

Penelope Sanderson (Moderator) & Kate McMahon, Lucy Forrest, Stephen Skov & Stef Zappino

Within the context of Covid-19, music therapists providing care to cancer patients in acute hospital settings face multiple challenges. Balancing safety with an increasing need for psycho-emotional support is paramount, with safety protocols and visitation rules changing weekly, if not daily.

This panel brings together music therapists and a music therapy student from the Olivia Newton John Cancer Wellness and Research Centre (ONJ Centre) and the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (Peter Mac) to shed light on the challenges, innovations and future implications of providing support for cancer patients within a Covid-19 context.

Moderated by Penelope Sanderson, the Divisional Manager of Cancer Services at ONJC, Penelope brings a broad perspective to the work provided by music therapists, and has been a central point for collaboration between these two cancer centres. The panelists represent a broad array of experiences including registered music therapists and a music therapy student from across the two settings. Both centres have had unique approaches to providing patient support, and this panel provides an opportunity for delegates to gain insight into the implementation of rapid responses and creative innovation within highly regulated medical environments

Biographies:

Penelope Sanderson provides leadership and management for several programs within the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness & Research Centre including Cancer Clinical Trials Centre, Radiation Oncology, Clinical Genetics and the Wellness and Supportive Care Program which has a focus on growing and integrating supportive care for patients and their families.

Dr Lucy Forrest, RMT is Senior Music Therapist at the ONJ Cancer Wellness & Research Centre, Austin Health; and the Palliative Care Service, Alfred Health. Her clinical and research interests include adult and paediatric cancer & palliative care, cultural issues in practice, neuro-degenerative illness and clinical supervision.

Kate McMahon is an RMT (Olivia Newton John Cancer Centre) and PhD candidate (University of Melbourne) with experience working in adult mental health, aged psychiatry and cancer care. Kate is currently exploring the experiences of people with dementia and their families as part of HOMESIDE, a multinational research trial

Stephan Skov is a Senior Music Therapist at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre.

Stef Zappino currently works at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre as part of the outpatient paediatric radio therapy service and Adolescent and Young Adult service. In addition to this Stef piloted a family program at Peter Mac, supporting children of parents with cancer, which has received ongoing funding for 2021.

James Wheller is a Master of Music Therapy Student in the graduating 2020 cohort at the University of Melbourne. He was the Music Therapy Student on placement at the Olivia Newton John Cancer Wellness & Research Centre during March and April 2020. During this placement, he helped deliver music therapy services in-person and online as the ONJ responded to COVID-19

Paper: The use of visual supports by Registered Music Therapists (RMTs): Survey results that address the why, who, what and how

Allison Fuller

Registered Music Therapists (RMTs) have been using visual supports within their practice for some time; however, there is a paucity of specific literature on this topic. Surveys of music therapists in the USA, UK and Europe show that training for music therapy students in AAC techniques may be inadequate or omitted, and that there is a need for AAC instruction within professional development programs for practicing music therapists (Gadberry & Sweeney, 2017; McCarthy, 2013). In addition, there is no published academic literature relating to Australian RMTs use of AAC within their practice, particularly regarding the range of visual support tools used. Therefore, the need was identified to investigate the implementation of visual supports by RMTs within Australia. A survey was distributed to RMTs in order to gather data on their reasons for using visual supports, and their targeted population groups. Questions on visual support format, appearance, delivery, and training experiences were also included. Data were collected via hard-copy forms distributed at the Australian Music Therapy Association (AMTA) national conference, then entered and analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Of the 71 respondents, results showed the majority of RMTs surveyed (98.6%, n=70) have utilised visual supports within their music therapy practice. On investigation, findings from this initial survey suggest that RMTs take an individualised client-centred approach to the application of visual supports within their music therapy practice, and they observe valuable benefits for their clients regarding easing stress and anxiety, promoting client agency, and in supporting communication (Fuller & Short, 2020). Within this presentation, findings of the survey will be shared along with practical tips and considerations for RMTs when using visual supports within their work.

Biography:

Al has been a music therapist for 24 years, focusing on children and family-centred practice. She is currently on staff at Western Sydney University where she lectures into the Master of Creative Music Therapy and is completing her doctorate in the use of aided visual supports within music therapy practice across face-to-face and telehealth platforms. Al is also the owner and director of MusicConnect, a group music therapy program for families with complex needs.

References:

- Fuller, A. M., & Short, A. E. (2020). The utilisation of visual supports within music therapy practice in Australia: Listening and looking [Manuscript submitted for publication].
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Paper: Responsive research design: A collaborative reflection on listening to and learning from people with lived experience of dementia, their families and supporters

Phoebe Stretton-Smith, Zara Thompson & Kate McMahon

Music therapy is understood as a unique and meaningful therapeutic modality in its ability to promote connection to personhood and support musical attunement and empathic relationships. The strengths and capacity of people with dementia to participate in music and build and sustain musical relationships are often intuitively recognised and readily drawn on in music therapy practice. However, while the abilities of people with dementia and benefits of music therapy programs have been highlighted in the research, less consideration has been given to ways we can support people with dementia to meaningfully connect with and actively engage in the research that impacts them. This includes research designs that are both responsive to the strengths, capacity, needs, values and experiences of people with dementia and their families, and that recognise how their engagement and input can enhance the quality and relevance of research outcomes.

This paper is a collaborative reflection on the need to enact notions of personhood and person-centred care within research at a deeper level, including through listening and responding to the perspectives of people with dementia, their families and supporters, and drawing on familiarity, creativity and understandings of the potential of connecting through music in data collection methods. The three co-presenters have experience in designing and/or conducting qualitative research with people who are living with dementia and their supporters. We will draw on our experiences of design and implementation, and critically reflect on the successes and challenges we have experienced and observed in our research processes.

We aim for this presentation to be a call to action for both researchers and also clinicians who may be seeking to include people with dementia in program design and evaluation.

Paper: Music therapy-informed webinars: Evolving beyond traditional therapy models?

Professor Katrina Skewes McFerran

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic created an atmosphere of deep uncertainty and challenged the traditional ways that music therapy has been practiced. Face-to-face work became impossible and online technologies became the only way to offer support to people as they struggled with anxiety, fear and confusion. According to anecdotal report from the wellbeing service providers at The University of Melbourne, there was an explosion in numbers of people accessing the online self-help programs that had always been available but barely subscribed. In this context, I endeavoured to develop an online model of delivering music therapy to cater to large groups of people and after introductory webinars attended by more than 400 people, commenced an 8 week program for 250 participants. Although numbers dwindled over time, evaluation suggested it was a powerful experience for those that did attend. This presentation will describe learnings about scaling up music therapy principles using ideas from transformational coaching.

Masterclass: Going Deeper in DAWs - Digital composition and production for music therapists

Cameron Haigh

This session is designed improve skills with Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs) - such as Apple's 'Garageband' - in music therapy practice. Popular music has increasingly been created through digital means. This musical lexicon is more familiar to many music therapy clients than instrumental modalities that are arguably more traditionally favoured in music therapy practice. Music therapists, and music therapy educators, must continually evolve to embrace technologies such as the DAW as means to provide engaging and effective services. By 'speaking the language' and using the tools that are familiar to clients who engage primarily with digitally created music, opportunities for connection are magnified.

This masterclass is designed for music therapists with a basic familiarity with a DAW such as Garageband, or any other DAW. The class will focus on teaching skills for musical composition and production that are readily accessible for music therapists to apply in their practise. Following a brief overview of relevant literature this workshop will lead participants beyond their current comfort zone with their DAW. Advanced techniques for creating and refining recordings will be presented, using both 'in the box' digital sounds as well as performances captured through audio recording. Noting that any technology can become time consuming, this workshop will focus on techniques that can be efficiently incorporated into music therapy sessions and workflows. Topics covered will include:

Composition techniques

- Synths and Arpeggiators
- Sampling
- Detailed editing
- Layering/overdubbing
- Sound editing
- Virtual instruments and players

Production techniques

- Making the most of effects
- Compression
- 'Cleaning up' with EQ
- The Master bus

Examples from the presenter's own clinical practice using both MacOS and iOS versions of GarageBand will be provided. Techniques will be demonstrated live in GarageBand using screen sharing and participants will be encouraged to use their own DAW (which need not be GarageBand) to practice the techniques, ask questions, and share results.

Participants will learn that digital tools, in particular the DAW, offer expressive opportunities to increase musical and emotional connection. Participants will learn numerous quick tips and develop confidence using the DAW as not just adjunct technology, but another tool to enhance musicality and be more responsive to client needs.

Paper: Music students' ambient music-making for active listening over the broadcasting media

Dr Lee Cheng

This presentation describes the design and implementation of a music-making project that involves university music students to create ambient tracks for the relaxation experience in music therapy, which are meant to be podcasted through an internet-based community radio station in Hong Kong. Participants were undergraduate music and music education students who participated in a laptop ensemble as part of their co-curricular learning activity; while face-to-face ensemble practice was not available under current global pandemic situation, individual music-making activities under a curated theme were arranged by the author who is also the director of the ensemble.

Before the music-making process, students were introduced the conceptual underpinning of music-centered music therapy and ambient music for active listening. They also developed knowledges and skills to use Digital Audio Workstations for ambient track production. At the end of the workshops, each student produced a 5-minute ambient music track for the active listening and relaxation experience.

Results of this project informed good practices for students learning and music-making experience in music therapy. A comprehensive understanding and experience of the receptive music therapy process would help students better create music that could be an effective tool for listeners to immerse in the ambient modes of consciousness and being.

Panel: Deliberate resilience through collective reasoning: Peer support at the management level

Dr Helen Shoemark (Moderator), David Knott, Debbie Bates, Elizabeth Harman, Amy Thomas, Ann Hannan, Amy Troyano & Beth Collier

This panel explicates themes derived from the work of the international Creative Arts Therapies (CATs) Managers Network. They explore a) the unreported and rapidly emerging role of management level music therapists, b) the collation of insights during the COVID pandemic, and c) explanations of how these experiences and insights continue to inform clinical practice and well-being of clinicians in the longer term.

Roundtable: Keeping people connected during a pandemic: Music therapy research and practice goes online

Professor Felicity Baker, Dr Jeanette Tamplin, Dr Imogen Clark, Dr Libby Flynn, Kate Teggelove, Zara Thompson, Hayley Miller & Kate McMahon

The global pandemic has led to the need for older people in particular, to self-isolate, even when not mandated. Music therapy research and practice has needed to evolve, reflect, and respond to the challenges associated with the pandemic to keep people connected. We will report on 3 projects that have collected data on how RMTs have adapted research and practice to ensure continuity of care and provision of support to those in isolation.

Paper 1: Music Therapy Telehealth practices in Australia - the results of an AMTA survey on RMT practices during COVID-19

This presentation will report the results of a survey of 53 RMTs and 16 consumers disseminated during the pandemic which aimed to a) identify how to better facilitate client access to music therapy, b) better understand which aspects of music therapy treatment are best delivered in a telehealth context and c) better understand what supports are needed at the client's location to ensure the therapy is delivered effectively.

Paper 2: Redesigning the Homeside family carer training to be delivered online – The Homeside music therapy program funded by the NH&MRC, originally designed as a face to face family carer home training program, aims to support the quality of life of people living with dementia and their carer. The COVID-19 interruption led the research team to revise the intervention protocol for online delivery recognising that carers and people living with dementia were in even more need of support during lockdown. This presentation will explain features of the protocol that were adapted to ensure fidelity of the initially designed intervention was maintained with the translation to online delivery

Paper 3: Therapeutic Choirs in the virtual world

This presentation will present results from a survey of international health-focused choir facilitators and organisers, which sought to understand how they have or haven't adapted their choirs to an online format, and what the barriers and facilitators to doing so are. The presentation will also present perspectives from members of the Musical Memories choir - a community-based, dementia inclusive choir- who have embraced singing together online!

Perspectives: Changes: Discussing sound and vision in Music Therapy with a new grad and a senior music therapist

Joanne McIntyre & Netta Dor

In March of 2020, Joanne was recommended Netta as a locum by another RMT. They worked alongside each other for five weeks in adolescent mental health, both at an SSP school and a mental health ward. During this time, it became evident that although they worked well together, their approaches, backgrounds, training and age were at opposite ends of the spectrum. Whilst both RMTs were direct in their approaches, there was a mutual respect for each other's ideas. As an experienced RMT, Joanne found that working with a new graduate provided her with a fresh perspective and reminded her to stay open minded. As a new graduate, Netta found that working with someone more experienced helped her explore a difficult population group with additional support, whilst still being able to trust her instincts and stay true to her therapeutic approach. Ultimately, both therapists were working towards the same outcomes with their clients. The speakers will present case examples and discuss their differing responses and approaches, framed by age, background and context. They will discuss how these differences affected music choices and the way the population group responded to them differently. They will additionally discuss whether or not different training had an impact on their approaches. This session will promote dialogue regarding sharing knowledge, ideas, experience and support with other RMTs as a way of continuing development as a music therapist. The session will also highlight the things that new graduates can offer more experienced RMTs, as well as vice-versa.

Panel: Reflecting on how it all happened: Enablers and challenges for music therapy training in the time of COVID

Alison Short (Moderator & Panellist), Allison Fuller & Kate Penson

Foundationally, all AMTA accredited courses need to produce career-ready graduates, but current training practices have been severely disrupted by the current pandemic. This panel research case study presentation reflects on the impact of COVID on training music therapists from the perspectives of both University staff and students. It considers how teaching and learning practices have been affected, identifying enablers and challenges in order to understand, respond to and learn from this period of intense change. Drawing on the approaches of Wolf, Daniels and Thompson (2017) and Yin (2009, 2018), this paradigmatic research case study, delineates pre-COVID resources and processes and then details a timeline of changes and the effects of these changes in relation to governance, teaching delivery and student learning perspectives. In doing so, it focuses on areas such as 1) didactic learning, 2) practical skills development, 3) clinical practice experience, and 4) engagement with industry and the role of alumni. These aspects are all considered in terms of pre-pandemic, early pandemic (Autumn semester) and later pandemic (Spring semester) time frames. In line with standard research case study approaches, this presentation incorporates the voices of students and staff via mixed method qualitative and quantitative data collection. Analysis reveals the availability and effectiveness of pre-existing resources such as an AMTA-approved Simulated Music Therapy Practicum (SiMPrac) program. The subsequent University shutdown provided challenges to evolve regular teaching practices and inevitably led to adaptations such as online lectorials, the use of real-time shared collaborative documents for recording of new information generated during break-out groups, and innovative online platforms including Watch2Gether. In addition, new strategies aimed at supporting student resilience are outlined and reviewed. Spontaneously developed collaborative industry initiatives demonstrate connections for mutual benefit amidst the pandemic and point towards more possibilities for the future. A final review of enablers and challenges concludes with a discussion of areas for further development into the future, as courses evolve and reflect according to their focus on training excellence and producing career ready music therapy graduates.

Moderator & Panellist: Alison Short, RMT, MT-BC - Alison is an internationally accredited music therapist and health researcher, and an experienced music therapy academic heading up the Master of Creative Music Therapy team at Western Sydney University, Australia. Since graduating in the first ever Australian music therapy class at the University of Melbourne, Alison has published extensively, with research spanning a wide range of topics and focus areas.

Panellist: Allison Fuller, RMT - Allison has been a music therapist for 24 years, focusing on children and family-centred practice. She is currently on staff at Western Sydney University where she lectures into the Master of Creative Music Therapy and is completing her doctorate in the use of aided visual supports within music therapy practice across face-to-face and telehealth platforms.

Panellist: Kate Penson, RMT - Kate has worked as a music educator and music therapist mostly with children and families in South-West Sydney. She is currently the Placement Coordinator for the Master of Creative Music Therapy at Western Sydney University.

References: Wolf, C.P., Daniels, M.H. & Thompson, E.S. (2017). Case study research. In C. J. Sheperis, J. S Young, & M. H. Daniels (Eds.), *Counselling Research* (2nd ed., pp. 170-190). Pearson.

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*. (6th ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
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Perspectives: Telerehab Palliative Joint Music and Art Therapy Session

Isabel Tan & Lee Sze-Chin

When the COVID-19 situation worsened in February 2020, our hospital segregated into various working zones for the staff to manage the pandemic. Because of this, both the art and music therapist were not able to enter the palliative ward to facilitate in-person sessions. This impacted the access of the patients to our services to meet the therapeutic goals of increasing their social interaction and connection, providing distraction to manage negative feelings related to presenting pain or fear of death, as well as improving their mood through activity engagement. The art and music therapists responded to the evolving situation and trialled tele-rehab services to provide continuity of care for the patients in the palliative ward. Their pilot tele-rehab sessions demonstrated the potential for more extensive use of art and music telehealth services for hospital inpatients.

This perspectives session will highlight the strategies employed by the art and music therapist to facilitate and enhance the tele-rehab sessions, and compare and contrast the process and emphasis for tele-rehab through their respective lenses.

The presenters will touch on the following perspectives:

- shared therapeutic goals
- planning for the workflow of the combined art and music therapy sessions
- the respective physical space and equipment setup for the art and music tele-rehab sessions
- the respective areas of focus / emphasis for the art and music therapists
- reflections on implications for practice and research with regards to the music therapy community

Roundtable: Music therapists with lived experience of disability, neurodivergence, and chronic physical and mental health conditions: Reflecting on connections within and beyond our professional identity

Paper 1: Building pride in a community of RMTs with lived experience

Sarah Curtain (presentation coordinator), Dr Grace Thompspon, Allison Davies & Ben McKenzie

Previous workforce surveys of music therapists in Australia have collected information about various aspects related to professional identity. However, one aspect that remains hidden is the extent to which music therapists have lived experience of disability, neurodivergence, and chronic physical and mental health conditions. This paper will explore the ways that music therapists' lived experience is a resource in their practice. We wish to move from a deficit understanding of therapists with lived experience that is often implicit in codes of ethics and standards of practice, to one that celebrates the richness and knowledge that their experience brings. In doing so, we aim to make visible the fact that therapists can and do come in all forms and with all backgrounds, and that recognising health diversity in our profession benefits us all.

Paper 2: Reflections on access issues in music therapy training for students with lived experience

Brede Davis (presentation coordinator), Zoë Kalenderidis & Megan Murray

Music therapy training requires students to engage with theory and practice through academic work, experiential learning and clinical placement, however little is known about the student experience. A recent survey of music therapy students in the USA revealed that a substantial number had an invisible illness or disability, yet many did not feel comfortable to disclose to their supervisor. Survey respondents were concerned that disclosure would lead to supervisors losing trust in their abilities, with many opting to forgo access to learning opportunities as a result. While students are encouraged to develop personal insight and reflect on their placement experiences, supervisors may be unaware of the issues faced by many students. This paper will explore ways that supervisors can create safer spaces for health diverse students by centring accessibility, understanding access needs and validating unique experiences.

Paper 3: Introducing the Post-Ableist Collective (PAC) in celebration of diverse health identities within the music therapy profession

Carolyn Ayson (presentation coordinator), Grace Thompson & Zoë Kalenderidis

This paper will reflect on the impact of ableism in our music therapy work, both for clients and music therapists. Beyond outright discrimination of people with disability, ableism is typically linked to an agenda to normalise and cure. In contrast, music therapists working from a post-ableist position seek to collaboratively provide conditions and musical experiences that are less disabling and restrictive through addressing barriers and exploring connections. We will discuss how including post-ableist perspectives to working with our clients might also create safe spaces for music therapists with lived experience of disability, neurodivergence, and chronic physical and mental health conditions. We contend that advocacy must flow both ways, since if music therapists with lived experience are marginalised in our profession, so too are the people we work with.

Panel: Advocating for systemic change: diverse perspectives on the NEED for music therapy in neurorehabilitation

Tanya Marie Silveira (Moderator), Dr Jeanette Tamplin, Marissa Mellick, Steven Giannakopoulos, Dr Anuka Parapuram & Anna Barlow

Music Therapy is an underutilised resource within the medical system. Considering the multiple and simultaneous benefits of music therapy in neurorehabilitation, it is surprising to note that there are not many music therapists employed within this context. The purpose of this panel discussion is to dialogue about the urgent need for music therapy access in neurorehabilitation from the perspective of two patients, a rehabilitation physician, a physiotherapist and a music therapist. We encourage delegates to actively think about their role in continuing this conversation in the workplace to further advocate for more music therapy in neurorehabilitation, and beyond.

Perspectives: Is connection enough? Can community musicians be effective replacements for music therapists in community settings?

Joe Thompson & Adam Van Eyk

As the demand for music therapy grows across Australia, music therapy companies are being forced to find novel solutions to accommodate new programs with limited staffing capacity. Community musicians – intuitive musicians without formal music therapy training – are widely being explored as a means to address this shortfall.

Joe Thompson works predominantly with individual clients in a clinic setting, where goals are carefully assessed and measured. He holds the perspective that music therapy should be classified by a much narrower set of criteria than traditionally used. He will argue that programs which do not meet the criterion for therapy can effectively be delivered by a community musician.

Adam Van Eyk extensively on outreach programs, especially in aged care. Adam sees the myriad of skills registered music therapists naturally bring to the settings they work in. In his opinion, community musicians are not well-enough equipped to deliver quality programs, especially given the idiosyncratic needs of the settings music therapists generally work in.

The dialogue between Joe and Adam will address a key issue of deliberation for the music therapy community at present. Their discussion will provide an opportunity for increased clarity on the value of the skills exclusive to music therapists, the role of therapists and the importance of connection in music therapy work.

Roundtable: Evolving, Reflecting, Responding: Sing&Grow's Lessons From COVID

Paper 1: Evolving - A reimagining of Sing&Grow in response to COVID-19

Jessica Higgins-Anderson

Due to COVID-19 restrictions Sing&Grow suspended all in-person services during the first national Stage 3 lockdown period. The national Sing&Grow team developed alternative themed, weekly content for delivery throughout Term 2, including live Zoom group and individual sessions, pre-recorded sessions, session booklets and links to other useful material. Sing&Grow also launched a Facebook page to provide some of the above content as well as a weekly 'Live' broadcast to a wider audience in a time of increased stress and reduced social support. In this presentation we will describe how the national team formed interconnected working groups to quickly adapt to the social changes and create content for families. This operational evolution brought about unexpected positives for the team, allowing staff to be more connected across the country and contribute meaningfully to overall program development. In this paper we will reflect on the organisational and attitudinal changes that this lockdown has facilitated for us as a team and how music therapists more broadly could collaborate meaningfully to develop resources. We will share selections of the content created by the Sing&Grow team during the initial national lockdown period, and reflect on the practical and therapeutic considerations of offering telehealth groups and pre-recorded sessions that promote parental responsiveness.

Paper 2: Reflecting - From resilience to unforeseen challenges: pivoting and adapting to changes in delivery

Lorna Berry

Young children thrive when their parents or carers experience positive mental health and wellbeing; however some families face obstacles to developing these protective factors. The COVID-19 pandemic has added to the stressors faced by families, increasing barriers, and impacting their ability to foster a nurturing environment for their children. Among the stories of hardship from the communities in which we work, there have also emerged stories of resilience—from families who have endured adversity for a long period of time but have been able to build skills to live with economic and social hardship. This is in contrast to some families who have been facing these challenges for the first time. In this paper we will utilise Bronfenbrenner's ecological model to reflect upon and discuss the enablers and barriers to families being able to access music therapy services and the conditions required for engaging in online sessions. We will also look at the innovative and accessible ways we responded to families' immediate needs, within the scope that the COVID restrictions allowed us.

Paper 3: Responding - Looking forward

Julia Oreopoulos

In this paper we will present some of the feedback from families and Host Organisations during the national COVID lockdown to share what did and did not work well for the families we work with. We will use the resultant learnings to explore how these understandings can inform strategy and practice to increase resilience in communities that may previously have been considered 'low need', as well as for families who are experiencing higher levels of adversity for the first time. Using the concept of Targeted Universalism, we will reflexively examine the processes that have worked well during this period for Sing&Grow as a team and with our Host Organisations, as well as identify areas for improvement. We will examine which groups of families are emerging as having unmet needs, what these needs are, and how music therapists might meet them going forward. Then finally we will use the new knowledge we have gained to discuss how Sing&Grow are continuing to adapt our offerings, creating targeted services designed to best meet the needs of all families. These reflections will be relevant to all music therapists who work with young children and families, encouraging the profession to think deeply about the innovative ways we can support the families we work with.

Panel: Musical engagement through healthy ageing, cognitive impairment and dementia

Anita Connell, Pete McDonald, Matthew Sutcliffe, Joanne Kershaw and Jeff Thurlow

As the world population of older adults continues to increase, so too do the number of people with age-related cognitive decline, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Currently, there is no pharmacological cure for dementia. 50 million people worldwide have dementia and this figure is anticipated to triple by 2050 (Alzheimer's Disease International, 2019). Early intervention and prevention offers the best hope of delaying deterioration, maintaining everyday functioning and minimising the health, social and economic implications.

There is evidence that cognitive programs and cognitively stimulating activities can protect against cognitive decline and preserve everyday functioning in instrumental activities of daily living (iADL) for older adults (Mowszowski et al., 2016). Additionally, it is known that actively participating in music-based activities has cognitive benefits (Schnieder et al., 2019) and that for older adults, higher levels of well-being are realised when a sense of purpose, autonomy and control is maintained in the music activity (Hallam, Creech, Varvarigou, McQueen, & Gaunt, 2014). Lifestyle programs that include music are also associated with maintaining cognition and creative arts activities are cited as important activities for older adults to preserve cognition and mitigate cognitive decline (Doi, Verghese & Makizako, 2017).

This panel will focus on musical engagement across the health continuum for older adults in support of healthy ageing. We'll present the evidence of music-based programs for healthy older adults and discuss early intervention opportunities for those with subjective cognitive impairment; a self diagnosed cognitive impairment that may precede mild cognitive impairment, a pre-clinical stage of dementia. We'll discuss the role of music therapists across the health continuum with a focus on musical engagement in ageing and in particular, younger onset dementia and dementia care in residential facilities. We'll discuss the modes of delivery in light of COVID19, online and in person content, with a particular focus on musical engagement. Our presentation will include musical examples including the lived experience of a carer and participant of music therapy who has dementia.

Biographies:

Pete McDonald, RMT and neurologic music therapist working predominantly with residents in aged care settings who have Dementia.

Matt Sutcliffe, RMT who has experience working in clinical practice and residential care settings with older adults who have younger onset Dementia.

Anita Connell, RMT and PhD candidate researching early intervention music-based approaches for healthy older adults and those with subjective cognitive impairment.

Joanne Kershaw, Customer Engagement Coordinator, Dementia Australia

Jeffrey Thurlow - Participant of Music Therapy

Keynote: The Urgency for Sociocultural Reflexivity in Music Therapy

Professor Susan Hadley

Given our current moment, in the midst of global protests demanding racial justice, and with the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, the Me Too movement, the Ni Una Menos movement, along with continued efforts for disability justice and LGBTQ+ justice, in a society that seems to be becoming increasingly openly polarized around issues of individual versus collective social justice and human rights, there is an urgency for sociocultural reflexivity in music therapy. As music therapists, our ethics require us to identify and recognize our personal biases, and to avoid discrimination in relationships with clients, colleagues, and others in all settings. We are also expected to strive to be self-aware and to recognize the impact of our feelings, attitudes, and actions on the client and the therapy process. Furthermore, we are tasked to demonstrate awareness of the influence of race, ethnicity, language, religion, marital status, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, ability, socioeconomic status, or political affiliation on the therapeutic process. While these are recognized as important, I have found that there is not enough in our education and training that really help students and clinicians understand the kind of work that it takes to really work in a socially just, ethically sound, and culturally sustaining manner. It requires awareness, knowledge, and skill. Awareness takes a lot of work, and requires a dialogical approach. In this presentation, I will discuss not only the importance of cultivating critical reflexivity, but provide some ways to engage in the process, and examples and implications of such engagement.

Sing&Grow 2019 Evaluation Project

Lorna Berry

Sing&Grow is an evidenced-based music therapy program, supporting children and families to use music for building relationships, increasing community connection and facilitating childhood development outcomes. In 2019, Sing&Grow in conjunction with QUT, conducted a national evaluation project. Using mixed methods data collection, the evaluation sought to further understand how the program addresses caregivers' capacity to be responsive to their children and their sense of parental self-efficacy, as well as the impact on children's self-regulation and families' use of music in the home.

Results found there were significant improvements across the sample in parent-reported: parent self-efficacy in the areas of discipline and play; use of music at home; and children's cognitive self-regulation. Qualitative results found that families reported increased social connectedness, inclusivity, belonging and sense of confidence. Parents also reported feeling better equipped to respond to their child's developmental and educational needs, and described improved bonding and stronger relationships between siblings, caregivers and children.

Initial results for changes to parental responsiveness showed no statistically significant improvements over time. However, after a process of dialogue and reflexivity, we identified that families who began with lower sub-test scores at baseline showed greater improvement compared to families who began the programs with more capacity. This insight highlighted that our programs are most effective for families who have the greatest need.

This study makes an important contribution to the existing Sing&Grow evidence base; for the first time, significant improvements were demonstrated in children's cognitive self-regulation over time, as reported by parent, with important implications for school readiness for children. The study also documents for the first time, pre to post intervention improvements in parents use of music at home, and self-efficacy in two areas with strong ties to Sing&Grow key parenting messages, discipline, and play.

The Possibilities of Group Singing Online

Kate Fletcher

The “Together Red” group program is a choir-based program for adolescents and adults with Down syndrome. This year the choir transitioned online due to Covid19 restrictions and have shown resilience and flexibility to enable their connection with each other to be maintained.

The aim of this presentation is to evaluate the effectiveness of maintaining connectedness through the choir while rehearsing online. It includes reflections from the music therapist as well as individual choir members as well as simple scale measures of elements of the program. Strengths and challenges of the program will also be examined.

Discussion will involve the transition to a hybrid program that involves a mixture of face-to-face and online participation as Covid19 restrictions are lifted, the positive results of staying connected with each other, and how this will impact on the group moving forward.

Musical Attention Control Training for Schizophrenia

Cameron Haigh

Introduction: Cognitive dysfunction is a major feature of schizophrenia and is associated with reduced outcomes in day-to-day function for individuals with the illness. The author's clinical work in adult mental health rehabilitation indicated that Neurologic Music Therapy (NMT) could be an engaging and effective method for cognitive training. Due to the foundational nature of attention for all cognitive functions, this study specifically examines the NMT technique of Musical Attention Control Training (MACT). A small body of literature has investigated MACT using small group statistics. This feasibility study will examine individual responses to MACT in a case series design.

Aims: The primary research question asks, 'What is the effect of a group MACT program on attention of individuals with a schizophrenia spectrum disorder at the levels of (1) sustained, (2) selective, (3) alternating and (4) divided attention?' Secondary questions will examine the acceptability of the intervention and feasibility of the research methods.

Methods: Four participants with schizophrenia at an inpatient mental health rehabilitation unit will receive 12 sessions of group MACT over 4 weeks. A battery of psychometric measures of attention will be administered pre- and post-intervention to examine changes in sustained attention, selective attention, alternating attention and divided attention. Participants will rate their experience in each session as well as complete group and individual interviews. For comparison, matched control participants in the same rehabilitation program will complete the attention battery at baseline and after four weeks of treatment as usual.

Results: Preliminary observations and research learnings will be presented including early response data and insights into attention theory applicable to implementation of the MACT technique.

Discussion: This feasibility study brings a particular focus on the experience of each individual participant by using mixed methods and intensive data collection. The results will inform both clinical practice and future research.

The Evolution of Intergen: A New Grads' View

Soya Thippawal & Catherine Vesic

A grant funded project, in conjunction with a local city council, was used to implement a 13-week Intergenerational program across three aged care facilities and three childcares. The aim of the program was to provide opportunities for connection and relationships through collaborative singing and instrumental play. This allowed for an increased awareness across generations between 10 residents and 10 children. Three registered music therapists (RMTs) facilitated one-hour, weekly group sessions at each aged care facility. This involved a combination of active music making, sharing instruments between resident and child, movement activities and interpersonal song sharing.

Due to the global pandemic, the project required evolution and adjustment as a result of the restriction of external visitors to aged care facilities in New South Wales. Two new-graduate RMTs designed a revised project scope, which upon reflection, went through three clear stages; face-to-face collaborative setting, to a blended in-person/online format to a completely online aged care program delivered by one RMT via Telehealth. As new graduates, we encountered multiple challenges and opportunities for personal and professional growth within this short timeframe. By presenting on our reflections of the evolution of this program, we intend to share the immediate adaption and response that this project demanded in order to continue its duration across the initial timeframe whilst satisfying the program objectives. We aim to discuss and conclude that we were still able to use music to continue supporting the connection and relationships with the aged care facilities, particularly during the lockdown period.

Song Creation - a strength based tool to build expressive confidence

Ann Lehmann-kuit

This research investigates the under-researched area of song creation in music therapy with children with autism. Moreover, this research aims to capture the participants perceptions of their own expressive confidence reflecting back on their songs created as children, testing the methodology of long term follow up with participants with autism. This research forms the basis of a Master of Research (WSU) which is at the recruitment stage.

Song creation is musical and lyrical material produced spontaneously by the client supported by the therapist, to create aesthetic whole (Amir, 1990). Song creation begins with a moment of connection, e.g. to what is present in the room or a preferred topic, evolving into a flexible structure supported by the music therapist. This research seeks to engage 1-3 past music therapy participants in semi -structured interviews using Zoom video platform, reflecting on their song creations from ten years earlier, responding to their perceptions of expressive confidence.

Song creation is emerging as a strength-based, flexible structure which strengthens identity with individuals with autism (Asch, 2016). Expressive confidence is a central concept in Creative Music Therapy growing musical self-confidence utilising the rhythmic, melodic and expressive components of music (Nordoff & Robbins, 2007). Expanding the musical range of expression is seen as an experience that reflects and allows growth in all aspects of human emotional life (Aigen, 2014).

Aims of research:

- Deeper understanding of the expressive identity of people with autism seen through song creation
- Developing methodology to address retrospective collaborative feedback of young people with autism
- Further exploring the use of expressive music making (song creation) to ameliorate mental health issues common to this cohort. Exploring if/ how formative creative processes through music therapy can form a positive experience to build expressive identity, developing positive self-concept which acts as a protector to mental health challenges.

Exploring the use of music as an intervention in perinatal mental health: a systematic approach based on literature

Greer Boutling

The perinatal period, from conception to one year after birth, is a critical time in a woman's life. Perinatal anxiety and depression are common, yet may go undetected and untreated, which has wide-ranging repercussions for connections within the woman, her child, family and society. Current management includes pharmacological, psychological and psychoeducational methods. Music therapy has the potential to be a low-cost, side effect-free intervention for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

A literature review was conducted with the aim of examining how music is used as an intervention in perinatal mental health (specifically, antenatal anxiety and depression, and postnatal anxiety and depression), music therapy's effectiveness for this population, and the potential for new research. Detailed analysis found the use of music as an intervention is linked to a reduction in perinatal anxiety and depression. The most common music therapy methods used in perinatal mental health are reported as receptive, particularly in the antenatal period. Some active methods, such as group lullaby singing in postnatal women, show promise in the treatment of postnatal depression symptoms. However, overall there is a lack of robust music therapy research in this area, particularly into antenatal depression, as well as early intervention for the prevention or reduction in symptoms of postnatal depression. Few studies were conducted by or with registered music therapists. Results of the entire literature review indicate that further research is needed to assess the value of better integration of music therapy into obstetric healthcare. This may confirm the early, but to date limited, evidence that music therapy can provide women in the perinatal period the opportunity to form vital connections with themselves, their child, family and society.

Crucial connections: Reflections on the role of the Support Worker in group music therapy

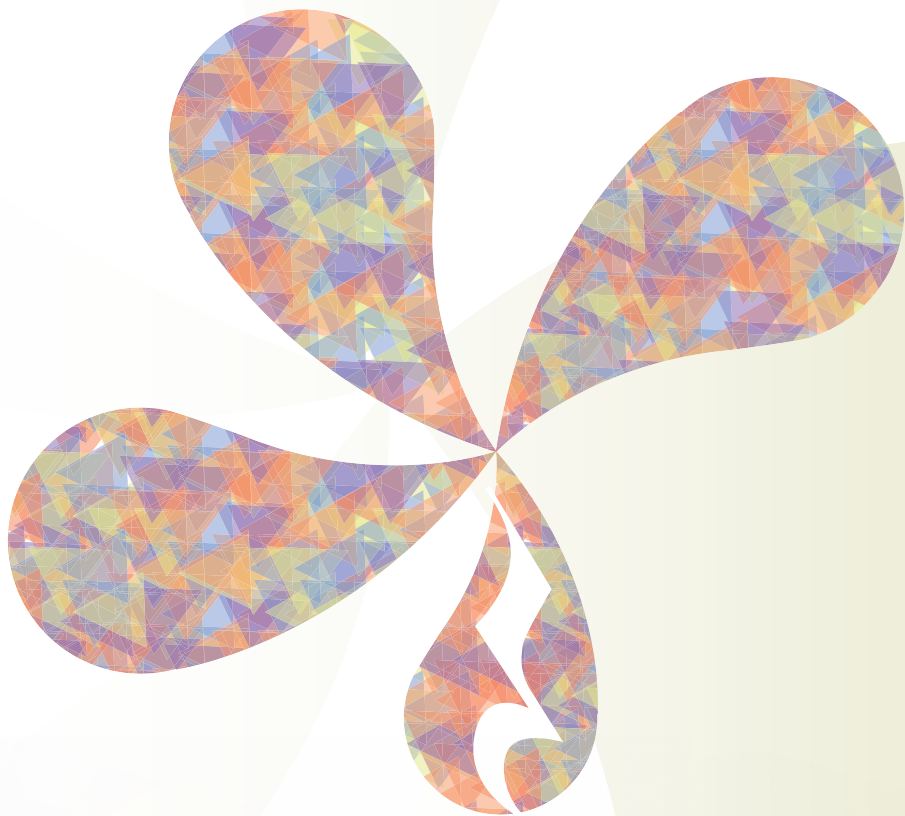
Helen Cameron

Music therapists frequently work alongside support workers, or carers of their participants during the course of their working day.

With the funding provided by the National Disability Insurance Scheme in Australia, more people with disabilities are able to access community based activities with the assistance of support workers. In a private music therapy practice which offers group programs for adults with intellectual disabilities, the support worker has a vital role to ensure the access and participation of the group members.

This presentation will describe a qualitative research project which explores the lived experiences of these support workers. Interviews were conducted with support workers who had assisted a member for over a year to gain a depth of perspective and insight into the benefits and challenges inherent in the role.

These interviews are being analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological methods at the present time. The results will be detailed in this presentation. It is anticipated that the results will illuminate effective ways to productively collaborate with Support workers in music therapy, in group and community based settings.



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Connection: Evolving, Reflecting, Responding