



**World Art Therapy  
Festival** PRAGUE  
26 - 28 SEPTEMBER 2025



# World Art Therapy Festival 2025

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ABSTRACT BOOK

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# World Art Therapy Festival 2025— Abstract Book

## Content

<b>Oral Presentations</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Workshops</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Posters</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Content of Oral Presentations</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Content of Workshops</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Content of Poster Presentations</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Partners</b>	<b>78</b>



ORAL PRESENTATIONS

# ORAL PRESENTATIONS





# O 01 – Embracing our Shared Humanity: A Pathway to Harmony, Growth, and Global Impact for the Future of Art Therapies

Vivian Chan<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> World Federation of Music Therapy, Hong Kong

## **ABSTRACT TEXT**

This keynote explores the interconnectedness of personal growth, professional practice, and global impact, drawing from the speaker's journey as a music therapist and her experiences leading to meaningful work within the World Federation of Music Therapy (WFMT). Through reflections on personal growth, travels, and clinical experiences, she illuminates some of the foundational values that drive the work of the WFMT: compassion, empathy, kindness, holistic well-being, collaboration, inclusion, equity, unity, and peace. The future of our professions lie in our ability to unite and foster peace. By extending the aforementioned values not only to clients but also within the professional community, we foster a culture of mutual support and growth. Highlighting the WFMT's purpose, mission, and vision, the talk underscores the importance of recognising our shared humanity and the need for healthy collaboration on a national and international level to bring about continued growth and development in our professions. By embracing our interconnectedness—with clients, colleagues, and the wider world—we can cultivate a more compassionate and equitable future for the arts therapies profession and contribute to a more harmonious world.

## O 02 – Psychosomatic music therapy— Harmony of Opposites

*Marie Beníčková<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Akademie Alternativa s. r. o., Olomouc, Czech Republic

### ABSTRACT TEXT

#### INTRODUCTION

Psychosomatic music therapy is my own original method integrating a person's bio-psycho-social-spiritual paradigm. Music serves here as a tool of therapeutic intervention—a medium that connects the physical, psychological, relational and spiritual dimensions of human existence. The basic principle of this method is working with contrast—not only in music (rhythm, dynamics, melody), but also in everyday life, where it manifests itself in polarities such as tension-relaxation, giving-receiving, stillness-movement, silence-sound.

#### METHODS

Psychosomatic music therapy was applied in the form of structured therapeutic sessions, which included both active approaches (e.g. playing instruments, working with the voice) and receptive approaches (e.g. listening to music). Sessions were conducted individually and in groups. The therapeutic process was based on the connection of work with the body, breath, voice and sound, supplemented by experiential reflection. The research took place in a supportive environment and used a mixed design. The quantitative part included standardized scaling of anxiety, stress and somatic symptoms. Qualitative data were obtained through, among other things, semi-structured interviews and subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis.

#### RESULTS

The results show statistically and clinically significant improvements in stress management and reduction of anxiety and psychosomatic symptoms. Participants also reported increased awareness of body grounding, improved self-regulation, and a strengthened sense of purpose in life. The qualitative analysis highlighted the therapeutic importance of the experience of contrast, which was often perceived as a key moment in the process of change.

#### DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

Working with contrast—as with the natural rhythm and dynamics of life—allows clients to safely integrate internal polarities that are often suppressed or experienced unconsciously. Psychosomatic music therapy thus proves to be an original and effective approach, supporting deep self-regulation, internal stability and the restoration of psychophysical balance. Music in this context serves not only as a tool for expression, but also as a mirror of inner experience and a path to greater wholeness. The results indicate that this method has the potential to become a valuable addition to music therapy care.

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#### KEYWORDS

psychosomatic, music therapy, contrast

## O 03 – Reconnecting the Muses: The Hypothesis of Spirituality in the Music Therapy Profession

*Giorgos Tsiris<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> St. Columba's Hospice Care, Director of Education, Research and Creative Arts, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

### ABSTRACT TEXT

The development of music therapy as a contemporary Western profession has been increasingly shaped by the emergence of evidence-based practice. Promoting certain assumptions around what constitutes valid scientific evidence, evidence-based practice has mobilized research activity, and it has informed the development of professional guidelines and identities in the field. At the same time, however, evidence-based practice has sidelined and perhaps silenced areas of music therapy practice that are not measurable and quantifiable.

In this keynote, I focus on the hypothesis of spirituality in music therapy. Navigating the different meanings of 'hypothesis' in science and in drama, I offer a critical exploration of methodological and professional trends while considering the wider story of spirituality in our profession. In this sense, the 'testing' (science) and the 'plot' (drama) of spirituality in music therapy come to surface alongside their intersections, their tensions, and their associated risks and possibilities. Through research and examples from my work in end-of-life care, and with the hope to reconnect the muses in our profession, this keynote will draw questions and potential directions in music therapy practice, education, ethics and research.



## O 04 – Listening Across Borders: Music Therapy, Displacement, and the Search for Connection

Samuel Gracida<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> SRH University, Bridges Project, Heidelberg, Germany

### ABSTRACT TEXT

How do we form meaningful relationships through music when shaped by different languages, cultures, and histories? In this keynote, I reflect on music therapy as a space for interpersonal connection across lines of displacement, migration, and care—drawing from both clinical work and personal experience.

My perspective is informed by my coordination of *Bridges—Music Connects*, a program offering music therapy to displaced children and youth in Germany, and by my role as co-editor of *Music Therapy and Displaced Persons*, a forthcoming volume gathering global perspectives on music therapy in contexts of forced migration. Alongside these projects, I've written about my own identity as a practitioner shaped by multiple cultural contexts, including an autoethnographic essay for a special issue on decolonial perspectives, and a publication on language and therapeutic relationships in a German nursing home.

I also contribute to international research on adapting music therapy assessments for older adults across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Through ongoing involvement with the International Association for Music and Medicine, the Mexican Music Therapy Association, the World Federation of Music Therapy, and various international working groups, I've come to see how diverse approaches to care can challenge assumptions and deepen our understanding of what it means to listen, to connect, and to accompany.

This keynote invites reflection on the relational dimensions of music therapy—how music can hold space for complexity, foster mutual recognition, and help negotiate belonging when words fall short.

## O 05 – The Potential of Music Therapy in Work with Children with ADHD

*Janka Pappová<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> *Inštitút umeleckých terapií, Bratislava, Slovakia*

### ABSTRACT TEXT

Interacting with children with ADHD in a music therapy setting is a challenge, but above all a joyful process of discovering their genuine needs. A small-scale ongoing study conducted at a Slovak elementary school focused on the impact of music therapy on the attention span of school-aged children with ADHD. The results suggest improvements in attention and executive functioning, while also revealing suppressed grievances, frustrations, and a strong desire to be included without experiencing alienation. The diagnostic and therapeutic potential of arts therapies for children with special educational needs is undeniable, even though the capacity of Slovak schools to involve arts therapists remains limited. Despite these constraints, music therapy and other creative modalities are gradually gaining their place and recognition within both educational and therapeutic contexts.

## O 06 – Art Therapy in Grief Counseling with Children and Adolescents

*Hanna Nöthig<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Reha-Klinik- Hausbaden- Badenweiler, Arttherapy, Freiburg, Germany

### ABSTRACT TEXT

#### *Art therapy in mourning*

Many issues arise in families and can be accompanied by Art Therapy.

A special area is Art Therapy in mourning.

For many years, children and young people have been coming to my studio via an institution in Freiburg to process their grief through artistic creation. In this way, grief and anger can be turned back into courage so that they can move on in life with renewed strength.

#### *Art therapy in grief counseling with children and adolescents*

The painful loss, the longing for the deceased, is like entering a “world out of joint” in which nothing is as it was. One feels “out of time”, out of the order of continuity, of security, of a meaningful world.

How do infants, children and adolescents experience grief and death? In what way does Art Therapy offer “Containing” in grief? What role does “Magical Thinking” play?

What can immersion in imagery mean for children?

“I feel something you can’t see”...

Children come to my studio and playfully, artistically and creatively seek out their feelings and thoughts in order to reorganize what has fallen apart.



## O 07 – Creative Approaches to Art Therapy Supervision—What Do Clients, Supervisees and Supervisors Need?

Val Huet<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> International Association for Creative Arts in Education and Therapies, Executive Committee, London, United Kingdom

### ABSTRACT TEXT

Art therapists understand the role of supervision as essential to maintaining good and safe practice and supporting self-care and professional growth. However, when challenges or ruptures occur in the supervisory relationship, they highlight the complexity of this multi-layered task. At such times, clinical and professional issues can become stressful for both supervisee and supervisor, and this can affect the client's experience of therapy.

In this presentation, I will look at what supervision aims to achieve from the different perspectives of clients, supervisee and supervisor. I will introduce a framework to set up safe, effective and creative supervision that is responsive to these perspectives. I will focus on how to integrate art-based approaches to supervision that embeds our creative process in this important task. I will reflect on how these can also be used for self-care and resilience by supervisors and supervisees.

## O 08 – Imagining the Future of Art Therapy – at the Crossroads of Education, Research and Practice

*Mimmu Rankanen<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University, Department of Art, Design and Drama, Oslo, Norway

### ABSTRACT TEXT

Both art therapy education and research are crucial for the future of art therapy. Education and research are also bound together and create the ground for new professional generations and practices to grow.

However, developing art therapy education and research are challenging tasks, since they demand finding a successful balance between art and human knowledge. Learning in depth skills of creativity and art at the same time as integrating them with psychological and psychotherapeutic knowledge and sensitive human interaction sets us in a crossroad, where choice of spending time on exploring one path and perspective always leaves less time to familiarize with the other perspectives. Furthermore, there is also a need to balance between focusing on learning to practice art therapy and/or learning to do research on art therapy.

In this presentation, I will use my experience of collegial development of all together four different art therapy and art psychotherapy programs in Finland and Norway during the last two decades. I will use the four educations as case examples of how different the art therapy educations can be and what kind of contributions these different choices of can offer for society and for building the future, the evidence-base and the profession of art therapy. Each of these paths has different possibilities for creating future—future growing from shared experiences of creativity and art-based practices, future born from strengthening pedagogical and supervisory skills of art psychotherapists, future rising from deeper art psychotherapeutic and relational understanding, and future of spreading the art therapy practices in different fields of society by developing convincing interdisciplinary research.

## O 09 – Possibilities of Art Therapy for Children with Down Syndrome

*Veronika Kern Sinová<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> *Inštitút umeleckých terapií, Bratislava, Slovakia*

### ABSTRACT TEXT

**Down syndrome** is one of the most widespread and well-known chromosomal disorders. It is caused by an extra 21<sup>st</sup> chromosome, which results in lifelong intellectual disability, developmental delays, typical physical features, and other associated health issues. The level of intellectual disability varies among individuals with this condition, most commonly presenting as mild to moderate intellectual disability.

Despite the many deficits associated with this condition, children with Down syndrome are often characterized by qualities such as the ability to love, empathy, spontaneity, sincerity, warmth, and joy in various activities—as well as stubbornness. They enjoy music, dance, painting, and often have excellent imitation skills, which significantly supports the learning process.

The artistic expression of children with Down syndrome is complex and differs from the typical development of drawing in non-disabled children. Compared to the general population, their artistic development is delayed. The technical aspect of their artwork depends on the level of motor skills development, memory, attention, and is significantly influenced by their overall cognitive abilities. Deficits in fine motor skills and reduced muscle tone result in difficulties with hand and finger coordination, leading to delayed graphomotor development. Nevertheless, many children with Down syndrome are able to express their emotions and desires through art, and some demonstrate clear talent in this area, while others exhibit artistic expression on the level of scribbles or playful use of colour.

This paper describes the possibilities of art therapy for children with Down syndrome, focusing on individuals for whom visual art became a unique tool for establishing a relationship and contact between the child and the art therapist.

For these children, artistic creation represents excitement, joy, and pleasure; a means of self-expression without the need for verbalization, and a way to release negative emotions, anxiety, and stress. Through art, they achieve a sense of satisfaction and increased self-confidence.

Long-term art therapy also leads to improvements in interaction, social skills, and verbal communication. The desire to communicate with the therapist becomes more intense; not only through gestures and facial expressions but also through attempts at verbal interaction, with noticeable development in vocabulary and articulation. Progress is also evident in areas such as attention span, perseverance, and emotional control. Improvements in fine motor and graphomotor skills result in cleaner, more independent work with art materials, and more precise brush movements lead to greater creativity and richer use of colour.

Children with Down syndrome have great potential to develop their abilities and skills through art therapy. It is essential to provide them with suitable conditions, support, and an individualized approach that allows them to explore the world through artistic creation. Their authentic emotional experiences are unique, their joy in creating is genuine, and the progress in the aforementioned areas is undeniable.



## O 10 – “Dance Constellation” method

Tomáš Beníček<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Akademie Alternativa s.r.o., Co-Founder and Managing Director, Olomouc, Czech Republic

### ABSTRACT TEXT

**The lecture will be dedicated to the Dance Constellation method.**

Dance Constellation is an artistic-therapeutic method that integrates principles of dance-movement therapy, music therapy, drama therapy, and art therapy. Dance Constellation (also referred to as DC) is a method focused on self-discovery, personal development, and personality integration.

The method takes into account the biological, psychological, social, and spiritual development of a person and offers a guided movement process with experiential, preventive, and therapeutic intent.

The method was created by certified dance-movement therapist and art therapist Dr. Tomáš Beníček.

## O 11 – Moving Family Reconstruction

Susanne Bender<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> EZETTERA – Europäisches Zentrum für Tanztherapie, Dance Therapy, München, Germany

### ABSTRACT TEXT

The classical method of family reconstruction, developed by Virginia Satir, aims to uncover the influences of life histories across generations within the context of contemporary history. Behaviors that hinder liveliness and joy can often be traced back to family events, structures, rules, myths, rituals, or even traumata.

Using a genogram—a type of family tree—representatives (group participants) are arranged to symbolize family members and their relationships. These representatives often experience bodily sensations that provide important insights into the family system. While the classical method focuses on verbalizing these sensations, the Moving Family Reconstruction brings the entire system into motion, typically with the support of music. By expressing emotions such as grief, anger, boredom, eroticism, or joy, the representatives can offer more precise information about the family members they embody.

This process helps to clarify family stories and reinterpret them in ways that support future life planning. It allows individuals to access strengths, talents, and resources while recognizing not only where the family may have hindered them, but also the opportunities it has provided.

# O 12 – Dance Movement Therapy and Jungian Psychology Integrated: New Insights into Depression Recovery

*Päivi Pylvänäinen<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> *Eino Roiha – Instituutti, The Finnish Association for Dance Therapy, Jyväskylä, Finland*

## ABSTRACT TEXT

This oral presentation integrates two sources of information: 1) research findings on the use of dance movement therapy (DMT) in the treatment of adults with depression and 2) the Jungian concepts of psyche. The presentation will elaborate how the combination of DMT and Jungian psychology opens a new view for the meaning of depression and for the central tasks in the treatment of depression.

The concept of body image was used in our research on the outcomes of DMT in the treatment of depression. With the Body Image Assessment interview, which is based on the tripartite model of body image, the characteristics in the body image of patients suffering from depression were elucidated. A poor awareness of the embodiment, unease and discomfort with the body, concerns how others perceive one's body and a lack of the sense of direction were discovered.

Resonating these characteristics with the Jungian concepts of Shadow, Persona, Animus/Anima, Ego and Self invites a new narrative of the network of these characteristics of the body image of the patient with depression. This narrative may support the patient's motivation for searching recovery and individuation.

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## O 13 – Caring for the Carers: An Embodied Approach to Clinical Supervision within Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH) Education

*Julia Hall<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Schools, Education, Hampshire, United Kingdom

### ABSTRACT TEXT

This presentation will explore how people working in SEMH schools can be supported through provision of clinical supervision, one that employs an embodied approach. Furthermore, how a sensorial body-based approach to the supervisory process, can prevent stress, burnout, and promote resources of self-care, whilst also, facilitate deeper understanding of self and self-in-relationship.

The presentation draws from frames of reference that include: Body, Sensory and Movement Psychotherapy, body memory, sensory attachment and developmental theory.

Our body holds the history of our lives; from in-utero the process of gathering body-stories is ongoing. Halprin, posits that a therapeutic approach, that includes the body and movement, acknowledges, 'our body contains the history of our life, exactly as it contains bones, muscles, organs, nerves and blood' (2002: 96). Reich (1949) and Van Der Kolk, (2021) elucidate that, life experiences become imprinted on the body, creating a palimpsest of body and sensorial memories. These bodily inscriptions inform body memory, and is an ongoing process, where the 'body keeps the score' (Van de Kolk, 2021) and guides how we inhabit the world. From the body story, default habits are created, that may be useful or not. Reich states that, a palimpsest of experience, could contribute to formation of body 'armour'; one that can protect and support resilience, but has potential to be rigid, with bodily tension and held breath (1949). Poignant here, within an SEMH school, is how embodied histories of the child and adult may collide, mis-attune or attune, at an unconscious level, which may, become visible through the body's external expression.

People working in schools with children who have SEMH needs, will meet by default, shadows of the child's family; a trans-generational imprinted memory or groove that is replayed in the present moment of relationship, within the school environment. At a body felt level (Gendlin, 2003) a child's story that is expressed and visible through the body, may resonate with staff member's personal story, at an unconscious level. During our lifespan, the body responds to situations and relationships, these imprints contribute to the development of a personal movement repertoire, with which to navigate the world. The adult may recognise an essence in the child, that resonates with their personal way of being and coping strategies used. Such events may be joyful, but also awaken body felt sense memories, that bring about: re-cycling of past trauma experience, furthermore, there may be a sense of feeling overwhelmed by sensations or memories. This can be impactful on the adult and adult-child relationship. Moreover, relational responses maybe perpetuated and exacerbated through the body/countertransference of the child-adult encounter.

The presentation will discuss how provision of clinical supervision for people working in SEMH education, one that uses an embodied approach, can prevent stress and burnout, through the learning of body-based practical resources to: support grounding, develop healthy boundaries, promote self-care and personal growth, and facilitate work-life balance. Moreover, this embodied approach to supervision, not only supports the adult, but contributes to the child's potential to thrive, within the body/countertransference relationship.

## O 14 – Melodies of Care: Music for Well-Being During Breast Cancer Treatment

*Brigita Vilč<sup>1</sup>, Renata Martinec<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> University of Zagreb, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, Department of Motor Disorders, Chronic Diseases and Art-Therapies, Zagreb, Croatia

### ABSTRACT TEXT

Breast cancer and its treatments can significantly affect a woman's well-being as well as overall quality of life.

The physical and psychological challenges associated with surgery, chemotherapy, and other treatments often lead to heightened anxiety, depression, and body image concerns.

These factors can influence the recovery process, making it crucial to incorporate complementary therapies that can support emotional adjustment during cancer treatment.

Music is being recognized as a valuable complementary intervention in medical care. Research suggests that music can effectively reduce anxiety, elevate mood, and promote relaxation—benefits that can be greatly beneficial for women undergoing the challenges of breast cancer treatment. However, studies examining its direct influence on emotional adaptation and quality of life during cancer treatment remain limited.

The goal of this paper is to present the initial findings from a research study conducted in clinical settings during breast cancer removal procedures, such as segmentectomy or mastectomy. The study focuses on the impact of classical music listening on emotional well-being and psychological adaptation in the perioperative period. Various aspects of quality of life, including physical symptoms, emotional well-being, body image, and social functioning, were preliminary evaluated.

The integration of music into oncology care proposes an opportunity to improve the quality of life for breast cancer patients. Further research can explore the potential of music as an established part of oncological care, with the goal of improving the emotional and psychological well-being of breast cancer patients.

## O 15 – Body awareness through dancing

Anděla Kubátová<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Akademie Alternativa s.r.o., Prague, Czech Republic

### ABSTRACT TEXT

Body is made for moving, but during these days we are living more in our head, less in our body. And therefore, our body suffer. How can we reconnect with our body through movement and dancing? And how is body awareness connected to our mental health? We will look at this topic with the help of dance-movement therapy.

# O 16 – Desert of Words, Drops of Sounds. Music Therapy for Expression and Communication in Severe Disabilities

*Ilaria Bolzon<sup>1</sup>, Rita Meschini<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Associazione Comusicando, Musicoterapia, Ferrara, Italy

<sup>2</sup> Associazione Comusicando, Musicoterapia, Macerata, Italy

## ABSTRACT TEXT

### INTRODUCTION

Music therapy for adults with disabilities is used as a means of interaction, development of communication skills as well as to improve the level of cognitive functioning. Furthermore, music therapy is a significant intervention for individuals with severe adult disabilities, as it improves quality of life, stimulates sensory perception, and promotes psychological well-being, offering new opportunities for communication and expression.

The purpose of this study is to monitor, with protocols and grids (qualitative level) and through videos the microanalysis of interaction patterns (quantitative level), duration of interaction, vocal and instrumental interaction patterns, number and duration of spontaneous vocalizations and verbal productions.

### METHODS

Multiple case studies of patients with developmental disability are reported. The study of multiple cases also allows for a comparison of the different communicative modalities that establish themselves in the music therapist-patient dyad. Music therapy took place on a weekly basis, about 30 minutes per session for 5 months. Sessions are based on psychodynamic-relational music therapy using the technique of free improvisation. The intervention is based on a relational matrix that focuses on reinforcing space-time integration processes and the development of the intersubjective relationship. The music therapy intervention is grounded in non-directivity, non-verbal communication, fostering creativity and the patient's expressive freedom, which facilitates processes of change and the reshaping of certain deficits, impairments, and issues. Data has been collected once every three weeks.

### RESULTS

Music therapy contributes to the development of executive functions, initiative and communication by use of sound-musical elements. From this study emerges how the patients have increased and changed the number of verbal, bodily, vocal and instrumental productions. Times of interaction, their instrumental and relational initiative and shared attention have also increased. A music therapy assessment tool of non-verbal communication allows to define the ways in which patients interact, facilitating monitoring of the progress and the maintenance of the results achieved. The tool specifically monitors the presence of vocal production, motor activation, instrumental production, facial expressions, smiling, body movements, eye contact, and interpersonal distance. In addition, vocal and/or instrumental productions are analyzed in the sound dialogues between the patient and the music therapist. Each musical parameter can provide valuable insights into the emotional state, mutual connection, and communicative dynamics of the dyad.

### DISCUSSION

The results collected may contain important information for the actual development of communicative-intentional patterns and the initiative within the patient-music therapist dyad.

### KEYWORDS

music therapy, adult disability, self-development, communication, cognitive functions



# O 17 – The Role of Music in Music Therapy Supervision and Professional Self-Development

Malle Luik<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MTÜ Avita Muusikateraapia Kliinik, Music Therapy, Tartu, Estonia

## ABSTRACT TEXT

### BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Music Therapy supervision has been an extremely important discipline in the professional development of music therapists. This presentation contains some integrated findings from various studies on music therapy supervision carried out by the author of this abstract and the supervision action team of the European Music Therapy Confederation (EMTC) in 2021–2024. The evaluations of music therapy supervisors from EMTC countries and Estonian music therapy students on the role of music in supervision and its influence on professional self-development will be examined.

### METHOD

Members of the EMTC Supervision Action Team prepared and sent a questionnaire to EMTC member associations that included questions about the requirements and standards of professional music therapy supervision in each country, as well as the use of music in music therapy supervision. European music therapy supervisors from six countries and Estonian music therapy students filled out questionnaires about preferred approaches and music therapy methods/techniques, reasons for using music and the role of music in supervision. The received data were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods.

### RESULTS

The results of the EMTC action team study were presented at the EMTC conference in Aalborg, 2024. They showed large differences in music therapy supervision across European countries. From them, it was possible to highlight more frequently used

- approaches in supervision (psychodynamic, music based, person-centered, integrative)
- supervision methods (role play, constellation)
- methods of music therapy in the supervision process (improvisation, listening to music) and why they are used, their effect on the self-development of the supervisees.

The answers of Estonian music therapy students supplemented the results obtained from Europe: key supervision needs, effects of music and music-based interventions, benefits of group supervision for professional self-development. Students acquired new knowledge, ideas, perspectives; enforced performance skills and benefited from practicing new techniques.

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## O 18 – Improvisation: A Case Study— Sono Venuto A Suonare, E Di Nascosto A Danzare (I Came To Play, And Secretly To Dance) (P. Conte)

*Marta Lissoni<sup>1</sup>, Agostino Longo<sup>2</sup>, Mirko Maddaleno<sup>2</sup>, Leonardo Mariotti<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> ANFFAS Lucca, AIM, Lucca, Italy

<sup>2</sup> School of Dynamic Music Therapy, aim, Firenze, Italy

<sup>3</sup> Zorggroep Sint-Kamillus, Psychiatry, Bierbeek, Belgium

### ABSTRACT TEXT

This work aims at contributing to the discussion on the peculiarities of improvisation within music therapy practice. Through a clinical case we explore the relationship between the improvisational act and the emergence of the so-called relevant moments. The main intention is to underline when and how these moments occur, while describing which elements made them possible.

Through the analysis of video excerpts, we also reflect on how the subjective experience of improvisation—which by its very nature is difficult to put into words—is also revealed through specific qualitatively observable elements.

With this understanding, and the awareness that reflection is a continuous process, we discuss how aspects belonging to the musical sphere, along with those which relate to the body and corporeity (pulsation, musical/ affective synchronization, bodily listening) are transformed during the different moments of improvisation.

# O 19 – MusicTherapy and Gardentherapy: A Systemic Approach for the Life Quality of the PsychoPhysical Disability

*Adriana De Serio<sup>1</sup>, Donato Forenza<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> University, Music, Bari, Italy

<sup>2</sup> University, Apulian Academy of Sciences, Bari, Italy

## ABSTRACT TEXT

### AIMS

In this experimental research the Authors present the methodological “Musictherapy and Gardentherapy Plan” that they created by interconnecting it with the Garden Landscape Ecosystems (GLE) and addressing it to PsychoPhysical Disability (MusGarPPhyD). In the context of the multidisciplinary environmental education aimed at spreading the values of the landscape culture, it's necessary to develop the perception of the socio-economic-environmental sustainability to implement a multidimensional approach that pays attention to conservation and enhancement of gardens and natural environments. The result is an improvement in life quality also in compliance with the objectives of the European Agenda 2030. The MusGarPPhyD can help professionals such as musictherapists and environmental and landscape researchers to strengthen subjects' motivation to learn to deal with the psychophysical discomfort associated with disability and to cope with distress and psychological fragility and loneliness and social seclusion and to promote productive social relationships.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The MusGarPPhyD was implemented in different areas/spaces. The musictherapy treatments took place first inside Residential Therapeutic Centres and then in the GLE. Patients: twenty, set in two groups. Weekly-sessions (50') for three months. Methodological phases: – Phase F1. MusicTherapy treatments for each group in the indoor spaces. – Phase F2. MusicTherapy sessions inside the gardens (GLE). After each Phase, F1 and F2: – a Questionnaire for each patient (ten items / liking-indices) was administrated at  $t_0$  time, during the treatment and at  $t_n$  time at the end of the treatment. – Monitoring of patients' behavioral responses through assessment scales, matrix-table and graph-system.

### MUSICTHERAPY METHODOLOGY

Pazient's Sonorous-Musical Anamnesis, Musictherapy Assessment Document, Observation Protocols, Bodily-Environmental-Rhythmical-Sonorous-Vocal-Energy production first indoors and then outside, sonorous-musical instruments and edible instruments made by the Author/musictherapist with some foods; Administration of Patient-Environment-Music Index at time  $t_0$  and  $t_n$  to estimate the patient's behavior evolution, Musictherapeutic Advancement Index.

### RESULTS

The MusGarPPhyD can strengthen the individual sense of identity and improve psychophysical skills and resilience to face and to overcome the difficulties caused by the congenital /acquired disability. The multi-sensory perceptions deriving from contact with the plants inside the GLE improve the psychological well-being and regulate the physiological parameters such as blood pressure, cardiac and respiratory rhythm, reducing the cholesterol levels. The secretions of the peptide hormones endorphins and the endogenous opioids enkephalins increase and bring a state of patient's tranquillity and a better mood. The patients showed a preference for musictherapy treatments within a setting made up of gardens and peculiar landscape systems. This resulted in greater health benefits.

## CONCLUSIONS

The MusGarPPhyD contributes to reduce psychophysical tensions, anxiety, depression and stress, facilitating the connections between the cerebral hemispheres, thus also improving intellectual performances, self-confidence, motor skills and social and family interactions. Therefore it is necessary to design hospitals, rehabilitation centers, nursing homes, surrounded by gardens GLE Ecosystems of natural and urban parks and gardens create fascinating skyline and mosaics of landscapes rich in beauty and Biodiversity. The MusGarPPhyD is useful for the health management promoting patient's psychophysical activation, better mood/affective-tone and relationships and contributing significantly to improving the life quality.

# O 20 – MusicTherapy for Actors: An Exploratory Study Applied to Students from University Theatre Faculty

*Adriana De Serio<sup>1</sup>, Adrian Korek<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> University, Music, Bari, Italy

<sup>2</sup> University, Theatre, Timisoara, Romania

## ABSTRACT TEXT

### AIMS

This experiential research work presents an innovative Group-MusicTherapy-Theatre-Plan (MusThePlan) the Authors have carried out to support the actors. The international scientific literature reports very few studies on this topic. The MusicTherapy gives rise to an individual psychophysical feedback and influences the emotional centres of the brain and the subconsciousness. Therefore, the Authors underline the effectiveness of preventive, educational and training goals of the MusThePlan to lead theatre students and actors to deal with anxiety and to overcome psychophysical weaknesses, shyness, emotional stress, in stage performances, to increase mental flexibility, awareness of one's identity and resources for a positive self-development and psychophysical health, to develop and strengthen social bonds and a network of subjects who work for social inclusion and the reduction of stigma.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

30 students from University Theatre Faculty. Weekly sessions for two months. Session length: 120 minutes. Setting, active listening, verbal/non verbal communication, bodily-rhythmic-sonorous-musical instruments. MusThePlan methodological phases: Free/structured production of Sonorous-Musical Energy/(SME) by body percussion, voice-canto, percussion instruments; Interaction of SME and Motor/Visual/Tactile-Energy; Rhythmic speech and singing drills using pacing and rhythmic patterns; Vocal exercises focusing on the pitch to improve the intonation and on the diction to improve the articulation and to lead up it to an increased intelligibility; Synchronization. Bodily-Environmental-Rhythmical-Sonorous-Vocal Energy (BERSVE) production features: different rhythmic-sonorous musical parameters; method of emotional swelling/culmination and then the slackening. Group-Musictherapy observation protocols and assessment. Imberty Indices to analyze the BERSVE production (general dynamism to monitor postural and kinetics tension/distension; formal complexity to monitor formal integration/disintegration of the oneself). Musictherapy SOMPAT/PEMI (Indices by the Authors) administration: the SOMPAT is settled through the observation of subject's eye and mouth and upper and low limbs motility, muscular tone, possible perspiration; the PEMI is used to monitor student's behavior evolution ( $t_0/t_n$ ).

### RESULTS

After the first month the students (non-musicians) learned to play percussion instruments and formed a musical band that played classical/modern music on the percussion instruments with the musictherapist/pianist/conductor in a public concert. At the end of the second month the students performed a public musical theatre show acting, dancing, singing and playing percussion instruments. The students highlighted the importance of the playful aspects of the group musical production in order to achieve emotional contact and harmony within the group. The students said they had improved kinetic and vocal and all the skills useful for acting activity and the nourishment of the bodily and emotional balance.

### CONCLUSIONS

The MusThePlan makes use of some specific MusicTherapy methodological models, techniques and strategies useful for the actors. The MusThePlan can destroy the individual "mask" and can be useful when the verbal language is unable to undermine the defense mechanisms of the subject. The MusThePlan improves actor's psychophysical activation, motivation, gratification, knowledge of one's own possibilities and the quality of life. Therefore, the MusThePlan could be useful to carry out targeted interventions for the actors with characteristics of repeatability and objectivity, and predictability of results. Furthermore, it would be useful to plan the University course/master "MusicTherapy for the Theatre".

# O 21 – Blau and the Little Big Minute: A Case Study on Bonding as a Creative Experience with an Adolescent with Autism Spectrum Disorder with High Abilities in an Art Therapy Workshop

*Madalina Gabriela Ilina<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> *Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, Cultura social-cultura visual, Estrategias artísticas en el siglo XXI, Valencia, Spain*

## ABSTRACT TEXT

This case study presents the experience of Blau, an 18-year-old adolescent with Autism Spectrum Disorder with High Intellectual Abilities.

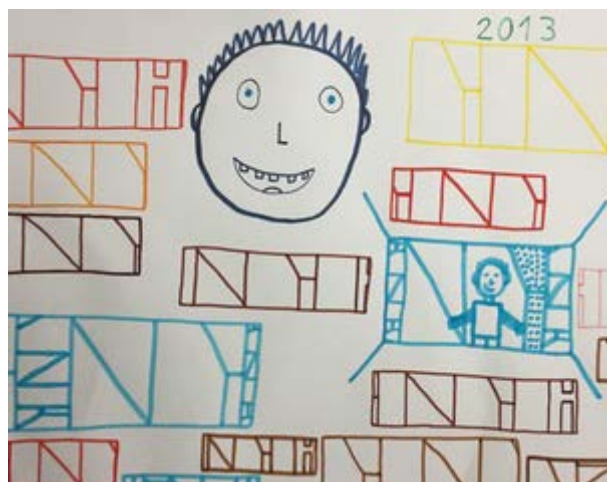
The research focused on the importance of developing the bond between art therapist and participant. This allowed the participant to develop a process of self-exploration through the artistic tool, and to improve his socialization skills.

The methodology was qualitative, analysing the experience through the observation during art therapeutic accompaniment, visual narratives, field's diary and own art therapist artist diary. On the other hand, quantitative, analyzing observation sheets on his tranquility, creative repetition and social interaction, and transferring it into a graphic visual representation.

The Art Therapy experience was structured in three phases that had the following results:

- At the beginning phase, Blau isolated himself in the repetitive representation of graphic patterns related to his TV Quiz Show *Saber y Ganar* that he used to watch with his parents and that was his favorite family time. He identified himself with the role of moderator of the TV Quiz Show and sometimes as a participant in it, thus controlling his anxiety facing uncertainty and avoiding any contact with his classmates and with the art therapist.
- In the intermediate phase, Blau demonstrated flexibility and acceptance of the new possibilities that artistic techniques and materials allowed him, he reflected and compared his imagination and creation, he took distance from the TV Quiz Show, without participating directly in the scene, but took on the role of set designer. He showed an improvement in his communication skills and his graphic patterns went from mechanism to openness of abstraction, he became aware of his life narrative and his emotions.
- In the final phase, Blau left the TV Quiz Show and accepted being himself, evidencing an introspection through the artistic tool, which allowed him to reflect on his self-concept through symbolization, he modeled the shapes of his patterns, explored new composition opening the contours of his graphic universe, wanting to work in a group and be part of it, seeking physical contact to be recognized and accepted, while becoming aware of his life story and his emotions.

In conclusion, the support of the therapeutic framework by the art therapist was fundamental, as Blau felt accompanied, safe and secure to explore his inner world, feeling that his rhythm, space and needs were respected without feeling judged. All this created the bond and so Blau moved from isolation to artistic openness, developing his own graphic alphabet, balancing his creative repetition to be himself and be with others.



Blau's graphic universe.



## O 22 – Art Therapy and the Materials of Life: A Shared Becoming

*Pamela Whitaker<sup>1</sup>, Adrienne McDermid-Thomas<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Ulster University, Belfast School of Art, Dundalk, Ireland

<sup>2</sup> Queen Margaret University, Occupational Therapy and Arts Therapies, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

### ABSTRACT TEXT

This presentation and discussion will encourage a consideration about the use of art materials within art therapy that supports the rights of nature. Both presenters will share examples of how organic and recyclable materials can encourage regenerative art making and kinship with natural ecologies.

Art therapy needs to consider its relationship with art media in alignment with urgent calls for climate action. Our profession should evoke an ethos of anti-oppressive practice regarding nature. As an ethical imperative the profession needs to reconsider its use of art materials and contextualise quality of life in terms of the rights of nature to support ecosystems. Human participants in art therapy engage in dynamic, transformative processes aimed at improving health and wellbeing, made possible by the involvement of non-human actors; principally but not exclusively, art materials. Within neoliberalism the art therapist engages in the ordering of resources, or the procuring of materials, within a structure that prioritises human consumption above consideration for planetary wellbeing.

An ethical sourcing of art media may include incorporating found objects (including collections of people's belongings), recycled materials, photography, digital art therapy and botanical arrangements to reduce the consumption of bought art materials. Art therapists can influence an ecological consciousness towards a nature-based ethics of care. The duty of art therapy to enhance quality of life encourages an ethos of responsibility and capacity to contribute beyond the human centric (Van Lith, 2024). The environmental identity of art therapy is paramount to promoting both the safeguarding and enhancement of nature. By widening our ethical duty of care to include the use of art materials that do no harm, art therapy can move beyond a reductionist approach into "societal, psychological, and climate welfare" (Cornwall, 2024, p. 156). Decolonising the practice of art therapy should address the rights of nature, as a foundation for art therapy's services to both humanity and our kinship to life ecosystems. The profession has a responsibility to recognise that all ecosystems on our planet are intertwined. Developing skills related to cooperation, partnership and fair distribution are essential as an antidote to privilege and entitlement over nature. One of the pillars of climate justice is adaptation. As art therapists and art therapy educators move into a new era of decolonised and anti-oppressive practice, the issue of how we conceptualise, articulate and ethically underpin our work with materials will be of key importance to imagining anew our professional responsibilities.

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# O 23 – Trauma-Informed Integrated Expressive Arts Therapies Model: Enhancing Emotional Healing and Resilience in Humanitarian Contexts

*Camilla Mele<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore Milano, Psychology, Milano, Italy

## ABSTRACT TEXT

Oral presentation of a short-term integrated trauma-informed creative arts therapy intervention model I designed for humanitarian aid in refugee camps in Jordan, funded by the Erasmus+ programme.

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

1. To enhance emotional expression in children: Through the use of non-verbal methods such as painting, drawing and sculpture, art therapy provides children with an opportunity to express their emotions when words are insufficient.
2. Building resilience in children: Trauma-informed expressive arts therapies help children reconnect with their sense of agency, enabling them to rebuild their resilience in the face of adversity.
3. Promoting healing through creativity: The creative process in art therapy helps children process trauma in a safe and controlled environment, allowing them to explore their emotions in a way that promotes healing.
4. Training humanitarian workers: Equipping local educators, health workers and community leaders with the tools to effectively support traumatised children, while integrating strategies to prevent and manage compassion fatigue, burnout, and vicarious trauma. This includes training humanitarian workers to recognise symptoms of emotional distress in themselves and others, promoting a culture of emotional self-care and encouraging practices that support personal well-being.
5. Create a sustainable model of care: Ensuring that both children and humanitarian workers benefit from sustainable, trauma-informed arts therapy practices that continue to thrive long after the initial intervention phase.

## METHODOLOGY

The intervention model combines needs analysis, training of trainers on-line and on-site modules for humanitarian workers and hands-on art therapy workshops for children, with a focus on preventing and addressing emotional distress among professionals.

1. Module A: Training Humanitarian Workers. This module focuses on trauma-informed approaches and the use of expressive arts therapies. It aims to increase participants' awareness of the impact of trauma on children and provide them with practical tools to help children express their emotions through art. This training also covers self-care practices for humanitarian workers to prevent burnout and manage compassion fatigue, including relaxation exercises, stress reduction techniques and emotional regulation strategies through art therapy.
2. Module B: Art therapy workshops for children. These workshops are designed by the trainers to provide a safe, creative space for children to express their trauma and begin the process of emotional healing. The workshops use a range of artistic media including drawing, painting and sculpture to help children process their emotions and build resilience.
3. Integration of movement, art and drama therapies: Recognising that trauma affects individuals holistically – emotionally, physically and psychologically – the projects focused on integrating movement, art and drama therapies as part of a more comprehensive intervention. The multidisciplinary approach includes movement therapies, which allow children to reconnect with their bodies and express emotions through physical movement, creative arts and drama. This model enables children to express their stories and feelings through role play, improvisation and story-telling, fostering a sense of empowerment and agency.

The intervention model emphasises the importance of creating a safe space for both refugee children and aid workers. Trauma-informed arts therapies approach was crucial, ensuring that both groups are supported in a way that acknowledges their pain while promoting recovery and well-being.

## O 24 – Theory of Regenerative Music Therapy: Promoting Inner and Outer Sustainability

*Melody Schwantes<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Appalachian State University, Hayes School of Music, Boone– NC, USA

### ABSTRACT TEXT

Regenerative approaches to arts-based practice draw upon ecological, systemic thinking and are grounded in principles of interdependence, balance, and holistic well-being (Kenny, 2006; Rolvsjord, 2006; Stige & Aarø, 2012). This presentation, rooted in music therapy, explores how regenerative approaches (Hutchins & Storm, 2019) can address inner and outer sustainability. Regenerative music therapy recognizes the need for deep engagement in the inner and outer worlds, acknowledging the direct correlation between inner crises and the broader environmental challenges we face (Ames, 2023; Seabrook, 2020).

Central to this approach is the integration of multiple dualities such as: inner life and outer presence, left and right hemispheres, day and night, gentle and assertive, among others. Through this approach, therapists can work with divergent perspectives (e.g. opening up, exploring, expansion) simultaneously with convergent perspectives (consolidating, grounding, bringing together) to move clients towards emergence, where new ideas and breakthroughs can exist.

This regenerative approach to therapy aims to move beyond mechanistic models of care, fostering a shift toward living systems logic—one that values interdependence and collective regeneration, both in individuals and the world around them. A regenerative approach to music therapy nurtures compassionate relationships where individuals are encouraged to express themselves musically while respecting and allowing space for others to do the same. This aligns with the overarching goal of fostering a balance between individuality and group interdependence, reflected in practices such as group improvisation, songwriting, and collaborative performance. Through experiential practices such as sound stories and music-assisted relaxation, music therapists can provide profound opportunities for clients to reconnect with their inner and outer worlds, contributing to a more sustainable and regenerative future. This presentation will include examples from clinical practice as well as a guided music-assisted relaxation experience.

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## O 25 – Sounding Relief: Music Therapy as a Non-Pharmacological Approach for Rural Adults with Autoimmune Disease and Mental Health Challenges

*Sylvia Grace Smith<sup>1</sup>, Melody Schwantes<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> *Appalachian State University, Music Therapy, Boone, USA*

### ABSTRACT TEXT

Adults living with autoimmune disease (AD) often experience increased stress, anxiety, social isolation, depression, pain, discomfort, and physical challenges (Global Autoimmune Institute, 2024). The creative arts therapies (Raudenská et al., 2023; Rogers-Melnick et al., 2021; Torres et al., 2018) have looked into the impacts of these modalities on chronic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, cancer, fibromyalgia, chronic pain, and sickle cell disease. However, little research has been done to address the mental health needs of adults with AD. This study explores the feasibility and acceptability of music therapy (MT) as a non-invasive, holistic intervention to improve psychosocial well-being in rural adults with ADs and self-reported anxiety or depression. The findings aim to inform the development of a scalable, effective pilot study for future research on the use of MT for this under-resourced population. This presentation will describe the preliminary findings.

We have recruited adults aged 18 and older, diagnosed with AD and reporting symptoms of anxiety or depression. Participants have reported having the following autoimmune diseases to date: Type 1 diabetes, celiac disease, and chronic pain, and are mostly women and are on average 25 to 40 years old. Participants have completed psychometric measurements for anxiety, depression, and quality of life before the intervention, and participants could choose in-person or telehealth based sessions. Our 8-week, resource-oriented approach (Rolvjord, 2010) is a strengths-based, contextual model of MT in which each participant works with the therapist to develop their personal goals related to overall well being. Principles of the resource-oriented approach include acknowledging and emphasizing client strengths, potentials, and resources, equal collaboration between client and therapist, viewing clients within their broader context, using music as a resource for health, and fostering positive experiences and empowerment.

Participants have identified the follow goal areas that they want to address during music therapy: reducing anxiety and stress, finding perspective on what they can and can not control, stress management, and stress reduction in regards to their spouse. Participants have chosen song listening, playlist creation, songwriting with use of artificial intelligence, improvisation, music-assisted relaxation, and electronic music creation. Some participants have chosen in-person sessions, while others have chosen telehealth due to their location or health status. While telehealth is more accessible and allows participants to conserve their energy, it can be a more challenging process for live music creation as well as the need for the clinician to convey warmth and empathy across the digital space.

By exploring the acceptability and feasibility of MT for rural adults with ADs and mental health concerns, this study contributes valuable insights into a potential intervention for a population in need of accessible, non-pharmacological treatment options to enhance their quality of life.

# O 26 – Decreasing Delirium through Music in Critically Ill Mechanically Ventilated Older Adults—The DDM Randomized Clinical Trial

*Babar Khan<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Indiana University School of Medicine, Medicine, Carmel, USA

## ABSTRACT TEXT

### IMPORTANCE

A majority of critically ill older adults develop delirium during their ICU stay which predisposes them to downstream complications.

### OBJECTIVE

To determine if a music listening intervention decreases delirium duration and delirium severity and improves pain and anxiety symptoms in mechanically ventilated critically ill patients.

### DESIGN, SETTING, AND PARTICIPANTS

A multi-center, randomized controlled trial with concealed outcomes assessments among critically ill mechanically ventilated patients was conducted from February 2020 to December 2023. Patients were enrolled from the ICU services of two Indiana hospitals affiliated with Indiana University School of Medicine, and from Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN.

### INTERVENTION

A seven-day music listening intervention comprising slow-tempo (60–80 beats per minute) classical and contemporary music, delivered twice daily through noise cancelling headphones and iPads<sup>®</sup>, was compared to a silence-track control delivered under identical conditions.

### MAIN OUTCOMES AND MEASURES

The primary outcome was delirium/coma free days during the seven-day intervention period assessed by the Confusion Assessment Method for the ICU (CAM-ICU) and the Richmond Agitation Sedation Scale (RASS). The secondary outcomes were delirium severity assessed by the CAM-ICU-7, pain assessed by the Critical Care Pain Observation Tool (CPOT), and anxiety assessed by the Visual Analogue Scale- Anxiety (VAS-A).

### RESULTS

A total of 158 patients were randomized [mean age 68 (SD 9.2) years, 46% females, and 20% African American]. In an intention to treat analysis, no differences were found in the number of delirium/coma-free days in the music intervention [median 2.5 (IQR 0–5) days] versus the silence-track control [3 (IQR 0–5) days,  $p = 0.77$ ]. The intervention did not improve delirium severity (mean CAM-ICU-7 music 4.08 (SD 2.22), control 4.32 (2.27),  $p = 0.39$ ), pain (mean CPOT music 0.35 (0.57), control 0.30 (0.48),  $p = 0.72$ ), or anxiety symptoms (mean VAS-A music 39.41 (30.69), control 39.08 (28.31),  $p = 0.935$ ) over the seven-day intervention period.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RELEVANCE

Among mechanically ventilated critically ill older adults, a seven-day music listening intervention delivered through noise cancelling headphones and iPads<sup>®</sup>, did not significantly decrease delirium duration, delirium severity, pain, or anxiety symptoms.

## O 27 – Specialized Language in Music Therapy: A Challenge for the Profession. Implication in Training, Practice and Research

Francesca Maria Rubbettino<sup>1</sup>, Ferdinando Suvini<sup>2</sup>, Chiara Maria Bieker<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> New Day ETS, Music Therapy, Catanzaro, Italy

<sup>2</sup> Conservatorio di Ferrara, Music Therapy, Ferrara, Italy

<sup>3</sup> Aulòs APS, Music Therapy, Trieste, Italy

### ABSTRACT TEXT

Music therapy, a continuously evolving discipline, faces the growing need to define a specialized language that precisely delineates its methods, objectives, and results. This need emerges in particular in the contexts of education, professional practice and research, where clear and unambiguous communication is fundamental to guarantee the effectiveness of interventions and the validity of research.

This speech explores the challenges linked to the definition of a specialized language in music therapy, analyzing the different theoretical and methodological perspectives that characterize the discipline. It highlights how the lack of a shared language can hinder communication among professionals, the validation of practices, and the dissemination of music therapy in clinical and social settings.

Furthermore, some proposals are presented to overcome these challenges, including the creation of a terminological glossary, the definition of guidelines for research and clinical practice, and the promotion of interdisciplinary dialogue that favors the integration of music therapy with other disciplines.

The final aim is to contribute to the construction of a specialized language that can strengthen the professional identity of music therapy, promote its scientific validation, and favor its dissemination as an effective tool for individual and collective well-being.



## O 28 – Music as a Health Resource: Community Music Therapy for Older Adults

*Lydia Murray<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Appalachian State University, Department of Music Therapy, Boone, USA

### ABSTRACT TEXT

#### INTRODUCTION

Around 80% of older people live with and manage at least one chronic condition in their day to day lives. The rate of increasing medical costs and lack of access to care in the United States has a direct impact on their day to day quality of life. For older adults who live in more rural areas, many individuals experience a lack of transportation, lower income, and shortage of services. These barriers make it increasingly difficult for individuals in rural Appalachia to receive care if they are in need of additional mental health support. Countries with increasing elderly populations saw a significant correlation between increasing age and mental health issues, including depression and overall poor emotional well being particularly in rural areas. All of these combined factors point out a glaring need for additional health resources for older adults living in less populated areas. Participation in group music therapy experiences such as drumming, singing, and listening to preferred music has a wide range of observed health benefits. This includes but is not limited to improved cognition, mood, reminiscence, group cohesion, and self-expression.

#### OBJECTIVE(S)

The purpose of this group was to explore the effects of community music therapy (CoMT) on the social connectedness, cognitive stimulation, mood improvement, and quality of life of older adults in rural appalachia.

#### METHODOLOGY

The CoMT group met on a biweekly basis, and participated in music therapy experiences such as drumming, therapeutic singing, movement to music, instrument play, and preferred music listening. The group chose a long form project of choosing, preparing, and performing a song for their local faith congregation at the end of the 8 sessions together. A focus group interview was conducted after the 8 CoMT sessions and the group performance to gather participant feedback and evaluation of their experience within the group.

#### RESULTS/FINDINGS

The recording of the focus group interview was transcribed and analyzed for relevant themes. Four main themes emerged,

- 1) unclear/unsure initial expectations about music therapy,
- 2) improved mood and energy,
- 3) social connection through a shared experience, and
- 4) music validates/validated their life experiences.

#### CONCLUSION

CoMT appeared to be a valuable, beneficial resource for older adults in the community. Recommendations for other groups include meeting on a weekly basis, increasing funding for music therapy services, providing a goal or focus for the group to help it feel more accessible, and expanding the types of groups and music therapy services available.

## O 29 – Modern Harmonies: Providing a Rich Music Therapy Experience Through the Merging of Telehealth Services and Music Technology

*Landon Coroi<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Appalachian State University, Hayes School of Music, Boone, USA

### ABSTRACT TEXT

Although music technology has become more readily available, the integration of electronic music and digital audio workstations (DAW) into music therapy practice and education is limited (Crooke & McFerran, 2019; Knight & Krout, 2016). The application of these resources is not only a skill issue but an ethical issue as well. Under-resourced populations have utilized music technology for decades through the use of beat-making and genres such as rap and hip-hop, which are integral to the culture of these groups (Campbell, 2023; Crooke and McFerran, 2019; Viegas, 2018). Rap and hip-hop have paved the way for social discourse and positive change while serving as a platform within communities for discussing oppressive social and political systems. Neglecting to integrate music technology into practice is a limitation of treatment with those whose identity connects with these cultures. Additionally, the use of DAWs in virtual music therapy settings with all populations allows clinicians to increase access of services to clients. The ability for service users to attend music therapy virtually when in-person sessions are not an option due to social, economic, or physical disability allows for an increased sense of agency; whereas a lack of therapeutic resources may be associated with a loss of control (Cephas et al., 2022). The use of music technology is associated with increasing confidence, decreasing physical, cognitive, and social barriers, and allowing the formation of musical identity (Crooke & McFerran, 2019; Viegas, 2018). Clients who have access during music therapy sessions to electronic equipment and DAWs with sound libraries have near-infinite choices in personalizing their music experience (Engelbrecht & Shoemark, 2013; Knight & Krout, 2016; McLellan, 2021). Clients are able to modify not only the instrumentation, but additional effects such as reverb, resonance, sustain, delay, and distortion while exploring fixed scale and chordal structure, live looping, and sampling (Viegas, 2018). The ability for service users to record, keep, and listen to products of the music therapy experience outside of sessions allows for the integration of therapeutic material and enhances the overall therapeutic experience (Snape et al., 2024). This presentation will serve as a discussion and guide on the application of interventions and ethics of incorporating music technology, including DAWs and electronic equipment, into music therapy practice. Participants will have hands-on experience creating digital music, including free and low-cost resources to utilize in in-person and virtual therapeutic settings.

# O 30 – Stress Regulation and Burn-out prevention through the use of the Kestenberg Movement Profile (KMP)

*Hemma Gerstl*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University Clinic Tulln, Psychiatry, Vienna, Austria

## ABSTRACT TEXT

We live in a dynamic, increasingly digitized (work) world. The acceleration, unstable work processes, constant availability, and continuous distractions caused by massive visual and auditory sensory overload lead to growing stress and existential anxiety in society. This raises the question: how can one remain internally stable and physically relaxed in these countless stress-inducing situations?

The key lies in a healthy balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, two distinct branches of the autonomic nervous system. The sympathetic nervous system enables us to face challenges by causing muscle tension, increasing heart rate, and raising blood pressure. It dilates the bronchi and activates the sensory organs. Depending on the situation, the sympathetic system is supported by hormones such as adrenaline.

The parasympathetic nervous system takes over once the tension or shock subsides. It returns all the involved organs to a resting state, causing the heart to calm and slow down, the muscles to relax, and the blood pressure to drop. The supportive hormone here is serotonin, which fosters a content and relaxed mood. In this state of leisure, one can recover pleasantly and generate new, creative ideas. It is in this state that we gain access to our emotional evaluation system. Chronic stress suppresses the parasympathetic system, leading to foreseeable consequences such as sleep disorders, digestive problems, and a diminished libido.

A good balance between these two forces is the foundation for overall health and successful stress regulation. Both research and practice show that personal competencies in dealing with stress can be trained. Such training must include the body, as emphasized by embodiment research.

The Kestenberg Movement Profile (KMP), a holistic model of movement development created by Judith Kestenberg, is an ideal tool to initiate valuable experiential learning in relation to stress management. It works with two systems:

1. The Tension Flow/Rhythmic Flow System, which comprises 10 rhythmic patterns corresponding to 5 main developmental phases. These rhythms are learned developmentally between the ages of 0 to 6, but accompany us throughout our entire lives.
2. The Shape Flow/Form System, which reflects movement in space and the complexity of object relations.

The different rhythms and the shape flow provide insight into how a person deals with their needs, emotions, and social relationships.

This presentation will demonstrate how conscious physical engagement with both KMP systems can improve access to one's own self and emotions and thus have a positive effect on personal stress regulation.

# O 31 – The Use of Art Therapy When Working with Children: How to Help Children Express Emotions and Communicate

*Eva Hegarová<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Akademie Alternativa, Czech Republic

## ABSTRACT TEXT

**Art therapy is one of the effective methods for working with children who have difficulty expressing their emotions, communicating, and processing inner experiences.** By using the artistic process, children can safely explore their inner worlds, express feelings, and develop social skills without the need for words. Through drawing, painting, modeling, or other creative activities, they discover new ways of self-expression, thereby strengthening their emotional stability and communication abilities.

**Research shows that art therapy helps reduce children's stress, anxiety, and frustration.** It also promotes creativity, problem-solving abilities, and increases their self-confidence. Art therapy represents an innovative and effective approach that enhances children's communication skills and helps them understand themselves. This means of expressing emotions and building social relationships has wide applications in therapy, education, and psychology.

## O 32 – Dramatherapy in Schools: Enhancing Teacher Wellbeing

*Kristýna Hlaváčová<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Primary School Pardubice – Svítkov, School Psychologist, Chrudim, Czech Republic

### ABSTRACT TEXT

Stress, burnout syndrome, psychohygiene, the enhancement of psychological resilience, and teacher wellbeing are highly relevant and important issues that will be the focus of this lecture.

The teaching profession can be intellectually stimulating, emotionally engaging, and deeply fulfilling. However, it can also be extremely exhausting. The demands placed on teachers are significant and span a wide range of duties, while the role itself carries considerable responsibility.

The teaching profession involves not only educational activities such as planning, organization, assessment, and an individualized approach to student learning, but also a broader educational and developmental influence. In their daily work, teachers contribute to shaping children's personalities, strengthening their willpower, fostering emotional regulation, and cultivating moral values, attitudes, and opinions. They also play a key role in promoting positive relationships among students, resolving conflicts, and supporting the development of cooperation, communication, and social skills. An integral part of the teaching profession is also ongoing communication with parents, colleagues, and school management—all of which require mutual respect, compromise, and collaboration to achieve the educational and developmental objectives.

These responsibilities, combined with the high expectations placed on teachers by society, often result in significant psychological strain. Consequently, teachers are among the professional groups most at risk of experiencing burnout syndrome.

In this lecture, we will explore ways to support teachers' mental health, enhance their psychological resilience, and promote their overall wellbeing through dramatherapy. Wellbeing—or life satisfaction—can be evaluated across several key dimensions of human experience: physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual. Dramatherapy offers a wide range of techniques and exercises that can be effectively applied to enhance clients' life satisfaction. As such, it holds considerable potential as a practical and impactful method for improving the wellbeing of teachers—and not only teachers.

## O 33 – A Continuum of Musical Care: How a Range of Music-Based Interventions Can Support Families with Young Children

*Elizabeth Coombes<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> University of South Wales, Allied Health, Newport, United Kingdom

### ABSTRACT TEXT

Recent music therapy research dedicated to families with infants and pre-school children indicates a range of benefits that can occur depending on the aims and goals of the therapy.

This presentation will describe and discuss music therapy research and practice with vulnerable families in different settings. It will include discussion of a psychosocial intervention for families with premature babies (Coombes, 2020), and contrast this with weekly group music therapy for displaced families (Coombes et al. 2025). Common factors in terms of change mechanisms will be identified, and recommendations for future music therapy practice identified.

In addition, suggestions as to a continuum of musical care practices will be posited, outlining potential policy directions in family musical care provision globally.

## O 34 – Creative Drama as a Supporting Tool in Art Therapies

*Dana Kollarova<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Faculty of Education, Nitra, Slovakia

### ABSTRACT TEXT

In the interest of the quality of education and upbringing in both regular and special schools and institutions, optimal methods and tools for working with children, youth, and adults are being sought. Teachers, educators, lecturers, and therapists look for approaches that enable effective influence on natural and relaxed communication and the expression of all abilities and potential. In this context, creative drama emerges as a valuable contribution to both educational theory and practice. Within the process of pedagogical thinking, creative drama is perceived not only in terms of its practicality but also in terms of emotional experience, with its core rooted in social-aesthetic learning that emphasizes positive experiences. Its fundamental method is role play, through which, we support expressive abilities, natural behavior, teach the distinction between what is essential and non-essential, as well as the ability to perceive and understand art. It is through the intentional artistic expression of ideas (musical, literary, visual, movement-dance) that we can overcome communication barriers, influence the emotional side of personality, and through positive experiences from role-playing games, prevent psychosocial failures with the goal of achieving psychophysical relief. The paper will present the possibilities of using role-playing games in artistic therapeutic approaches with an emphasis on psychophysical relaxation and will also bring current research findings.



WORKSHOPS

# WORKSHOPS



# WS 01 – Psychophonetics: A Psychology of Freedom Through Expressive Arts, Healing, and Transformational Drama

Thomas Le Cornu<sup>1</sup>, Yehuda Tagar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Skola Empatie, Counselling, Žulová, Czech Republic

<sup>2</sup> Skola Empatie, Counselling, Bernolákovo, Slovakia

## ABSTRACT TEXT

This experiential workshop introduces Psychophonetics, a transformative modality that integrates expressive arts into a dynamic process for self-awareness, healing, and personal growth. Focusing on Self-Development, Self-Discovery, and Self-Confidence, the workshop offers a creative and structured approach to exploring and transforming internal experiences. Participants will engage in dialogue, movement, gesture, visualization, sound, and drama, which will support them in uncovering their true potential and fostering self-empowerment. Rooted in Anthroposophy, phenomenology, and experimental theatre, Psychophonetics empowers individuals to become their own healers, teachers, and leaders. By combining elements from these disciplines, this method helps individuals connect to their deeper self-awareness and promotes transformation in both personal and professional aspects of life. This approach not only fosters a deeper understanding of one's internal world but also enhances one's ability to express, communicate, and connect with others on a meaningful level.

The workshop will include a range of exercises designed to engage participants in sensing, movement, visualization, and sound. These activities are intended to activate and expand participants' awareness of their physical, emotional, and mental states. Through these exercises, participants will begin to explore the mind-body connection, gaining insight into their current challenges and discovering pathways to overcome them. The workshop's activities will be designed to facilitate both individual and group exploration, enabling participants to connect with others in the group and share their experiences while maintaining a focus on their own personal growth.

A key aspect of Psychophonetics is its emphasis on methodical empathy, a process that encourages deep listening and understanding of oneself and others. This is a central theme of the workshop, and participants will be guided through various phases of empathy that will support them in deepening their self-awareness and cultivating the emotional intelligence necessary to create meaningful change. The experiential nature of the workshop invites participants to embody these processes, encouraging active participation rather than passive observation.

Throughout the session, participants will have the opportunity to explore their personal narratives through gesture, movement, and drama, allowing them to express and transform their inner conflicts and challenges. The workshop will offer tools for self-reflection and self-expression, helping individuals to integrate their personal experiences and identify new possibilities for growth. The dramatic process of Psychophonetics invites participants to explore their internal stories, transforming these narratives into a more empowering and liberating form.

The ultimate aim of this workshop is to provide participants with practical tools for ongoing self-development, fostering self-discovery and building self-confidence. By the end of the session, participants will leave with a greater sense of clarity, empowerment, and a renewed commitment to their personal and professional growth.

No prior experience with Psychophonetics is necessary to attend this workshop. It is open to all individuals who are willing to explore, engage, and experience the transformative power of this unique method of self-expression and healing.

# **WS 02 – Connecting to and Playing with the Paradoxical Role of the Clown. The Clown Role Gives Us Permission to Embrace Our Weaknesses and Discover Our Strengths, Becoming More Lighthearted, Fun and Humorous**

*Jeff Gordon<sup>1</sup>, Yoram Shenhar<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Joy of Heart, Therapeutic Clowning, Netanya, Israel

## **ABSTRACT TEXT**

Playing with the Paradoxical Role of the Clown and its Possibilities for Personal and Collective Growth and Healing. When we see the antics of the Clown we laugh at their ability to make fools of themselves and reflect back to us the absurdities of life, the illusion that we are in control and that we know how life will unfold. In invoking the role for ourselves through a process of drama therapy we are encouraged to laugh at our weaknesses, play with our inner conflicts, fail, fall down and bounce back again. Embracing our paradoxical nature, we can feel secure in our insecurity, confidently shy, courageously fearful and accepting of our child within our adult role. The role opens us up to a more lighthearted approach to life, where we can play with all the possibilities and take more courageous decisions and more creative paths. It is a role that unmask our authentic self and allows us to be more fully present, spontaneous curious and playful. It is a role that breaks down both inner and outer barriers to our expressive self and in doing so brings us closer to others. Challenging social norms, the anxiety of conforming to expectations placed upon us is dissolved and we can rediscover how we really want to be in our everyday interactions. The Clown thinks less and feels more.

The process of invoking the Clown involves firstly, understanding our dominant role plays in life and secondly, physically embodying those that are opposite in nature and conflictual. In light of Robert Landys theory of the role and counter role and guide. It also supports Jungs work on the 'Transcendent Function'. The Clown emerges when they are played out together. Having then invoked this role we can use it to playfully and humorously challenge the emotional and behavioral patterns that undermine our positive wellbeing.

The Workshop will involve play, improvisation, role play and touch upon the Clown, giving an insight into the therapeutic aspects of this deeply human role.

# WS 03 – “What If We Couldn’t Hear the Music?” Self-Experience Workshop Based on Work with Deaf Population in Bogota, Colombia

*David Caicedo Galvis<sup>1</sup>, Magaly Mora<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá, Centro Filarmónico Escolar San Carlos IED, Bogotá, Colombia

## ABSTRACT TEXT

We have assumed that music can be heard. But it has more dimensions.

For millennia we have used it to dance, to move, to accompany rituals and to close or open epochs. We have also used it to make the meaning of a text more forceful or to tell stories. It is a social mobilizer. We feel its vibration in our bodies when we go to a great concert and we notice the bass and percussion in our feet and chest. It has served us to express complex feelings and is a vehicle to unleash our creativity. Music is a complex phenomenon that involves multiple dimensions, perhaps like no other art, leading people to engage in a forceful entrainment. We have assumed that music is heard because we are listeners. But what if we were deaf, could we participate in its other dimensions? The answer is yes. If we find the way.

The project “Vamos a la Filarmónica” of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Bogota is a great project that impacts more than 20 thousand children in this city and that among many other places, has two training centers that incorporate inclusion. For more than two years we have been working in one of these centers and accompanied by hearing impaired children we have learned from Colombian Sign Language to aspects that help us understand how deaf people perceive the world. This has led us to think about how to develop learning experiences that enhance their sense of belonging, their self-esteem and their aesthetic enjoyment of music. One characteristic of the processes we have developed has to do with integration between hearing and deaf people, promoting inclusion and breaking down social barriers. We work on increasing the recognition of sensations associated with music, and their knowledge of musical language, such as rhythm and musical figures. This work has the potential to help us understand how to enhance and take advantage of the multiple dimensions of music not only in the deaf but also in the hearing, enabling new pedagogical and therapeutic approaches for us.

What can we learn from the deaf through music? To find out, this proposal consists of a music therapy workshop, whose main theme is the enjoyment of music from a perspective that includes its different dimensions, beyond listening. The target audience is young people and hearing adults with or without musical knowledge who want to explore the musical perspective of the deaf. What this workshop hopes to achieve is an understanding and awareness of how the hearing impaired perceive music and how we all, both hearing and deaf, share multiple dimensions in our human experience. It is also hoped to provide new perspectives and ways to enjoy musical elements such as rhythm, emotion, vibration, texture, and even harmony.

Amplify your musical experience by learning about the Deaf world!

# WS 04 – Probody Artmaking as Method: Caring for the Body Through Body–Object Interaction

*Peilin Liang<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Department of English, Linguistics and Theatre Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Singapore

## ABSTRACT TEXT

### INTRODUCTION

How can performers concurrently care for themselves as they create performances? In this theatre workshop, participants get to sample exercises taken from Towards Probody Artmaking, a multi-iterative, interdisciplinary, and movement-based Practice as Research (PaR) project. The research inquiry was prompted by my long-term observation of bodily deterioration and damage suffered by performers from both professional and community contexts. Over a span of five years (2021–2025), the project has set out to answer the research question by engaging puppeteers, puppet makers, movement artists, physiotherapists, Pilates educators, theatre students and affiliates of National University of Singapore, as well as community members. Through the five iterations, we have sought to integrate movement-based care practices into the creative process of performance making.

### GOALS

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate some knowledge of safe and efficient movement
- Integrate safe and efficient movement into play
- Activate creative expression through play

### MAIN TOPIC

- Introduction to Towards Probody Artmaking
- Moving with care
- Slow motion ball game
- Carrying peanut
- Together with Hoku

### TARGET AUDIENCE

- Performers or community performers interested in self-care through play and movement

# WS 05 – The Music of You: A Journey to Self-Discovery

*Jarmila Bučíková<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> MAUT assistant, Music therapy, Prague, Czech Republic

## ABSTRACT TEXT

The human voice is deeply connected to self-confidence, emotional expression, and personal authenticity. This interactive music therapy workshop explores how vocal techniques, guided improvisation, and musical self-reflection can serve as powerful tools for personal growth and empowerment.

Participants will engage in structured vocal exercises designed to enhance presence, release emotional blocks, and cultivate a sense of inner strength. Techniques such as vocal grounding, musical mirroring, power mantras, and expressive soundscapes will be used to help individuals access their authentic voice and overcome barriers to self-expression. The session will also incorporate elements of guided imagery and archetypal exploration through music, allowing participants to connect with deeper layers of their identity.

By integrating music therapy principles with self-development techniques, this workshop offers an experience that helps individuals unlock their voice, build confidence, and harness the healing power of sound. Participants will leave with practical vocal tools that they can apply in their daily lives to foster resilience, self-assurance, and emotional well-being.

## KEYWORDS

music therapy, voice empowerment, self-confidence, vocal expression, sound healing, personal development.

These advanced music therapy techniques help participants connect with their authentic voice, overcome expression barriers, and build confidence through sound and improvisation.



# WS 06 – Bridging Real and Virtual Environments: Augmenting Virtual Reality as a Path to Embodiment

*Loredana Larionescu<sup>1</sup>, Konrad Mihat<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Asociația Entuziart, Colegiul Psihologilor din România, Bucharest, Romania

<sup>2</sup> coVR Videos, 360 video production, Bucharest, Romania

## ABSTRACT TEXT

This workshop will explore the integration of 360° film in therapeutic and personal development settings, focusing on how immersive experiences can enhance body awareness, emotional regulation, and overall well-being. We will present two applications of panoramic films created by our team in affective and movement-based interventions, highlighting their potential for fostering deep mind-body connections.

1. Amniotic artherart, a 360° film that immerses participants in fluid, organic motion, combined with an in-person, hands-on, affective touch and weight-support intervention. This approach enhances participants' sense of safety, relaxation, and connection with their bodily sensations.
2. Danstopic 360, a film utilized in a burnout prevention workshop, where participants will transition from immersive viewing to a body-mapping and dance movement therapy intervention, encouraging participants to externalize emotions and reconnect with their physical presence through creative movement and an aesthetic dialogue with their drawn body-map.

Throughout this experiential workshop, we will try out directly and discuss the effects of these interventions on various groups, emphasizing key findings related to sensory integration, emotional expression, and self-regulation. Additionally, we will address critical technical and ethical considerations, including the importance of trauma-informed and empathetic facilitation, the necessity for aesthetically enriching VR experiences (beyond purely functional applications), and strategies for evaluating therapeutic outcomes using mixed-methods research designs.

Attendees will gain insight into how immersive media can be thoughtfully incorporated into art therapy and movement-based practices. The session will include interactive components where participants will experience first-hand how 360° film can be used to create embodied, therapeutic experiences. The discussion will also open pathways for further research and interdisciplinary collaboration, particularly in designing VR interventions that prioritize artistic depth, psychological safety, and therapeutic effectiveness.

This workshop is ideal for art therapists, movement therapists, psychologists, and creative practitioners interested in integrating immersive technologies into therapeutic contexts. No prior experience with VR or 360° film is required—only an openness to exploring new dimensions of sensory and embodied storytelling in therapeutic practice.

## WS 07 – Using Dramatherapeutic Techniques to Enhance Wellbeing

*Kristýna Hlaváčová<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Primary School Pardubice – Svítkov, School Psychologist, Czech Republic

### ABSTRACT TEXT

Stress, burnout syndrome, psychohygiene, the enhancement of psychological resilience, and overall wellbeing are increasingly relevant and important topics in today's fast-paced world. These will be the focus of our workshop. In this session, we will explore together how we can care for our mental health, strengthen psychological resilience, and improve wellbeing through the use of dramatherapeutic techniques. Wellbeing—or life satisfaction—can be evaluated across several dimensions of human experience: physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual. Dramatherapy offers a diverse range of techniques and exercises that can be effectively applied to support development in these areas. As such, it holds significant potential as a practical and meaningful method for enhancing wellbeing. During the workshop, we will engage with selected techniques and exercises that may be beneficial in fostering life satisfaction and personal resilience.



# WS 08 – Breathe In, Breathe Out— The Harmonica as a Tool of Relaxation and Self-Expression Within the Context of Music Therapy

Viktor Kemény<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Budapest, Hungary

## ABSTRACT TEXT

Harmonica is often called the most personal instrument of them all, due to various reasons. It is one of the only wind instruments in the world which can produce sound with both blowing air into it and drawing air from it and which can play multiple notes at the same time. It is designed to be beginner friendly but capable of playing a wide range of sounds and styles like sound imitations or various western and eastern scales. And because of its small size it is not just easy to carry but makes it almost invisible while you play it making the experience similar to singing.

These qualities make it an ideal tool for music therapy. While music therapy usually uses various pitched and un-pitched percussion instruments, the harmonica is similarly accessible to the musically untrained clients while being able to aid various therapeutic goals better. It can relieve stress and anxiety due to the breathing patterns used while also aiding breath control like breathing exercises. It does that while inciting fun and joy and connection when playing with others while increasing self-confidence and self-expression. These outcomes can be greatly increased with a couple of techniques which are designed specifically for music therapy settings.

## WS 09 – Insight into the Principles of the Artistic–Therapeutic Method “Dance Constellation”

Tomáš Beníček<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Akademie Alternativa s.r.o., Co-Founder and Managing Director, Olomouc, Czech Republic

### ABSTRACT TEXT

This hands-on workshop will offer participants an insight into the principles of the artistic-therapeutic method “Dance Constellation.”

The workshop will provide a practical experience with the basic form of the exercise “Dance Orchestra,” and together we will explore exercises designed for gradual familiarization with the method’s principles.

Depending on the composition of the group, the workshop will then incorporate elements of dance-movement therapy in combination with principles of art therapy, music therapy, or drama therapy.

## WS 10 – Squeeze the Lemon within Us

*Dorit Drori<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Tel Katzir, Israel

### ABSTRACT TEXT

The workshop is based on personal and group process. No need for any previous photography experience. I will provide photographic paper.

We will open the workshop using mindfulness work with our breath, body scan and the rising emotion to what emerges now.

We will explore the “Butterfly Hug” technique—a simple and amazing tool for soothing and strengthening resources. Basic practice relaxes the nervous system and allows for an enjoyable experience.

The “butterfly hug” can be a basic practice with patient, and can be practice from an early age even at home. The practice, especially with patients experiencing stress and anxiety, allows a rewarding and empowering experience while feeling regulated and controlled.

We will explore our personal fingerprint in order to get another kind of insight from the unconscious through the traditional development process of analog photographic paper.

Each participant will also choose a card from the 200 “Hand Path Cards” which I created in the past 15 years.

Each card refers to a specific hand and its environment, providing a wide range of choices, feelings and situations in the circle of life.

We will look at the emerging image on the photo paper: What appears to our eyes and what appears in our mind?

We will create our present chosen fingerprint with art materials and make a link between the work on the photo paper, and the chosen hand path card.

What is the visible image that I want to keep? What space do I need?

What can the card show me that might be hidden from me?

We will share feedback in the group on other insight on the card.

At the end of the workshop, we will share the experience of using photo paper and cards.



# WS 11 – Rhythms of Heritage: Implementing Folkloric Kaşık Percussion in Turkish Music Therapy

*Zeynep Nazlı Kale<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Müzik Terapi Derneği, MUZTED, Ankara, Turkey

## ABSTRACT TEXT

### INTRODUCTION

Music has been significant in healing practices in Turkish history<sup>[1]</sup> since the Seljuk and Ottoman periods<sup>[2]</sup>, yet its applications in modern music therapy need research. While makam-based therapy is a popular study topic, the potential of percussion instruments such as kaşık (Turkish wooden spoons) in therapeutic contexts is limited. Kaşık is a percussion in folk Turkish music and dance<sup>[3]</sup>. Small hand percussions such as kaşık foster motor coordination, attention, and social interaction, making it a valuable tool in group-based therapeutic interventions. This workshop examines kaşık as a percussion and potential modern music therapy applications.

### METHODS

Structure of the kaşık percussion workshop:

Historical Overview: Brief discussion on Turkish music therapy traditions, including Seljuk, Ottoman, and contemporary applications.

### INSTRUMENT INTRODUCTION

Introduction of Kaşık and its cultural roots through folkloric dance rhythms and music.

Hands-on Participation: Participants will learn the playing techniques of Kaşık through basic folkloric rhythmic patterns. They will also explore how synchronizing rhythms in a group setting enhances motor skills, cognitive engagement, group cohesion, attention, group-making, non-verbal communication, and connection.

Therapeutic Applications: This section is a discussion on the use of kaşık in music therapy, particularly in group settings.

### Q&A AND REFLECTION

Questions and feedback on the workshop and potential clinical and community-based applications.

### RESULTS

While this is an experiential workshop rather than a research study, expected outcomes include Participants developing an understanding of kaşık as a percussion instrument and its role in Turkish music and potential in therapy through hands-on experience in applying kaşık rhythms. Recognition of cultural music traditions as a resource for modern music therapy interventions.

### DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

This workshop highlights Kaşık as a percussion and encourages integrating cultural instruments into music therapy. By engaging in hands-on practice, participants explore the possibility that traditional rhythmic practices can potentially support therapeutic goals such as; motor coordination, attention, and non-verbal communication. Future research should investigate the effectiveness of kaşık percussion in music therapy.

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### KEYWORDS

music therapy, kaşık, Turkish folk music, percussion in therapy, cultural music traditions

## WS 12 – Moving Family Reconstruction

Susanne Bender<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> EZETTERA – Europäisches Zentrum für Tanztherapie, EZETTERA, Munich, Germany

In this workshop, we delve into the secrets, myths, and stories embedded within our families of origin. Family events and inherited mandates continue to influence our lives well into adulthood. By becoming aware of these underlying influences, we can break cycles of repetition and begin to plan and live our lives independently.

To access the hidden bodily knowledge intrinsic to a family system, a participant introduces their family by selecting representatives for specific family members from the group. These representatives experience physical sensations and impulses to move, unveiling vital insights into the family dynamic.

Unlike classical family therapy, which focuses on discussing these sensations, systemic dance therapy animates the entire family system to follow their movement impulses. This movement enables the representatives to offer more precise information about family members, helping to identify effective solutions.

Through family choreography, histories are illuminated, collaboratively deciphered, and reinterpreted for future growth. This process provides an opportunity to reconcile with our inner child, helping us to recognize not only the limitations imposed by our family but also the strengths and opportunities it has afforded us.

# WS 13 – Art Therapy for Adults: How to Understand Emotions through Creativity

*Eva Hegarová<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Akademie Alternativa, Czech Republic

## ABSTRACT TEXT

**Art therapy is an effective method of self-discovery that helps people express their emotions, reduce stress, and better understand their own experiences.** This workshop focuses on working with emotions and developing communication skills. Through practical exercises, participants will try out various techniques that will help them better understand their own emotions. The emphasis is on the creative process, not the final product—art therapy is not about perfection, but about authentic expression of the inner world.

**The workshop offers a safe and supportive environment where participants can find new ways of self-expression and share their experiences.** It is intended for anyone who wants to explore their emotional experience through creativity. Come and discover the power of creation as a path to calm, self-awareness, and personal growth!

# WS 14 – Mood Enhancement Through Intentional Music Listening: The Iso-Principle's Role in Health and Wellbeing

*Sylvia Grace Smith<sup>1</sup>, Lydia Rudd Murray<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> *Appalachian State University, Music Therapy, Boone, USA*

## ABSTRACT TEXT

In this workshop, participants will gain an understanding of the iso-principle, explore real-world case examples, and collaborate in creating a shared iso-principle playlist. Before sharing music with each other, the music therapists will check in with the group and assess the starting point of the group's overall mood and energy. When building the playlist, participants will be invited to share a favorite song, and discuss its musical elements and connections.

The goal is to equip attendees with the knowledge and experience to incorporate the iso-principle into both clinical and personal practices as a tool for health and emotional wellbeing. The workshop will be facilitated by two music and creative arts therapists from the United States, who have applied the iso-principle in acute psychiatric settings, and with individuals living with autoimmune diseases and mood disorders.

The iso-principle is a music therapy-based concept where you meet the current mood and energy state of the client, and then gradually move to their desired mood (Alshuler, 1944). Developing resources for stress reduction and mood enhancement may be a valuable skill for therapists working with a wide range of populations. Various studies have explored the impact of music listening and found that it can be a beneficial resource for mood management (Biagini et al., 2012; Lai, 1999; Lesiuk, 2010; Sarkamo et al., 2008). More specifically, other studies have investigated the impact of music listening using a technique known as the iso principle (Heiderscheit & Madson, 2015; Putri, 2022; Zybura & Head, 2024).

The effects of intentional music listening have been studied in a variety of different contexts, including patients in medical rehab settings (Sarkamo et al., 2008), clients dealing with depression and anxiety in acute psychiatric care (Heiderscheit, 2015; Lai, 1999), and first responders who are navigating the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Putri, 2022). Using the iso-principle may help to decrease symptoms of depression, improve overall mood state, and decrease cognitive symptoms of confusion (Sarkamo et al., 2008; Zybura & Head, 2024). Beyond symptom management, the iso-principle can serve as a personal health resource, empowering clients to actively participate in their own well-being. It offers a way for individuals to express autonomy and self-expression, contributing to their emotional resilience and mental health.

# WS 15 – Psychosomatic music therapy— Harmony of Opposites

*Marie Beníčková<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Akademie Alternativa s. r. o., Olomouc, Czech Republic

## ABSTRACT TEXT

### INTRODUCTION

Psychosomatic music therapy is my own original method integrating a person's bio-psycho-social-spiritual paradigm. Music serves here as a tool of therapeutic intervention—a medium that connects the physical, psychological, relational and spiritual dimensions of human existence. The basic principle of this method is working with contrast—not only in music (rhythm, dynamics, melody), but also in everyday life, where it manifests itself in polarities such as tension-relaxation, giving-receiving, stillness-movement, silence-sound.

### METHODS

Psychosomatic music therapy was applied in the form of structured therapeutic sessions, which included both active approaches (e.g. playing instruments, working with the voice) and receptive approaches (e.g. listening to music). Sessions were conducted individually and in groups. The therapeutic process was based on the connection of work with the body, breath, voice and sound, supplemented by experiential reflection. The research took place in a supportive environment and used a mixed design. The quantitative part included standardized scaling of anxiety, stress and somatic symptoms. Qualitative data were obtained through, among other things, semi-structured interviews and subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis.

### RESULTS

The results show statistically and clinically significant improvements in stress management and reduction of anxiety and psychosomatic symptoms. Participants also reported increased awareness of body grounding, improved self-regulation, and a strengthened sense of purpose in life. The qualitative analysis highlighted the therapeutic importance of the experience of contrast, which was often perceived as a key moment in the process of change.

### DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

Working with contrast—as with the natural rhythm and dynamics of life—allows clients to safely integrate internal polarities that are often suppressed or experienced unconsciously. Psychosomatic music therapy thus proves to be an original and effective approach, supporting deep self-regulation, internal stability and the restoration of psychophysical balance. Music in this context serves not only as a tool for expression, but also as a mirror of inner experience and a path to greater wholeness. The results indicate that this method has the potential to become a valuable addition to music therapy care.

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### KEYWORDS

psychosomatic, music therapy, contrast



# WS 16 – Rhythms of Connection: Movement, Expression, and Creation

*Meral Gyuner Dalyan<sup>1</sup>, Kardelen Fincanci Arian<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Balans GGZ, Psychology, Haarlem, Netherlands

<sup>2</sup> Self-Employed, Art Therapist, Çanakkale, Turkey

## ABSTRACT TEXT

“Rhythms of Connection: Movement, Expression, and Creation” is an intermodal art therapy workshop that invites participants to explore self-expression, interpersonal connection, and group collaboration through dance, movement, photography, and poetry. This workshop combines dance and movement therapy techniques, encouraging participants to engage in embodied experiences individually, with a partner, and as part of collective being.

Throughout the workshop, participants will explore and express emotions, thoughts, and stories through movement, facilitating a deeper connection to themselves and others. Following the dance- movement expressions, a photograph will be taken by each participant to represent the collective experience and provide a visual expression of the exploration. To deepen the connection and insight gained through movement, participants will collaboratively write a group poem, reflecting the emotions, experiences, and themes that emerged during the workshop.

This dynamic process encourages creativity, enhances emotional expression, fosters interpersonal connections, and promotes a sense of community. The workshop is designed to support participants in developing greater self-awareness, building empathy, and discovering new ways to communicate through art, while honoring the power of movement and collaboration.

The workshop welcomes individuals of all backgrounds, providing a safe and supportive space for exploration and expression.

# WS 17 – Possibilities of Art Therapy for Children with Down Syndrome

*Veronika Kern Sinová<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> *Inštitút umeleckých terapií, Bratislava, Slovakia*

## ABSTRACT TEXT

**Down syndrome** is one of the most widespread and well-known chromosomal disorders. It is caused by an extra 21<sup>st</sup> chromosome, which results in lifelong intellectual disability, developmental delays, typical physical features, and other associated health issues. The level of intellectual disability varies among individuals with this condition, most commonly presenting as mild to moderate intellectual disability.

Despite the many deficits associated with this condition, children with Down syndrome are often characterized by qualities such as the ability to love, empathy, spontaneity, sincerity, warmth, and joy in various activities—as well as stubbornness. They enjoy music, dance, painting, and often have excellent imitation skills, which significantly supports the learning process.

The artistic expression of children with Down syndrome is complex and differs from the typical development of drawing in non-disabled children. Compared to the general population, their artistic development is delayed. The technical aspect of their artwork depends on the level of motor skills development, memory, attention, and is significantly influenced by their overall cognitive abilities. Deficits in fine motor skills and reduced muscle tone result in difficulties with hand and finger coordination, leading to delayed graphomotor development. Nevertheless, many children with Down syndrome are able to express their emotions and desires through art, and some demonstrate clear talent in this area, while others exhibit artistic expression on the level of scribbles or playful use of colour.

This paper describes the possibilities of art therapy for children with Down syndrome, focusing on individuals for whom visual art became a unique tool for establishing a relationship and contact between the child and the art therapist.

For these children, artistic creation represents excitement, joy, and pleasure; a means of self-expression without the need for verbalization, and a way to release negative emotions, anxiety, and stress. Through art, they achieve a sense of satisfaction and increased self-confidence.

Long-term art therapy also leads to improvements in interaction, social skills, and verbal communication. The desire to communicate with the therapist becomes more intense; not only through gestures and facial expressions but also through attempts at verbal interaction, with noticeable development in vocabulary and articulation. Progress is also evident in areas such as attention span, perseverance, and emotional control. Improvements in fine motor and graphomotor skills result in cleaner, more independent work with art materials, and more precise brush movements lead to greater creativity and richer use of colour.

Children with Down syndrome have great potential to develop their abilities and skills through art therapy. It is essential to provide them with suitable conditions, support, and an individualized approach that allows them to explore the world through artistic creation. Their authentic emotional experiences are unique, their joy in creating is genuine, and the progress in the aforementioned areas is undeniable.

# WS 18 – Listening Across Borders: Cultivating Relational Competencies through Multimodal Arts Practice

*Samuel Gracida<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> SRH University, Bridges Project, Heidelberg, Germany

## ABSTRACT TEXT

How can we truly listen across borders—not only across languages, but across histories, identities, and art forms?

This experiential workshop builds on the keynote's themes of connection, displacement, and intercultural care, inviting participants into a space of shared inquiry through visual art, music, movement, and storytelling. Drawing on the concept of musical multicultural competence (Norris & Hadley, 2016) and expanding it to a broader arts therapy context, we explore how artistic practice can become a site for relational presence, cultural humility, and social responsiveness. Participants will engage in structured creative processes and reflective dialogue to examine:

- How their personal and cultural identities shape their artistic and therapeutic practices
- What it means to encounter unfamiliar or dissonant aesthetics across cultural difference
- How arts practices can hold space for complex identities, power dynamics, and emotional residue in contexts of migration and displacement
- How listening—beyond the auditory—can function as an ethical stance across modalities

This session centers not only on skill-building but also on cultivating a posture of **curiosity, discomfort tolerance, and co-presence** in working across difference. It invites practitioners to rehearse ways of being with others when words fall short and cultural reference points diverge.

Open to practitioners across all art therapy modalities, the workshop is designed to complement the keynote with embodied practice and shared reflection.

# WS 19 – Move into Balance: Exploring the Role of Movement in Supporting Well-being During the Sedentary Working Day

*Gillian Hipp<sup>1</sup>, Rebecca Jones<sup>1</sup>, Holly Andrews<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> University of Reading – Henley Business School; Leadership, Organisations, Behaviour & Reputation, Reading, United Kingdom

## ABSTRACT TEXT

The modern workplace is increasingly sedentary, contributing to a range of physical and mental health concerns, including stress, anxiety, fatigue, and musculoskeletal discomfort. The '10-Day Move into Balance Challenge' was developed as a research study to explore how 15-minute movement meditation breaks can positively impact well-being during the sedentary working day. Rooted in Laban's Movement Theories and contemporary recuperation research, this challenge was designed in response to movement observations of sedentary office workers, addressing the need for accessible and meaningful movement interventions in workplace settings.

This workshop will provide participants with an understanding of the research underpinning the '10-Day Move into Balance Challenge' and its potential applications in supporting workplace well-being. Through an experiential introduction, attendees will engage in a movement meditation from the challenge, gaining first-hand insight into how movement can be integrated into daily routines to enhance physical vitality, emotional regulation, and cognitive function. The session will also explore how this research can contribute to raising awareness of dance movement therapy (DMT) as a valuable tool for well-being in both professional and therapeutic contexts.

By bridging workplace well-being with dance movement therapy principles, this workshop invites participants to reflect on the role of movement during the sedentary working day as a means of self-awareness, recuperation, and balance. Through guided discussion, we will explore how DMT practitioners and allied professionals can adapt and advocate for movement-based interventions in workplace settings. The session aims to inspire new perspectives on how dance and movement can serve as accessible and effective strategies for fostering well-being in an increasingly sedentary world.

# WS 20 – Let It Resound/“Sound as a Bridge to Yourself and to Others”

*Janka Pappová<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> *Inštitút umeleckých terapií, Bratislava, Slovakia*

## ABSTRACT TEXT

This workshop offers a space for shared exploration of sounds that arise from inner experience and mutual attunement. In a safe and accepting environment, we will use simple musical instruments, voice, silence, and movement to explore subtle connections—between self and group, inner and outer worlds, intention and spontaneity. The aim is not musical performance, but an authentic process of being together, allowing what is present within us to “resound”—playfulness, tension, the need for connection, or quiet stillness. The workshop fosters both personal self-awareness and group dynamics, offering shared resonance as a source of belonging. Open to all—no musical background is required. Suitable for those who wish to slow down, attune, connect, and simply let things resound.

## **WS 25 – Open Dialogue & ‘Anti-Keynote’ Workshop “Reconnecting the Muses: The Hypothesis of Spirituality in the Music Therapy Profession”**

*Giorgos Tsiris<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> St. Columba’s Hospice Care, Director of Education, Research and Creative Arts, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Building on my keynote “Reconnecting the muses: The hypothesis of spirituality in the music therapy profession”, this workshop will offer an open space for dialogue. Participants will be invited to reflect on their own experiences of spirituality in the arts therapies. Through critical exploration of emerging questions and dilemmas, we will unpack different theses and anti-theses, and we will consider potential ways of re-connecting the ‘what’, the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ in our work.

## WS 26 – Journeying Home: Exploring the path to inner-self through nature and Guided Imagery and Music (GIM)

Vivian Chan<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> World Federation of Music Therapy, World Federation of Music Therapy, Hong Kong

In this experiential workshop, we weave elements of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) and relational forest therapy (RFT) to guide us inward—a journey that leads us “home” to our truest selves.

By engaging with carefully selected music and guided imagery, paired with mindful nature connection practices, participants will be invited to gently reconnect with their memories, feelings, and visual, auditory, or somatic (body-based) imagery.

This process is both grounding and transformative. It encourages uncovering parts of ourselves that may have been hidden or forgotten amidst the busyness of life—bringing new awareness, integration, and healing. Whether you are stepping into forest therapy or GIM for the first time or deepening an existing practice, you will be supported in cultivating a renewed sense of presence, authenticity, and connection.

This workshop is an invitation to return to your sacred space, enriching your therapeutic toolkit and deepening your relationship with both self and the natural world. Join us to pause, reflect, and journey inward—to re-experience the peace and wisdom that nature and music can awaken within.

# POSTERS

POSTERS





# **P 01 – Integrating Music Therapy in the Territorial Care Policies for Elderly People and Their Caregivers in Italy. The SiFaRete Project, a Bridge between Public and Private Organisations**

*Chiara Maria Bieker<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> APS Aulòs, None, Trieste, Italy

## **ABSTRACT TEXT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The elderly person may encounter various types of frailty, often submerged until they become medium-severe health or social needs. To intercept these frailties at an early stage, an integrated, flexible and non preconstituted approach is required, as well as activities allowing monitoring and early identification of emerging needs. Music therapy can be an effective part of this approach. Nevertheless, both the global approach and the presence of music therapy on political agendas are lacking in the concerned project area (Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy).

### **METHODS**

To detect the hidden needs of frail elderly people of the region, in 2022 it has been planned a co-design process between public and private organizations and, for the first time, a music therapy association has been actively collaborating at this political table. Through meetings with stakeholders and multidisciplinary networks, the local needs and the most appropriate methods of intervention were identified. Following this, 10 music therapy programs for elderly people and caregivers as well as training protocols for caregivers were offered, with more than 200 people involved in 2024.

### **RESULTS**

The creation of an integrated and synergic working model has allowed greater efficiency, sharing and reciprocity in the collaboration between institutions, with shared intake, monitoring, and reciprocal referral of people between private and public institutions. This has allowed an increase in the actual and perceived quality of services, and consequently led to improvements in care.

### **CONCLUSION**

The inclusion of music therapy in a co-planning dedicated to the care of the frail elderly and their caregivers is an absolute novelty in Italy. The good results achieved stand as a good practice that can be exported to other regions as well as to other areas of care.

## P 02 – Gamification of a Music Teaching Process with Adolescent Brass Players

*David Caicedo Galvis<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá, Centro Filarmónico Escolar San Carlos IED, Bogotá, Colombia

### ABSTRACT TEXT

Musical training processes in adolescents are a challenge that goes beyond technical knowledge or curricular planning. As an Artist Trainer of the project “Vamos a la Filarmónica” of the Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá, one of my functions is to be in charge of the instrumental training process with several groups of teenagers playing trombone, trumpet, French horn and tuba in a school context in a public school in Bogotá. In general, students in public schools in this city usually come from environments where there is a notable social inequality, associated with situations of violence, insecurity and lack of opportunities, among other situations that are reflected in the way these children and adolescents behave in their daily lives. One of these groups is called “philharmonic focus group” because it receives musical training for 4 years. This year, the group is made up of adolescents ranging from 11 to 14 years old.

In addition to the fact that instrumental training in these instruments is characterized by slow progress in general, this group presents difficulties in terms of motivation, discipline and participation. For this reason, as the author of this proposal, I am developing and implementing a gamification system that integrates aspects of video games to the pedagogical process with this group. Among these aspects are experience points, ranks, daily or weekly challenges and rewards, in order to encourage a stronger commitment of the students with the process, a more active participation, favoring their concentration and a collaborative relationship between the members of the group.

The suggested format for this proposal at the WATF 2025 is a poster presentation in which the events of this training process during the current year can be presented. It is aimed at people who are interested in instrumental music pedagogy or who believe that this work can contribute to them. What it hope to achieve is to demonstrate the results and characteristics of the implementation of this gamification system and its impact on technical learning, well-being and the dynamics of interaction within the group.

Let's discover together this process made with current tools for current teenagers!

# P 03 – The Effect of Community-Based Group Art Therapy Program on People Diagnosed with Severe Mental Health Disorders: A Phenomenological Study

Kardelen Fincancı Arıkan<sup>1</sup>, Meral Gyuner Dalyan<sup>2</sup>, Pınar Karan<sup>3</sup>, Nurhan Eren<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Independent Researcher / Self-Employed, Art Therapy, Istanbul & Canakkale, Turkey

<sup>2</sup> Balans GGZ, Psychology Department- Psychologist, Haarlem, Netherlands

<sup>3</sup> University of Maryland- College Park, Human Development and Quantitative Methodology- 2<sup>nd</sup> year PhD student, Washington- D.C., USA

<sup>4</sup> Istanbul University- Faculty of Medicine, Department of Mental Health and Diseases- Social Psychiatry Service- Prof. PhD, Istanbul, Turkey

## ABSTRACT TEXT

Individuals with severe mental disorders have difficulty adapting to society and maintaining their daily lives. (Tükel et al., 2017) This dysfunction often prevents the person from expressing their feelings and thoughts verbally. Art therapy expands the therapeutic field by using the art product as a transition, art space and playground, allowing the expression of emotions that are difficult to express verbally, and uses art as a therapeutic tool (Eren, 2015).

Community-based art therapy, on the other hand, aims to improve social engagement and facilitate the expression of stigmatization and therefore problems in social functioning experienced by individuals diagnosed with mental disorders through art and group therapy setting in a social environment. (Got & Cheng, 2008; Kapitan et al., 2011; Morris & Willis-Rauch, 2014). According to Onken (2007), "recovery" begins with the acceptance that individuals with severe mental disorders can also live a productive and whole life. It is thought that the experience of being a part of the society with a group where individuals feel safe again will contribute positively to their recovery by increasing their social functionality. In this study, the standard practice of psychiatric rehabilitation studies, which is carried out in a hospital, was taken one step further and moved outside the hospital and into the public space. Therapists (an artist and a psychologist who trained in art psychotherapy) conducted semi-structured sessions in public space such as, parks, exhibitions, cinemas, museums, to enhance the social engagement of the participants. At the end of each session, participants shared how they spent the day through the artworks and verbally and the therapists reported the session in writing. Study sample includes 9 out-patient individuals who volunteer to participate in an art therapy program in Istanbul University, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Mental Health and Diseases, Social Psychiatry Service and diagnosed with schizophrenia and alike severe mental disorders and with target problems on social functioning (e.g., social isolation, social phobia). Informed consent was obtained. It is observed that being in a social environment with a supporting therapy group had an impact on problem-solving skills, adaptation skills, interpersonal relations, stigmatization and social functioning of the participants.

Based on the phenomenological theory (Creswell, 2013) we pursue thematic analysis of our data. This study will provide valuable insights into the impact of community-based art therapy on individuals with severe mental disorders and pioneers a novel approach that emphasizes real-world social engagement.

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Full reference list can be found as pdf.

# P 04 – Art as a Potential Space: Examining the Emotional and Identity Development of STEM Students through Interactive Art-Making

*Tetsuko Kato<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Kobe University, Graduate School of Human Development and Environment, Kobe, Japan

## ABSTRACT TEXT

### INTRODUCTION

Students in higher education in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields may have underdeveloped emotional maturity due to the demands of rigorous coursework. Interactive art-making may contribute to the emotional and psychosocial development of STEM students. Grounded in Winnicott's concept of potential space and Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, this study explores how a creative, play-like environment can facilitate emotional awareness and psychosocial growth. Through interactions with others who witness, reassure, and engage in play within potential space, an individual's internal fantasy and external reality intersect, fostering self-formation.

### METHOD

The mutual squiggle and story-making method (MSSM) was used, in which a practitioner collaborated with a participant to create artworks (Fig. 1). Two STEM college students (pseudonyms: Hayato and Manabu) participated in five weekly sessions. Each session involved collaborative art-making in a setting designed as a safe and playful potential space for expression. Semi-structured interviews were conducted after each session to capture participants' reflections and emotional responses. Additionally, each student completed a tree-drawing test before the first session and after the final session as a projective assessment of changes in self-perception. The tree drawings from the first and final sessions were compared to examine developmental changes.

### RESULTS

Case 1: Having entered the study with a high level of identity formation, Hayato engaged in the art-making process in a thoughtful but restrained manner. He reported finding the sessions interesting and calming, using them more for relaxation than for overtly playful exploration. Over the five weeks, his storytelling during the sessions became more elaborate and future-oriented, indicating a growth in creative self-expression. Notably, Hayato's post-intervention tree drawing was larger, with wave-like roots, suggesting a sense of movement or progress compared to his initial drawing. Case 2: In contrast, Manabu began with a lower level of identity formation and showed the most dramatic development through an art-based intervention. Initially, he was tentative in expressing himself. However, as the sessions progressed, he became more confident and more emotionally open. His collaborative art pieces became increasingly complex and expansive, eventually almost extending beyond the boundaries of the frames, with an outward expansion paralleling his growing sense of self. In the final session, Manabu remarked on the greater consistency in the collaborative stories, reflecting deepened relationships with the researcher and his identity coherence. His second tree drawing filled more of the page and included a thicker trunk than the first, indicating an enhanced self-assurance and personal growth.

### DISCUSSIONS

Overall, the results suggest that interactive art-making within Winnicott's potential space is a powerful medium for emotional exploration. The creative, play-oriented context allowed STEM students to project and work through aspects of their identity in a non-threatening manner, aligning with Erikson's development theory. For practitioners, this implies that incorporating collaborative art-making activities in therapy or educational settings may help emerging adults in STEM fields articulate emotions and solidify their identity. These findings contribute to art therapy research by illustrating how structured, yet playful art interventions can promote personal growth and support psychosocial development.

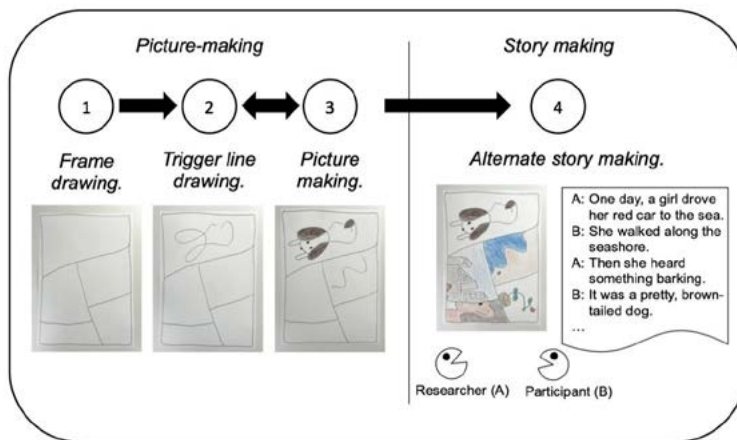


Fig. 1 MSSM Procedures

(Kato & Ito, The Arts in Psychotherapy 2024 Vol. 90, 102199, licensed under CC-BY 4.0.)

## P 05 – ARTE-FILE: Artefiletic Support Program for High School Students with Learning Disabilities

*Barbora Sender<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Faculty of Education, Department of Pedagogy, Nitra, Slovakia

### ABSTRACT TEXT

The supportive artefiletic program for secondary school students with learning disabilities is aimed at stimulating creativity, re-education of weakened cognitive functions, development of functional literacy and learning strategies, and also strengthening the social and emotional competencies. The ARTE-FILE program consists of several modules, which include lessons focused on working with problem areas through appropriately selected and engaging visual arts or artistic techniques. The lessons are created in the form of worksheets and other materials (project cards, memory games, comics, etc.). The ARTE-FILE program is designed to provide a supportive, re-educational, compensatory and stimulating strategy to help secondary school students. It is a rich material that can be used by pedagogical and professional staff working with students with learning disabilities in secondary schools. We primarily suggest its use by special educators and psychologists in individual and group interventions. However, after training, other professional and pedagogical staff of school support teams and counseling facilities will be able to work with it as well.

# CONTENT OF ORAL PRESENTATIONS





O 01 - Embracing our Shared Humanity: A Pathway to Harmony, Growth, and Global Impact for the Future of Art Therapies	5
O 02 - Psychosomatic music therapy—Harmony of Opposites	6
O 03 - Reconnecting the Muses: The Hypothesis of Spirituality in the Music Therapy Profession	7
O 04 - Listening Across Borders: Music Therapy, Displacement, and the Search for Connection	8
O 05 - The Potential of Music Therapy in Work with Children with ADHD	9
O 06 - Art Therapy in Grief Counseling with Children and Adolescents	10
O 07 - Creative Approaches to Art Therapy Supervision—What Do Clients, Supervisees and Supervisors Need?	11
O 08 - Imagining the Future of Art Therapy - at the Crossroads of Education, Research and Practice	12
O 09 - Possibilities of Art Therapy for Children with Down Syndrome	13
O 10 - "Dance Constellation" method	14
O 11 - Moving Family Reconstruction	15
O 12 - Dance Movement Therapy and Jungian Psychology Integrated: New Insights into Depression Recovery	16
O 13 - Caring for the Carers: An Embodied Approach to Clinical Supervision within Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH) Education	17
O 14 - Melodies of Care: Music for Well-Being During Breast Cancer Treatment	18
O 15 - Body awareness through dancing	19
O 16 - Desert of Words, Drops of Sounds. Music Therapy for Expression and Communication in Severe Disabilities	20
O 17 - The Role of Music in Music Therapy Supervision and Professional Self-Development	21
O 18 - Improvisation: A Case Study—Sono Venuto A Suonare, E Di Nascosto A Danzare (I Came To Play, And Secretly To Dance) (P. Conte)	22
O 19 - MusicTherapy and Gardentherapy: A Systemic Approach for the Life Quality of the PsychoPhysical Disability	23
O 20 - MusicTherapy for Actors: An Exploratory Study Applied to Students from University Theatre Faculty	25
O 21 - Blau and the Little Big Minute: A Case Study on Bonding as a Creative Experience with an Adolescent with Autism Spectrum Disorder with High Abilities in an Art Therapy Workshop	26
O 22 - Art Therapy and the Materials of Life: A Shared Becoming	28
O 23 - Trauma-Informed Integrated Expressive Arts Therapies Model: Enhancing Emotional Healing and Resilience in Humanitarian Contexts	29
O 24 - Theory of Regenerative Music Therapy: Promoting Inner and Outer Sustainability	31
O 25 - Sounding Relief: Music Therapy as a Non-Pharmacological Approach for Rural Adults with Autoimmune Disease and Mental Health Challenges	32
O 26 - Decreasing Delirium through Music in Critically Ill Mechanically Ventilated Older Adults—The DDM Randomized Clinical Trial	33
O 27 - Specialized Language in Music Therapy: A Challenge for the Profession. Implication in Training, Practice and Research	34
O 28 - Music as a Health Resource: Community Music Therapy for Older Adults	35
O 29 - Modern Harmonies: Providing a Rich Music Therapy Experience Through the Merging of Telehealth Services and Music Technology	36
O 30 - Stress Regulation and Burn-out prevention through the use of the Kestenberg Movement Profile (KMP)	37
O 31 - The Use of Art Therapy When Working with Children: How to Help Children Express Emotions and Communicate	38
O 32 - Dramatherapy in Schools: Enhancing Teacher Wellbeing	39
O 33 - A Continuum of Musical Care: How a Range of Music-Based Interventions Can Support Families with Young Children	40
O 34 - Creative Drama as a Supporting Tool in Art Therapies	41



WORKSHOPS

# CONTENT OF WORKSHOPS



WS 01 - Psychophonetics: A Psychology of Freedom Through Expressive Arts, Healing, and Transformational Drama	43
WS 02 - Connecting to and Playing with the Paradoxical Role of the Clown. The Clown Role Gives Us Permission to Embrace Our Weaknesses and Discover Our Strengths, Becoming More Lighthearted, Fun and Humorous	44
WS 03 - "What If We Couldn't Hear the Music?" Self-Experience Workshop Based on Work with Deaf Population in Bogota, Colombia	45
WS 04 - Probody Artmaking as Method: Caring for the Body Through Body-Object Interaction	46
WS 05 - The Music of You: A Journey to Self-Discovery	47
WS 06 - Bridging Real and Virtual Environments: Augmenting Virtual Reality as a Path to Embodiment	48
WS 07 - Using Dramatherapeutic Techniques to Enhance Wellbeing	49
WS 08 - Breathe In, Breathe Out—The Harmonica as a Tool of Relaxation and Self-Expression Within the Context of Music Therapy	50
WS 09 - Insight into the Principles of the Artistic-Therapeutic Method "Dance Constellation"	51
WS 10 - Squeeze the Lemon within Us	52
WS 11 - Rhythms of Heritage: Implementing Folkloric Kaşık Percussion in Turkish Music Therapy	53
WS 12 - Moving Family Reconstruction	54
WS 13 - Art Therapy for Adults: How to Understand Emotions through Creativity	55
WS 14 - Mood Enhancement Through Intentional Music Listening: The Iso-Principle's Role in Health and Wellbeing	56
WS 15 - Psychosomatic music therapy—Harmony of Opposites	57
WS 16 - Rhythms of Connection: Movement, Expression, and Creation	58
WS 17 - Possibilities of Art Therapy for Children with Down Syndrome	59
WS 18 - Listening Across Borders: Cultivating Relational Competencies through Multimodal Arts Practice	60
WS 19 - Move into Balance: Exploring the Role of Movement in Supporting Well-being During the Sedentary Working Day	61
WS 20 - Let It Resound/"Sound as a Bridge to Yourself and to Others"	62
WS 25 - Open Dialogue & 'Anti-Keynote' Workshop "Reconnecting the Muses: The Hypothesis of Spirituality in the Music Therapy Profession"	63
WS 26 - Journeying Home: Exploring the path to inner-self through nature and Guided Imagery and Music (GIM)	64



# CONTENT OF POSTER PRESENTATIONS



POSTERS

P 01 – Integrating Music Therapy in the Territorial Care Policies for Elderly People and Their Caregivers in Italy. The SiFaRete Project, a Bridge between Public and Private Organisations	66
P 02 – Gamification of a Music Teaching Process with Adolescent Brass Players	67
P 03 – The Effect of Community-Based Group Art Therapy Program on People Diagnosed with Severe Mental Health Disorders: A Phenomenological Study	68
P 04 – Art as a Potential Space: Examining the Emotional and Identity Development of STEM Students through Interactive Art-Making	69
P 05 – ARTE-FILE: Artefiletic Support Program for High School Students with Learning Disabilities	71

# Partners

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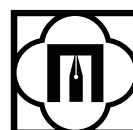
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