

QUALITATIVE INQUIRIES IN MUSIC THERAPY:

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Edited by
Susan Hadley

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editors

Contributors

Editor's Introduction

Susan Hadley

Tipping the Scales: A Substantive Theory on the Value of Group Music
Therapy for Supporting Grieving Teenagers 1

Katrina McFerran

Music Therapists' Experiences with Adults in Pain: Implications for
Clinical Practice 43

Melanie Kwan

Clinical-Musical Responses of Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapists: The
Process of Clinical Improvisation 86

Michelle Cooper

Integrating Musical and Psychotherapeutic Thinking: Research on the
Relationship between Words and Music in Clinically Improvised Songs 116

Alan Turry

Presenting Carly and Elliott: Exploring Roles and Relationships in a
Mother-Son Dyad in Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy 172

Suzanne Sorel

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

As you are now aware, starting with this volume, *Qualitative Inquiries in Music Therapy* has moved to an online format of the monograph series. Of course, any move such as this has its pros and cons, many of which you have probably already pondered. There are many aspects of the new format that are very positive. On the one hand, there will be no more waiting for your volume once you have ordered it. This advantage is even more significant for those readers who live in remote locations throughout the world, especially those outside of the United States. For those who are concerned with the environment, this move to an online format reduces unnecessary paper consumption. Furthermore, in these difficult economic times, the online format is at no cost to consumers! However, on the other hand, there are some aspects of the traditional print format that some bibliophiles may miss. Some of you may eagerly anticipate the feel, the look, the smell, and the sound of crisp new pages as you thumb through a new volume. This experience can be so intoxicating for some. Some may also miss the experience of leafing through the pages while sitting outside on a warm sunny spring day after a long cold winter. But no matter how you experience this phenomenon of the shift from traditional paper format to online, it goes without saying that the quality of this series remains intact.

There are some interesting threads that weave the studies in this issue of QIMT together. The thread that unites the first two studies is that they both use a modified grounded theory analysis. Grounded theory is a method which has as its primary purpose the discovery or building of theory from the data (Amir, 2005, p.365). Theory building specific to music therapy is a significant area for future growth in music therapy. In the first study, Katrina McFerran utilizes a modified grounded theory analysis of focus group interviews conducted with grieving adolescents receiving music therapy in a school setting. This analysis resulted in the development of a theory that states that bereaved teen-agers feel better if they have opportunities for fun and creative expression of their grief alongside their peers. In the second study, Melanie Kwan uses a similar approach to explore the experiences of music therapists working with adults experiencing pain. Emerging from the interviews she conducted with three music therapists who work with adults experiencing pain were themes related to trust, presence, caring, physical empathy and resonating sympathetically, empowerment, and facilitating communication or emotional expression.

An important component of a grounded theory approach, which is also true of a phenomenological inquiry, is for the researcher to bracket existing notions about a phenomenon (Amir, 2005, p.368). All of the studies in this volume are related in terms of their links to phenomenological inquiry. The first two studies, as mentioned above, take a phenomenological stance in terms of analyzing the data, but have the express aim of building theory. Michelle Cooper, in the third study, utilizes a phenomenologically informed approach to examine the clinical-musical responses of Nordoff-Robbins music therapists while improvising with clients in order to examine what was going on in the therapist's consciousness moment-to-moment. Cooper's study may also be said to be a naturalistic inquiry in that she interviews five Nordoff-Robbins music therapists in a purposive sampling about their work in the natural setting (Aigen, 2005, p.355-356). That is, they viewed videotapes of their clinical work together and discussed what each music therapist was experiencing when they were improvising with their client.

The final two studies in this volume also utilize naturalistic inquiry as the methodological approach and are also linked to the other three studies in their phenomenological focus. Another

thread common to the final three studies are that they are examining the Nordoff-Robbins music therapy clinical approach. Alan Turry's study examines the relationship between lyrics and music in improvised songs that were created in the context of Nordoff-Robbins music therapy sessions with a woman who sought out music therapy as a result of being diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. This study examined archival video material that was collected over a period of eight years. It is reported as a case study and was purposefully chosen because this client created improvised songs frequently and these songs held meaning for her in ways that were significant and unusual. Suzanne Sorel's study similarly examines archival video material from twenty-four Nordoff-Robbins music therapy sessions, along with session transcripts, interviews with the therapy participants, and other documents relevant to this course of therapy. Her study explores the first Nordoff-Robbins music therapy (NRMT) sessions that were provided for a parent-child dyad in which the parent was an active participant. Given that this was a new treatment context in NRMT, Sorel's study illuminates issues dealing with roles in this kind of therapy context, the value of drama and performance in therapy, and the role of music in this setting.

The studies in this volume illustrate the fluidity of some of the conceptual frames in qualitative research. While there is some overlap of styles of qualitative analysis in these studies which can lead to interesting debates in our profession, what is particularly notable is that each study goes a long way to further our understanding of the experiences of both the music therapists and the clients in music therapy.

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