

QUALITATIVE INQUIRIES IN MUSIC THERAPY:

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Edited by
Laurel Young

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

For those of you who may not know, *Qualitative Inquiries in Music Therapy (QIMT)* is a research monograph series that offers qualitative music therapy researchers the opportunity to present their work without the length and content restrictions typically imposed by traditional academic journals. Here, authors have the luxury of being able to fully explicate the experience of their research in a way that will hopefully inspire readers to become invested not only in the results but also in the process of the inquiry itself. Only through a clear understanding of each study's unique process can practitioners and students fully appreciate the level of accountability, discipline, rigor, and personal investment that is required to produce credible qualitative research.

QIMT Volume 7 contains three studies that each use different qualitative methods to investigate various aspects of human experience. It is also interesting to note that all three studies utilize participant interviews as a primary source of data. In the first study, *The Use of Music and Mandala to Explore the Client/Therapist Relationship in a Therapeutic Day School*, Heather Wagner examines her non-arts therapist colleagues' individual experience of an arts-based supervisory method used to explore a difficult client-therapist relationship. Her approach was informed by a combination of grounded theory and action research. As all participants perceived personal and professional benefits that went beyond their work with the client in question, Wagner's study highlights the strong potential for the use of arts-based interventions in clinical supervision contexts with non-arts therapy mental health professionals. Furthermore, the inclusion of Wagner's personal reflections and the mandalas that she used to process her own reactions add an important element of transparency to her inquiry. This may be especially interesting for other researchers/clinicians/supervisors who also find themselves in complex multiple/dual roles.

The second study, *Client Experiences in Postlude Discussions in Guided Imagery and Music (GIM)*, was written by Laurel Young and used a phenomenological approach. Individual stories created from participants' verbal descriptions of their postlude discussion experiences are used not only to support the overarching theme categories that emerged but are also meant to fully engage the reader in the clients' experiences. As noted by Aigen, "the more deeply involved in a [research] text the reader becomes, the greater the likelihood that the text will have a significant impact on the reader" (2005, p. 219). It is possible that many readers may identify with these clients' stories from a variety of perspectives (e.g., as a client, a therapist, or both), which in turn, may further elucidate the implications of the results.

Finally, the third study, *The Musical and Personal Biographies of Adolescents with Foster Care Experience*, is a biographical inquiry written by Michael Zanders. As very little has been written on music therapy intervention with this clinical population, a primary aim of the inquiry was to better understand the role that music played throughout the participants' lives and though this understanding, provide a foundation for future research. Zander's paper is written in a genuine voice that not only underscores his clinical experience with the population but also demonstrates his commitment to addressing the unique needs of foster care youth. This helps to contextualize the study as well as contribute to its readability.

Ultimately, the purpose of all research, regardless of the method, is to provide new knowledge. All three studies contained in this volume provide us with new knowledge that emerged from examining research participants' experiences of arts-based clinical supervision, GIM intervention, music, and/or life. The overarching value of these findings lies especially in their potential applicability to real life contexts.

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