

**Music Imagery Relaxation (MIR)  
Clinical Application to Reduce Pain and Anxiety  
Workshop's Proposal by Dr. Gimeno, M.M.**

**Title:** Music Imagery Relaxation (MIR) Adults Clinical Applications

**Length:** 8 hours (2 units)

**Workshop Description**

This workshop presentation will introduce the technique of Music Imagery Relaxation (MIR), which is based on the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (BM). MIR uses the patient's experience of wellbeing to induce relaxation while listening to preferred music. The aim is for the patient to have a vivid positive experience in an altered state of consciousness. The music therapist provides a brief relaxation exercise, followed by a script elaborated from the patient's personal story. All of the senses are utilized, providing to the patient an inner experience where sensory modalities can help the imagery to develop. MIR was recently tested in a pilot study at the Health Alliance of the Hudson Valley in Kingston, NY, showing statistical significance on reducing pain and anxiety levels in patients who underwent orthopedic surgery (Gimeno, 2015).

The field of Guided Imagery and Music has expanded since the early 1970's, when Helen Bonny founded this method. The literature on the adaptations of the BM describes some changes, such as duration of the music, selection of the music, and bodily position during music listening (Gimeno, 2010). Goldberg (1998) recommended the use of music with a narrow range to allow a very brief imagery experience without the dynamic unfolding that is characteristic of a standard session. Hearn (2009-2010) suggested a short duration of music, no longer than 10 minutes, with New Age or classical style. She also recommended having the client in a sitting position rather than lying down on a couch, as is the case of a regular Bonny Method session.

The use of supportive inductions in the medical setting has been reported in a recent study (Gimeno, 2015). Summer (2002) refers in her study to the importance of giving supportive therapy when clients need to be held in order to reinforce any positive feeling that might emerge during the session. In the same study, she encourages the use of task-oriented inductions, as opposed to an induction that encourages exploration. Summer states that in supportive therapy, an induction should clearly present a self-affirmation rather than a conflict. Music's effect on imagery has been a therapeutic modality where individuals become involved in imagery experiences while listening to music. Music provides structure and can become a "projective screen" that encourages involvement (Goldberg, 1998).

A workshop in MIR would be able to provide students and professionals with the proper materials to utilize this technique within a medical setting. MIR may be used without formal training beyond this workshop, unlike the Bonny Method, which allows for this methodology to spread to different sectors of the medical field. The information provided in this workshop would be beneficial to anyone, student or professional, who works in a medical setting and is interested in furthering his or her knowledge in imagery and relaxation music therapy techniques.

## References

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## Abstract

This workshop will introduce the technique MIR that addresses primarily the needs of bedridden patients, but can also be given in individual bases and group settings. Participants will learn the principles of the technique; how to create a script for relaxation based on the patient's self-report as well as how to choose appropriate music when the patients do not select preferred music. This presentation will include a didactic and experiential component.

**Key Words:** Music, Imagery, Relaxation, Guided Imagery, Bonny Method Adaptation.

## Mini-biography

Dr. Maria Montserrat Gimeno is an Associate Professor in the Music Therapy Program at the State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz. She was born in Barcelona, Spain, where she worked as a nurse for several years. She has completed her Bachelor's Degree in Music Therapy at Willamette University, as well as a Master's of Art and Doctorate Degree in Counseling Psychology from the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. She is also trained in the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music. Dr. Gimeno is known both nationally and internationally for her research on the use of Music and Imagery (MI) in medical settings and has taught MI courses in the United States, Spain, China, South Korea, Finland, Canada, Austria, and India.