

Music Therapy for Children with Leukemia

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Key words: Children, Leukemia, Music Therapy, Methods, Hospitalization.

Abstract

Leukemia is the most common pediatric cancer. It has a strong effect on children's physical, mental and spiritual health. It also affects their families. Music therapy as an integrative/complimentary therapy is often used in hospitals to mentally support and help children coping with hospitalization. This paper will address the pathology of Leukemia, common methods utilized in hospitals, and the theoretical background underlying the methods. Some clinical and personal experiences will be shared in the conclusion.

Content

This presentation will firstly briefly review the pathology of Leukemia, include the etiology, symptom, treatment, physical and psychological common impact areas and challenges for children, such as physical pain, coping with hospitalization, separation and isolation, loss of the control, self-conception, fear of death, anger, anxiety and withdraw. Then the speaker will introduce the most common music therapy treatment goals, which need to consider the treatment stage of the illness, the age of children or adolescents, and each of their particular situation. The goals are including psychological perspective such as coping and adapting life after diagnose, hospitalization, manage fear, anxiety and withdraw, reducing feeling of isolation and separation from school and regular life routine, providing opportunities for making choice and sense of control, providing opportunities to play, etc. The physical and co-treatment perspective, such as pain management, procedure support, etc. The family perspective, which need to consider the family as a whole picture and include caregiver in the therapy process.

Then the speaker will discuss different music therapy methods that been used in past literatures and her own clinical work and observation. There are three main stream methods, receptive/listening method, compositional method, and improvisatory methods. The speaker will introduce different techniques under each method category. For receptive/ Listening Methods, such as active/expressive music listening, passive music listening, music assisted relaxation,

music and imagery, music and movement. For compositional method includes song writing, music composition. Under improvisatory method, instrumental or vocal improvisation, music assisted play will be introduced.

In the end, the speaker will share some experience of working in pediatric unit in Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (New York), a case example will be included.

Reference

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Presenter's Information

Shu Wang, current music therapy graduate student in New York University and field work student in Mont Saini Beth Israel music therapy department in New York, United State.

2014, she worked as a field work student in Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MKCC), the biggest cancer hospital in US.

2012-2014, she finished two years of music therapy graduate program in Montclair State University, study under Dr. Brain Abram and other professors.

2012-Current, Shu has been working with in setting, include hospital, nursing home, special education school in New York and New Jersey. children with special needs (Autism, developmental delay, ADHD), older adult, palliative care for all age patient, and hospitalized patient in diverse diagnoses and age range.

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