

**The 4th International Conference of the International Association for Music and Medicine
Where Music and Medicine Meet (Beijing, China - June 11-13, 2016)**

Proposal for Oral Presentation

Topic: Music Therapy for Children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) and Traumatized Experiences in Hong Kong

Description:

According to the figures reported in the Hong Kong Legislative Council document, the number of Special Educational Needs (SEN) children is estimated to be in the range of 20,000 to 40,000 in Hong Kong (2014). The position paper for the Hong Kong Society of Child Neurology & Developmental Paediatrics in 2007 has already pointed out that Hong Kong's awareness and support systems for persons with ADHD have been 'mainly limited to the medical system only', suggesting that the prevalence of SEN children and their potential psychological needs demands more attention and support. To date, music therapy has not yet been recognized as a form of psychological therapies in the current Hong Kong medical system and therefore, the resources for supporting the SEN children with psychological forms of therapies such as music therapy is limited.

This paper introduces the author's music therapy work in a residential school for social development in Hong Kong, which could be considered as a 'rare' setting for music therapists to work in as well as the documentation reaches. The music therapy work encompasses a short-term intervention (8 sessions x 1 hour) for children in their middle childhood (aged 8-13), some of which were diagnosed with ASD or ADHD; and of dysfunctional family backgrounds. As the group progressed, all young participants started to share their negative experiences about difficulties in building up relationships with family or with peers at school. Negative emotions and ideas were expressed within a safe space and in a manageable manner. The children had identified positive coping strategies by themselves during the process in their creative music-making. It is observed that the children have exhibited less behavioural problems in general.

In the presentation, the author will specify how this group of children is deprived of emotional regulations from their early attachment patterns; hence create their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. This constitutes the children's needs for psychological intervention. At the same time, the author will describe how music therapy could serve as a means to promote social engagement, affect regulation and emotional release in a group setting. The integrative use of Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT) assessment is introduced. Improvisation, group musical activities on cultivating group rhythms, musical drawings were the primary means used to engage the group members. The presentation will explore the integration of music with other arts media, which has become an integrative form of symbolic play for the children during the session. Violent acts and ideas were act out and its meaning were explored in a form of pretend (symbolic) play led by the children. The importance of using symbolic play and metaphor in the work for this client group is discussed.

Abstract:

This paper focuses on a short-term music therapy group work for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) and traumatic experiences in a school for social development in Hong Kong. Music therapy as a form of psychological intervention is discussed.

Presenter's Biography:

Man Ting YEUNG is a UK-trained music therapist, currently practicing in various non-government organisations and schools in Hong Kong.

Keywords:

Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; Trauma; Psychological intervention; Symbolic play; music therapy

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