

# **The Application Of MER To Psychological Trauma Treatment**

## **— The Case Report Of Music Therapy (Abstract)**

Events that may cause psychological trauma include natural disasters, traffic accidents and other unexpected catastrophic events. Long-term experiences of being neglected, emotional or physical abuse in daily life may also cause psychological trauma. This kind of trauma will last for years or even a lifetime, which seriously affects the common life of sufferer. Music Entertainment and Reprocessing (MER) is a music psychotherapy for psychological trauma, created by professor Gao Tian. At the beginning of the treatment, music is used to synchronize with the visitor's emotions. As the treatment continues, music will be changed to transfer visitor's emotions to the desired therapeutic goals. MER aims at using the great impact of music on people's emotions to help patients out of their psychological dilemma by releasing their negative emotions and inspiring those positive experiences in their lives.

Here is the basic information of one patient, Miss S: 28 years old, Han nationality, no religion, bachelor's degree, painter, unmarried but in a relationship. This patient has a clear consciousness and a strong desire for help. She had experienced a terrible relationship that caused her both physical and mental harm. After a period of rest and treatment, Miss S is

physical healthy and in a stable relationship now. However, she still worries about the seizure of her psychological illness(a tiny chance diagnosed by her psychologist). She even would tremble with fear at the sight of the letters showing her illness. Miss S considers her past experience as a time bomb that may destroy her life at any time. So she hopes to eliminate the negative impacts of her past experience on herself. The therapist diagnoses her illness as psychological trauma. After the pre-processing of emotional stability, the therapist adopted the humanism-oriented MER for her treatment. There are five rounds for music-listening imagination, which lasts for two hours. The following is the summary of this treatment process.

**The most terrible picture in mind:** her ex-boyfriend kept repeating the letters showing her illness.

**Negative evaluation:** I'm the person who don't deserve to get happiness.

**Positive evaluation:** I'm the person who deserve to get happiness.

**VOC**(The degree of believing in the positive evaluation1-7): 1

**SUD**(The degree of discomfort caused by the past experience 1-10): 9

### **Round One**

At first, the emotional experience of Miss S was humiliation and regret; she shivered all over and felt herself dirty. The therapist asked her to

carefully taste these feelings and to imagine the most terrible picture in her mind when the music started. Then he played Bach's *Passacaglia in C Minor*. With the music playing, a picture gradually appeared in the mind of Miss S: her ex-boyfriend wearing a horse-face strutted around arrogantly, while she was hiding in a corner. She said, "I am very small, just like a naked woman, so helpless, so sad, and so cold..." (Sounds of cello playing in the music) She continued, "The cello brings me more and more pressure, like the black metal without any temperature... there are only cello and the horse-faced man in the picture... I feel so helpless." As the music continued, cello gradually became golden to Miss S and she stood up to fill the picture. Thereafter the music converted twice, and when Shostakovich's *Piano Concerto No.2 in F major Op.102: Andante* was playing, she said, "I am in a nude-colored dress." When the therapist asked her about her feeling, she answered, "I feel calm and settled."

## **Round Two**

Miss S felt nervous and confused (Are those calm feelings true? ), with her thighs and buttocks shivering. When the therapist played Mahler's *Symphony No.5 – Adagietto*, she saw no one in the picture and said, "I felt so cold." Again, she trembled. The letters, showing her illness, turned into big stones and pressed on her chest until she became a big meat-pie. When Monteverdi's *Sacred Works* was playing, Miss S felt a stream of air

spreading throughout her body, and she thought music made her understood by others. Though she was still nervous, Miss S didn't tremble and felt cold any more.

In the **Third and Fourth Round** of the treatment, the self-image of Miss S became more and more powerful. She felt that she became a boxer, bitterly hitting the horse-faced man.

### **Round Five**

When the therapist played Dvorak's *Slavonic Dances*, Miss S saw herself dancing in the picture and the horse-faced man was trampled under her foot. In her imagination, Miss S also saw a white banner hanging overhead, with the black letters showing the pain on it, "I tore all of them down." Thereafter a beautiful beach appeared in her mind, and she said, "The sand under my foot is warm...my whole body felt warm ... I feel like I am reborn again... I'd like to be held in my mum's arms again." Then the therapist guided Miss S to be hugged by her mother in her imagination, and to carefully taste the touch of her mother's embrace. At the end of the treatment, Miss S said, "These past painful experiences have gone. I will keep go on my life without any pain... I'm safe now... my foot are powerful." And the therapist guided her to maximize this power. After the treatment, the therapist discussed the score of VOC and SUD with Miss S. The score of VOC was increased to 7 and SUD was

decreased to 0.1. The therapist respected her willingness and kept the scores.

The treatment effect is obvious in this case. At the beginning of treatment, the visitor was in a low mood and felt self-contemptuous. While at the end of treatment, the visitor was in a high mood and felt self-confident. Based on the humanism theory, the therapist didn't interfere too much in the process of treatment. Instead, he believed that the visitor had the ability to solve the problem by herself, and he just listened to her. The therapist found the positive power in her narration and maximized this power by playing music and talking to her. Miss S was surprised at the result of treatment. And the therapist repeatedly emphasized that all these changes came from her inner power.