

EDITORIAL

Toward theory-informed clinical research and practice

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Over the years, *Approaches* has nourished my intellectual curiosity by giving me opportunities to access material that reflects international and diverse perspectives in music therapy and related professions. I first joined the *Approaches* team as a peer reviewer in 2011, and in 2017 I stepped into the role of associate editor. The experience of serving as associate editor has been rewarding by allowing me to engage in a dialogue between authors and reviewers, and thus supporting publications that enrich the knowledge pool of our profession. While it is my honour to write this editorial, it is also bittersweet, as I will be stepping down from my role as associate editor this December. My commitment to *Approaches*, however, continues, as I will carry on contributing as a member of the advisory editorial board.

In this editorial I bear witness to how much the scope of *Approaches*, as an open-access journal, has grown over the past years. In my opinion, this issue reflects an emphasis grounded in clinical work that is informed by diverse perspectives bringing together music therapy and related disciplines. Specifically, the authors of articles published in this issue provide readers with theoretical insights and answer research questions rooted in clinical practice. This translation of theoretical issues into research that informs clinical practice aligns with what Stige (2015) identified as a key turn in music therapy – emerging research productivity that is contextually relevant.

Research focusing on intentionality, through which a therapist can use their personal qualities within the boundaries of ethical practice, is contextually relevant for clinicians despite what theoretical lens informs their clinical work. In this issue, Ahonen discusses how a therapeutic relationship develops when “music therapists equally use both music and their own person” in order to bring forth therapeutic change, a concept infrequently addressed in music therapy literature. In the manuscript the reader can learn about clinical issues such as being a wounded healer (because our own experiences allow us to empathise and better understand others), managing countertransference, and understanding vicarious traumatisation (which occurs through repeated exposure to client traumatic disclosures). Those aforementioned clinical issues prompted Ahonen to

conduct an exploratory survey into how Canadian music therapists engage and reflect upon use of self in the therapeutic relationship.

Also providing information that is contextually relevant in their manuscripts, Ramaswamin and Silverman, as well as Lim, reflect on applying theory to provide a support frame for specific clinical interventions. In order to develop a neuroscience-based rationale for patient-preferred live music (PPLM) as a receptive intervention, Ramaswami and Silverman conducted a literature review. Their review benefits our profession by increasing our understanding of the mechanism through which music-listening brings forth neurobiological changes, which then in turn change our behaviours and affect. Aspects of music-listening as a neurologic reward, as offering a sense of familiarity and preference (that allow a sense of control and effective distraction), choice and autonomy in selecting music, as well as the social component of music-making, become the proposed theoretical pathways supporting live music as a receptive music therapy intervention. Lim, on the other hand, applies Egan's Helping Model to explain both theoretical and empirical questions pertaining to clinical work with individuals with substance-abuse disorders. The specific theory is illustrated through a case study that includes assessment, clinical goals, and discussion of specific music-based experiences.

Reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the journal, Keramida and Vaiouli write about differentiated teaching approaches in music education. A collaboration between researchers blending their training in special education, music therapy and music education, their article provides a phenomenological in-depth analysis of challenges in addressing the educational needs of children with special needs in elementary general education classrooms.

The systematic investigations of diverse clinical issues make the articles in this issue culturally and scientifically relevant. The theoretical insights in these manuscripts can translate into direct clinical practice applications. The book reviews included in this volume also reflect the surge in understanding research, using research to inform clinical practice, and engaging in inter-collaborative activities. Similarly, the conference reports represent interdisciplinary dialogue between musicologists, music educators, special needs educators, psychoanalysts, and music psychologists. It is my hope, as associate editor of *Approaches*, that the four articles included in this issue, as well as the plethora of book reviews and the conference reports will ignite our readers' intellectual curiosity and provide both relevant and inspirational material.

Closing this editorial, and on behalf of the whole team of *Approaches*, I would like to express our gratitude to our Advisory Editorial Board members who are approaching the end of their five-year service on the journal's board and will be stepping down by the end of the year: Anthi Agrotou, Mitsi Akoyunoglou, Cochavit Elefant, John Habron, Efthymios Papatzikis, Maria Pothoulaki, Hanne Mette Ridder, Shirley Salmon, and Melanie Voigt. We thank each and every one of them and convey our deep appreciation for their enormous contribution to *Approaches* over the past years. At the same time, a warm welcome to the new team members who joined our Advisory Editorial Board over the past months: June Boyce-Tillman, Enrico Ceccato, Tali Gottfried, Steven Lyons, Raymond MacDonald, Beth Pickard, Vassiliki Reraki, Lorna Segall, and Anita Swanson.

REFERENCES

Stige, B. (2015). The practice turn in music therapy theory. *Music Therapy Perspectives*, 33, 3–11.