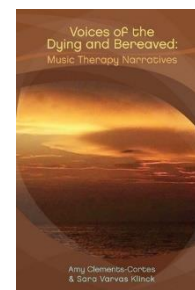


BOOK REVIEW

Voices of the dying and bereaved: Music therapy narratives (Clements-Cortés & Klinck)

Reviewed by Robert E. Krout

Southern Methodist University, USA



Title: Voices of the dying and bereaved: Music therapy narratives **Authors:** Amy Clements-Cortés & Sara Varvas Klinck **Publication year:** 2016
Publisher: Barcelona Publishers **Pages:** 204 **ISBN:** 9781937440923

REVIEWER BIOGRAPHY

Dr Robert E. Krout, MT-BC is Professor Emeritus and former Chair of the Music Therapy Department at Southern Methodist University, where he taught for 13 years and received honours including Outstanding Teaching Professor, Distinguished University Professor, and University Scholar-Teacher of the Year. Robert moved to Texas from New Zealand, where he taught and helped establish a postgraduate university music therapy programme. He was previously Music Therapy Manager at Hospice of Palm Beach County (now TrustBridge Health) in Florida. There, he worked in end of life care and bereavement, and founded an American Music Therapy Association National Roster Internship programme. [rkrou@smu.edu]

Publication history:

Submitted 14 Jan 2018

Accepted 29 Jan 2018

First published 15 Feb 2018

The varied uses of music therapy to creatively meet the needs of the dying, their loved ones, and their bereaved survivors have flourished in recent years and clinicians have available to them a growing body of resources to help inform and guide their practices. This book is a welcome addition to that literature and I believe it is unique in both the ways it is organised and the richness of clinical experiences portrayed. End of life and bereavement care are challenging for patient, family and clinician, and the authors richly portray these challenges and the meaningful successes facilitated by music therapy in an intimate and highly insightful manner. The reader benefits from the substantial clinical experiences of the authors and their journeys with both the dying and the bereaved as detailed in the six cases that are explored and detailed in the book.

While the first main section of the book immediately engages the reader, the foreword written by Joanne Loewy puts the entire work into perspective. I found it both illuminating and instructive in approaching the book and recommend it highly as a starting place. The detailed prelude to the book written by both authors is also very helpful, as it lays out how this unique book is organised. The book itself is organised in two main parts. Part 1: *Dying* was written by author Clements-Cortés and consists of five chapters. Part 2: *Bereavement* was written by author Klinck and also consists of five chapters. Case examples are detailed by both authors. Following Klinck's chapters are a postlude from the authors, references and three illustrative appendices detailing sheet music and improvisation examples relating to three of the authors' cases. An index follows these appendices.

Part 1: *Dying* consists of two groundwork chapters and three chapters illustrating methods of providing music therapy, for patients who are dying, via three detailed case examples. Chapter 1 is titled *Music Therapy in End of Life Care: A Review of the Literature*. Here, Clements-Cortés' presents a thematic review describing the varied uses of music therapy in end of life care. A very helpful table illustrates the review. Labelled *Selected References Supporting Emergent Themes in Palliative Care Music Therapy*, it is organised in sections. In each section symptoms are categorised and listed on the left side of the table, with relevant references listed on the right side by author and publication date. The first three sections of the table are labelled *Physical Themes*, including *Music Therapy as Effective Symptom Management*, *Music Therapy as Pain Management* and *Music Therapy to Promote Relaxation*. Following are four *Psychosocial Themes*, including *Strengthening Self-Identity*, *Emotional Expression and Grieving*, *Supporting Relationship* and *Music Therapy as Relationship Completion*. Finally, three *Spiritual and Whole-Person Care Themes* are displayed, including *Spiritual/Transpersonal or Growth Experience*, *Life Review and Legacy Creation* and *Music Therapy to Enhance Quality of Life*.

Chapter 2, *Implementing the Methods of Music Therapy with Palliative Care Clients*, presents a summary of music therapy techniques commonly provided with patients who are dying. The first category is *Receptive Techniques* and includes techniques and considerations for using *Music for Relaxation*, *Guided Imagery and Music (GIM)* and *Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music*, *Music for Reminiscence*, *Song Choice*, *Song (Lyric) Discussion* and *Somatic Listening*. The second category is *Improvisational Music Therapy*. Techniques described and varied considerations listed include *Empathic and Referential Improvisation* and *Active Improvisation*. The section labelled *Re-Creative Music Therapy* outlines facets and aspects for using various types of music, labelled *Vocal* and *Instrumental*. The *Compositional Music Therapy* category includes applications of *Song Composition and Song Stories*, *Musical Autobiographies*, *Music Collages* and *Music Life Review*.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 illustrate interventions with patients who are dying, via detailed case descriptions. The *Improvisation and Songwriting at End of Life* chapter describes the author's work with Janet. A 53-year-old woman with breast cancer, improvisation proved to be effective at helping Janet process previous life experiences. Songwriting, meanwhile, enabled Janet to express her feelings via music and lyrics. Chapter 4, *Saying Good-bye with Song*, detailed music therapy with a 68-year-old male named Dean, who was dying of pancreatic cancer. The author described how music therapy was able to assist Dean in connecting to his wife, children and grandchildren. Improvisation, song choice and songwriting were the primary techniques used by the author. Part 1 of the book concludes with the case of Melanie, a 73-year-old woman who was dying of colon cancer. The author describes how music played a strong role in supporting this patient's grieving process, as well as helping her assess the relationships in her life.

Part 2 of the book focuses on bereavement. Author Klinck begins with a chapter titled *Music Therapy in Bereavement Care: A Review of the Literature*. Here, she describes a synthesis of the fields of bereavement services, group therapy work and music therapy. A number of definitions are offered, including grief, mourning and bereavement. She also provides an overview of prevalent grief theories, types of bereavement support groups, how the creative arts can interact with grief and uses of music therapy and grief. Finally, bereavement-specific music therapy interventions are highlighted. Chapters 7, 8, and 9 focus on case examples. The chapter titled *Personal Discovery Through Music Creation and Lyric Analysis in Bereavement Care* focuses on Nancy and her experiences from a music therapy and

bereavement group research study. This group took place following the death of her husband from cancer. The author describes how lyric analysis, songwriting and finally active music-making, all helped validate Nancy's grief experiences. In Chapter 8, *Revealing Honest Expressions of Grief in Clinical Improvisation*, Klinck describes the case of a woman named Evelyn. She also took part in a music therapy based bereavement group research study after the death of her husband from cancer. The author describes the uses of group improvisation, which validated Evelyn's expressions of emotions and provided her with opportunities for emotional release. Chapter 9, *Honouring Departed Loved Ones and Maintaining Connection Through Meaningful Musical Memories and Song Lyrics* describes Klinck's third case summary. She describes a woman named Ruth, and her experiences from a music therapy bereavement group research study in which she took part after the death of her husband due to Alzheimer's Disease. The group incorporated song discussion, music listening and lyric analysis. The author reported that these offered Ruth opportunities for her to express her inner processes, as well as to maintain an emotional connection with her husband. Chapter 10 is quite unique, not only in relation to the rest of this book, but to the grief literature at large. Titled *Music Therapy Bereavement Group Model*, in it Klinck presents a framework of theoretical foundations, as well as goals and rationales for the group work. She also describes philosophical considerations, as well as practical recommendations, specific group elements, varied music therapy strategies and outlines of weekly sessions. She also presents a summary of the research study which acted as the context for the case summaries found in chapters 6 to 8.

In summary, this book rings true to its title *Voices of the Dying and Bereaved: Music Therapy Narratives*. The voices of those who are dying and also those who survive them are shared creatively and with meaning as their music therapy stories are told. The voices of the authors and their own life and grief journeys are also heard through reflective and open observations of how they have been affected and influenced through this important work. I find this book to be a unique and thoughtful contribution to the literature pertaining to the varied uses of music and music therapy in both end of life and bereavement care. It is based on research, presents clear relationships to foundational theories and shares patient and client stories that I believe will enrich the work of music therapists working in these areas. The book is thoughtful and reflective and it shares the combined wisdom and experiences of both authors. I recommend this book highly and thank the authors for their valuable contribution to the literature.