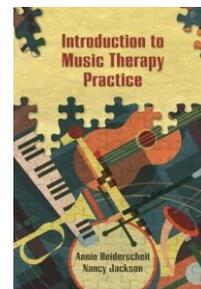


BOOK REVIEW

Introduction to music therapy practice (Heiderscheit & Jackson)

Reviewed by **Caroline Anderson**

Bluebell Hospice, UK



Title: Introduction to music therapy practice **Authors:** Annie Heiderscheit & Nancy Jackson **Publication year:** 2018 **Publisher:** Barcelona Publishers **Pages:** 305 **ISBN:** 978-1-945411-30-4

REVIEWER BIOGRAPHY

Caroline Anderson works as a music therapist in a children's hospice in the UK. Her clinical experience includes adults and children with learning disabilities and autism spectrum disorders, and also in young oncology. She has a particular interest in skill-sharing with carers and parents and has undertaken a number of skill-sharing projects in Rwanda and the UK. Caroline will shortly be completing her doctoral studies examining cultural difference in music therapy practice. [c.m.anderson@hotmail.co.uk]

Publication history:

Submitted 18 May 2020

Accepted 21 May 2020

First published 25 June 2020

Introduction to Music Therapy Practice sets out a wide range of music therapy practices and approaches through descriptive case studies and accompanying narratives drawing on current research. Heiderscheit and Jackson, both music therapy educators, have compiled a textbook to accompany introductory courses in music therapy for non-music therapists. They use case studies as the most engaging route into understanding the breadth of music therapy practice. Each subsection of the book begins with a case study that provides a springboard to considering aspects of music therapy techniques as well as the wider context in which they take place, for example, information on physical and mental illness, and the kinds of services that provide music therapy within these fields. The textbook is primarily intended for non-music therapists and their educators, and as such serves to open up the world of music therapy to non-specialists. The 48 case studies are contributed by 29 clinicians from five countries, demonstrating huge variance in practices and approaches; the book is therefore an overview of many different approaches, with the case studies bringing the focus back to the individuals at the heart of the work.

Annie Heiderscheit and Nancy Jackson work as music therapy researchers, clinicians and directors of music therapy training courses in the United States, in common with most of the contributors to this book; this context influences its overall tone. Although the examples of music therapy practice are provided from music therapists of several nationalities, and the research evidence provided is from a range of international sources, other supporting information such as disease epidemiology, the health insurance system, and history of the profession uses a United States perspective.

The 15 chapters of *Introduction to Music Therapy Practice* are intended to align with a typical 15-week college semester. The book is divided into four main sections with 12 case studies in each,

covering the identified four music therapy techniques: re-creative, receptive, compositional and improvisational music therapy. These are preceded by an introductory section that provides accessible, research-based answers to questions such as 'what is music?', 'what are health and wellbeing?' and 'why use music as therapy?' Each chapter concludes with a glossary of terms (highlighted in bold in the main text), and the references from that chapter, rather than a list of all references at the end of the book. This approach serves the book's potential use as a textbook where individual chapters may be considered in isolation, but also makes it easier for the reader to explore the many references as they go along.

Section A, 'Re-creative Music Therapy', describes music therapy sessions with pre-composed music actively used by music therapy clients, as opposed to receptive methods. The examples given include singing familiar songs with people with Parkinson's disease and singing lullabies in a neonatal intensive care unit. Most case studies introduce wider information about that particular area of clinical practice. For example, a case study involving therapeutic piano lessons with a girl with Down's syndrome then includes additional information on Down's syndrome and other intellectual disorders, and the rationale and benefits of therapeutic music lessons. The section ends with eight supplementary case studies employing re-creative methods and some additional examples of research in this area.

The variations of 'Receptive Music Therapy' are explored in Section B. The first example, that of active music listening with a mechanically ventilated patient in an intensive care unit is followed by contextual information on mechanical ventilation, intensive care, use of active music listening with such patients and a rationale for when such an approach may be employed, including for relaxation. The Bonny method of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) and other specialised receptive methods are described, similarly illustrated with case studies.

Section C, 'Compositional Music Therapy', presents therapeutic applications of song, instrumental and multimedia composition across the contexts of bipolar disorder, developmental disability, and through case studies referring to a wide range of physical, psychological and social disorders. Several of the case studies provide song lyrics written by service users, again bringing focus back to the struggles of real individuals, and the intimacy of music therapy relationships. As with other chapters, a review of the research and evidence base follows.

The fourth section, 'Improvisational Music Therapy', initially presents the Nordoff-Robbins music therapy approach with two case examples, then broadens into other improvisation based approaches exemplified in case studies situated in a forensic mental health setting, a care setting for people with dementia and a residential eating disorder unit.

Following the four main sections on music therapy techniques comes a chapter describing various clinical contexts; hospitals, day services, special education, and community based care. An overview of each setting with a diagram of referral, treatment and evaluation pathways is given to demonstrate the differences in music therapy delivery. This is followed by a chapter describing the development of music therapy in the United States. An appendix listing websites and journals representing a more international perspective than the preceding chapter is included.

As a UK trained and practising music therapist, my own background is in improvisational music therapy informed by psychoanalytic theory. Perhaps this is inevitable in a book that seeks to cover so much ground, but I felt that my particular music therapy approach was somewhat under-

represented, with only a nod to this model and its pioneers in the form of a short paragraph. I was also interested to reflect that while I consider myself an improvising music therapist, as I read through the sections I realised that I use techniques from all four sections – re-creative, receptive, compositional, improvisational – in my clinical work. The book indeed includes reminders of how in real music therapy sessions methods are often combined or flow from one to another.

Introduction to Music Therapy Practice is concise, far-ranging and scholarly, designed to open up the breadth of music therapy practice to non-specialists. The case studies provide colourful snapshots that both bring the techniques to life in the mind of the reader and energize the theory. They have been carefully curated to fit with the rest of the text, which has clarity and conciseness; this is necessary in a book that contains such a wealth of information. There is a marked United States perspective at times that makes some sections less relevant to readers outside this context although this text does cover a broad range of music therapy techniques. As a practicing music therapist I would be more likely drawn to books that focus in more detail on my own areas of interest, although I greatly enjoyed the tour through the different types of practice exemplified, and learned from the many experienced contributors.