

## Culture of experiential training in Germany

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Why am I talking about our culture of experiential music therapy training (EMT) in our training courses in Germany? When Connie Izenberg, Chair of the WFMT Commission on Education and Training, proposed the topic of culture in music therapy, Thomas Wosch and I discussed it and we decided that this subject, in particular, plays a significant role in our field of music therapy.

### A Common agreement

In 1996, seven uniquely different professional music therapy associations began meeting regularly as a joint coalition, called the „Kasseler Konferenz“ (KK) – despite the great variety of music therapy treatment approaches: depth psychotherapy / analytical oriented music therapy, Nordoff-Robbins, Anthroposophic or Regulative Music Therapy, with their inherently different vocabulary and interpretations. These associations worked successfully in redefining significant terms and principles relating to music therapy, with the goal to reach a common agreement, in order to develop our professional profile and possible State recognition.

In countless meetings, due to obvious theoretical differences, this professional assembly (KK) formulated the following resolution, designating self-experience/ experiential training as an essential part of music therapy understanding and training.

First they agreed to the term „Selbsterfahrung“ („self-experience“) – this being a neutral term, encompassing all forms of experiential training.

The formulated goals of self-experience are:

- Promotion of personal growth through fundamental self-experience on the basis of different psychotherapy concepts
- Exchange of knowledge about the music therapy process through self-experience (method related self-experience)
- Personal related self-experience: recognition of possibilities, limitations and boundaries in one's own treatment competencies. This may or may not be done in the sense of depth psychology oriented self-experience (biographical work)

- Treatment with music in its different forms
- Realisation in dyad and/or group situation

These are the common agreements which are the main content of our understanding of music therapy, as represented and taught in our training programmes.

### EMT in training courses

Traditionally, music therapy educational programmes in German-speaking countries began in Vienna, with no specific teaching methodology. Music therapists of the first generation found orientation in this field, drawing from their understanding of psychological concepts and promoting individual therapy.

Today the term *Lehrmusiktherapie* (LMT) as used in German-speaking regions, is based on psychoanalytical training analysis. Training analysis was established by Jung and Freud, further developed e.g. by Mary Priestley into the so-called analytical music therapy, or / and by Fritz Perls to Gestalt-therapy. In this context, EMT is based on the concepts of transference and counter-transference, including psychotherapeutic techniques such as holding, containing, confronting, mirroring.

Together in 1996, the directors of university training programmes in Germany (psychotherapeutic /depth psychology, analytical music therapy training courses) defined the term „experiential music therapy training“ (EMT) as follows:

*„EMT is to be understood as a music therapy treatment form which can be employed on the occasion of professional training or continuing education for the music therapist. The term „music therapy self-experience“ is at this time used for EMT as well as for other forms of music therapy work (workshops at meetings, courses where other professional groups are first introduced to music therapy, etc.). When it is a question of EMT within music therapy self-experience, the following designation is recommended: Music therapy self-experience in the sense of an experiential therapy.“ (Tüpker)*

This definition of EMT is compatible with most music therapy training programmes throughout Germany.

For these training programmes, at the university level and at two private institutions, EMT is a mandatory component in the education of their music therapy students. It is taught in the form of individual music therapy (in a dyadic setting) and group music therapy.

For individual therapy, EMT is provided outside of the academic setting, in order to prevent problems of mixing roles, competencies and dependencies. Students work with an experiential music therapist outside of the university or training institute. Biographical backgrounds, conflicts, basic emotional structures, and the life progressions of the students are important issues in EMT.

Group music therapy is given within the programme from an external therapist, to combine personal experiences within a social framework and to learn methods and techniques of group music therapy.

Nevertheless there are other methods without clearly defined EMT training: Nordoff-Robbins, Anthroposophic, and Orff-Music Therapy. Within the Nordoff-Robbins and the Anthroposophic programme curriculum, EMT is inherent in the musical training, although at a different level and significance; Orff-music therapy requires no EMT.

### **Students in EMT**

Students are not patients with life disturbing problems and the desire to alleviate them, but they have to be „hungry for self experience and curious about themselves“ (Frühmann, 1994). As educators and music therapists we know that nobody will choose a therapeutic profession without some personally challenging issues, challenges leading to creative action. Additionally, we have to be aware of helping students to develop healthy aspects of their personality, coping strategies, means of protection and stabilization, resources, abilities and assets of their own personalities and assist them in learning to know the results. These goals are formulated in all our music therapy training programmes.

### **Music in EMT**

During the past decades, we had a strong connection to psychotherapy, not only in theoretical and methodological thinking but also in our understanding of EMT. This connection was necessary to further develop our professional identity, from music therapy as a medical support therapy to that of a unique creative art discipline. Consequently the necessity of music therapists implementing music as a therapeutic medium and having expertise musical skills has increased.

We have to experience within ourselves the power of music, its effect, possibilities, limits (and side effects); we have to be aware when and why to use music, develop necessary therapeutic musical skills and attain knowledge as to how we might reach our clients musically, beyond words and verbal skills.

### **Present situation**

Since there is no State recognition or protection of our profession/title in Germany, our professional association, BVM (Professional Association of Music Therapists in Germany) took over the responsibility of establishing official recognition requirements. The BVM requires 100 hours of individual music therapy (EMT) outside the educational setting and additionally 50–100 hours of group experiential training (GMT) within the training programme.

In summary we consider it necessary to establish music therapy as a recognized psychotherapeutic art discipline. According to the Straßburg Declaration for Psychotherapy (1990), we also believe that music therapy education should consist of theory, experiential music therapy, and practice under supervision – including the acceptance of a variety of therapeutic treatment theories, methods and techniques.

## References

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## Finding the Mark: Designing research training for Music Therapists

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We are currently developing the Roehampton University post graduate diploma for revalidation to become an MA in September 2006. This development is in response to a mandatory requirement by the regulatory body for health care professions in the UK, The Health Professions Council. All UK training courses will become MA from September 2006.

One of the key tasks in selecting students is balancing their areas of strength and weakness: we require that they have the following:

- Professional skill upon at least one instrument