

Developing Faith in the Transition to Adulthood: An Analysis of Songs Written by Adolescents who have had Adverse Childhood Experiences

Glaubensentwicklung im Übergang zum Erwachsenen werden: Eine Analyse von Liedern, geschrieben von Jugendlichen mit belastenden Kindheitserfahrungen

Michael Viega¹, New York

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Studies (ACE) reveal a longitudinal relationship between childhood trauma and high-risk health outcomes in adulthood, leaving adolescence a precarious transitional stage of development. Faith development, where personal trust is placed in something of value, can be a resource for adolescents in developing a positive orientation towards the future in the face of hopelessness. The study investigates the development of faith as revealed in songs created by adolescents who have experienced extreme adversity and trauma. Results of combined arts-based and analytic song analysis indicate three song categories corresponding with stages of trauma: Songs that Protect Vulnerability, Songs of Abandonment, and Songs of Faith and Love, which is then supported by James Fowler's model of faith development. A model of therapeutic songwriting is presented to help adolescents develop faith towards their transition into adulthood. This model has three phases: Imitation, Developing Self-Reflection, Developing Self-Love. Implications and applications of this model are discussed.

Die Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Studien (Studien zu Kindheitstrauma und Gewalt) zeigen eine longitudinale Beziehung zwischen Kindheitstraumata und dem hohen Risiko für Gesundheitsfolgen im Erwachsenenalter. Der Glaube, als ein persönliches Vertrauen in etwas Wertvolles, kann für Jugendliche angesichts von Hoffnungslosigkeit in Bezug auf die Zukunft eine Ressource für das Entwickeln einer positiven Orientierung sein. Die beschriebene Studie untersucht in Liedern Jugendlicher, die extreme Belastungen und Traumata erlebt haben, die Entwicklung von Glauben. Die kombinierte kunstbasierte (arts-based) und analytische Liedanalyse verdeutlicht im Ergebnis drei Lied-Kategorien für Traumastufen: Lie-

1 Author's Note: The author would like to acknowledge Dr. Cheryl Dileo, director of the Arts and Quality of Life Research Center (AQLRC) at Temple University, Philadelphia, PA. The songs presented in this paper were a part of AQLRC's *Hear Our Voices* initiative. In addition, thanks to Dr. Kenneth Aigen (Music Therapy, New York University) for his mentorship and advisement involving this work.

der, die vor Verwundbarkeit schützen, Lieder des Verlassenseins, und Lieder des Glaubens und der Liebe. Dies wird durch James Fowlers Modell der Entwicklung des Glaubens theoretisch fundiert. Für Musiktherapeuten wird ein entsprechendes Modell für Songwriting vorgestellt, um Jugendliche in Glaubensfragen während des Übergangs ins Erwachsen werden zu helfen. Dieses Modell besteht aus drei Phasen: Nachahmung, Entwicklung der Selbstreflexion, Entwicklung der Selbstliebe. Es werden die damit zusammenhängenden Vorstellungen und Anwendungsmöglichkeiten dieses Modells diskutiert.

Literature Review: Adolescent Development and Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adolescence is a pivotal transitional period of human development physically, emotionally, socially, psychologically, neurologically, and spiritually (Curtis 2015; Good & Willoughby 2008; Steinberg & Morris 2001; Romeo 2017). Successful transition to adulthood requires a transformation of consciousness, from that of a child who is able to attend freely within symbolic play to that of an adult seeking wholeness and meaningfulness (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson 1984). Erick Erikson (1968), renowned developmental psychologist, notes that this period of human development is marked by paradox: For instance, a teenager seeks individuality and autonomy while also craving group belonging; an adult might shame a teenager for exploring new identities, while simultaneously place them in situations that embarrass them in front of their peers. Already faced with concerns of identity formation, complex social pressures, and a rapidly maturing brain, an adolescent's transition into adulthood can be marred by the impact of stress and childhood trauma (Layne et al. 2014; Romeo 2017).

A large-scale longitudinal study that began in 1995, called the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE), has been examining the relationships between exposures to childhood trauma and the „origins of high priority health, behavioral, and social problems“ (Larkin, Shields & Anda 2012, 264) for adults and adolescents. ACE has been defined as pertaining to those persons under 18 years of age who have suffered one or more of the following,

- 1) emotional neglect,
- 2) physical abuse,
- 3) sexual abuse,
- 4) verbal abuse,
- 5) physical neglect,
- 6) battered mother,
- 7) household substance abuse,
- 8) mental illness in household,
- 9) parental separation or divorce,

10) incarcerated household members (Anda & Brown 2007; Felitti et al. 1998). ACE studies have revealed strong relationships between the number of traumas experienced by a child and health difficulties in adulthood, including early death (Dube et al. 2001; Felitti et al. 1998). Though many of these studies have focused on the impact of childhood trauma on adults, evidence supports that the same danger exists for adolescents (Layne et al. 2014; Rytälä-Manninen et al. 2014). This includes attachment difficulties, truancy, substance abuse, running away from home, suicidal ideation, criminality, self-injury, and sexual exploitation (Layne et al. 2014). It is clear that youth who have been exposed to childhood trauma have to overcome tremendous hurdles in the transition to adulthood, which can result in hopelessness (Hamilton et al. 2013).

Hopelessness has been defined as „the expectation that negative events will happen in the future and the belief in one’s helplessness to affect these outcomes“ (Hamilton et al. 2013, 465). Hopelessness has been linked as a predictor for depression in adolescence (Hamilton et al. 2013), which can be enhanced when adolescents experience victimization and are unable to consider future consequences and plans before acting. This has been attributed to brain development in adolescence, especially amygdala, hippocampal formation, and prefrontal cortex (Romeo 2017). Hamilton et al. (2015) have noted that interventions to help adolescents develop a strong orientation towards the future might build resilience and lessen the impact of hopelessness and depression.

Though researchers have stressed the importance of identity formation, cognitive and social growth in aiding an adolescent’s transition into adulthood, less is known about the impact of spiritual development. Good and Willoughby (2008) hypothesize that adolescents are particularly susceptible to exploring spirituality, defined as one’s personal connection to the power of divinity and peak experiences, as a way of coping with the intensity of adolescence. In addition, the authors state that adolescent conversions towards spirituality can endure throughout the lifespan and provide a powerful resource towards regulating stress and emotions into adulthood.

Given that music plays a formidable role in adolescent development (McFerran 2010; McFerran, Garrido & Saarikallio 2016) and the possible spiritual dimensions of popular music (Aigen 2008; Sylvan 2002), it is important to see how spirituality might emerge within music created in health-related contexts. This paper seeks to investigate how spirituality, specifically faith development, manifests within songs created by adolescents who have experienced extreme childhood trauma.

Therapeutic Songwriting

Therapeutic songwriting has been used with adolescents in a variety of health settings as a way to address medical trauma (Robb 1996; Robb & Ebberts 2003a, 2003b), issues surrounding bereavement (Dalton & Krout 2005; Krout 2005), instill hope and resilience (Goldstein 1990; Kinney 2012), and to help adults to help

process childhood trauma and abuse (Day 2005; Day, Baker & Darlington 2009). Baker (2015a) notes that therapeutic songwriting can support identity formation, with songs serving as a clinical artifact that captures a person within a certain stage of development. Baker and MacDonald (2014) have found that authenticity and meaningfulness in songs can be enhanced when a person feels it captures his or her identity. The individual uniqueness of each songwriter is expressed not only in the lyrics but also in the music, which can serve to enhance, contradict, and/or support textual information in songs (Turry 2006; Viega and Baker 2016). Since music plays a vital role in identity formation in the everyday lives of adolescents (Laiho 2004), therapeutic songwriting can provide an important resource for helping an adolescent transition to adulthood through the exploration and expression of one's uniqueness and lived experience (Viega 2013).

Analysis of songs written in music therapy can serve as an artifact that informs clinicians of a songwriter's developmental processes. Song analysis can also support empathy building for the lived experience of disability, trauma, and the ecological contexts that impact the songwriter (Viega and Baker 2016, 2017). O'Callaghan and Grocke (2009) discussed two different approaches to lyric analysis, a grounded theory approach used for hypothesis generation and theory building, and phenomenological analysis used to uncover more holistic understanding of the experiences revealed in the songs. Aigen (2009), Turry (2006), Viega (2013), and Baker (2015b) have noted the importance of a more integrated approach to investigating songs integrating music and lyric analysis. Viega and Baker (2016) have also discussed the benefits of combining experiential and analytic approaches to song analysis, suggesting that arts-based methods can reveal more complex themes that might be missed otherwise.

A combined approach to song analysis is used in this study towards investigating the complexity of adolescent development and the lived experience of trauma. The hope of this study is that in-depth song analysis can reveal the trails, fears, rewards, and needs of adolescents who have had adverse childhood experiences so that a better understanding of how music therapists can support their transition to adulthood through therapeutic songwriting is garnered. Therefore, the purpose of this study is twofold. First, is to reveal developmental processes of adolescents who have experienced trauma through song analysis; second, is to understand how faith (future orientation) develops for adolescent songwriters who have had adverse childhood experiences.

Method Song Analysis

Twelve songs were analyzed using a combination of arts-based and analytic lyric and music analysis. For an overview of the benefits of combined experiential and analytic song analysis see Viega and Baker. Adolescents in a residential-care facility who have experienced high ACE scores wrote the songs analyzed in the study. The residential-care facility was located outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in

the United States of America. The songwriters came from a high-risk inner-city environment. They identified with Hip Hop Culture, which has been defined as artistic response towards systematic oppression, as well as cultural expressed within street entrepreneurialism, knowledge, language, and fashion (KRS-One 2009; Westbrook 2002). For more about the discourse surrounding Hip Hop Culture and Music Therapy see Viega (2016a).

Songwriters in this study participated in therapeutic songwriting program called *Hear Our Voices*, an initiative of the Arts and Quality of Life Research Center out of Temple University (Philadelphia, PA) and founded by its director Dr. Cheryl Dileo. A total of twenty-two songwriting participants recorded one hundred and fourteen compositions over the course of the songwriting program at this residential-care facility. Songs were chosen for analysis based on the researcher's own visceral and intuitive relationship with the compositions. In essence, the author started with songs that he had resonated intimately and that evoked either positive transferences or uncomfortable associations. Subsequent songs were then chosen based on emerging data generation. Twelve songs in total were analyzed with data saturation (Fusch and Ness 2015) informed by the creative processes of the arts-based analysis (see Table 1).

Table 1
Included Songs for Analysis

Song Title	Music Style	Type of Song	Song Length
Cryin'	R & B	Lyrics layered over precomposed loops	1:00
Emotional Disaster	R & B and Rock hybrid	Original lyrics recorded over layered precomposed loops and live guitar and synthesizer	4:24
Butterfly Wings	R & B	Original lyrics over pre-composed instrumental	2:34
My Party	Rap	Rapping over pre-composed song instrumental	1:14
Darkness	Rap- „Horrorcore“	Original composition with electronic instruments (drum machine and synthesizers)	4:20
Who'll Understand?	Rap	Composed lyrics over pre-composed song instrumental	2:18
Lost	Rap	Pre-composed instrumental and rapping	3:11
Love	R & B	Lyrics sung over pre-composed instrumental	3:11
Numb	Singer Songwriter	Singing over guitar	4:05
Reek Mugga	Rap	Rapping on client created instrumental	2:46
A Girl Like Me	R& B	Original lyrics over client created music	3:39
Butterfly Wings (Revisited)	R & B	Original lyrics over pre-composed song instrumental	2:34

Arts-based Analysis

Arts-based research (ABR) continues to develop in music therapy research with two special editions on this topic recently appearing in the *Journal of Music Therapy* (Winter 2015) and *Music Therapy Perspectives* (Spring 2016). ABR is defined as “an umbrella term that includes the use of arts as a research method – where the art forms are primary in the research process – and as an overall methodology – where a creative world-view forms the philosophical foundation for an inquiry” (Viega and Forinash 2016, 491). For the current study, ABR was seen as the primary methodology, where a sustained creative worldview informed the decision-making processes throughout the research study (Rolling 2013, Viega 2016b). The primary purpose of ABR is theory generation, using the arts to discover and invent new possibilities of observing complex social phenomenon (Rolling 2013).

Remixing was used as the primary artistic method of data generation. Remixing is a music technique that uses copying/cut and paste music technology, sampling small moments of a pre-composed song to discover meaning by creating a new composition (Navas 2012; Viega 2013). The craft of remix was chosen for this study since it reflects ways songs are recontextualize in popular music styles like rap, which also mirrored the preferences and cultural identity of the songwriters. First, Viega listened to the songs in a relaxed state of consciousness and allowed himself to respond naturally to whatever affective and intuitive response he had, paying attention to bodily sensations and emotional responses to the music. This occurred over several listens until a moment from each song was chosen to sample, which could include one or more of the following:

- 1) music elements, such as a 4–8 bar guitar or piano accompaniment,
- 2) lyrical elements, such as a word or a phrase that evoke a strong affective response,
- 3) ambient elements of the recording not related to music or lyric content, such as sounds and conversations that occur outside of the song’s context.

The various sounds were then sampled from the original recordings using a Korg (ESX-1) Electronic Sampler Production Station, which includes a drum machine, synthesizer, and sampling capabilities. New remix compositions were created and organized in an iTunes playlist. A panel of professionals representing the various elements of the study – a music therapy expert on therapeutic songwriting, a social worker immersed in Hip Hop Culture, and an arts-based researcher – listened and reflected on the original songs and the remix composition to ensure trustworthiness of the arts-based design. A total of twelve remixes were created.

Structural corroboration (Barone and Eisner 2012) is the process of taking various artistic data to create a unified piece, which makes the findings more compelling and promotes credibility in ABR. The twelve remix compositions were organized into a final concept album called *Rising from the Ashes*. The album is composed of three stages, 1) Going into Hiding, 2) Down in the labyrinth, and 3) Loving me and my Butterfly Wings (see table 2). For more about the arts-

based research results from *Rising from the Ashes* see Viega, 2016c, where a video performance of that album is available through *Music Therapy Perspectives*.

Table 2
Stages of the Concept Album

Stages of Concept Album	Remix Composition Tracks	Original Songs
Overture	Track 1: Rising from the Ashes	Butterfly Wings
Going into Hiding	Track 2: Hide it all in my Body	Lost
	Track 3: Leave me Alone, I'm Scared	My Party
	Track 4: Like Icarus	Reek Mugga
Down in the Labyrinth	Track 5: Her Words are Lost	Cryin'
	Track 6: My Heart Can't Take it Anymore	Emotional Disaster
	Track 7: Funeral Procession	Darkness
	Track 8: Thaw	Numb
"Loving me and my Butterfly Wings"	Track 9: Shining Up in the Sky	Who'll Understand?
	Track 10: Opening a Door	Love
	Track 11: U R U!	A Girl Like Me
	Track 12: Soar!	Butterfly Wings

Analytic Analysis

The original songs were organized using the three stages developed in *Rising from the Ashes*. Going stage-by-stage, songs were systematically analyzed for lyrics, music, and composition elements. The lyrics were analyzed using phenomenological approaches outlined in O'Callaghan & Grocke (2009). In addition, Viega scored the salient music qualities of each song and completed a final summary for each composition noting how the music and lyrical themes interacted. Using the categories of the concept album, Viega cross-compared the songs in each stage and compiled final summaries. Last, between category analysis of the summaries revealed three themes that illuminate the developmental processes within these groups of songs, which include *Songs that Protect Vulnerability*, *Songs of Abandonment*, and *Songs of Faith and Love*.

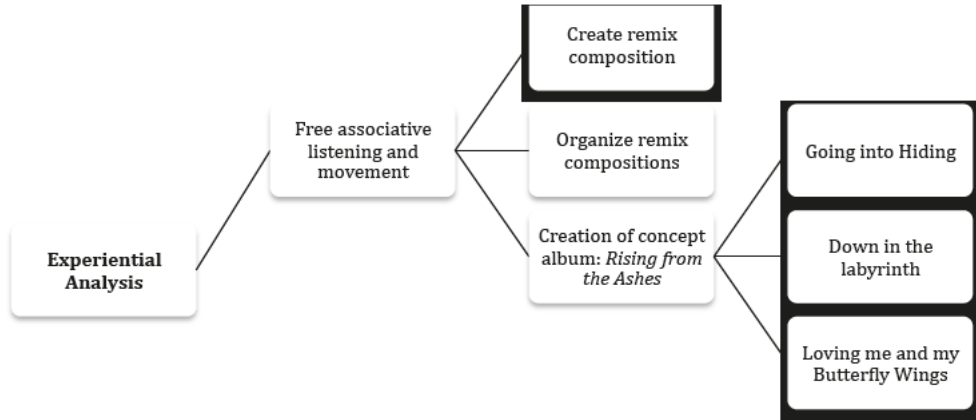


Figure 1
Phase 1: Experiential Analysis

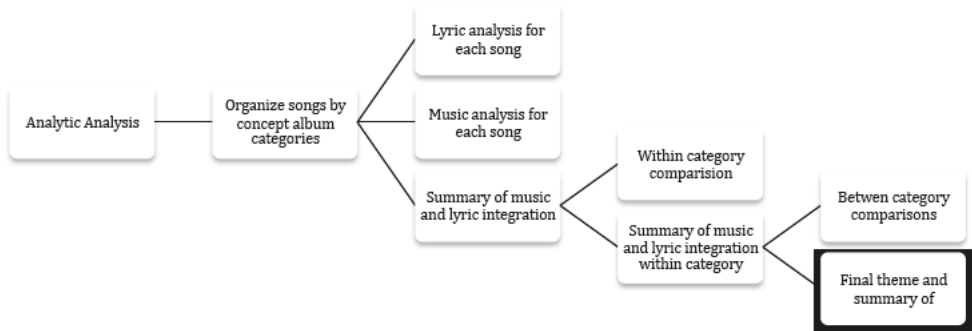


Figure 2
Phase 2: Analytic Analysis

Fowler's Model of Faith Development

The findings from the experiential and analytic portions of study were synthesized with the stages of James Fowler's model of faith development (1981/1995). In the context of this study, faith is defined as universal meaning-making where personal trust is placed in something of value, whether it is religion, spirituality, music, family, or any other numinous structure (Fowler 1981/1995). The construct of faith is relevant to this study for several reasons:

First, faith can be seen as the development of a positive orientation towards the future, which is needed for adolescents to gain resilience and coping from traumatic experiences.

Second, popular music has been noted for its ability to be a vehicle towards numinous and transformation experience for adolescents, which relates to the stylistic elements of the songs created in the therapeutic songwriting program (Aigen 2005; Sylvan 2002; Viega 2013).

Last, the construct of faith and spiritual development mirrors the worldview presented here for adolescent development, which is a transformation of consciousness from childhood to adulthood that includes a spiritual journey towards self-understanding (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson 1984).

Fowler's developmental theory of faith (1981/1995) is an extension of Piaget's (1950/2001) theory of intelligence development, Lawrence Kohlberg's (1981) stages of moral development, Erik Erikson's (1968/1994) stages of identity development, and Daniel Levinson's (1978) understandings of the transitional eras in human development. Fowler devised seven stages that represent various phases of human growth and development: Stages 1–4 represent the eras of infancy (undifferentiated faith), childhood (intuitive-projective faith), early adolescence (mythic-literal), and late adolescents (synthetic-conventional). Stages 5–7 represent young adulthood (individuating-reflective faith), middle age (conjunctive faith), and late adult era (universalizing faith). Fowler's model has been criticized for its structural and linear approach to faith development, as well as negating ecological and cultural influences (Heywood 2008). For the current study, Fowler's model was used as way of enhancing meaning of psychological processes revealed through experiential and analytic analysis of the songs and not to suggest universality or linear growth from adversity and trauma.

Results

The first purpose of this study related to revealing developmental processes of adolescents who have experienced trauma through a combination of experiential and analytic analysis. Three categories emerged describing the various stages of development revealed in the songs: Stage 1, *Songs that Protect Vulnerability*; Stage 2, *Songs of Abandonment*; Stage 3, *Songs of Faith and Love*.

Songs that Protect Vulnerability

Three songs fit within this category, "My Party", "Lost", and "Reek Mugga".² The music and lyrics in these songs reveal a duality within the lived experiences of

2 MP3 recordings of *Songs that Protect Vulnerability* can be accessed at:
 "My Party" (https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6tJ2_7IJPaKQXdDZ0ZRczNEMjQ).
 "Lost" (https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6tJ2_7IJPaKOV9TTG9hVEdPZFk).
 "Reek Mugga" (https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6tJ2_7IJPaKNEE0M0Fxb3VITnM).

adolescents in this phase of development: On one end, the lyrics describe topics related to obtaining power, fame, and money, and engaging in high-risk, heedless behaviors. In addition, most lyrics are written without concrete narratives and instead are projective and spontaneous. Concurrently, the music provides dystopian soundscapes filled with sound effects like sirens and missile blasts, subsonic bass tones and pounding drums, and dislocated synthesizers. Any acoustic or natural instrumentation (human whistles, acoustic guitars and pianos) are hidden within the bombastic music production. The conflict between the music and lyrics suggests that the songwriters are protecting vulnerable emotions, such as existential fear and rejection, in order to prevent emotional and psychological pain from surfacing.

Songs of Abandonment

Four songs were categorized as *Songs of Abandonment* including, “Cyrin”, “Emotional Disaster”, “Darkness”, and “Numb”.³ The songs in this category lyrically detail emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and abandonment that has resulted in feelings of self-hate, hopelessness, suicidal ideation, depression, and numbness. The music plays a dual role in this stage of development. First, it offers possibilities to explore and move through the evocative topics expressed in the lyrics. Musical and production elements often give voice to unexpressed emotions, offering empathy and support to the songwriter’s lyrics. Second, sound effects are used to intensify and enhance more linear narratives that are forming. For instance, thunderstorms and rain effects are used to heighten the emotional atmosphere; pitch manipulation and stereo panning enhances feelings of depression and/or feeling disoriented; filters and delay create a sense of fragmentation, disconnection, and isolation.

Songs of Faith and Love

Four songs were categorizes as *Songs of Faith and Love* including, “Who’ll Understand?”, “Love”, “A Girl Like Me”, and “Butterfly Wings”.⁴ Lyrically, songs

3 MP3 recordings of *Songs of Abandonment* can be accessed at:

“Cyrin” (https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6tJ2_7IJPaKcDJmanV4Y2VBQms).

“Emotional Disaster” (https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6tJ2_7IJPaKRTU2eWRqTk9INEU).

“Darkness” (https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6tJ2_7IJPaKc2ZPMlhrZDdhQVE).

“Numb” (https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6tJ2_7IJPaKUWFzYkVkVEcxV3c).

4 MP3 recordings of *Songs of Faith and Love* can be accessed at:

“Who’ll Understand?” (https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6tJ2_7IJPaKNFdvdGZHd0tCQ2s).

“Love” (https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6tJ2_7IJPaKTUdjM3VkVGcxLUk).

“A Girl Like Me” (https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6tJ2_7IJPaKSGlYa1NwNnNXS2s).

“Butterfly Wings” (https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6tJ2_7IJPaKQV8yLVZ3eF8ycGc).

in this category discover resources of self-love, personal power, and faith for a better future. In addition, personal stories of struggle are shared but from within a space of resilience. The last song, “Butterfly Wings,” offers mentorship towards those who have experienced adversity but are struggling and lost. The music plays a powerful supportive role, with acoustic instruments, syncopated rhythmic drumming, and synthesized instruments enhancing feelings of empowerment and self-love. Soaring melodies and harmonic progressions provide the needed musical structures to encourage and allow feelings of faith and love to expand and grow. Vocal melodies take on a significant role in this stage with self-exploration occurring in the sonic background of the supportive musical and production elements.

*Table 3
Developmental Summary of Transitions Between Song Stages*

Songs that Protect Vulnerability	Songs of Abandonment	Songs of Faith and Love
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The music provides a setting in which songwriters can explore various personas within the lyrics • The music reveals hidden emotions not found in the lyrical content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The music offers possibilities to explore and move through challenging emotional states that the songwriters expose in their lyrics • The music intensifies the lyrical content by utilizing studio effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The music partners with the lyrical content to support the songwriters’ blossoming feelings of self-love • The music provides balance, integration, and stability to allow feelings of self-love and empowerment to expand and grow

The second purpose of this study related to understanding how faith (future orientation) develops for adolescent songwriters who have had adverse childhood experiences. Fowler’s pre-stage and stage one – *Undifferentiated Faith* and *Intuitive-Projective Faith* – relate to *Songs that Protect Vulnerability*; stage two – *Mythic-Literal* – relates to *Songs of Abandonment*; stage three and four – *Synthetic-Conventional* and *Individuative-Reflective* – relates to *Songs of Faith and Love* (see table 4). Presented below is a summary that links Fowler’s developmental descriptions with the findings described above.

Table 4
Relationship Between Fowler's Stages of Faith and Song Categories in this Study

Fowler's Stages of Faith	Songs	Song Category
Pre-stage: Undifferentiated Faith	My Party	Songs that Protect Vulnerability
Stage One: Intuitive-Projective	Lost Reek Mugga	Songs that Protect Vulnerability Songs that Protect Vulnerability
Stage Two: Mythic-Literal	Cryin' Emotional Disaster Darkness Numb	Songs of Abandonment Songs of Abandonment Songs of Abandonment Songs of Abandonment
Stage Three: Synthetic-Conventional	Who'll understand? Love A Girl Like Me	Songs of Faith and Love Songs of Faith and Love Songs of Faith and Love
Stage Four: Individuative-Reflective	Butterfly Wings	Songs of Faith and Love

Pre-Stage: Undifferentiated Faith

The undifferentiated faith stage is dependent on mutuality and characteristic of a symbiotic relationship and healthy attachment experienced in infancy. This stage is the basis of trust and enduring faith (Fowler 1981/1995). Fowler (1981/1995) suggests that the infant may be locked “in a pattern of isolation and failed mutuality” (p. 121) if neglect and abandonment occurs during this stage. This struggle can be found in the song “My Party,” in which the songwriter is left to her own devices and engaging in self-harm amidst the backdrop of a dystopian sonic soundscape. The primary need expressed in this song is for safety in the face of being exposed and vulnerable.

Stage 1: Intuitive-Projective Faith

The songs “Lost” and “Reek Mugga” represent this stage, where imitative, fantasy-filled play are central in the development of faith. The songwriters for both these songs identified and copied stylistic elements from their own favorite rappers. The creation of these songs was spontaneous and lyrics often came out of improvisational rhyming, representing unconscious sexual, violent, and destructive imagery. In addition, the songwriters displayed egocentric tendencies often associated with developmental patterns found in this stage of development.

Stage 2: Mythic-Literal Faith

The songs found within this stage represent the category of *Songs of Abandonment*: “Cryin’,” “Emotional Disaster,” “Darkness,” and “Numb.” In the mythic-literal stage, linear narratives form reflecting internal conflicts (Fowler 1981/1995). In addition, forces within the songs keep the songwriters in hopelessness and despair, which reflects Fowler’s belief that characters in this stage feel they deserve their fate and are helpless to an all-powerful force (such as the sound effects used in these songs to enhance the lyrical narratives). The benefits of successful completion through this stage are development of self-reflective skills and enhanced meaning of their lived experience.

Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional Faith

Three songs, within the category of *Songs of Faith and Love*, fit within this stage: “Who’ll Understand?,” “Love,” and “A Girl Like Me.” In this stage, self-love is developing as the songwriters confront their past and find meaning from their experiences. This growth is usually occurring in context of developing interpersonal relationships, such as a mentor, teacher, or close ties with peers. This is reflected within the integration of the music and lyrics, where the music provides grounding and support for the songwriters to reflect on their past experiences. The benefits of successful completion of this stage are embodied feelings of self-love and the ability to reach out for help when needed.

Stage 4: Individuative-Reflective Faith

One song, from the category *Songs of Faith and Love*, fits within this stage, “Butterfly Wings.” This stage is an extension of the synthetic-conventional faith. Here, a person commits to continued self-growth, while at the same time reaches out to others who have had similar experiences. In addition, symbols emerge that are linked directly to one’s identity (Fowler 1981/1995). In “Butterfly Wings,” the songwriter uses nature symbols to identify her internal resources (such as “grace of a doe,” and “serenity of a dove”). One fear of this stage is not successfully transitioning to stage five and instead returning to stage 1 in what Fowler (1981/1995, 183) calls a “second narcissism.” This is reflected in this song by the ambiguous tonal structure, which does not provide a solid tonic (home). However, the rhythmic accompaniment and production provides enough grounding and space for the songwriter to spread her wings and fly. It should be noted however, that this is a sensitive time of transition, and the songwriter needs continued support. However, the benefits of this stage are enhanced agency and self-worth towards having a fully realized, meaningful adulthood, while providing mentorship to others.

Fowler’s stages five and six, conjunctive faith and universalizing faith, are not represented in these songs. This is possibly due to the more complex, advanced, and transcendent worldviews represented in these stages. Within Fowler’s model, stage four (*individuative-reflective faith*), represents young adulthood. “Butterfly

Wings” represents this stage, even though the songwriter is in late adolescence. However the songwriter symbolizes what successful transition into adulthood might look like for an adolescent who has experienced extreme trauma.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate transitional and developmental processes within songs created by adolescents who have had adverse childhood experiences. In particular, faith development (Fowler 1981/1995) was considered as a possible resource for helping adolescents develop a positive orientation towards their future. The results indicate a developmental model of therapeutic songwriting that could help adolescents who have experienced adversity move through stages of faith development towards a positive future orientation (see Table 5). This model has three phases: *Imitation*, *Developing Self-Reflection*, *Developing Self-Love*. It is important to note that this model does not suggest that each songwriter will move through these phases in a linear progression. Instead, these phases provide a portrait of possible therapeutic decisions to help adolescents develop faith as a resource for coping with adverse childhood experiences.

Table 5
Stages of Development Therapeutic Songwriting

Songwriting Phase	Fowler's Stage of Faith	Musical Development
Phase 1: Imitation	Pre-stage: Undifferentiated Stage 1: Intuitive-Projective	1) Simple accompaniment 2) Identifying with favorite artist 3) Little to no melodic development 4) Lyrics that are produced intuitively and contain projective unconscious material
Phase 2: Developing Self-Reflection	Stage 2: Mythic-Literal	1) The songwriter uses the music consciously to propel the narrative of the lyrics 2) Musical elements enhance and illuminate internal struggles 3) Lyrics name and explore challenging emotions 4) Characters and symbols in lyrics act upon the songwriter 5) Melodic elements emerge but detached from songwriter's voice
Phase 3: Developing Self-Love	Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional Stage 4: Individuative-Reflective	1) Melodic elements embody songwriter's voice 2) Harmony provides stability and support for development of self-love 3) Ambient texture support narrative and symbolic representations are connected to songwriter's lyrical content

Phase 1: Imitation

For songs that share characteristics with the category *Songs that Protect Vulnerability*, songwriters are identifying and imitating their favorite artists. They protect their own inner vulnerabilities and engage in the songwriting process through play. Lyrically and musically, songs are created quickly. Free association and symbolic play can reveal internal conflicts such as an unrestrained need for power, agency, control, and emotional regulation, which might be expressed through violent, objectifying, and evocative verbal content. There is often little harmonic and melodic development and the rhythm and bass might play a prominent role in the song production.

In this phase of therapeutic songwriting, the music therapist needs to be aware of his or her own prejudices as the lyrical and musical content can be evocative and situated within one's culture, such as that of rap and Hip Hop (Hadley and Norris 2016; Viega 2016a). Primary is for a music therapist to note issues of trust versus mistrust in the therapeutic relationship. The music therapists must nurture a therapeutic space that is safe, creative, and playful, while simultaneously creating boundaries to help contain possible anxiety an adolescent might be experiencing within the relationship. In addition, an unconditional positive regard and acceptance essential for creating therapeutic rapport, could help to support a working relationship, along with working towards building resources during this phase. During this stage the music therapist should encourage playful exploration through verbal wordplay, music instruments, and/or digital technology. While the adolescent explores, the music therapist listens for the metaphors and messages to build an empathetic connection to the adolescent's lived experience. Resource and rapport building at this phase can help when entering into phase two, *Developing Self-Reflection*.

Phase 2: Developing Self-Reflection

In this phase, a linear story line emerges from the songs that explore songwriters' adverse childhood experiences. The lyrical narratives and music production contain elements, such as added sound effects or characters in the lyrics that work towards keeping the songwriter in a perpetual state of hopelessness and powerlessness. Melodies within these songs might be underdeveloped, while simple harmonic and rhythmic qualities help contain the evocative lyrical content.

This phase might provoke powerful feelings from the music therapist, wanting to rescue the songwriter, pushing him or her towards resolution or solutions. Here, issues related to suicidal ideation, self-injurious behaviors, or other self-destructive tendencies might emerge for the songwriter. Therefore, a music therapist must provide the songwriter with support, while simultaneously being mindful of ethical responsibilities regarding safety and confidentiality if a duty to warn scenario emerges (Dileo 2000). The music therapist should use authentic listening to nurture

emerging self-reflection within this phase by offering music production options to enhance these feelings.

Songwriters can experience a paradox in this phase: On one hand, they will experience the joy and rewards of creating a song, while simultaneously painful memories, emotions, and feelings might emerge. With therapeutic support, the songwriter can experience prolonged and focused engagement with the songwriting process. This in turn could help a songwriter in nurturing his or her own unique voice and songwriting style.

Phase 3: Developing Self-Love

In this phase of therapeutic songwriting, songwriters use the music to demonstrate insight garnered from their past trials and tribulations, discover solutions towards a better tomorrow, and express embodied feelings of self-love. The songs written in this phase may feel like a partnership between the music therapist, songwriter, and the music, each supporting the emerging expressions of faith and love. Vocal melodies might be more prominent with a wider range of intervallic leaps and rhythmic runs that highlight soaring emotions of personal freedom and connection.

Songwriters will show eagerness to engage, while simultaneously feeling vulnerable and anxious due to the nature of transforming consciousness into adulthood by taking own personal responsibilities and giving back to others. The therapist's role during this phase is to maintain a safe environment and provide autonomy for the songwriter's expansion and growth in the music. At the same time, the therapist must be aware of any returning destructive patterns that might hinder the songwriter's transition to adulthood. In this phase, the trust developed within the therapeutic rapport plays a pivotal role in providing mentorship towards successful transition.

Future Directions and Limitations

This study investigated songs created by adolescents who have experienced trauma through arts-based and analytic analyses. The results of the analyses indicated stages of faith development as revealed in the songs. Viega and Baker (2016) note that combined experiential and analytic song analysis can uncover a richer, more complex narrative of people's lived experience in health-related contexts. However, they warn of the constraints to combined analysis including the time it takes to conduct an in-depth investigation, as well as the training needed in utilizing experiential techniques. For instance, Viega is a Fellow in the Association of Music and Imagery, and trained to conduct analytic and experiential analysis in the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music.

The results of this study are bound to Viega's own interpretations, which are indicative of his own aesthetic and cultural, theoretical worldview, and direct clinical experiences. However, this study is meant to mirror clinical experience towards providing music therapists ways of utilizing artifacts of therapeutic

process (i.e. songs). The model provided above can help music therapists gain a deeper understanding of the lived experience of trauma and develop therapeutic songwriting interventions that can help a person in the development of faith. Future implications of this work could be the development of an assessment tool, using song analysis to reveal stages of development and clinical interventions.

The transition to adulthood for adolescents who have had adverse childhood experiences is filled with challenges. It is a time of high-risk and can determine future outcomes regarding health in adulthood (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson 1984; Larkin, Shields & Anda 2012). These songs reveal the depth of that struggle, as well as the possible rewards for successful transition into adulthood. The creation of a song for adolescents within a therapeutic relationship can help them experience safety and trust, explore various identities, and express their abandonment towards the development of faith and self-love. This transformation can be profound as seen in the lyrics of the song “Butterfly Wings:”

I'm being rebirthed like a phoenix rising from the ashes
 I'm not old but I'm new with butterfly wings
 Humanity better watch out cause I'm bringing something new.
 Loving me and my butterfly wings

References

- Aigen, K. (2005): *Music-centered music therapy*. Dallas, TX: Barcelona.
- Aigen, K. (2008): The religious dimensions of popular music and their implications for music therapy. *The British Journal of Music Therapy* 22 (1), 24–34.
- Aigen, K. (2009): Verticality and containment in song and improvisation: An application of schema theory to Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy. *Journal of Music Therapy* 46 (3), 238–267. Online doi.org/10.1093/jmt/46.3.238. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Anda, R. F.; Brown, D. W. (2007): Root causes and organic budgeting: Funding Health from conception to the grave. Editorial, *Pediatric Health* 1 (2), 141–143.
- Baker, F. A. (2015a): *Therapeutic songwriting: Developments in theory, methods, and practice*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Baker, F. A. (2015b): What about the music? Music therapists' perspectives of the role of music in the therapeutic songwriting process. *Psychology of Music* 43 (1), 122–139. Online: doi.org/10.1177/0305735613498919. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Baker, F. A.; MacDonald, R. A. R. (2014): Experiences of creating personally meaningful songs within a therapeutic context. *Arts & Health* 6 (6), 14–161. Online: doi.org/10.1080/17533015.2013.808254. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Barone, T.; Eisner, E.W. (2012): *Arts based research*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Bonny, H. (1993): Body listening: A new way to review the GIM tapes. *Journal of the Association for Music and Imagery* 2, 3–10.

- Csikszentmihalyi, C.; Larson, R. (1984): *Being Adolescent: Conflict and Growth in the Teenage Years*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Curtis, A. C. (2015): Defining adolescence. *Journal of Adolescent and Family Health* 7 (2), Online: <http://scholar.utc.edu/jafh/vol7/iss2/2/>. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Dalton, T.A.; Krout, R. E. (2005): Development of the Grief Process Scale through music therapy songwriting with bereaved adolescents. *The Arts in Psychotherapy* 32 (2), 131–143. Online: doi:10.1016/j.aip.2005.02.002. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Day, T. (2005): Giving a voice to childhood trauma through therapeutic songwriting. In: Baker, F.; Wigram, T. (Eds.): *Songwriting: Methods, techniques and clinical applications for music therapy clinicians, educators and students* (pp. 82–96). Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley.
- Day, T.; Baker, F.; Darlington, Y. (2009): Experiences of song writing in a group programme for mothers who had experienced childhood abuse. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy* 18 (2). 133–150. Online: doi.org/10.1080/08098130903062405. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Dileo, C. (2000): *Ethical thinking in music therapy*. Cherry Hill, NJ: Jeffery.
- Dube, S. R.; Anda, R. F.; Elitti, V. J.; Chapman, D. P.; Williamson, D. F.; Giles, W. H. (2001): Childhood abuse, household dysfunction, and the risk of attempted suicide throughout the life span: Findings from the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 286 (24), 3089–3096. Online: doi:10.1001/jama.286.24.3089. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Erikson, E. H. (1994): *Identity, youth and crisis*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company (Original work published in 1968).
- Felitti, V.J., Anda, R.F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D.F., Spitz, A.M., Edwards, V., Koss, M.P., & Marks, J.S. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 14(4), 245–258. Online: doi.org/10.1016/S0749-3797(98)00017-8. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Fowler, J. W. (1995): *Stages of faith: The psychology of human development and the quest for meaning*. New York: HarperCollins (Original work published in 1981).
- Fusch, P. I.; Ness, L. R. (2015): Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report* 20 (9), 1408–1416. Online: <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol20/iss9/3>. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Goldstein, S. L. (1990): A songwriting assessment for hopelessness in depressed adolescents: A review of the literature and a pilot study. *The Arts in Psychotherapy* 17 (2), 117–124.
- Good, M.; Willoughby, T. (2008): Adolescence as a sensitive period for spiritual development. *Child Development Perspectives* 2 (1), 32–37. Online: doi:10.1111/j.1750-8606.2008.00038.x. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Hadley, S.; Norris, M. S. (2016): Musical multicultural competency in music therapy: The first step. *Music Therapy Perspectives* 34 (2), 129–137. Online: doi.org/10.1093/mtp/miv045. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Hamilton, J. L.; Connolly, S. L.; Liu, R. T.; Stange, J. P.; Abramson, L. Y.; Alloy, L. B. (2015): It gets better: Future orientation buffers the development of hopelessness and

- depressive symptoms following emotional victimization during early adolescence. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology* 43 (3), 465–474. Online: doi:10.1007/s10802-014-9913-6. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Hamilton, J. L.; Shapero, B. G.; Stange, J. P.; Hamlat, E.; Abramson, L. Y.; Alloy, L. B. (2013): Emotional maltreatment, peer victimization, and depressive versus anxiety symptoms during adolescence: hopelessness as a mediator. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology* 42 (3), 332–347. Online: doi:10.1080/15374416.2013.777916. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Heywood, D. (2008): Faith development theory. A case for paradigm change. *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 29 (3), 263–272. Online: doi.org/10.1080/13617670802465813. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Kinney, A. (2012): Loops, lyrics, and literacy: Songwriting as a site of resilience for an urban adolescent. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 55 (5), 395–404. Online: doi: 10.1002/JAAL.00048. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Kohlberg, L. (1981): *The philosophy of moral development: Moral stages and the ideas of justice: Essays on moral development, volume 1*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Krout, R. (2005). The music therapist as a singer-songwriter: Applications with bereaved teenagers. In: Baker, F.; Wigram, T. (Eds.): *Songwriting: Methods, techniques and clinical applications for music therapy clinicians, educators and students* (pp. 206–225). Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley.
- KRS-One (2009): *The gospel of Hip Hop: First instrument*. New York: powerHouse.
- Laiho, S. (2004): The psychological functions of music in adolescence. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy* 13 (1), 47–63. Online: doi: 10.1080/08098130409478097. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Larkin, H.; Shields, J. J.; Anda, R. F. (2012): The health and social consequences of adverse childhood experiences (ACE) across the lifespan: An introduction to prevention and intervention in the community. *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community* 40 (4), 263–270. Online: doi: 10.1080/10852352.2012.707439. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Layne, C. M.; Greeson, J. K. P.; Ostrowski, S. A.; Kim, S.; Reading, S.; Vivrette, R. L.; Briggs, E. C.; Fairbank, J. A.; Pynoos, R. S. (2014): Cumulative trauma exposure and high risk behavior in adolescence: Finding from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network core data set. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy* 6 (S1), S40–S49. Online: doi.org/10.1037/a0037799. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Levinson, D. (1978): Education, moral development and faith. *Journal of Moral Education* 4 (1), 5–16.
- McFerran, K. (2010): *Adolescents, music and music therapy: methods and techniques for clinicians, educators and students*. Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- McFerran, K. S.; Garrido, S.; Saarikallio, S. (2016): A critical interpretive synthesis of the literature linking music and adolescent mental health. *Youth & Society* 48 (4), 521–538. Online: doi: 10.1177/0044118X13501343. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Navas, E. (2009): Remix: The bond of repetition and representation. In: Sonvilla-Weiss, S. (Ed.): *Mashup culture* (pp. 157–178). New York: Springer.

- O'Callaghan, C.; Grocke, D. (2009). Lyric analysis research in music therapy: Rationales, methods, and representations. *The Arts in Psychotherapy* 36 (5), 320–328. Online: doi:10.1016/j.aip.2009.09.004. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Piaget, J. (2001): *The psychology of intelligence*. New York: Routledge (Original work published in 1947).
- Robb, S. L. (1996): Techniques in songwriting: Restoring emotional and physical wellbeing in adolescents who have been traumatically injured. *Music Therapy Perspectives* 14, 30–37. Online: doi.org/10.1093/mtp/14.1.30. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Robb, S. L.; Ebberts, A. G. (2003a): Songwriting and digital video production interventions for pediatric patients undergoing bone marrow transplantation, part I: An analysis of depression and anxiety levels according to phase of treatment. *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing* 20 (1), 2–15. Online: doi:10.1053/jpon.2003.3. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Robb, S. L.; Ebberts, A. G. (2003b): Songwriting and digital video production for pediatric patients undergoing bone marrow transplantation, part II: An analysis of patient-generated songs and patient perceptions regarding intervention efficacy. *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing* 20 (1), 16–25. Online: doi:10.1053/jpon.2003.4. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Rolling, J. H. (2013): *Arts-Based Research Primer*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Romeo, R. D. (2017): The impact of stress on the structure of the adolescent brain: Implications for adolescent mental health. *Brain Research* 1654 (Pt B), 185–191. Online: doi: 10.1016/j.brainres.2016.03.021. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Ryttilä-Manninen, M.; Lindberg, N.; Haravuori, H.; Kettunen, K.; Marttunen, M.; Joukamaa M.; Fröjd, S. (2014): Adverse childhood experiences as risk factors for serious mental disorders and inpatient hospitalization among adolescents. *Child Abuse and Neglect* 38 (12), 2021–32. Online: doi: 0.1016/j.chiabu.2014.10.008. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Steinberg, L.; Morris A. S. (2001): Adolescent development. *Annual Review Psychology* 52, 83–110. Online: doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.83. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Sylvan, R. (2002): *Traces of the spirit: the religious dimensions of popular music*. New York University Press.
- Turry, A. (2006): The connection between words and music in music therapy improvisation: An examination of a therapist's method. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). New York University.
- Viega, M. (2010): Body listening as a method of understanding a music program used in the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music. *Journal of the Association for Music and Imagery* 12, 21–46.
- Viega, M. (2013): “*Loving me and my butterfly wings*.” A study of hip-hop songs created by adolescents in music therapy. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Temple University, Philadelphia, PA.
- Viega, M. (2016a): Exploring the discourse in Hip Hop and implications for music therapy practice. *Music Therapy Perspectives* 34 (2), 138–146. Online: doi: 10.1093/mtp/miv035. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.

- Viega, M. (2016b): Science as art: Axiology as a central component in methodology and evaluation of arts-based research (ABR). *Music Therapy Perspectives* 34 (1), 4–13. Online: doi: 10.1093/mtp/miv043. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Viega, M. (2016c): Performing “Rising from the Ashes” arts-based research results from the Study “Loving Me and My Butterfly Wings: An Analysis of Hip Hop Songs Written by Adolescents in Music Therapy.” *Music Therapy Perspectives* 34 (1), 46–47. Online: doi.org/10.1093/mtp/miv044. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Viega, M.; Baker, F. A. (2017): Remixing identity: Creating meaning from songs written by patients recovering from a spinal cord injury. *Journal of Applied Arts & Health* 8 (1), 57–73. Online: doi: 10.1386/jaah.8.1.57_1. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Viega, M.; Baker, F. A. (2016): What’s in a song? Combining analytical and arts-based analysis for songs created by songwriters with neurodisabilities, *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy* 26 (3), 235–55. Online: doi.org/10.1080/08098131.2016.1205651. Retrieved: 11.08.2017.
- Viega, M.; Forinash, M. (2016): Arts-based research. In: Wheeler, B.; Murphy, K. (Eds.): *Music therapy research*. 3rd edition. Dallas, TX: Barcelona.
- Westbrook, A. (2002): *Hip Hoptionary: The dictionary of hip hop terminology*. New York: Harlem Moon.

Dr. Michael Viega
Assistant Professor of Music Therapy at SUNY, New Paltz
New York, 12561
E-Mail: viegam@newpaltz.edu