

Goal-oriented processes: Exploring the use of goals in music therapy to support young people with autism spectrum disorder

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Abstract

This qualitative research project explored how a student music therapist utilised goal-oriented processes to support young people with autism spectrum disorder throughout their course of music therapy. Inductive thematic analysis of selected literature relating to goals in music therapy developed an initial framework of what goal-oriented processes could include. The student music therapist's clinical data (including session notes, monitoring sheets, client reports and reflective journal entries) was then coded through deductive secondary analysis, from which five key themes were formed. The findings indicated that clients' goals were supported by: employing a client-centred philosophical approach; nurturing therapeutic relationships; collaborating with clients and their caregivers; utilising the referral, assessment and review processes; and observing and documenting clients' development. These goal-oriented processes helped to support goals that were meaningful for the clients and their caregivers. Themes were explored in detail using a case vignette to illustrate and provide a context for the findings. Although the context-bound qualitative nature of this research project limits its generalisability, it attempts to provide insight into what goal-oriented processes in music therapy might include, encouraging other music therapists to consider how they utilise goals in their own practice.

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Ethics Statement

The Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee has granted ethical approval for this research project under the generic template approved for NZSM526 Casework and Research (Ethics Approval: 22131 - 15/07/15)

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