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MULTICULTURAL ENCOUNTERS IN MUSIC THERAPY IN NEW
ZEALAND: What particular clinical experiences do NZ music therapists
describe when encountering clients who identify closely with a culture
different from their own?

Research dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Music Therapy

At The New Zealand School of Music, Wellington

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigates how music therapists work within a culturally diverse environment in New Zealand and the researcher's own growing experience as a student clinician. This research endeavoured to answer two research questions. Firstly, what do music therapists in New Zealand perceive from their experience of working with clients from different culture? Secondly, how does my own experience as a second generation Korean MTS affect my clinical work in a multicultural environment in New Zealand?

This study applied aspects of qualitative research. Four qualified New Zealand music therapists and the researcher herself participated in this study. Data was collected from the interviews with the music therapy participants, the music therapy student's reflection on case notes from two clinical cases, and a research journal. Music therapists identified various issues that associated with their experiences of working cross culturally. The main areas of key ideas were categorized under: 1) cultural considerations 2) preconceptions 3) building a communicative bridge 4) clinical competency 5) different approaches 6) culturally appropriate practice. The ideas under these categories have crystallized to articulate the different voices of participants for the benefit of the knowledge in the existing literatures and for the enhancement of personal tools towards self awareness and culturally appropriate clinical practice. From the overview of all the participants consulted in this study it was concluded that recognition of the importance of self awareness was one of the most significant factors in building culturally appropriate practice in a multicultural environment.

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