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HOW DOES MY MUSIC THERAPY PRACTICE, IN A TRANSITION SCHOOL FOCUSED ON SUPPORTING ADOLESCENTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS, RELATE TO THE KEY COMPETENCIES OF THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM?

An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music Therapy at Massey University, Wellington New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

This exegesis outlines research about the way the key competencies of the New Zealand curriculum related to music therapy practice at a transition school for adolescents with mental health needs. Secondary analysis of data, informed by grounded theory methods, was carried out in order to develop a theory about the relationship between music therapy and the key competencies. The competencies, which are focused on supporting students to develop broad skills that will help them in their education and throughout their lives, guided all work with students at the school, including music therapy practice. While educative in nature, the competencies also seemed to have some naturally therapeutic purposes, and this study focused on understanding how they related to music therapy in practice. Data that had been collected in the natural environment of the school to meet the requirements of the placement as a student music therapist were analysed. The findings showed that there was a significant relationship between music therapy practice and the competencies. This contributed an additional perspective and dimension to the way the competencies could be addressed with students. In particular, music therapy provided students with opportunities to try out different ways of being with each other and supported them to experience feelings of hope and empowerment.
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This research received ethics approval from the Massey University Ethics Committee: Southern A Application- 11/41 on 15th August 2011.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .......................................................................................................................... ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ................................................................................................... iii

1. INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................... 1
   1.1. The research ........................................................................................................ 1
   1.2. Personal position ................................................................................................. 1
   1.3. The setting ........................................................................................................... 2
   1.4. The environment ................................................................................................. 3
   1.5. Key competencies ................................................................................................ 4
   1.6. Music therapy ...................................................................................................... 5
   1.7. Community music therapy .................................................................................. 6
   1.8. Exegesis layout .................................................................................................... 6

2. LITERATURE REVIEW ............................................................................................... 8
   2.1. Search information .............................................................................................. 8
   2.2. Adolescents and mental health ........................................................................... 8
   2.3. Adolescents and music therapy .......................................................................... 9
   2.4. Potential for music therapy in schools ............................................................... 10
   2.5. Experiences of music therapists in schools ....................................................... 10
   2.6. Key competencies – origins and implications .................................................... 12
   2.7. Key competencies in practice ............................................................................ 13
   2.8. Creativity in education ....................................................................................... 14
   2.9. Summary ............................................................................................................. 15

   Research question ........................................................................................................ 15

3. METHODOLOGY ......................................................................................................... 16
   3.1. Overview: Methodology and approach to research ............................................ 16
   3.2. Theoretical research and grounded theory ......................................................... 16
   3.3. Social constructivism ......................................................................................... 17
   3.4. Data sources ....................................................................................................... 18
   3.5. Data analysis ....................................................................................................... 18
   3.6. Ethical considerations ......................................................................................... 20

4. FINDINGS .................................................................................................................. 22
4.1. Overview ............................................................................................................. 22
4.2. Theory .................................................................................................................. 24
4.3. Managing self ....................................................................................................... 24
   4.3.1. Communicating limits ......................................................................................... 25
          a. Self-protection .................................................................................................. 25
          b. Self-criticism .................................................................................................... 25
   4.3.2. Communicating needs ....................................................................................... 26
   4.3.3. Student(s) ‘managing self’ .............................................................................. 26
   4.3.4. Challenging as part of group processes ......................................................... 27
4.4. Participating and contributing ............................................................................. 27
   4.4.1. Student(s) finding meaning for themselves ................................................... 28
   4.4.2. Student(s) finding self-motivation .................................................................... 29
   4.4.3. Creating meaning for staff .............................................................................. 30
   4.4.4. Modelling by staff .......................................................................................... 31
   4.4.5. Evolving quality of engagement ..................................................................... 31
4.5. Relating to others ................................................................................................. 32
   4.5.1. Collaborating .................................................................................................... 32
          a. Bonding ............................................................................................................ 33
          b. Brainstorming .................................................................................................. 33
          c. Moving forward ............................................................................................... 34
   4.5.2. Playfully negotiating ....................................................................................... 34
   4.5.3. Student offerings ............................................................................................. 35
   4.5.4. Developing a music therapy culture ............................................................... 36
4.6. Thinking ............................................................................................................... 36
   4.6.1. Talking/reflecting ............................................................................................. 37
   4.6.2. Chatting ............................................................................................................. 37
   4.6.3. Student-initiated thinking ............................................................................... 38
          a. (Student) leading the session ........................................................................... 38
4.7. Using language, symbols and texts .................................................................... 38
   4.7.1. Using elements/theory of music ...................................................................... 39
   4.7.2. Symbolising with music ............................................................................... 39
   4.7.3. Utilising creative processes .......................................................................... 40
4.8. Clinical vignette .................................................................................................. 41
5. DISCUSSION ......................................................................................................... 46
   5.1. A comfortable relationship ............................................................................... 46
5.2. Key findings ................................................................................................................. 46
5.3. Grief, hope, and empowerment.................................................................................. 48
5.4. Creativity and multiple uses of key competencies .................................................. 49
5.5. Team collaboration and a sense of ownership ......................................................... 50
5.6. Music for wellbeing in schools .................................................................................. 51
5.7. Future Research ........................................................................................................ 51

6. LIMITATIONS .............................................................................................................. 53

7. CONCLUSION ............................................................................................................... 54

REFERENCES ................................................................................................................ 55

APPENDIX 1 ...................................................................................................................... 62
APPENDIX 2 ...................................................................................................................... 63
APPENDIX 3 ...................................................................................................................... 65
APPENDIX 4 ...................................................................................................................... 67
APPENDIX 5 ...................................................................................................................... 68
APPENDIX 6 ...................................................................................................................... 70
APPENDIX 7 ...................................................................................................................... 71

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Categories and sub-categories ......................................................................... 23
Table 2: ‘Music for wellbeing’ and the KCs ................................................................... 72

Figure 1: Bridging the KCs .............................................................................................. 23