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**Characteristics of staff interaction with music therapy in a forensic
psychiatric setting: examining the clinical implications.**

A thesis in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Music Therapy

At Massey University
Wellington
New Zealand

Anna Hill

2006

Abstract

This study was conducted within a qualitative paradigm, using naturalistic inquiry as the methodology. The primary aim was to discover what sort of impact the attending staff member had on the dynamics of the group music therapy session, in a forensic psychiatric setting. The secondary aim was to establish the features of the interaction between staff and music therapy. Themes of the above two aims were collated to form a template of clinical considerations for the music therapist working with staff in a forensic psychiatric setting. Three male forensic clients participated in five group music therapy sessions. These were co-facilitated by the researcher and a co-music therapy student (CMTS). In addition, six staff members, employed at the research location, were interviewed in order to ascertain their understanding of the staff member's role in the music therapy session and what role they perceived music therapy assuming in a forensic psychiatric setting. Descriptive notes were collected from the video footage of the group music therapy sessions and interviews were transcribed verbatim. Data analysis involved the use of non-cross sectional data organisation. Summaries of the clinical work and results from the interviews indicate that the attending staff member has a strong influence on the interplay and dynamics of the group. Both negative and positive influences surfaced. Education of staff members about music therapy processes and the role of staff members are essential aspects of clinical practice in this setting. Education regarding the above factors reduces anxiety for staff members participating, encourages support of the program, and ensures staff members engage in a way that assists with the therapeutic

process. Finally, the study indicates that communication and dissemination of the clinical work with staff is demanded outside of the music therapy space in order for the music therapy program to successfully meet client needs in a forensic psychiatric setting.

Acknowledgements

It is my pleasure to thank and acknowledge all the people who assisted in the completion of this thesis.

Firstly, I would like to thank all the participants who gave me their time and shared their experiences so openly with me. Special thanks to Linda Willows for giving her time so willingly.

I would also like to thank my supervisor Sarah Hoskyns, whose clarity of thought and amazing knowledge of the music therapy literature helped me enormously, especially in the last few weeks!

To all my music therapy colleagues, for offering me support and insight.

To Julie MacDonald, and Alex Nicholson for your tautoko and proof reading skills and all my friends and family who have helped me.

Finally, I would like to thank my partner Ben Moore, for encouragement, patience and a unflappable belief in me that really kept me on track and gave me the boost needed at times to make this project possible.

I sincerely thank you all for your part in this thesis.

Ethics approval has been obtained for this research project from Massey University
Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC)

And

The Central Regional Health and Disabilities Ethics Committee (CEN/05/10/076)

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