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ADULTS WITH NEURO-DISABLING CONDITIONS: EXPLORING THE WAYS MUSIC THERAPY CAN SUPPORT RESIDENTS IN A LONG TERM CARE FACILITY

An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of:

Master of Music Therapy

At New Zealand School of Music

Massey University and Victoria University of Wellington

New Zealand.

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2014
Abstract

This exegesis presents findings which emerged from secondary review of clinical practice data collected during a music therapy placement. The setting for this research is a long-term residential care facility for people with a variety of physical and neurological conditions, including cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury, stroke and multiple sclerosis, aged 18 to 65. The aim of the facility is to maximise the quality of life for people with physical disabilities and those with terminal illnesses. The research aim was to develop theory about how music therapy can provide support to people with long term neurological conditions. Thematic analysis was employed to develop core themes about the support that music therapy has provided. These findings are presented under the following six themes: building relationships, collaborative practices, fostering community, acknowledging diversity, emotional support and musical engagement. These themes all focus on relatedness, and the quality of life of individuals, groups and the community. They also indicate the value of a flexible community-centred approach for delivering music therapy. A vignette from clinical practice is included to illustrate important points made in the exegesis. The study complements other music therapy research situated within a health-care perspective and could offer particular significance for new music therapy practitioners looking to understand and work with people with neuro-disabilities in long term care facilities.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people:

The residents and staff at the facility: This study would not have been possible without you and I have learned so much from all of you and enjoyed making music alongside you.

Dr Sarah Hoskyns my research supervisor, for her genuine warmth, and passion for music therapy, and for keeping things real over two years of this student journey.

Dr Daphne Rickson for her consistent support over two years of training and for providing the inspiration for me to pursue the dream of working in this field.

Penny Warren my visiting music therapist, for her insight, and fun, and for challenging me this year to grow as a professional.

Carolyn Nixon for her encouragement as my clinical liaison, and for the opportunity to work together as fellow therapists.

Dr Greg Gilbert, CTL, Elizabeth Smith and the staff of Massey library, for their willing help and availability.

My friends and family for supporting me continually throughout this journey.

This exegesis is dedicated to my late parents Mary Duncanson Bolwell and John James Bolwell for instilling in me a love of music.

Ethical approval was gained for this project: HEC : Southern A Application – 11/41 Master of Music Therapy Programme ethical template for student research in NZSM 526 undertaken as observational studies, theoretical or case study research.
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