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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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