REFLECTIONS ON PRACTICE | PEER REVIEWED

Peace Camp:

Reflections on Community Music Therapy and Conflict Transformation

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Abstract

Community Music Therapy (COMT) is a development increasingly referenced and often nebulous in the field of music therapy. Depending on its description in the literature, COMT seems to be situated between an aspiration to stretch beyond boundaries of the 'consensus model' and serve atypical populations, and a working practical approach with clear guidelines. Curiosity around this phenomenon inspired an initial inquiry by the author into potential theoretical underpinnings to provide context and definition for its aims, namely critical theory. Through identifying the links between CoMT, critical theory/psychology, and conflict transformation–the approach utilized in modern peacekeeping–the author hoped to inspire more intentional efforts by music therapists working at the convergence of those ideas. This research culminated in the author's master's thesis, a critical review and attempted integration of these topics, in 2018. This article aspires to build upon that research by remapping the knowledge gained onto the experiences that catalyzed the inquiry. Through vignettes and commentary, the author uses a reflexive, critical lens to examine his tenure as a music counselor at Seeds of Peace Camp, a conflict transformation camp. By re-examining trial-by-fire moments and their aftermath, the author identifies relevant research in the aforementioned fields that may have enhanced or explained participant responses. This serves to broaden the collective understanding of the overlapping goals and practices of CoMT, critical theory/psychology and conflict transformation.

Keywords: community music therapy; conflict transformation; peace and conflict studies; critical theory; youth in conflict; seeds of peace camp

Introduction

Augsburger (1992) wrote that conflict is a natural phenomenon that is "essential to, ineradicable from, and inevitable in human life; and the source, cause, and process of conflict can be turned from life-destroying to life-building ends" (p. 5). However, regardless of scale and prevalence within human society, it is notoriously difficult to address conflict through means that are gratifying to all parties involved. The existence and continued growth of professions such as conflict transformation[1], diplomacy, and counseling is evidence of society's need for intervention in the face of conflict. As western academia (and larger society) reflects on and attempts to reconcile its own biases and proximity to the impact of colonialism, helping professions and conflict transformation theorists/practitioners are actualizing opportunities to converge and learn/work in tandem.

The compatibility between the creative arts and peacemaking has been evident since at least the late 1990's with the publication of Lederach's (2005) "The Moral Imagination," considered a seminal text in Peace and Conflict Studies. Recently, this compatibility was loosely explored in a music therapy literature review produced by Bergh and Slodoba (2010), who discussed global efforts in using the arts to transform "protracted social conflicts."[2] In Urbain's (2015) book *Music and Conflict Transformation*, the editor attempted to consolidate global voices from a variety of professions that intersect with the arts and conflict transformation. Despite this, as community-musician and scholar Howell (2018) notes, there is still a great dearth in the literature, especially pertaining to participant voice representation, specific intervention strategies, and a clear theoretical underpinning for the work being done. Thus, the significance of this inquiry, and the lessons, validation, and integration contained within, cannot be understated, nor come at a more opportune time.

Overall, humanitarian crises and global climate change continue to threaten the livelihoods of many vulnerable populations. The Bergof Foundation handbook for conflict transformation states that globally, humans are experiencing a rise in violence, and that violence shares more similarities with the protracted social conflicts of the 1990s, than the multi-state conflicts of the mid-20th century (Austin, 2018). Debate continues regarding whether the depletion of crucial non-renewable resources is creating environments ripe for conflict proliferation (Austin, 2018; Salehyan, 2014; Theisen et al., 2013). The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (2022) reports 84 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, the highest number on record.

While the demand for creative, culture-centered approaches to transforming conflict is present in the literature, the theoretical framework for conflict transformation is still in need of further development. This is especially notable considering the limited cultural experience many Western practitioners possess before attempting to work with conflict survivors[3] who may come with varied religious, social, and ethnic backgrounds (Comte, 2016; DeAntiss & Ziaian, 2010; Heidenreich, 2005). In the creative arts therapies (and the counseling profession as a whole) there has been a challenge to recruit and retain a diverse practicing body (Awais & Yali, 2013; Kim & Whitehead-Pleaux, 2015). This lack of diversity is especially notable when non-Western participants of healthcare initiatives interact with Western healthcare approaches for the first time (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2007; Khawaja et al., 2008; Segal & Mayadas, 2005).

Lack of clarity also seems to circulate around actual goals addressed by music-based projects. Theorists and arts-activists advocate and justify the use of music to transfer learning around peacemaking, due to its accessibility across groups of people (Dunn, 2008; Urbain, 2015). However, the risk is great without proper facilitation and attention to cultural factors; accessibility can be mistaken for universality, which leads to negative outcomes (Coen, 2015; Kent, 2015). Howell (2018) asserts that some of this risk can be

alleviated by practitioners who focus their efforts on the four broad goals that she posits form the impetus for working in a conflict zone, referred to as "typology of intentions" (p.45). These include music education, cultural regeneration, social development, and healing/health promotion. Savaiano (2012) suggests a call to action in his doctoral dissertation for predoctoral interns that they are trained in critical psychology and class (socio-economic) issues, an argument that was echoed by Hassanein (2018) in specific reference to music therapy interns.

Music therapy, a field with specific standards of practice and code of ethics, maintained by certification boards, is particularly poised to address at least one of Howell's intentions, namely healing/health promotion, due to its position as an allied health profession (American Music Therapy Association, 2019). Indeed, for decades, music therapists have worked with conflict survivors (many of whom were asylum seekers), employing techniques such as vocal holding to build self-awareness and self-validation, folk music to aid with acculturation stress and instill self-control, and guided imagery in music to help participants reconnect with their emotions (Jordanger, 2015; Orth, 2005; Urbain, 2015). Music therapists tend to narrow their attention on trauma and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms despite most research participants displaying normal distress symptoms. This indicates potentially subversive and homogenizing assumptions about conflict survivors carried by Western practitioners (Comte, 2016; Hassan et al., 2016; UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 2013). Yet, when music therapists attempt to address goals beyond the healthcare realm, as proposed by Ansdell (2002) in his introduction of community music therapy (CoMT), the theoretical lens through which to conduct such work appears murky. This reflection proposes a possible answer to the theoretical quandary by exploring the intersection of CoMT with critical theory.

Author's Situation of Self

To situate my views on the potential and future benefits of music therapy in the context of conflict transformation, it is crucial to backtrack, and provide some personal context. As a mixed-ethnicity human with American-Jewish and Arab-Muslim heritage, who spent his childhood in Egypt (a key player in the geopolitics of the Middle East/North African region), I have always been simultaneously drawn to and discouraged by the Arab-Israeli conflict. Witnessing the proliferation of violence on both sides, and the perpetuation of negative assumptions and attitudes within my extended family, has been a personal dilemma. However, my ethnic and cultural connection to the major players of the conflict has also led to an intuitive belief that I am uniquely poised to address the challenges. In some ways, I felt that my existence was proof that love could surmount generations of division between my parents' cultures. I am conscious of the idealism in that vision, but nonetheless have been motivated by it.

In graduate school, I became interested in using music therapy skills to approach conflict situations or provide emotional support for those whose lives were enmeshed in it. I chose to spend a summer as a music counselor at Seeds of Peace Camp[4]. This was an intense trial-and-error effort in music and conflict transformation with many personal highs and lows. After the summer, my attention turned to what knowledge, that before now was missing, could have informed the decisions I made in session planning? What were the theoretical or practical cues to follow going into the summer that could have minimized the pitfalls experienced? Furthermore, how could this knowledge be utilized to support others interested in this work? Was it possible to devise a toolkit for the hypothetical community music therapist who wanted to work with youth in conflict?

This inquiry resulted in an unpublished critical review of the literature, comprising traditional music therapy literature, and supporting content from allied fields including

community music, art and drama therapies, and peace and conflict studies (Hassanein, 2018). Through pan-discipline comparison and synthesis, I explored the legacy of critical theory, the impact of critical psychology and liberation psychology on non-Western conflict survivors, and potential overlaps with the burgeoning philosophies behind CoMT (Hassanein, 2018). Conclusions I drew included advocacy for incorporation of critical theory and culturally diverse actors into more music therapy education programs, as a means of facilitating more culturally reflexive anti-oppressive practices by Western music therapists working with non-Western clients (Awais & Yali, 2013; Baines, 2013; Gipson, 2015; Hassanein, 2018). Considerations were made, such as whether individual or community health goals are more appropriate for people living in conflict zones, or whether the consensus model of music therapy perpetuates neocolonialism on conflict survivors and decentralizes resilience (Ansdell, 2002; Comte, 2016; Maratos, 2002; O'Grady & McFerran, 2007). The literature inquiry offered some practical directions for music therapists and community musicians, such as: the benefit of mindfulness and imagery-based interventions (Jordanger, 2015); drumming as a stabilizing and culturally relevant experience (Baker & Jones, 2005); the development of deep listening and dialogue skills, and how they translate into shared musical experiences (Gottesman, 2016; Junkin, 2017); and the importance of developmental considerations when working with adolescents in vulnerable spaces (Miranda, 2013; Moscardino et. al., 2010). Finally, it was supposed that many well-intentioned Western (creative arts) therapists may possess meaningful gaps in their training or historical comprehension with regards to protracted social conflicts that limit their ability to support survivors in anti-oppressive ways (Hadley, 2013; Hadley & Norris, 2016; Savaiano, 2012).

   As such, the mission of this reflection is to take the most pertinent findings from the original thesis and condense them to provide a foundation for therapists interested in working with people in conflict, primarily Arab and Israeli youth in a community-based setting (rather than inpatient or outpatient institutions). It will explore critical theory, conflict transformation, and CoMT at a foundational level, and use that knowledge to explain or build upon actual narrative experiences that I encountered at Seeds of Peace (SOP). One of the primary takeaways from the critical review (Hassanein, 2018) was a lack of testimonials or vignettes from therapists to illustrate the work being done, so this reflection will attempt to contribute to that need. Structurally, the vignettes are interspersed and serve to support the literature presented in the reflections. This reflection serves as a call for academic training programs to consider the formalization of an extended education track for therapists interested in conflict transformation work, similar to the way therapists are trained in the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery in Music (BMGIM) or Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy (NRMT).

Background

Hassanein (2018) situated the somewhat elusive and fluid theoretical framework of CoMT on the opposite side of a continuum of health needs and goals from those addressed by the more clinically practiced (and replicated in institutions of higher learning) "medical model" of music therapy. This was strongly informed by the initial writings of Ansdell (2002), Ansdell & Pavlicevic (2004), and O'Grady & McFerran (2006), who were interested in addressing social issues but found themselves questioning the authenticity of their actions as a "consensus model" of music therapy without the inclusion of clinical language or goals. Their rejection of the prescribed music therapy approaches seemed to make sense on an intrinsic level, however it was difficult for some within the field to find a theoretical motivation behind the new movement, which led to some backlash (Maratos, 2002). Some music therapists argued that they had been using their training to work in the community

health realm, without drawing attention, long before Ansdell (2002) loudly called for "winds of change." This confusion was complicated by Ansdell & Pavlicevic (2004) describing CoMT as an "anti-model that encourages therapists to resist 'one-size-fits-all-anywhere models'" (p.21). For most music therapists (or other allied health professionals), the work they engaged in was guided by a specific theoretical orientation which provided insight into participant behavior thus creating a lens through which the therapist could view the therapeutic process; CoMT, on the surface, challenged that notion.

Deeper examination into the way CoMT has been described in recent years, however, led to my assertion of critical theory and its progeny, critical psychology, as the underpinning of CoMT (Hassanein, 2018). Ruud (2009), in his chapter on music therapy's interface with systems theory, described three main practical frameworks for music therapy: instrumental-functional, which is the primary driver of medical music therapy; hermeneutic and dialogical, which is employed in relational analytical music therapy; and critical, which he argued is the realm of CoMT; that is, a "reflexive use of performance-based music therapy within a systemic perspective" (p.128). CoMT seeks to identify and play out the role society expresses both implicitly and explicitly on the music, the participants, and the practitioners (Stige, 2003). Vaillancourt (2012) wrote that CoMT strives to "increase social and cultural awareness and bring a sense of societal participation to all concerned" (p.175). This contrasts largely with the institution-based, private method employed by a "consensus model" of music therapy, but is notable in its similarity to the already established field of critical psychology (Hassanein, 2018).

In their book chapter, "Critical psychology for social justice," Fox et al. (2009) challenged the notion that mainstream Western psychologists do just enough to "promote human welfare" (p.3) as is ethically obligatory, and perpetuate a status quo in society, allowing dominant institutions to maintain social, political, and economic power, while cultivating inequality and oppression. Teo (2015) echoed these ideas and furthered them, noting that Western psychology inaccurately views itself as "world psychology" (p.121), which can be used without modification worldwide. As with community music therapy, critical psychology applies a discerning reflexive lens to the way it operates within society, particularly attentive to the culture of the locale. This has led to many variations in different regions of the world, adopted by people indigenous to those regions, which are detailed in Hassanein's (2018) literature review including: liberation psychology (Lykes & Sibley, 2014; Martín-Baró, 1994; Moane, 2003; Teo, 2015); Hook's (2012) psychology of post-colonial South Africa; and Sikolohiyang Pilipino which focused on the Philipino psychology devoid of Western colonial judgment (Enriquez, 1992; Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000).

For the purposes of this reflection, I will not delve as deeply into the history of critical theory, as the literature review that inspired this piece already serves as a thorough introduction (Hassanein, 2018). However, in brief terms, critical theory forms the foundation for many lenses that have been embraced in the social and helping professions seeking to examine power dynamics and advocate for liberation from oppression, namely feminist (e.g., Brown, 2017), queer (e.g., Butler, 1990), and disability (e.g., Asch, 2001) theories (Teo, 2015). While it has yet to become a household designation, some practitioners have started to refer to themselves as "critical" music therapists furthering the linkage between the themes that they explore in their practices and those of critical psychology. In her article, "Dominant narratives," music therapist Hadley (2013) described her journey as a white therapist through the identification of prevailing narratives in her life and how they led her to embrace critical theory. She in turn used that theory in her therapy to disrupt those narratives rather than continue to try and assist "individuals to function more adequately in a system/world not wired for them" (p.314). This was achieved through an examination of power differentials and an emphasis on transparency, as well as through the fostering of drama therapist Sajnani's (2012) concept

of "response/ability." This concept pertains to the therapist's ability to respond to the immediate presenting pathologies of the client and against the oppressive systems that elicit them simultaneously, within the creative, collaborative process. This concept is similar to that employed by Zarate in her music therapy practice (Sajnani, Marxen & Zarate, 2017). Zarate proposed the phenomenon of "clinical listening-cultural listening" which occurs during an improvisation and requires the therapist to be intentional, reflexive, aware of multiple layers of listening to the improvisation (hers, the client's, society's and beyond), and aware of culture projections on the music in order to honor, explore, and uncover shared roots of the symptom (Sajnani, Marxen & Zarate, 2017).

Zarate implies the role society has in her client's pathology, furthering the linkage I identified between critical psychology, music therapy, and community music therapy (Hassanein, 2018). However, as noted previously, in general, critical theory is not widely utilized in the creative arts therapies, possibly due to how closely the demographics of the field mimic those of the oppressors, with over 90% of American Art Therapy Association members identifying as white females (Awais & Yali, 2013) and over 88% of American Music Therapy Association members identifying as white (AMTA 2021 Workforce Analysis, 2022). As Hadley and Norris (2016) noted, a lack of training around conceptualizing cases in a culturally sensitive way can limit the success therapists have, and when therapists come from the dominant culture rather than that of their participants, there is a higher risk that a critical examination of culture is overlooked. As was noted in the synthesis section of Hassanein's literature review (2018), the field of conflict transformation also asks its participants to challenge the dominant narratives constructed to perpetuate conflict. When therapists working in conflict transformation neglect the way these narratives shape their interactions with participants, they may misinterpret client responses within sessions as well as systemic factors that exert external pressure.

On the Vignettes

The theoretical framework outlined in the previous section serves to introduce the practitioner interested in working in conflict transformation (especially with non-Western participants) to the notion that they may be a critical music therapist and would benefit from deeper examination into critical theory. However, before delving into vignettes from my experiences at Seeds of Peace (SOP) Camp, it is important to reiterate than while my own identity as a critical therapist was developing at the time, I did not have the grounding background information that I now possess, thus the experiences were not based in critical theory/psychology as presented thus far. Accordingly, the commentary on the vignettes that will accompany them is written from the vantage point of educated reflection, based on present knowledge.

While the order of the vignettes is immaterial for purposes of gaining insight, they are reproduced chronologically to provide the reader with a narrative arc similar to that I experienced. They are written in first person. This is by no means an exhaustive narrative of the entire summer. Some of the vignettes focus on more structural level incorporation of music into daily camp activities, while others focus on specific exercises facilitated by me. Finally, I delve into the field of conflict transformation for the purposes of uncovering how community music therapy and critical theory can function in its context (Hassanein, 2018). Rather than front-load this reflection on practice with that research, it will be embedded throughout the commentaries on the vignettes.

Vignette A: The first songs

SOP Camp is situated on a pristine, tree-filled, plot of land in rural Otisfield, Maine. At the center of the campgrounds, between the teen and adult sides of the property, is the

assembly point where campers and counselors meet before every meal to discuss daily announcements as well as witness each other's performances. Rows of green wooden benches look towards a large oak tree; a sort of pulpit. Behind it, the early morning mist floats off Pleasant Lake, an aptly named crystal clear body of water that will be integral to the camp experience by the end of the summer. The rejuvenating power of the lake cannot be understated: for many campers it was a place of solace, a teacher, a friend when the chaos of generational trauma, conflict, and adolescent hormones became too much to handle.

It is here where I was first introduced to lyrics from Sweet Honey in the Rock's song, Wanting Memories, which were painted solidly on the benches in white, the second color in the palette adorning the swath of rustic cabins around camp. As I came to learn, the lyrics appeared to camp founder and international journalist, John Wallach, in a dream. That dream inspired the foundation of Seeds of Peace—Wallach envisioned a day when the leaders of Palestine and Israel would shake hands in peace, both having been Seeds in their youth. At this stage, a day before the campers arrived, it is apparent that beyond my responsibility to devise "fun activities" through which campers would learn and socialize, music would play a powerful role in the overall experience. The lines read:

"I am sitting here, wanting memories to teach me
To see the beauty of the world through my own eyes" (Barnwell, 1993)

As I was unfamiliar with the song, the returning music counselor (a public-school music teacher from rural Maine and former camper) sang it for me. I was mesmerized by the comforting embrace of the melody and vocal harmony. "Don't worry, you'll learn it, we have to sing it for the campers," she said wryly, "let's learn the Seeds of Peace song."

The song, titled "I Am a Seed of Peace," was written by two campers from the Egyptian and US delegations in the 1990s, and has a 2-part melody (to be sung by the campers and counselors respectively, or various other configurations). It followed the chord progression Am7 // C7/G // Fmaj7 // Esus4 → E7. My initial impression was that the song lacked any flair that I might have associated with "Middle Eastern[5]" culture, and rather appealed to a Western ear. Further, the song was "cheesy," especially by late 2010's adolescent standards. However, I was urged by the returning music counselor to "Give it time, you won't believe how much it will mean by the end—when everyone's crying." She spoke with an assuredness that many of the returners shared, as she masterfully strummed her ukulele, "You're gonna hear a lot of people say 'trust the process,' here."

"I Am a Seed of Peace"

I am a Seed of Peace (x3)
I am a Seed, a Seed of Peace.
I am! (You're what?) A Seed! (That's right!) I am a Seed of Peace.
Peace (x4)
People of peace, rejoice, rejoice!
For we have united into one voice:
A voice of peace and hate of war;
United hands have built a bridge between two shores.

We on the shores have torn down the wall;
We stand hand-in-hand as we watch the bricks fall.
We've learned from the past and fear not what's ahead;
I know I'll not walk alone, but with a friend instead." (Naguib & Durst, 1997)

My co-counselor was right. On the first full day of camp, when many of the campers were still wary of those on the "other side,"[6] culture-shocked and far from their homes, giddy and sleep deprived, I found myself doubting the song choice. My apprehension seemed to match theirs. Why were we learning this song, as opposed to something more contemporary that might have similar themes, something decided by the campers?

Three weeks later, as I trod water in Pleasant Lake, I led the entire camp, joined shoulder to shoulder, in "I Am a Seed of Peace." Arms were linked between Muslim Kashmiris and Hindus from Mumbai. An Israeli from Tel Aviv was linked with a Palestinian from Gaza (who had first learned to swim in that camp session), and a Somali-American from Maine. Campers clutched counselors, who held administrators, who held kitchen staff. There were tears running down faces, finding their home in the water with the realization that this was not a dream, but a reflection of "The Way Life Could Be" (the camp motto, prominently painted on the sign greeting camp visitors); that despite the moments of feeling like it would never end, camp was ending and the return to everyday life was a new but familiar culture-shock. These realizations seemed to ripple with the rhythm of the water, murky from the mad dash, screaming and hugging which had immediately preceded the circle formation. And everyone was singing, with an enthusiasm that could only be born from those particular people, who had created a new means of relating to each other in 21 days.

Reflection A

Johan Galtung (2000), notable theorist and founding practitioner in the field of conflict transformation, stated that all conflicts, regardless of scale, have a common criteria and progression: When two parties have incompatible goals, their mutual contradiction can cycle from disdain to outward aggressive action. However, as previously noted, this description does not account for complex conflict, where more than two competing parties with a multitude of goals are involved (Hassanein, 2018; Lederach, 2005). This description certainly defines the Arab-Israeli conflict, which contains a plethora of sub-groups and views, depending on personal and familial experience. As Robertson (2010) notes, cultural identities are built out of violent circumstances which make them difficult for health and social workers to interface. Bergh (2010) elaborates on this sentiment, arguing that singular identity markers do not unequivocally explain conflict, but rather are consequences of the politicization of identity.

This was evident among the campers I interacted with at SOP. While some were quick to discuss political and historical events to explain their presence at camp, or a particular statement they made, others took a humanistic approach. Each interfaced with the conflict differently, and though it must be noted that campers did embody the fullest representation of their national views, there was a large diversity in geography of origin, ethnic and religious backgrounds, and sexual orientation. Yet, despite all of the differences of view, the campers were able to connect with each other, and one of the prominent methods of connection was through collective singing.

Micah Hendler (2012), a former SOP music counselor and founder of the YMCA Jerusalem Youth Chorus, deconstructed the role of "I Am a Seed of Peace" in his essay "Music in Israeli Arab Peacemaking." He explained that he approaches the role of music and peacemaking from a skeptical perspective, debunking the notion that music is a "universal language," but rather "music acquires its meaning through cultural or life experience" (Hendler, 2012). This is a sentiment that is echoed in relevant literature, notably by Coen (2015) in her chapter, "Music: A Universal Language," and Kent (2015) in his chapter, "Unpeaceful Music." Hendler discusses the section where the chorus of the song reiterates the identity as a Seed, followed by the affirmation from the counselors ("That's right!") as a pivotal moment in the song, which he argues is part of the power of

what takes place at camp (Hendler, 2012). At a certain point in dialogue sessions, each teen runs out of arguments to justify the violence and prejudice that their "side" of the conflict has perpetuated and assumes a new collective moniker as a Seed. For example, they are an Israeli and a Seed, no longer an Israeli delegate.

It is through the acceptance of this shared identity that they are moved to empathize with the pain of peers on the "other side," and in turn this is where song serves as a connection and a reminder (Hendler, 2012). The lyrics play a powerful role in that transformation. Social psychology has proposed a phenomenon that may explain this transformational behavior; Greitmeyer (2013) used meta-analysis of research studies focusing on lyrical content and behavior. He determined that listening to prosocial lyrics with themes of connection, peace, and love does decrease feelings of aggression by decreasing state hostility (Greitmeyer, 2013). As such, singing peaceful songs makes campers more peaceful towards each other. Furthermore, as expressed in the vignette, this song is sung arm in arm in a physical representation of the bridge building and walking with a friend described in the lyrics.

The selected lines from Wanting Memories, a song that is not actually sung to campers until the final assembly at camp, also serve as a powerful reminder, and indeed one that does not become clear until camp is ending, of the individual change that occurred in each individual, the renewal of the dream of Peace. It is the charge that each Seed carries when they leave, to maintain the lens that they developed at camp, to continue to "see the beauty of the world" through the eyes of reconciliation, vulnerability, empathy, and reparation. To see the world for what it could be, not what it is. The larger lesson from this vignette, in the context of this reflection, is how it illustrates the importance of ritual as a means of transcending conflict and building a new peaceful culture. The BuildaBridge Safe Spaces Model, developed by therapists and arts-activists/educators J. Nathan Corbitt and Vivian Nix-Early, is a "trauma informed, hope-infused approach to working with youth living in contexts of crisis and poverty" (BuildaBridge International, 2015). While not specifically designed as a peacemaking tool, the model does function as at least one of Shank & Schirch's (2008) four broad categories of arts-based conflict transformation projects, namely building capacity. The other categories are waging conflict nonviolently, reducing direct violence, and transforming relationships. Through the use of ritual, generally in the form of a symbolic threshold crossing, opening song and agreements, the Safe Spaces Model creates a contained environment from which new culture and capacity can be nurtured through art-making. Creating a contained environment is essential to building a feeling of support and familiarity, something that can be constant and relied on to occur in what may be an otherwise unstable daily experience for a youth in conflict or crisis (BuildaBridge International, 2015; Junkin, 2017). This is similarly experienced in the ritualistic use of the SOP camp song, as it becomes a part of the personal journey of each Seed, a means of mutual connection for all, whether they first visited Maine in 1998 or 2018.

There are other examples of songs that have become part of the unique camp culture, from the energetic, anxiety-releasing table drumming rhythms taught to every camper in the boisterous dining hall to the lighthearted yet unifying, "Everybody likes hummus," and the international summer hits, in our case the massively popular Despacito by Daddy Yankee and Luis Fonsa. As Hendler (2012) wrote, "While not an explicit part of political dialogue, music is used, through repeated communal performance, to create and sustain community at SOP by establishing and reinforcing the identity of the Seed." In his field notes, he noted the testimonial of one Israeli camper, "at camp, we have our own language – of music, sports, table cheers and fun." This "language" is a step toward transformed conflict as described by Lederach (2005) in his "Moral Imagination" and Galtung's (2015) TRANSCEND method, a formalized approach that is widely practiced among United Nations peacekeepers. Galtung insisted, rather than peace behaving as the direct opposite

of conflict it is a constant process that requires maintenance in the reactive aftermath of conflict (Galtung, 2015). It is not just the absence of needs, but a generative mindset that relies on creative engagement to meet those needs in a reconstructive and reconciliatory manner (Galtung, 2015). Music therapist Lopez Vinader (2015) argues that the creative arts therapies share the same experiential, creative, and attitudinal values as the TRANSCEND method, and thus incorporates the method into her practice.

When discussing "needs," as a humanistic therapist, one can look to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy and clearly see how generative peace works to help secure the needs at all stages through the manifestation of nonviolence. Nonviolence as a requirement of peacebuilding facilitates safety, protects relationships, and helps survivors understand the guilt that is known to surface (Hassanein, 2018). Whether one commits atrocities or not, it is common for witnesses of violence to develop guilt which can hinder self-esteem, even after violent conflict has ceased, which then acts as a barrier to self-actualization (Kanyangara et al., 2014; Noor, et. al., 2008). Indeed, Galtung (2000; 2011) devised a specific set of needs to be met to achieve what he called "positive peace": survival, well-being, identity, and freedom.

Vignette B: Freedom is coming!

Every week, camp counselors were given the opportunity to create a "Special Activity" outside of the regularly scheduled activities that campers attended with their dialogue groups. These activities were selected on a first-come-first-served basis and were highly anticipated by campers. They were sometimes goofy yet always thoughtful and gave counselors an opportunity to show more of their personalities and form deeper relationships with like-minded campers. Examples during summer 2017 included: Super Naptime Deluxe, where campers gathered their pillows and blankets and had large mid-day sleepovers; Water Sports, which was so popular it ran every week; and Being Weird, which was an interesting activity that could best be described as "performance art." During this period, I conducted an a capella singing group.

The small group comprised 12 campers, the majority of whom were female, but with three male campers and two male counselors, we covered the entire SATB range. The campers included a relatively even split of Indians, Pakistanis, and Israelis, an Egyptian, a Jordanian, a US American, and a Palestinian. The first session began with every camper (and counselor) sharing why they chose to participate in the activity, any prior singing (with accompaniment or a capella), and any songs they would be interested in performing at an assembly in the future.

The range of responses was broad: The one Indian male admitted that he was not very familiar with Western pop music, but that he studied Hindustani classical singing. He timidly sang a beautiful quarter-toned song and received a lot of positive feedback from the group. Many of the Israeli campers expressed an interest in Western pop music, including Despacito, and a few Taylor Swift songs. The three Pakistani girls were all interested in Harry Styles and One Direction. The Jordanian male camper insisted he only listened to Kendrick Lamar and could not sing but wanted to beat-box. As voices started to get more excited and they debated the finer details of each song as a group choice, I noticed the voices that remained absent in the sonic space. The two girls from India were looking at each other and smirking, having said from the beginning that the group can decide, and they would go along with the decision. The girl from the US was the only camper with years of private voice lessons, and she looked dumbfounded as she tried to understand the highly emphatic and animated way the SWANA[7] campers discussed what seemed to be such a simple discussion on song choice. By the end of the 40-minute session, I was surprised by the mutually agreed upon song, "Ain't No Sunshine" by Bill Withers (1971); it had initially been proposed by an excitable Israeli girl.

The second song that was agreed upon, I proposed. It was a South African gospel song called "Freedom is Coming" (Leck, 1993). The song involved four-part vocal harmony on top of a clapping and stomping pattern, which added enough complexity to take two sessions to solidify. Many of the campers had never held a vocal part against a harmony before (which was expected) so adding a dance on top seemed risky. But in the second session, the campers all rose to the challenge of learning the "dance part." They repeated the steps together out loud, laughing and patting each other on the backs as it dissolved into a fit of noisy people yelling:

"Argh! I had it!"
"Stomp -- clap, chest, leg, stomp, clap -- LEG -- stomp, Argh!" an Indian camper exclaimed.
"Ok, ok, let's try again," the Egyptian camper responded, "we can do it!"

By the end of the session, they all had a functional grasp of the rhythm, with about seven campers highly confident in their ability to retain it. Having no extra time to begin "Ain't No Sunshine" the campers insisted they would self-organize a rehearsal at lunchtime to begin devising an arrangement. I was impressed by their motivation and left the session eager for the next one.

The final two sessions centered on musicality in the songs. The campers were eager to perform but required motivation and inspiration to afford the songs to have the maximum impact on the audience. Impressively, "Ain't No Sunshine" came together in less than 15 minutes, due to the diligent practice they maintained in my absence. When working on "Freedom is Coming," the campers seemed a little hesitant to emote. I became nervous, due to the tendency among the campers to look at everything through a political lens. I felt as if they would start to draw associations between South African apartheid and their respective conflicts, and the session could dissolve into blame and distrust. So, I shared my interpretation and connection to the song. I emphasized that freedom looks different to different people, and while the original motivation of the song may have emerged from one idea, that did not have to be ours. I emphasized that once a song is released, it takes on new, personal meanings for everyone who listens to it. Likewise, anyone performing it had the right to connect to and present it in their own way. I asked the campers to think about what freedom meant to them, and how they would individually overcome it, rhetorically. By the time the session was over, the singing was significantly more passionate, taking on an urgency previously lacking. The campers were buzzing with the excitement of an upcoming performance that day.

The passion that the campers brought to the performance was met with resounding approval by the rest of camp. The song has a steady dynamic crescendo throughout that builds to an ecstatic stomp. By the end, when the singers were effectively shouting "Freedom is coming, Oh, yes I know!" at the top of their lungs, and stomping dust clouds all over the front row benches, it was met with an uproar of applause. Looking at the group of singers beaming at one another, laughing, and patting each other on the back, I felt a familiar feeling. An Indian girl, who had initially been standoffish in the sessions approached me and said, "I feel like for the first time, everyone's voice was yelling, and yet I heard every individual voice!"

Reflection B

This vignette illustrates a few key points that pertain to the literature. One of Shank & Schirch's (2008) categories for arts in conflict transformation is waging conflict nonviolently. In these situations, the creative outlet acts as an opportunity for the parties to work out their feelings towards each other or the conflict at large. In the first few sessions, the conflict raged verbally, arguing over the superiority of individual song choices. Eventually, this transitioned into the music, when voices competed against each

other for volume and for their specific vocal lines to be heard. Metaphorically, though not the original intention, the voices initially competed for space, but eventually came together to blend with one another in such a way that individually desired needs were met. A similarly empathetic approach must be taken to achieve peace, as Lederach (2005) has described. In her book chapter, "Music and Empathy," Laurence (2015) noted the difference between an empathetic relationship and a power relationship. She argued that music has a propensity to build empathetic relationships through cooperation, non-manipulation, support, and a desire to know the other. The touching words of the Indian camper illustrate this notion in action and suggest that an ability to listen deeply was starting to develop.

The possibility of developing deep listening skills, useful in building empathy and gained through musical activities or exercises, is a focus at the intersection of music therapy and conflict transformation (Hassanein, 2018). Junkin (2017) developed an orchestra program for youth in Philadelphia, which she titled, Orchestral Dialogues: Accepting Others. Similar in size to the group described in Vignette B, and aged 9-14, orchestra members participated in both music lessons, where deep listening was honed, and dialogue sessions, where that skill was practiced. Over 5 months of data collection, Junkin (2017) noted that participants demonstrated "self-reflexivity, self-expression, responsibility, affirmation [and] co-creation of a new reality" (p.63). With a similar timeframe and structured sessions with goals explicitly expressed to the campers, the group in the vignette could have had similar outcomes. As stated in Hassanein (2018), if attempting to create such a structure, therapists need to look beyond their field of music for inspiration to disciplines such as Peace and Conflict studies that have longer histories of engaging with dialogue and related transformational approaches.

Another point from Vignette B is about performance as a therapeutic experience, and how it solidifies the link between CoMT and conflict transformation. Contrary to the consensus model of music therapy's emphasis on privacy and individualism, CoMT professionals explore the individual as they engage with the community beyond institutional walls (Andell, 2002). Stige and Aarø (2012) helpfully outline, through the acronym PREPARE, the core values of CoMT. The first letter refers to the performative focus of the work. It places emphasis on the role that practice and execution of the music has on the overall participant takeaway (Ansdell, 2002; Stige & Aarø, 2012). The second letter refers to how CoMT cultivates resilience in clients and builds bonds between participants and their audiences (Ansdell, 2010; Turry, 2005; Zharinova-Sanderson, 2004). Vaillancourt (2012) noted the significance of "a sense of societal participation to all concerned", implying an impact on those actively performing and those witnessing the performance. All are part of the community, and thus all have a stake. This was exemplified through the sharing of the music with the rest of the camp, and the subsequent celebratory applause. In this way, it becomes a unifying experience and one that can be referenced by more than just the 12 singers. It should be known, however, that the performance element of CoMT extends beyond the music into the way participants "perform" their relationships with each other, as an indicator of overall health (Enge, 2015; Stige & Aarø, 2012).

Vignette C: Mindful reflection

As campers walked into the music shack sometime in the middle of the second week of camp, I sensed a certain depleted energy. The campers trudged in, took off their shoes, and slumped on the mattresses lining the floor. They slumped on top of each other, and the group took about 10 minutes to get started. One male Israeli camper set the tone for a goofy morning by falling asleep almost immediately upon sitting down. I had prepared a drum circle activity, but after surveying the campers it became clear they were not in the

mood for an energetic, noisy first session of the day. I asked them if they wanted to try something more relaxing and the response was unanimously, "yes."

I instructed the campers to find a space on the mattresses where they were not touching anyone and began to play arpeggiated chords on my guitar in a cyclical manner. Alternating between Cadd9 and G, I invited the campers to breathe deeply following the metric accents in the guitar. I asked the campers to honor the silence in this experience. Slowly, they settled; their chest movements synchronized with the music. At this point, I asked campers to pay attention to how they felt in their bodies. Were they tense or nervous about the upcoming day? I encouraged them to acknowledge feelings that arose, but to gently set them aside for the time being and visualize themselves before their journey at SOP began. I asked questions rhetorically, with large pauses in between them: "What intrigued you when you discovered the camp? How did it feel to see the looks on your families' faces when you were accepted? How did it feel stepping on the plane? Stepping off? What did you hope to learn by the end of this summer? Do you feel that you are moving in that direction?" While internally, I felt some trepidation asking some of the questions for fear of a negative reaction, the body language of the campers suggested they were engaged, or at minimum, relaxed.

After about 20 minutes, the bell at the center of the camp rang, indicating the end of the session. I encouraged campers to slowly begin to notice themselves in the space and get up at their own pace. I asked how the experience was, and the response was notable. The camper who had fallen asleep in the beginning of the session said he was relaxed, and it was just what he needed. A Palestinian female camper stated how grateful she was for the reminder of why she was attending camp, "My family has so much faith in me, and I want to make them proud," she remarked. Another Israeli male camper simply stated, "This is the first time since the camp started that I have been able to just think for myself." And an Egyptian girl echoed him, "We all know we're going to have a lot of time to process this in dialogue, and talk about it, but it was nice to just be together and not have to explain anything." As they filed out of the shack, I was grateful I took the risk and deviated from my plan. I felt, for the first time, I had actually used music to successfully cultivate peace, rather than just serve as an activity to pass the time between dialogue sessions.

Reflection C

This vignette illustrates the benefit of mindfulness-based music therapy interventions in conflict transformation-based work. At its core, SOP camp is a highly stressful environment. Tears, blowouts, poor sleep, and even plumbing malfunctions are all a part of the storied "process" that campers weather. While attention to detail and empathetic staff serve to calm anxiety levels, it is impossible to eradicate anxiety altogether. After all, many campers are confronting their own actions, or those of loved ones, with a critical lens for the first time in their lives, not to mention being confronted by others. Anxiety was palpable in the first moments of Vignette C and confirmed by the camper discussing the dialogue sessions they were to participate in later on that day. As such, a reflective activity similar to the one described above seems to have a place in the world of conflict transformation. Research has shown that evenly pulsed receptive music in combination with progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) has significant positive effects on anxiety levels and perceived relaxation among participants (Gadberry, 2011; Robb, 2000). It should be noted that the vignette did not contain a full PMR attempt, but rather a basic body scan, as I was not trained in those techniques at the time.

Vignette C also signals another phenomenon which is worth noting for those interested in conflict transformation, the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery in Music (BMGIM). Jordanger (2015) explored the possibilities with BMGIM related to conflict transformation. Devised by Helen Bonny (1975), BMGIM is an approach that has demonstrated success

with traumatized clients, including psychiatric patients (McKinney & Grocke, 2016) and war survivors (Ng, 2005). As it requires advanced training, BMGIM utilizes more refined induction techniques than those in the vignette, and combines them with supportive music listening (Bonny, 1975).

Jordanger (2015) used the guided imagery and music technique with youth from Crimea (an ethnically diverse and politically tumultuous region) to develop what he called "collective vulnerability." After facilitating the music and imagery, Jordanger noted that the 13 participants of Russian, North Ossetian, Chechen, and Crimean descent were able to bond over a shared experience that went "deeper than mere disagreement on the verbal discursive level of conflict analysis" (p.136). This statement is reminiscent of the empathetic relationship formation described by Laurence (2015), as well as one of Shank & Schirch's (2008) areas of impact: transforming relationships. Likewise, it seems to illustrate what the Palestinian girl in the vignette described, a collective feeling that what they had shared was intimate in a way that dialogue sometimes fails to be. They were able to transcend arguments and politics to allow the evolution of their emotions on a collective level rather than a personal one. Indeed, there is still much to be trialed and uncovered with the role of mindful, receptive music therapy in conflict transformation work, but it connects quite well with the TRANSCEND method laid out by Galtung (2000). Lopez Vinader (2015) is the only music therapist who has written about using this method in her practice, emphasizing that empathy softens attitudes, nonviolence softens behavior, and creativity softens contradictions (Galtung, 2000).

Vignette D: Art Day

During the last week of camp, right before the whole population splits into two large teams for Color Games, everyone participates in Art Day. Rather than the usual activities, each dialogue group is assigned to one art-based activity lasting one hour. During that time, they devise a group project to be displayed or performed at a special assembly in the auditorium. In my session, I hoped to create a sound collage, combining instrument play and a lyrical component. I had some reservations going into the session, as I was unsure of the musical competency within the dialogue group. Only one of the members had demonstrated musicianship—an extremely polite and quiet Palestinian boy who played the drums. I had also heard from other counselors that this group was the most volatile in dialogue sessions. They had even come up with a chant they had non-ironically sung at an earlier morning assembly with the lines, "Dialogue H, Dialogue H, the only group that fills me with rage."

As Dialogue H filed into the room, I took note of how they sat in the music shack. There was a clear polarization between Israeli campers and Arab campers, with two exceptions: a Jewish American boy who sat with the Israelis and an US boy of Palestinian descent who sat between the two subgroups, as if to actualize a physical link between them. They had come directly from a dialogue session, and during my verbal check-in it became obvious that they were not excited about the prospect of working together. However, in this particular session a final product was expected. I introduced the idea of a sound collage to the campers: on top of the music—a loosely structured improvisation—each member would pick lines from a song, in English, that was personally meaningful. Together, we would rearrange them as a group to create a new unified message. I stressed that the entire group would have a role in the creation of the song as some would play percussion, and others would sing, as I provided a chord progression underneath. I was met with a lackluster response; with many members asking if they could just drum and not select lyrics, and others complaining that they didn't "know enough English music." Begrudgingly, I allowed them to use Arabic and Hebrew lyrics provided each lyrical section was read out loud, translated, and mutually agreed upon.

I handed out pencils and paper and we spent 15 minutes compiling lyrics, and another half-hour going through each song and translating it. I also asked each camper, if comfortable, to explain how they made their selection. Songs ranged from U.S. rap, to Arabic classical music, to Israeli pop, and U.S. classic rock. In most cases, though the songs represented a large variety of lyrical styles, they were all agreed upon. One exception was an Egyptian patriotic song popularized by the singer Dalida, Helwa ya Balady (or My Beautiful Country) (Saada, 1979), which was deemed too political by some Israeli campers. With the session taking so long to merely decide on lyrics, we concluded that rather than create a new vocal melody as envisioned, four group members would read the reassembled "poem" over improvised music. I left the session feeling somewhat relieved that there would be something to show for the time spent, and even a bit excited.

Three hours later I was standing in a large circle outside the auditorium with the Camp Director, two other members of the leadership team, and two Paradigm Shifters (returning campers who act as mentors to first time campers and attend their own programming), witnessing the members of Dialogue H scream at each other. I was pulled from another activity as the whole camp prepared for the assembly because an argument had erupted from within the auditorium after the Israeli group members had decided they would not step on stage with the Palestinians. Between spurts of accusations, and people coming to each other's defense, I tried to assess what had happened. "What changed?" I asked, "Earlier today, everyone was in agreement about what we were going to do." The Druze Israeli boy spoke up, "I read the lines from one of the Arabic songs that she picked," pointing to a Palestinian girl who had selected a song by Mashrou' Leila, "It talks about them silencing our voices! It's political, she's talking about Israel!" His statement was met with yelling on both sides, "It's not even about that! It's about being gay and wanting to be open!"

The girl was in tears at being called a liar, and many Palestinian boys were coming to her defense, "How dare you talk to a woman that way?" one said, "Is that how you were raised?" The American Palestinian attempted, "Can we change one line? Or get rid of it?" The Palestinians were more frustrated at this, "We have been so polite, but you are not going to silence us here. You agreed to the line before, why are you changing your mind now?" said a Palestinian girl, "If that line is not in the song, we are not performing." The Druze boy postured and retorted, "I was sleeping before, if it is in the song, we are not performing or stepping on the stage with you at all!" As I stood and watched the argument spiral, I felt helpless. I wanted to use my counseling skills to address the situation, but I didn't know what to ask or how to de-escalate the campers. They continued to rage at each other. One by one, the staff and Paradigm Shifters tried to propose a compromise but neither side budged. Meanwhile, the assembly had already started, and the schedule was shifted to give Dialogue H enough time to process their disagreement. In the end, the campers argued for almost three hours, and missed the entire assembly.

That night, after putting the campers in my cabin to bed, I walked to the counselors' lounge feeling defeated. I felt as though my project idea, and compromising on my own initial boundaries, had set in motion what transpired. I felt responsible for all of their anger, that I had perhaps fostered the conflict rather than created something new that was imbued with pride. As these feelings welled in me, I confided them to the Camp Director. She embraced me, as my frustration gave way to tears, and comforted me, "Zein, you didn't do anything wrong. That group had been building towards that argument for almost three weeks. It needed to happen. Tonight was just the catalyst." She smiled, and patted me on the back, "Trust the process."

Reflection D

The situation reflected in Vignette D was one of this author's most memorable experiences from SOP. It illustrates a few important points for anyone interested in replicating or expanding upon this work. The first is to recognize one's personal stake in peacemaking, and how much emotional labor you are willing to invest. I was deeply affected by what I witnessed and felt a personal responsibility for the activity to be successful. When it was not successful in the way I expected, there was an emotional response, which hindered my ability to de-escalate the argument. However, had I paid attention to the overarching goal, to build peace rather than create a song, I might have been able to maintain the level headedness of the Camp Director. Indeed, when applying Tuckman's (1965) stages of group development, which counselors are introduced to in training to work at SOP, Dialogue H was exhibiting all the hallmarks of a "storming" group. They needed to get to the point where they were not connected as a group, to move towards growth and cohesion. It suggests they were still on their way toward the reconciliation and reparation necessary for peace (Lederach, 2005).

   Lederach (2005) encourages peace builders to "complexify before you simplify" (p.33). He argues that the more complexity you understand within any scenario, the more prepared you will be to deal with it. When planning the session, I attempted to address a lot of complexity: I tried to apply a culture-centered approach, as described by Stige (2016), through accommodating multiple languages and genres in the source material; I was adamant about the maintenance of anti-oppressive language in both how I explained the activity, and in the selection of lyrics (Baines, 2013; Boxill, 2003). Inspired by Israeli music therapist Dorit Amir (2012), I created space for musical self-presentation, as well as space for the creation of a new collective identity. Finally, I explored a technique (song collage) that is demonstrably successful with trauma survivors and those dealing with adjustment issues, which I viewed as adjacent to the population of campers (Tamplin, 2006). However, while I was trying to address all areas of complexity, I neglected the sheer importance of music to teenagers, and their sense of self. As North et al., (2000) stated, teen music choices affect the way they see themselves in relation to others, who they associate with, and how they view their own emotional state. Research suggests music choice builds a sense of political, racial, and gender identity in teens (Miranda, 2013; Tanner et al., 2008). While being conscious of this may not have prevented the blowout described in Vignette D, it may have at least prepared me for the potential of such a blowout, so that I may have been better equipped to manage the needs of all parties.

Lessons Learned

Attempting to summarize all of the ways my experience at SOP and subsequent academic inquiry facilitated my growth is difficult. In an environment where differences of opinion on crucial social topics are so visibly and unabashedly on display, and narratives carry different subjective truths for different people, there were many instances when I felt caught in a state of simultaneous learning and unlearning. I had moments where my instincts and cultural connection served me better in accessing participants, and times when they did not help at all. Furthermore, as this experience was not planned as research, such as a heuristic study, I did not collect self-reported data, which could have been utilized to measure my growth/changes in perspective. Nonetheless, the lessons that I did identify fell into two broad categories: lessons for myself as a new clinician; and lessons for any music therapist looking to engage in conflict transformation work with Palestinian and Israeli youth. These are listed as follows:

- Having an ethnic or cultural connection to your participants does aid in the development of rapport, and initial familiarity with that culture's music is imperative. A facilitator can miss a lot of subtext if they are not familiar with the music being referenced, especially if the music has political significance. Thus, one may be tempted to share their identity as a way of building relationships early.

- However, cultural identity and political ideology are less mutually exclusive in regions of protracted social conflict. Thus, when a participant shares an aspect of your cultural identity, but a differing political ideology this can create potential for a rupture in the relationship that can be difficult to remedy, as your role can shift from neutral to opposition in their eyes. If you are not educated on the politics of the situation, this can be a difficult pitfall to climb out of alone. Many of us have a deep understanding of how our identity markers affect our lives, but to assume similarities with our participants is naïve. As such, it is recommended that less experienced therapists/facilitators seek supervision from clinicians who are skilled in cultural humility and have a historical, critical understanding of the conflict.

- In general, seeking supervision is critical, even if it is from a veteran conflict transformation professional rather than another music therapist. Conflict work can bring up a lot of feelings for the facilitators. In my tenure at SOP, I experienced imposter syndrome, guilt or fear of causing harm to participants, shame, confusion, disconnection, and exhaustion. Without the private moments to process with more experienced members of the team, I could have easily convinced myself that my impact was all negative. Remember that progress is nonlinear, and that if these issues were easy to solve, they would be solved.

- People who are parties in socio-political conflict with each other often carry the trauma of the generations who came before them, who may have perpetuated the conflict in question. They do not necessarily see themselves as individuals, but as representatives of a larger narrative. It is almost as if they wear the stories of others as a second skin (especially as youth with less life experience). Guided imagery and other receptive forms of music therapy can be effective methods to shed the layers of identity anxiety, nationalism, and obligatory representation, inviting participants to engage as individuals in an act of collective vulnerability. This, in turn, is what allows participants to humanize one another, and begin to work together.

- As a new therapist working in contexts of conflict, with people from cultures that may differ from yours (speaking to Western therapists predominantly), do not assume that a loud decibel means something is wrong. People speak passionately about the issues presented at SOP (as sometimes they are life or death scenarios) and it is not our role as facilitators to tone police. As therapists we are conditioned to create calm, safety, serenity in our spaces, but in conflict transformation contexts, the music therapy room can be used to wage the war nonviolently.

- The skills that we learn in music therapy training programs do carry over into the conflict transformation context. They can be used to address the same music therapy goals we have traditionally targeted in the consensus model of music therapy. However, we must have a deeper theoretical underpinning if we are going work on conflict transformation goals. Ideally, this means educating ourselves on the TRANSCEND method and other approaches that are standardized in conflict transformation work.

Conclusion

The intention of this reflection on practice was to consolidate current information on the intersections between music therapy and conflict transformation, not to showcase a new fully formed method. This was done in tandem with vignettes that illustrate some of the ways theoretical knowledge could inform practice, while also showcasing personal pitfalls I experienced in my time at Seeds of Peace Camp. It presents a practitioner's subjective experience at a snapshot in time, which may inform others interested in working with youth living in conflict. This inquiry demonstrated that although there is evidence of a critical underpinning in CoMT, there needs to be greater education and advocacy in the healthcare fields for training in this theoretical perspective. Furthermore, the development of appropriate goals is touched upon, such as waging war nonviolently and developing collective vulnerability and deep listening skills. From my perspective, it is imperative for the music therapy field to expand its horizons regarding how we inform our practice to include more sociopolitical standpoints. In the last 5 – 10 years, the lack of critical perspective in music therapy has been spotlighted and the field is taking strides to remedy this, as evidenced by the special issues being developed around the themes of social justice and minority worldviews in the popular music therapy journals. A new generation is joining longstanding advocates, striving to offer insight from voices that are often neglected globally and overlap with the underrepresented people who interface with protracted social conflict. The impact of these inquiries could also inform the role of the arts and music therapy in peacemaking work, and lead to a healthier global community.

About the Author

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1 *Conflict Transformation*: An approach to peacemaking that suggests that peace cannot be achieved through treaties alone, but that the state of the conflict must fundamentally change form.

2 *Protracted social conflict*: A phrase coined by Lebanese-born political scientist Edward Azar in his seminal article describing the Arab-Israeli conflict (Azar et al., 1978). The term was devised to distinguish long-lasting, identity-based, and regularly violent conflicts that differed in size and approach from the polarized conflicts that dominated global politics for the previous 50 years. Whereas wars like the Cold and World Wars presented relatively overt polarization, conflicts such as the circumstances set in motion by the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the Irish Liberation movement of the late 20th century, or the sectarian violence in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East are much more complex, regularly plagued by the consequences of colonialism and collective trauma (Bergh & Slodoba, 2010; Rinkler & Lawler, 2018; Robertson, 2010; Woodward, 2012).

3 *Conflict survivor*: Any human, military or civilian involved in conflict. They may or may not be displaced and does not exclude people actively living through conflict.

4 *Seeds of Peace Camp*: An international summer camp and non-profit which brings together teens from regions of conflict (Palestine, Israel, Egypt, Jordan, the USA, the UK, Pakistan, and India) to engage in transformational dialogue—mediated by adults who have gone through a six-month facilitation course—and other activities designed to build closeness and solidarity. Campers live, eat, sleep, create, and play with "the other side." All of these activities are deliberately considered to actualize a collective vision for "The way life could be" for three weeks in Maine, USA, before the delegations return to their home countries. Regional programming exists year-round for those that are motivated to continue. Per their website, there are currently 7,300 alumni (affectionately known as Seeds) working to make change in over 27 countries (Seeds of Peace, 2019). Counselors are also a blend of nationalities, religions, and socioeconomic backgrounds; many are former campers themselves.

5 *Middle Eastern*: This term is one which is particularly complicated, due to its geographic, and socio-cultural ambiguity. While it is used ubiquitously, including by those that come from the region that it purports to describe, namely the nations and communities spanning from Morocco to Pakistan, the phrase originated in colonial 19th Century Britain. Understandably, as such the term tends to reference proximity to Europe and the United States and not much else substantially. The people who originate from this region share cultural similarities but are also notably different, and these differences are often reduced due to the effects of orientalism. See endnote 7.

6 *The "other side"*: This phrase was used a lot at camp, delineating a polarized nature to the "conflict," namely between Arabs and Israelis, with US and UK delegations serving as mediating voices. However, in my perception, the conflict, as Azar et al. (1978) expressed, was much more complex. Some campers in the Israeli delegation identified as Arab Palestinians, some as Arab Druze, and even one as an Israeli of Armenian Orthodox descent. Each camper felt a varying loyalty to their governments. Furthermore, many US and UK campers came from Jewish or Arab descent and thus had their own biases with a range of views on Western foreign policy and intervention.

7 *SWANA*: An anticolonial term that is being used with increasing frequency by people whose origins in the region often described as the "Middle East". It is more geographically descriptive and allows for the people who unite under it to build social solidarity while celebrating differences, ensuring they are defining themselves. SWANA stands for South West Asians and North African. According to the SWANA Alliance (2017), the moniker encompasses people whose origins include but are not limited to: "Kurds, Nubians, Sudanese, Armenians, Circassians, Arabs, Iranians, Druze, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Turks, Yazidis, Azeris, Turkmen, Afghans, Copts, Imazighen, and other identities and their intersections."