

EDITORIAL

Adapting, Understanding, and Thriving

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Contributions to this issue

The contributors to this November 2023 issue of *Voices* reflect on creative practices in India, Mexico, Norway, Spain, Australia, and the United States through reflections on practice, research, and reports. Themes of being invited or forced to adapt and innovate, reflecting on processes to promote understanding, and taking time and care to enable thriving through music therapy and creative approaches run through this diverse compilation of articles.

Two articles in this issue appear in both English and Spanish. In the first, Eugenia Hernandez-Ruiz and Jill Sullivan map the current status of music therapy practice in Mexico, using an online survey of those who have practiced music therapy between 1997 and 2022. The small sample of self-identified music therapists who responded to the survey represent a variety of educational backgrounds and theoretical perspectives and provide an informative picture of current practices in Mexico. Challenges noted about this emerging professional group are balanced by optimism and enthusiasm for professionalization.

In the second, Anna Giménez-Castells, Jordi Jauset Berrocal and Eduard Casas Bertet describe a case study of music therapy in Spain for improving quality of life for a woman who experienced sexual abuse and domestic violence. Using results from quantitative self-report measures, the authors reflect around the role of music therapy in promoting personal growth and wellbeing.

Two articles in this issue follow on from earlier submissions. Continuing on from earlier parts of their multi-step survey on work satisfaction of music therapists in the United States, published in *Voices* Vol 22(1), Lillian Eyre, Anthony Meadows, and Audra Gollenberg present a mixed methods analysis of therapists' perspectives on their future plans, the direction of the profession, and perceptions of the American Music Therapy Association. Participant responses indicate that satisfaction levels are related to both perceptions of the direction of the profession and of the professional organization.

Following up from an article on digital music technology in Vol 21(2) of *Voices*, Kjetil Høyen Jonassen presents a qualitative multiple case study exploring how four adolescents engaged in an iPad-based music workshop while in outpatient mental health care. Making music with an iPad served as a form of health musicking that enabled development of social relations, promotion of self-esteem, and enhancement of wellbeing.

In another research article, Denise Straume Hansen McIvor lifts clients' voices by using interpretative phenomenological analysis to explore four Norwegian clients' understandings of what forms helpful client-therapist relationships in music therapy. Superordinate themes encompassed power relations in therapy and the balance between feeling safe and feeling challenged. Findings suggest that power imbalances in mental health care must be addressed to form trusting and helpful client-therapist relationships.

Several authors in this issue reflect on ways in which culture or the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted their practice. Reflecting on ways in which the therapeutic alliance is impacted by cultural values and practices, Marisa de León describes music therapy practices with communities along the Texas-Mexico border. Through composite case vignettes, de León explores how key cultural values of such communities manifest in music therapy sessions and shape both the therapeutic relationship and the role of the therapist.

The COVID-19 pandemic required that many music therapy practices go virtual, including a series of Sensory Friendly Concerts (SFC®) in Austin, Texas. Rooted in their experiences during the pandemic, Jordan A. Fogle and Laurie P. Scott reflect on the historical and theoretical backgrounds of SFCs and consider recommendations for how such inclusive community music events can be held either live or in virtual settings.

Demands of the pandemic era also created opportunities for developments in virtual forms of community and support within academia. Katrina Skewes McFerran reports on a music-based, insight-oriented, online group program developed to support the wellbeing of early career researchers. McFerran was able to integrate experiences as a music therapist, Guided Imagery and Music therapist, lecturer, and transformational coach in this 8-week offering, and reflects on the group process and narrative feedback.

We include two reports in this issue. First, Helen J. English, Michelle Kelly, Genevieve A. Dingle, Frini Karayanidis, and Jane W. Davidson report on a symposium held in Australia in 2022 exploring the role of creative activities in ageing well. Symposium participants actively contributed to discussion of core areas, and key suggestions emerging from the process included the need to involve older adults in research, increasing accessibility of creative activities, and partnering with community organizations for sustainability.

Finally, a virtual workshop series with participants from the University of Madras, India, is the background for Deepa Iyer S, S. Thenmozhi and Rajshri Ramakrishna's report. Aiming at familiarizing participants with the concept of music therapy and specifically focusing on the role of songwriting, the participants worked together for eight days, engaging in creative processes. The authors point to the affordances of the online webinar format for providing opportunities for creative collaboration despite being physically separated.

Thanking outgoing contributors and welcoming those new to Voices

Like many of the authors of this issue, the editorial team at *Voices* is also being challenged to adapt, re-envision, and expand possibilities for thriving. This November issue marks the concluding issue for Production Editor Marie Louise Ljones, from NORCE Norwegian Research Centre. Since beginning with *Voices* in 2020, Marie has contributed to the tidying of workflows, establishment of better internal communication systems for the editorial team, and expansion of areas of competence within the editorial team. Marie, Sue and Claire have collaborated closely to assure timely publication of issues, and to identify areas for growth in our internal editorial practices. We will greatly miss the proactive engine that characterizes Marie's work ethic, and her cheerful and encouraging way, but wish her well as she focuses squarely on her research pursuits. We take this opportunity to welcome and introduce Haruna Inagaki, who has a dedicated position as layout editor for *Voices*.

Haruna has a background in animation, illustration, and design, and has quickly adapted to the work of academic and online publishing by laying out the articles for this November issue. We thank Rodolfo Camilo Vieira who had a temporary position related to layout, prior to filling the position. We also welcome incoming Production Editor Hanne Fosheim of NORCE, who will take over duties from Marie as we transition into 2024. Our sincere thanks to Marie as she transitions out, and warmest welcome to Haruna and Hanne as they transition in!

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