



Cultural considerations in the field of music therapy assessment and their connections with ethical issues

Dr. Gustavo Schulz Gattino
Aalborg University

Introduction

- This presentation has the main goal to present basic considerations on cultural issues concerning the practice of music therapy assessment.
- Also, this lecture will connect this theme with the ethical issues in the field of music therapy assessment.
- These two themes are strongly connected.
- For this reason, a possible solution is to explain these two themes in the same lecture.

Introduction

- This presentation is based in the following publication:
- Gattino, G. (2020). Aspectos éticos e culturais da avaliação em musicoterapia. In Fundamentos de avaliação em musicoterapia [Ethical and cultural issues in music therapy. In Essentials of Music Therapy Assessment]. Forma & Conteúdo Comunicação Integrada.



Introduction

- The music therapist understands the assessment process in music therapy from ethical principles and conduct (Bates, 2015).
- At the same time, he/she/they consider the cultural skills related mainly to the music therapist's awareness of his/her/their own culture, and through study, knowledge, ability awareness of other cultures.

Introduction

- Ethics refers to the principles of conduct that govern an individual or group (Springer, 2019; Wilhelm, 2020).
- Culture can be defined as certain beliefs, values, worldviews, ideas, artifacts and shared styles (Kim, 2020).

Introduction

- Although these two themes can be discussed separately, there are many connections with the themes of ethics and culture within the context of assessment in music therapy.
- For the music therapist to carry out an assessment practice based on an appropriate ethical conduct, for example, it is important to be sensitive to differences or particularities within a given culture.
- Also, the music therapist needs to conduct assessment in an ethical manner that respects the opinions and thoughts about the identity of a group.

Publications connecting ethical and cultural elements in music therapy

- American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) (2019). Code of ethics. <https://www.musictherapy.org/about/ethics/Australian Music Therapy>
- Association (AMTA) (2014). Code of Ethics including Standards of Practice and Bylaws for Grievance Procedures. <https://www.austmta.org.au/system/files/Code of Ethics 2014.pdf>
- Belgrave, M. & Kim, S. (2020). Music therapy in a multicultural context a handbook for music therapy students and professionals. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Kindle Edition.
- Bolger, L. E., & McFerran, K. S. (2020, February). Current Practices and Considerations for International Development Music Therapy: A World Federation of Music Therapy Scoping Project. In Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy, 20(1).
- European Music Therapy Confederation (EMTC). Ethical codes. <https://www.emtc-eu.com/ethical-code>

Ethical elements for music therapy assessment

- Professional competence,
- Professional relationship in the assessment context,
- Confidentiality (limits access or places restrictions on certain types of information) and privacy (do not use or divulge content-related personal data),
- Limits of confidentiality,
- Data handling,
- Recordings,
- Communication during the assessment process,
- Consent forms,
- Security of stored information and assessment materials,
- Equivalent assessment opportunities (according to the person's possibilities),
- Data interpretation,
- Biases (systematic errors)

Data interpretation

- The assessment process involves interpretation practices where the music therapist makes a judgment about the information collected.
- Interpretation is a sensitive practice that must be carried out with the maximum technical and scientific knowledge.
- The music therapist avoids making misinterpretations that can be associated with personal judgments or a poor interpretation of the data collected (APA, 2003, 2010, 2017; Groth-Marnat & Whrghht, 2016).

Bias

- The bias refers to a systematic error made within a process (Coutinho, 1998).
- The music therapist is not free from bias within his/her assessment practice (Waldon & Gattino, 2018).
- The bias might be connected with difficulties related with cultural issues (cultural judgment or lack of information about an specific culture).
- Biases are a source of maleficence for the person being assessed and, therefore, the music therapist needs to carry out strategies to eliminate or reduce them by deepening the knowledge and practices carried out in the assessment process.

Bias

- Biases are a source of maleficence for the person being assessed.
- Therefore, the music therapist needs to carry out strategies to eliminate or reduce them by deepening the knowledge and practices carried out in the assessment process.

Cultural elements in music therapy assessment

- According to Kim (2020), the role of culture has significant implications for music therapy, as it influences the therapeutic relationship and further affects the entire music therapy process with regard to the assessment, treatment and evaluation of the process.
- The music therapist is immersed in a complex reality where there are different cultures and cultural identities.

Cultural elements in music therapy assessment

- This reality can be explained by multiculturalism.
- The multiculturalism is a social perspective that is committed to recognizing, respecting and promoting the existence of various cultures, such as age, gender, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, affiliations, religions, spiritual practices and disabilities (Gutmann, 2001; Kim, 2020).

Cultural elements in music therapy assessment

- According to Helander & Gattino (2020), societies are becoming increasingly multicultural as a result of immigrants, multiracial and minority groups, and the increasing age gap between generations.
- According to these authors, these multicultural processes end up leading to intersectionality.
- This phenomenon refers to situations where contrasting elements, such as gender, language, class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age and disability, overlap and contribute to increase systemic inequalities and discrimination (Collins & Bilge, 2020).

Cultural elements in music therapy assessment

- In the current postmodern context, there is an understanding of culture especially linked to relativism, the valorization of personal experiences, the search for particular meanings and the questioning of absolute notions (Lopes, 2020).
- According to Shuttleworth (2006) and Kim (2020), one of the main demands of the music therapist within the context of music therapy assessment is to emphasize the study of cultural aspects within the assessment process.

How does the music therapist understand the user's culture and his/her own culture in the context of music therapy assessment?

Cultural issues in the music therapy assessment

- To answer this question, it is necessary to study some specific ethical cultural dimensions and understand them within the assessment process in music therapy.
- The cultural concepts:
 - Culture as a complex and fluid structure
 - Human being as a cultural being
 - Culture as something relative and universal
 - Cultural sensitivity
 - Cultural humility
 - Cultural competence

Culture as a complex structure

- It is not possible to formulate a unique perspective on culture, because it can be understood in many ways (Kim, 2020).
- At the same time, culture is fluid because it is constantly changing.

Culture as a complex structure

- Culture can also be conceptualized on two levels: internal or external.
- Internal culture is related to a personal variable (for example, someone's values, knowledge, religion).
- External culture is related to political and organizational aspects in a social and ecological context, including economic status and climate.

Culture as a complex structure

- Given this complexity and fluidity about the culture, the music therapist as an assessor must consider which element of the culture he/she wants to assess (explicit / implicit or internal / external) especially in the preparation stage.
- In addition, he / she must be aware of this dynamic character of transformation of his / her own culture and that of the client.
- There are cultural microprocesses that change from one session to another can influence the final results of the assessment.

Human being as a cultural being

- The human being is a cultural being who can experience a culture individually, collectively or universally (Kim, 2020).
- Individual culture refers to an individual's cultural identity that results from his or her different interactions in the environment over time.
- The collective culture concerns the collective identity of a certain group within society (gender, religion, nationality, etc.).

Human being as a cultural being

- Universal culture refers to the universal identity that includes themes and aspects common to all human beings.
- Within this perspective, music can be considered an aspect common to all human beings.
- If music is what unites human beings from a universal perspective, the way in which the individual understands music will depend on his individual and collective culture.

Human being as a cultural being

- Before conducting a musical experience in the context of assessment, the music therapist can ask the client on his/her/their musical preferences and / or which songs he/she does not want to hear / play / sing in any way.
- If the client mentions that he/she belongs to a specific religion, the music therapist can ask if there is any song of that religion that he/she would like to hear or sing, for example.

Culture as something relative and / or universal

- Cultural manifestations can be universal (exist in all cultures) or relative (exist only in some specific cultures) (Kim, 2020).
- In all cultures there are festive songs (universal aspect), for example, but this does not mean that the genre, tone, rhythm and tempo of the festive songs are the same in all cultures (relative aspect).

Culture as something relative and / or universal

- It is important to understand that the concept of “universal” and “relative” depends on the belief and experiences of both the music therapist and the client.
- In a case attended by the present author, a child reported that he knew only the two songs in his entire life, as these songs were the ones that the user listened to on his father's radio tape player.

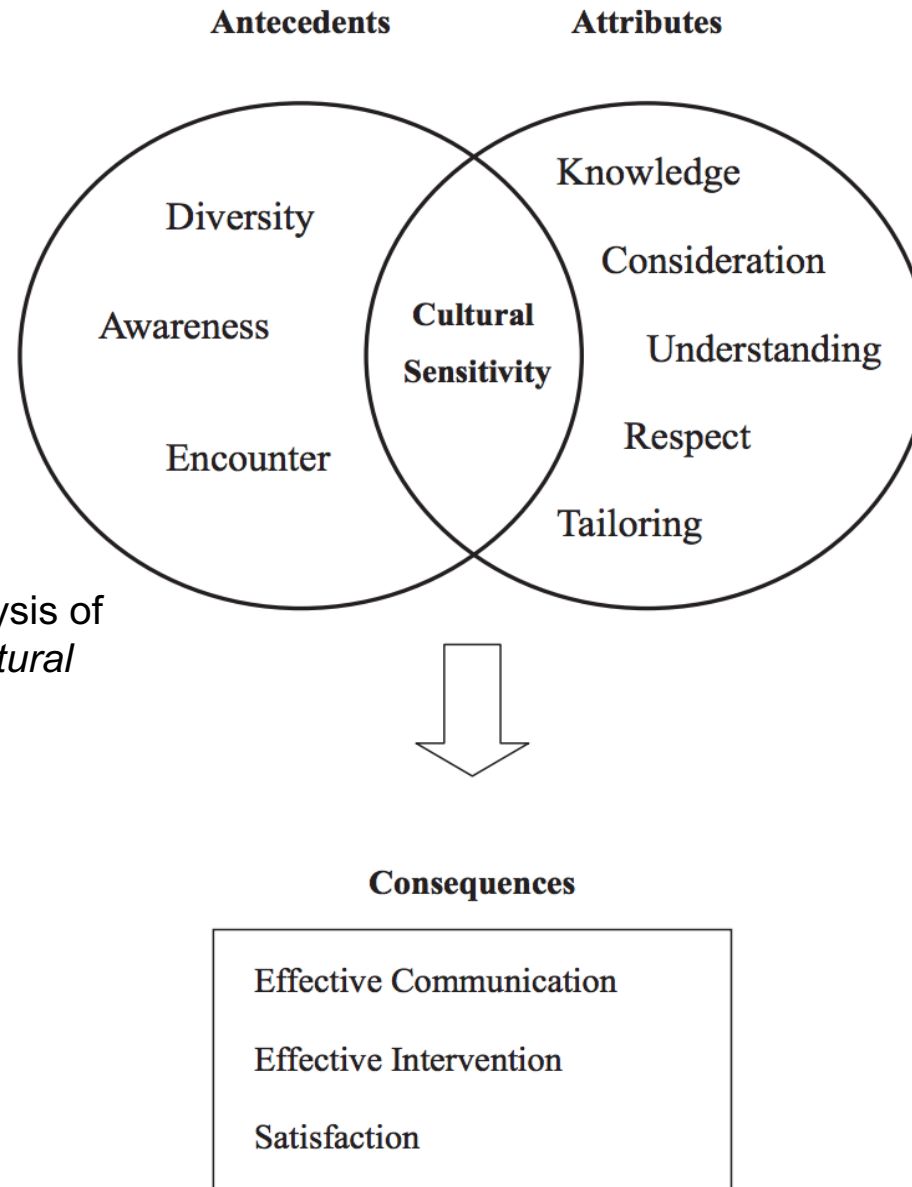
Culture as something relative and / or universal

- In this sense, these two songs represented the user's musical-cultural universe.
- For this reason, the music therapist as an assessor must make careful judgments about the relative or universal character of the user's cultural understandings within the context of assessment.
- The music therapist must constantly question his/her universal notions about culture that can be abandoned based on new information or experience.

Cultural sensitivity

- Cultural sensitivity can be associated with the music therapist's concept of cultural self-awareness, which the music therapist refers to understands his/her own culture and reflects on it (Kim, 2020).
- Cultural sensitivity is employing one's knowledge, consideration, understanding, respect, and tailoring after realizing awareness of self and others and encountering a diverse group or individual (Foronda, 2008).
- Cultural sensitivity results in effective communications, effective interventions, and satisfaction.

Concept Analysis of Cultural Sensitivity.



Foronda, C. L. (2008). A concept analysis of cultural sensitivity. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, 19(3), 207-212.

Cultural humility

- It is oriented towards others that seeks to develop mutual partnerships that address power imbalances with interpersonal respect.
- Cultural humility also refers to a lifelong commitment to openness to new cultural information, critical self-examination of cultural awareness and motivation to learn from others (Foranda et al., 2016; Upshaw, Lewis & Nelson, 2019).
- Cultural humility is fundamental for the assessment process in music therapy to be an inviting space for multiple interactions and learning and to help balance the power relations developed in this space.

Cultural competence

- It involves an understanding and an adequate response to the unique combination of cultural variables.
- Also it involves the full range of dimensions of diversity that the professional (the music therapist) and the user bring to the interactions (Fisher-Borne, Cain, & Martin, 2015).

Cultural competence

- According to Sue & Sue (2012), cultural competence is formed by :
 - therapist's cultural self-awareness,
 - therapist's knowledge and understanding of the assessed person's culture (in a technical and empathic way),
 - therapeutic skills to deal with different cultural contexts .

Cultural competence

- In summary, an music therapist assessor should structure his/her/their practices in all stages of the assessment process in cultural competencies that consider not only knowledge about his/her culture and the client's culture, but that include specific skills to culturally interact, intervene, analyze, interpret , conclude and communicate assessment results.

References

- American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) (2019). Code of ethics. <https://www.musictherapy.org/about/ethics/>
- American Psychological Association (APA). (2003, 2010, 2017). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct, including 2010 & 2017 Amendments. <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code>Australian Music Therapy Association (AMTA) (2014). Code of Ethics including Standards of Practice and Bylaws for Grievance Procedures. [https://www.austmta.org.au/system/files/Code of Ethics 2014.pdf](https://www.austmta.org.au/system/files/Code%20of%20Ethics%202014.pdf)
- Bates, D. (2015). Ethics in music therapy. In B. L. Wheeler (Ed.), Music therapy handbook (pp.64-75). Guilford Publications.Belgrave, M. & Kim, S. (2020). Music therapy in a multicultural context a handbook for music therapy students and professionals. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Kindle Edition.
- Bolger, L. E., & McFerran, K. S. (2020, February). Current Practices and Considerations for International Development Music Therapy: A World Federation of Music Therapy Scoping Project. In Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy, 20(1).Collins, P. H., & Bilge, S. (2020). Intersectionality. John Wiley & Sons.
- Coutinho, M. (1998). Princípios de epidemiologia clínica aplicada a cardiologia. Arquivos brasileiros de cardiologia, 71(2), 109-116. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0066-782X1998000800003>
- European Music Therapy Confederation (EMTC). Ethical codes. <https://www.emtc-eu.com/ethical-code>
- Fisher-Borne, M., Cain, J. M., & Martin, S. L. (2015). From mastery to accountability: Cultural humility as an alternative to cultural competence. Social Work Education, 34(2), 165-181. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2014.977244>
- Foronda, C. L. (2008). A concept analysis of cultural sensitivity. Journal of Transcultural Nursing, 19(3), 207-212
- .Foronda, C., Baptiste, D. L., Reinholdt, M. M., & Ousman, K. (2016). Cultural humility: A concept analysis. Journal of Transcultural Nursing, 27(3), 210-217. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1043659615592677>
- Gattino, G. (2020). Aspectos éticos e culturais da avaliação em musicoterapia. In Fundamentos de avaliação em musicoterapia [Ethical and cultural issues in music therapy. In Essentials of Music Therapy Assessment]. Forma & Conteúdo Comunicação Integrada.
- Groth-Marnat, G., & Wright, A. J. (2016). Handbook of Psychological Assessment (6th Ed.). Wiley.Gutmann, A. (2001). Multiculturalism and Identity Politics: Cultural Concerns. In N. J. Smelser, & P. B. Baltes (Eds), International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences (pp. 10175-10179). Pergamon.
- Helander, S. & Gattino, G. (2020). How are multicultural considerations playing a role in music therapy practice? A Nordic music therapist's experiences from working in a paediatric hospital setting in Peru. In L.O.Bonde & K. Johansson (Eds.), Music in paediatric hospitals - Nordic perspectives (pp. 45-80). NMH Publications.
- Kim, S.A. (2020). Music as an Acculturation Strategy in Culturally Informed Music Therapy. In M. Belgrave, & S. Kim (Eds.), Music therapy in a multicultural context a handbook for music therapy students and professionals. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Kim, S. & Elefant, C. (2016). Epistemological foundations of objectivist and interpretivist research. In Wheeler, B. & Murphy, K. .Music therapy research. Gislum: Barcelona Publishers.Lopes, V. R. (2020). A cultura pós-moderna e suas repercussões para o projeto ético-político do serviço social: elementos para o debate. Revista INTERFACE-UFRN/CCSA,v 17(1), 87-106.Ridder, H. M., McDermott, O., & Orrell, M. (2017). Translation and adaptation procedures for music therapy outcome instruments. Nordic Journal of Music Therapy, 26(1), 62-78.
- Shuttleworth, S. (2006). Viewing music therapy assessment from a feminist therapy lens. In S. Hadley (Ed.), Feminist perspectives in music therapy (pp. 429-450).Springer, M. L. (2019). Project and program management: A competency-based approach. Purdue University Press.
- Sue, D. W., & Sue, D. (2013). Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice (6th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Upshaw, N. C., Lewis Jr, D. E., & Nelson, A. L. (2019). Cultural humility in action: Reflective and process-oriented supervision with Black trainees. Training and Education in Professional Psychology.
- Waldon, E., & Gattino, G. (2018). Assessment in Music Therapy: Introductory Considerations. In Music Therapy Assessment: Theory, Research, and Application (pp. 19-41). Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Wilhelm, K. (2020). Ethical Considerations in Music Therapy Private Practice: A Review of the Literature. Music Therapy Perspectives, 38(1), 25-33. <https://doi.org/10.1093/mtp/miz028>



Thank you!

gattino@hum.aau.dk