

MUSIC THERAPY AND PAIN MANAGEMENT: A MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE*

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A multicultural approach in studying the influence of music on man's perception of pain is presented. Reference is made to contemporary research in psychoneuroimmunology, pharmacology, anaesthesiology, neuropsychology, aesthetics of music and other disciplines, with regard to discovery of the ISO-principle, very important in the process of diagnostics and treatment, and in various fields of creative therapy. Reference is also made to the Gate Control Theory of Pain, and the importance of an interdisciplinary approach in development of various methods of therapy interventions is presented.

Keywords: music, pain management, multicultural perspective, creativity, therapy, interdisciplinarity

Music Therapy and Pain Management: A Multicultural Perspective

There is a growing interest in the area of music therapy and pain management, with a proliferation of new approaches and research in this important topic. This is an area of really profound importance in music therapy because it directly addresses the most basic need of the lessening of human suffering. In the research, music is often referred to as an audioanalgesic music used for the purpose of pain reduction.

However, I think we need to keep in mind that pain itself is a very complex phenomenon that is influenced by a variety of factors, many of which are not at all correlated with the objective degree of physical trauma. Personal attitudes towards coping with pain may be connected to the totality of a person's life history, cultural values and previous experiences with pain that can increase anxiety and the apprehension of pain, and other related issues. With any group of patients experiencing similar physical trauma, each individual

will have a different experience of pain, and all influenced by various psychological and physiological factors that, in practice, are all inseparably related. In music therapy and pain management, it's really difficult to draw the lines between culture, psychology, neurology and the level of confidence inspired by the music maker. Research indicates that tension will increase the perception of pain, while a state of relaxation can reduce the experience. Therefore, a large portion of the pain-related music therapy research, in different ways, looks at the potential of music to both induce and support this state of relaxation. This phenomenon, in which music stimuli can serve to reduce stress and subjective pain, is one that seems to transcend cultural boundaries. Although the principal approach to pain management has been pharmacological, the recognition of pain as a multidimensional phenomenon has led to a growing interest in non-pharmacological approaches. These methods, which include music therapy, are not intended as substitutes for pharmacological treatment but rather as comple-

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