Towards Music therapy as an integrated part of Norwegian Child welfare service

– How do social workers understand music therapy for adolescents living under care of child welfare?

Viggo Krüger
Gamut, Grieg Academy, University of Bergen
Research project:

Towards independent living in a community: a qualitative study of music therapy practice in child welfare

- Information, dissemination and implementation of music therapy in child welfare
Challenges in child welfare
The challenges in child welfare seem to grow in number and complexity, both seen from a global and a local perspective.

Particularly, there are severe difficulties linked to the use of child welfare institutions (Backe-Hansen & Bakketeig, 2008).

In Norway, Clausen and Kristofersen (2008) have shown that individuals who have lived in an institution have a worse life condition than those living in foster care or at home with biological parents.

The situation of adolescents under welfare care is in many ways at odds with the rights and values of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (United Nation, 2009).

According to the CRC, children and adolescents have several rights, including rights concerning participation.

Participation include the right to take part in everyday activities as well as the right to be heard concerning important decisions.
We have previously studied how music therapy may be used as an approach within child welfare (Krüger, et. al. 2014; Krüger & Stige 2015).

Findings show that music therapy can be an important resource in the way children and adolescents organize and make meanings in everyday life situations.

Music is an important part of the way young people process thoughts, feelings, and experiences of social participation.

Moreover, music therapy gives opportunities to establish meeting places where young people experience that their skills and knowledge can be used in the communities of practice, such as school or work.

Human rights perspective/Child convention – Participation
Music workshop

**Planning Phase.** This phase is about identifying individual needs the quest for practical solutions.

**Preparation Phase.** Preparation phase is about getting to know the adolescents. The phase includes activities such as "get acquainted activities", “presentation rounds” and "low threshold music café” or tours.

**Working phase.** During this phase, active efforts are done in order to meet the needs discovered in the previously phase. The phase includes activities such as music rehearsal, songwriting, recording and performance.
Music workshop

**Realisation phase.** This phase is about to turn our eyes towards the environment, the local community and the society at large. The phase has to do with facilitating performance of songs, texts or recordings. The phase depends on an active audience that may provide feedback on what is written, rehearsed or recorded.

**The evaluation phase.** Central to the evaluation phase is feedback from the audience and the participants themselves as a basis to adjust and adapt to new practices. It is crucial that the young people's voices are heard in terms of changing practice.
در اینجا ما هر چیزی را که می‌خواهیم خلق کنیم، نتایج آنها را بتوانیم داشته باشیم.

در حال حاضر، هر چیزی که می‌خواهیم برای جمع‌آوری ما را به دست آوریم، هزینه‌ای برای ما ندارد.

این این است که ما هر چیزی را که می‌خواهیم برای جمع‌آوری ما را به دست آوریم، هزینه‌ای برای ما ندارد.
Traveling alone, many bad days
My mind keeps wandering, my head keep spinning
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I travel many miles through foreign countries
I can’t stand still, I am split in two
My head explodes and my thoughts are torn

Everything is going bad, now I have to pass
Left my mum and dad, and every friend that I had
I miss them like hell, can I please come back?

Not so lucky in life, can I choose again?
Traveling alone, many bad days
My mind keeps wandering, my head keep spinning
Background of the study

Music therapy is not an integrated part of Norwegian child welfare system

A team of music therapists has developed practices in private and public child welfare institutions in and around Bergen

The practices developed include music therapy for children and adolescents living in foster care, in institutions

Aftercare

A relatively large number of social workers are included in the practice of implementation and evaluating music therapy

How do they experience the value of music therapy and how can practice be improved?
Background – method

The population is adult social workers in the age 30-55.

The social workers have their background from three different child welfare institutions, both private and public.

All of the social workers have roles as ”ledende miljøterapeut” or ”avdelingsleder”.

Our main idea is to give social workers the chance to enhance our understanding of what music therapy can be, as seen from their perspective.

In doing so we hope that music therapy can be developed in a broader sense (develop practice and make ground for research)

Our aim with the study is to learn from the social workers in order to facilitate future implementation of music therapy as an integrated part of Norwegian child welfare.
We propose the following main research question

How do social workers describe the significance of music therapy practice in context of child welfare and how can we use their knowledge in order to facilitate future implementation of music therapy as an integrated part of Norwegian child welfare?
Data analysing procedure

Data is still in the analyzing phase.

We are analyzing the data using a hermeneutic approach.

Data selection is not conducted with the aim of focusing on all possible aspects of the material, but on those aspects that are particularly relevant for the emerging theoretical discussion.

The hermeneutic perspective entails an abductive approach, considering possible theoretical explanations for the data, forming hypotheses for each possible explanation, checking them empirically by examining the data and pursuing the most plausible explanation.

We have followed five steps in analyzing the data (still in process).
Step 1. Transcription of data. All interviews are transcribed. Two music therapy students has helped us doing this. We have transcribed 314 pages from Mp3 files.

Step 2: Organizing the data. During the process of analysis, we used a strategy of constructing codes. We made codes that helped us to group the statements into themes. The 314 pages were analysed in order to find meaning patterns and links between the different stories.

Step 3: Finding and Organizing Ideas and Concepts. The next step is to find ideas and concepts. By looking after patterns and links in the data material we have tried to make coherences and plots. We also looked at what stood out as unexpected or distinct stories, for example, situations where the social workers described how music therapy did not work.

Step 4: Building links between data material and theory. The fourth step is to link the empirical data to theoretical discussions. This choice is again related to the research question. During this step we want to use tendencies in the empirical material in order to develop critical and reflective dialogue with the literature in contemporary child welfare, music therapy, other relevant disciplines.

Step 5: Finding Possible and Plausible Explanations of the Findings Summary of findings and links to existing (or missing) research literature

Ethical consideration All participants signed an informed consent form. The project was approved by NSD (Norwegian Social Science Data Services).
Overview of preliminary themes

Analysis section 1 (excerpts)

a) Descriptions of how music is used in the institution regardless of music therapy

b) Descriptions of how music therapy has worked for the adolescents

c) Descriptions of how music therapy is facilitated and hindered by institutional structures

d) Descriptions of how music therapy should be developed in the future
a) Descriptions of how music is used in the institution regardless of music therapy

**Beate:** *The music is very important for the adolescents.*

The young people are very fond of music! They are playing all sorts of music, also the type of music I like. We are trying to influence them slightly. For example we don’t want them to play their music too loud. Lately there has been several adolescents who play musical instruments. Some are singing or writing lyrics. Some of them use their computer and create tunes. I do not know what it's called, “Beats”? So the music is actually very important for the youngsters.
a) Descriptions of how music is used in the institution regardless of music therapy

**Lars:** *When they use music, it is a sign that they relax and have a good time!*  
When they use music, it may be a sign that they enjoy their stay here, I think. They play music and sing. They have lots of good feelings associated with the music, I think. But at times they may well play music with such a mood that it makes them perhaps a little sad, I think, too. I think that they use music in order to express their feelings, either good or bad.
b) Descriptions of how music therapy has worked for the adolescents

**Vidar:** *Music therapy can facilitate individual factors for the adolescent*

Adults in general often have an understanding of reality that is “true”. Children living under care of the welfare system is “like that” or “like that”. We have a lot of preconceived understandings. They way music therapy works is that the adolescents are facilitated with a voice in order to express themselves. They can create an alternative identity as someone important to listen to, as someone positive and resourceful.
b) Descriptions of how music therapy has worked for the adolescents

**Nina:** *Music therapy can facilitate contact with positive peer environment*
We have trouble putting our youth in contact with other young people in a positive way. Participation in music therapy affords neutral ground. They meet not to get high or to escape. They meet to play music and dance. It is fine for them. They can make contacts within a healthy environment.

**Birthe:** *They can gain social competence and skills, and they can recognize themselves in others' stories*
It is important for them to meet someone who are in the same situation as them self. Their own problems become understandable for themselves and others. Most of them don’t believe in themselves or have little faith in the situation that they have become stuck in. They need to build self-esteem and trust they way they can do. They need to gain trust in themselves that they can that master the situation in company with others. It is true, they need to feel that they are a part of a group and that they can contribute to a group. The way music therapy works, is to build a structure for doing this.
b) Descriptions of how music therapy has worked for the adolescents

**Frode:** *The young people can use music therapy to communicate needs for personal support*

Tomorrow we have a staff meeting for all employees at (name of institution), where she (the adolescent) and the music therapist will participate. She will sing, and we will listen to some of her lyrics. Music therapy facilitate to reveal a story and to perform a story, for example in a meeting. The way the girl can perform her meanings is important for her.
c) Descriptions of how music therapy is facilitated and hindered by institutional structures

**Frode:** There are financial constraints that restrict the use of music therapy

Economy may well be an obstacle to the development of music therapy. Here at (name of institution) we have taken it as a part of our practice as a whole. When we sell services to child welfare services, we include music therapy as a part of our package. I think if we had done the other way, that music therapy was an additional thing that one has to pay for, there would be problems of funding it.

**Birthe:** We are always talking resources.

Music therapy is an extra cost yes, its true. Compared to other activities, we need to hire rehearsal rooms and also have access to instruments. It’s a cost, its true.

**Nina:** Joint venture?

They should see that this is so important that they become willing to pay in addition to residential care. Institutions should’nt hold the bill alone, we should go in with a joint venture.
d) Descriptions of how music therapy should be developed in the future

**Gunnar:** *You need involved “key personnel” in order to continue*
We need the ambassadors that can advocate MT. Ambassadors are the people who have a connection to the music itself. These are the people who realize that this can cause something good. They have often played in a band themselves or had a professional relationship to music..

**Nina:** *There is a need for contact with one key figure.*
You need for a passionate contact person who can “sell” the idea to the officers in the child welfare system. These persons can tell a little bit about the project and why it is important for the adolescents to join. If we can convey what music therapy do with the youth, I think it is easier to get money and build structures for practice.
d) Descriptions of how music therapy should be developed in the future

**Frode:** *It is important to convey music therapy to scholar and politicians*

Music can create a spark in youngsters. I think it is important to promote, outwardly that music therapy works. Scholars and politicians need to know that music therapy is a good initiative and that young people may need such practices where that can be heard and recognized. Or that they can make use of in any other way.
Analysis section 2

• Music therapy can contribute to child welfare practices - participation
• Music therapists need more insight into child welfare knowledge – “knowhow”
• Music Therapists need to be a part of a working team – actor, institution, system
• There are institutional limitations to the use of music therapy – music therapy identity
• It is important to convey music therapy to scholars and politicians - communication
• In the continuing we need to find ways to work with information, communication, dissemination, implementation and evaluation of music therapy in child welfare

• How, when, with whom, where?
Analysis section 3 – (very preliminary)

Possible and Plausible Explanations of the Findings

• Music Therapy as an arena for upbringing of children and adolescents in the transition between residential care and independent life

• Many good ideas and intentions, but still many steps have to be taken towards music therapy as an integrated approach in context of Norwegian Child welfare

• More research and more practice is needed…

