



13th European Music Therapy Conference 2025



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

23rd to 27th July, 2025



13th European Music Therapy Conference 2025

A joint conference of German Music Therapy Society, Hamburg
University of Music and Drama and MSH Medical School
Hamburg on behalf of the EMTC

The topic of this year's conference is "Bridges"

With the motto we strive to bring contrasting viewpoints into dialogue, diverse interests into discussion and neighbouring disciplines into interaction. Therefore, we invite students, researchers and practitioners from different music therapy perspectives and from other disciplines to engage with each other in a lively and inspiring exchange.

- **Music itself flows and "bridges"**

Music is a medium that connects, establishes contact, mediates differences, allows encounter, or bonds separate entities. Bridges also play a role in many genres of popular music: As such, the bridge might represent its own aesthetic structure and bring an exciting contrast into the music.

- **In music therapy we use music in many ways**

Music serves as a bridge to the inner world of feelings and memories, as a bridge to non-verbal clients with disorders of consciousness or intellect, or as a bridge to overcome cultural boundaries.

- **The Hamburgers are excellent bridge builders**

With its huge harbour, Hamburg is widely known as the gateway to the world. And with its three rivers Elbe, Bille and Alster and their tributaries and canals, the city has around 2.500 bridges – more than Amsterdam and Venice together!

This abstract volume offers you an insight into the essence of this 13th European Music Therapy Conference.

Your EMTC2025 organising team



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[579] Attachment-based music therapy in a triadic setting: a qualitative exploration of interventions and techniques

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Introduction: Over the last decade, an increasing number of music therapists have begun working in various family settings. Especially in the field of early childhood work, caregivers’ active involvement in the therapeutic process is often beneficial in initiating changes within the family system. Central to this way of working is offering a safe and playful atmosphere in the music therapy sessions coupled with reflection on these experiences in regular counselling sessions with the adult carers. This presentation focuses on a specific attachment-based music therapy approach that engages the infant and caregiver in a triadic music therapy setting.

Methods: This qualitative study focuses on identifying and describing specific music therapy interventions and techniques used in this particular way of working. To this end, a variety of data sources were subjected to content analysis, including expert interviews, case vignettes, and video material of individual therapeutic interventions with families.

Results: The results offer a comprehensive overview and detailed descriptions of various music therapy interventions and techniques employed within an attachment-based music therapy process in a triadic setting. Findings indicate that music has an important bridging function in this context, enabling simultaneous contact with both the child and the adult caregiver, thereby supporting and regulating their relationship.

Conclusion: Working with families in music therapy can be complex and challenging, so it’s essential to understand the relevant characteristics and requirements to provide effective therapy. In addition to their practical relevance, these results can inform the development of educational materials and further research projects.

[99] Evaluation of a primary prevention program for girls

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In puberty, the self-worth of girls decreases, while the self-worth of boys stabilizes. Positive self-worth is a main factor in mental health. This study wanted to prove if a six-session program for girls aged 10 to 11 can provide mental health by strengthening self-worth.

The project is based on considerations of the self from a perspective of developmental psychology, attachment theory, and neuropsychotherapy. A pedagogical model was used to describe the challenges of adolescence.

During the project, the therapists used a self-worth-strengthening feedback method (Self) after music improvisation. They were trained to conduct the projects, collect data, and apply the feedback method Self.

In a mixed methods design data was collected on n=58 girls in a treatment and control group. A standard-

ized questionnaire (Schauder, 2011) measured the self-worth of these girls. A second one was used to collect information about neuroticism and extraversion (Buggle & Baumgärtel, 2000). Proceedings of the projects and interviews with some girls were collected.

The findings showed that extremely low and extremely high values of self-worth were reduced and standard values of self-worth increased. The results also showed that the project should last longer than six sessions.

[135] Therapeutic change in the music therapy processes of working-age people with depression-related disorders - A mixed methods study

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Music therapy is proven to be an effective treatment for depression. It has been indicated to decrease client’s levels of depression, anxiety and enhance functioning (Erkkilä et al., 2011). Broader research is still needed as well as recognising the factors explaining therapeutic change. The purpose of this study (ISRCTN, 2024) is to deepen the understanding of therapeutic change and underlying mechanisms that affect one’s wellbeing and functioning.

The data will be collected as a part of an RCT-study (n=200) at the Centre of Excellence in Music, Mind, Body and Brain in the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Target group is working-age people with depression related disorders. Participants will receive a six-week music therapy intervention (12 sessions). The mixed-methods data will consist of audio and video recordings of these sessions and reflective discussions, session-based questionnaires for both clients and therapists and outcome measurement scores (pre, post and follow-up).

This versatile data set will offer a multidimensional and rich view to the phenomenon of therapeutic change in the field of music therapy. This presentation will give an idea of how we are implementing the study and offer some preliminary results. Presentation will be illustrated with authentic case material.

References:

Erkkilä, J., Punkanen, M., Fachner, J., Ala-Ruona, E., Pöntiö, I., Tervaniemi, M., Vanhala, M. & Gold, C. (2011). Individual music therapy for depression: randomised controlled trial. The British Journal of Psychiatry 199, 132–139.

Ala-Ruona, E. (2024). Integrative music therapy for depression-related disorders. ISRCTN registry, BioMed Central. <https://doi.org/10.1186/ISRCTN26812986>