



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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Content and aims: Potentials of a music-based framework for structured diagnostic behavior observation will be presented. Challenges in the role change between a music therapist and an investigator assessing the client’s behavior will be focused. Workshop participants will get an insight into using music-based settings for diagnostic observations and will be sensitized for ASD-symptomatology in this context.

Methods and activities: Practical exercises and role-plays will be used to demonstrate interactional tasks and applied prompts aiming to prompt diagnostically relevant behaviors. Videotaped MUSAD-sessions will be scored using the MUSAD-Short rating scale to introduce the coding procedure. Case examples from participants are welcome to discuss the poles between therapy and diagnostics.

Tergeist, M., Ziegler, M., Heinrich, M., Sappok, T., & Bergmann, T. (2022). MUSAD-Short – A music-based screening tool to assess autism spectrum disorder in people with intellectual disability. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 95, 101971. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2022.101971>

[402] Bridging Rhythm, Voice, and Body: A Mindful Approach to Music Therapy

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This workshop presentation explores the concept of „bridges“ in music therapy by integrating voice and body percussion, emphasizing mindfulness and play. Drawing from the presenter’s established „Mindful Drumming” method, the session aims to create connections between rhythm, voice, body, and melody. Participants will engage in experiential activities that combine body percussion and rhythmical singing, fostering presence, connection, and energy awakening.

This 90-minute workshop builds upon a decade of development in mindful drumming and body percussion practices, applied in various educational and therapeutic settings. By focusing on the body’s innate rhythms and promoting mindful awareness, this approach serves as a bridge to enhance self-connection, interpersonal communication, and present-moment experience.

The session will be predominantly practical, with minimal theoretical introduction. Attendees will:

1. Explore the body’s innate rhythms through guided exercises.
2. Practice transforming syllables and simple words into rhythmic patterns.
3. Experience the interplay between verbal and non-verbal expression, between rhythm and melody.

These hands-on activities demonstrate how music therapy can build bridges between different modalities of expression, between individuals, and between conscious and subconscious realms of experience. Participants will gain practical tools applicable to diverse therapy contexts. By the end of the workshop, attendees will have a toolkit of experiential techniques to immediately implement in their practice, fostering deeper connections across various client demographics and needs.

[312] REFLEaCT. Bridging theory, research and practice for anti-discriminatory music therapy

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Introduction: In this workshop, we invite music therapists to build connections between and within the theory, research and practice of an anti-discriminatory stance in their professional practice.

Methods: Starting with a brief overview of existing literature, we will then shortly present our research project [name blinded for peer review], in which we combined three different perspectives (music therapy, performing arts, psychosocial sector) as well as several data generation methods (survey, qualitative interviews, focus groups) in order to address the influences of societal conditions on mental health and implications for the clinical practice of music therapy. Based on our findings, we will then introduce considerations on the challenges and potentials of music therapy in the context of social inequalities and marginalisation. Thereafter, we will get creative together by analysing collected case studies and “tricky moments” in small groups and discussing options for action.

Aim: The aim is to heighten awareness of the relevance of societal dimensions in music therapy practice and open up new perspectives on tackling topics like marginalisation and social justice in music therapy.

References:

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Belgrave, M., & Kim, S.-A. (Eds.). (2021). *Music therapy in a multicultural context: A handbook for music therapy students and professionals*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Thompson, N. (2021). *Anti-discriminatory practice: Equality, diversity and social justice* (7th ed.). Red Globe Press.

Whitehead-Pleaux, A., & Tan, X. (Eds.). (2017). *Cultural intersections in music therapy: Music, health, and the person*. Barcelona Publishers.

[153] Welcome!?

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Starting a group music therapy session involves bridging two realities, connected through a moment of meeting. How do music therapists do that, over and over again? What works? What is helpful and what is not? What is the role of the music therapist and his/her/their need or preference? What can music do? In this workshop we explore different ways of starting a session. Via roleplay the group will experience a wide spectrum of approaching the start of a session. What building blocks, such as influence of setting, space, expectation, music, breath, (un)predictability, level of energy, personal preferences, ... initiate the bridging?