

Music Therapy in Mental Disorder (Practical Example)

Akira Hayakawa, Occupational Therapist

Keywords: Singing, Arrangement of music, Group-Occupational Therapy

Introduction

Music therapy, that uses sound and music for the purpose of treatment and help, may vary widely with the relationship between patient and therapist and the circumstances surrounding the clinical situation. The circumstances surrounding patients are the nature of, and medical condition of the disorders and age, from infant or child to adult or the aged.

The circumstances surrounding therapists are his/her capability regarding clinical work, such as the ability to evaluate a patient, the ability to use sound and music suitable for the patient, the ability to understand the interaction with the patient and so on. Furthermore, therapeutic procedures vary depending on the musical instruments used, individual therapy or group therapy, in hospital or outpatient clinic and environmental factors such as the place of therapeutic practice.

In this paper, the author presents some examples of music therapy practices in the field of mental disorder and suggests attention to the fact that the author is a practitioner of occupational therapy who uses music (mainly singing) for therapy. The author feels that sound and music have a specific effect during occupational therapy, but the author has only received a general education regarding music. The following is an example that the author has carried out as an occupational therapist, chosen from various styles such as those mentioned above.

Introduction of Examples from Practice

Table 1 shows the list of occupational therapy using music that the author employed during 20 years of clinical experience. I will describe the outline of objects and meaning of the practice in mental disorder by selecting two cases, one during my first seven years in clinical work as an occupational therapist (singing, shown in 1 of Table 1), and the other that started after 10 years of experience and is continuing today (singing, conversation and having tea together, shown in 6 of Table 1).

1. Group Singing (shown in 1 of Table 1)

(1) Structure

This is a group singing activity with 15 to 20 participants. The participants take their positions facing towards a white-board on which the lyrics are written. The leader and an accompanist then take their positions on either side of the board. The several songs chosen by the participants and the others are combined into 12-13 songs and sung in a group, including all members, in a session of 90 minutes. Often, short talks, simple exercises, games and solo singing are inserted between songs.

(2) Objects/Meanings

The object and meaning of such activity seems to me to be based on the expression and release of emotion buried deep inside of the participants, through singing and movement of the body. Such an object and meaning are not recognized prior to the activity but are gradually built during continued practice.

Activity	Content of activity	Participants	Location	Style / Group / Size
1. Singing	Lyrics on screen / Selection of music by staff / Participant selects music / Accompanied by guitar / Singing together / Short conversation	General disorder / Home-stay	Psychiatric DC	Lecture / Semi-closed / Group of 15 - 20 persons
2. Ensemble	Adapted commercial scores / Altered according to participants / Guitar, recorder, percussion / Practice of parts & ensemble	General disorder Home-stay	Psychiatric DC	Circle / Closed group of less than 10
3. Singing and playing games	Lyrics on screen / Selection of music by staff / Selection of games by staff / Accompanied by karaoke-tape / Singing together, games	General disorder / Psychosis / MR etc	In closed ward	Lecture / Open group of about 30 persons
4. Singing and exercise	Lyrics on screen / Selection of music by staff / Accompanied by karaoke-tape / Shake-hands while calling names / Singing together, exercise	Old person with dementia	In closed ward	Lecture / Open group of about 20 persons
5. Singing and exercise	Lyrics on screen / Selection of music by staff / Accompanied by piano / Singing and exercise together / Short conversation	General disorder / Psychosis / Old person with dementia / MR etc	Hall in ward	Lecture / Open group of about 30 persons
6. Singing, conversation and tea	Individual lyric file / Selection of music by participant / Accompanied by omni-code / Singing together / Conversation and tea	General disorder / MR etc	Occupation therapy room	Circle / Closed group of about 10 persons
7. Ensemble, solo-singing and conversation	Commercial scores / Guitar and solo-singing / Accompanied by flute / Practice of parts and ensemble / Conversation at intermission	Psychosis	Occupation therapy room	Individual / Closed

Table 1. Structure of Occupational Therapy Using the Music Experienced catharsis

Namely, the deeply buried individual emotion responds and interacts with the environmental atmosphere, such as calmness, softness, sadness, joyfulness and cheerfulness, and meld with each other, causing a catharsis. It is very important to make the right choice of music and arrange it within each group session to induce the expression, release and catharsis of emotion in each participant.

(3) Idea and Performance

As mentioned above, the most important idea is how to arrange the music titles and the choice of music. We thought that the start should include a few titles to warm up the voice and the establishment of a time and space, which are different from ordinary daily life in order to induce the full expression of internal feeling and

in a group. Several of the following titles may be important for the full expression of individual feelings while the entire group unites and it is

- ① introduction (2~3 musics)
 - warming up for vocal
 - setting for time and space, with some difference from daily habit
 - meaning for start of travel.
- ② towards the past internal world (4~5 musics)
 - music with retrospection
 - hardness, sadness, bitterness etc.
 - expression of feeling, exhalation, katharsis
- ③ towards the future • outsid world (3~4 musics)
 - hope and euphoria from 2
 - eatharsis
- ④ ending (1~2 musics)
 - towards real world.
 - end of time and space, with some difference from daily habit.
 - being calm.

Fig 1 Meaning of arranged music in sessions

important that every participant sing individually but in harmony together with the group. This is followed by several titles directed towards the future and external world and another several leading to the ending of this program to settle the group down (see Figure 1).

We have paid attention to the arrangement of seats and conversation among therapists. Seats are arranged in a circle as much as possible to facilitate sight between the leader, accompanist and participants. In terms of conversation among the participants, we tried to create a contrast of atmosphere from silence to quietness and lively conversation, while giving attention to those who appeared withdrawn from the group.

2. Singing Activity in a Small Group (Tables 1-6. Singing/Conversation and tea).

(1) Structure

The number of participants is less than ten and singing is held in a closed group.

Participants and therapist take position around an almost circular table. After every member is in position, they chat to each other about their condition while having tea. Then, individualized files containing music lyrics are distributed to each one to choose the songs they like and they sing together. Between songs they talk about daily events and about music. They also try to get to know each other. The therapist carries out an accompaniment, as he or she feels is necessary.

(2) Objective / Meaning

At the beginning of this activity, the objective is to provide time and a secure space for the participants who have difficulty relaxing in a group outside of their own hospital room, even though they can maintain personal communication. As the activity continues, the conversation within the group increases little by little and the action of trying to talk to the others also increases.

The ratio of singing and conversation may

vary depending on the members of the group and its situation, while the purpose is to induce communication between the participants.

(3) Ideas and Performance

It is easy for the participants who have difficulty in using linguistic communication to sing familiar songs and to be able to stay with people if they can sing, even though they cannot talk. This is the unique nature of this group and as time passes, communication gradually becomes possible.

New participants who cannot talk under tension can, if they like singing spend their time looking at their individual lyrics while others are talking to each other. The availability of individual lyrics and the act of singing provide one kind of escape and helps participants to stay at their place even when they show communication difficulty.

The lyrics were compiled giving consideration to their balance based on the participants assumed preference of season, time and genre. The lyrics in the files were numbered with seals to help the participants, who may have difficulty reading and to make it easier to turn the pages and request the music.

Conclusion

Two different methods in occupational practice using music (singing) in clinical experience were introduced. In clinical work using sound and music, the ratio and weight to conversation may differ according to the individual, but the importance and necessity of language has been felt through our practical experience.