



Lifelong
Learning
Programme



MUSic, performing and creative Arts professions involved in healthcare:

a portal for VET promotion and mutual recognition of profiles

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" Focus on music therapist professional profile"

ITALY

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Music therapist professional (PMT) profile in Italy

In his book *Defining Music Therapy* (1998), Kenneth Bruscia defines music therapy as “a systematic process of intervention wherein the therapist helps the client to promote health, using music experiences and the relationships that develop through them as dynamic forces of changes.”

In the definition two central elements of music therapy are present: the musical experience and the relationship between the patient and the therapist. In his or her work with the patients, the music therapist uses these two elements (music and relationship) in a strictly related way: music as a mean for creating a relationship and in the meantime the relationship as the place where the music gets a therapeutic potential.

The music therapist uses sound and music, vocal and instrumental improvisation and observes the musical language of the patient, creating an expressive situation to ease the change.

The training

The music therapist owns an accurate multidisciplinary preparation, theoretical and practical, related to music and music therapy. He or she has great musical competences with a theoretical model that helps and addresses the music therapist to understand the processes that grow and develop in the relationships of music therapy.

Currently the music therapy training consists of 1200 hours divided in musical area, music therapy area and internship. According to the Italian Norma UNI, the admission criteria to the courses are a bachelor or equivalent and at least three years of an accurate musical preparation, both practical and theoretical.

During the training in music therapy, the student learns and develops competences and the necessary knowledge to plan, achieve and evaluate music therapy intervention.

Context of work

Music therapy is a discipline that is present alongside with other medical, psychological and rehabilitating disciplines.

The music therapist works in a range of different settings and he/she defines his or her intervention with the colleague of the staff, following the clinical indication communicated by a psychologist or a doctor. Music therapists may work with children, young people and adults in public or private Institution and Associations, such as schools, centers for young people with disabilities, hospitals, centers for reeducation and rehabilitation, hospices... Music therapists need to have the competences and the necessary knowledge to plan, achieve and evaluate music therapy interventions in different clinical situations.

They use the music and the sound to reach specific aims defined depending on the type of situation, preventive or rehabilitative-therapeutic:

- Personal growth path;
- Accompaniment to delivery and birth
- Social, emotional and behavioral difficulties
- Global developmental delay
- Mental health issues
- Dementia
- Autism
- Learning difficulties
- Sensory impairment
- Psychiatric and other personality disorders
- Oncology and palliative care and mourn phase.

The aims of a music therapy intervention are to reactivate and strengthen cognitive, affective and relational functions in order to support the social integration of the patient.

Aims and objectives of music therapy:

- Develop the individual strengths
- Strengthen the communicative and relational competences
- Develop the adjustment of an individual in his/her life
- Support and help to develop creativity

METHODOLOGY

In the music therapy it is necessary that the music therapists:

- Belong to a multidisciplinary staff
- Get an authorization from a doctor, who will be the contact person and legal representative of the project
- Get a signed authorization for the processing of personal data
- Do an accurate observation of the patient
- Write a written report that clearly explains the parameters used for the observation
- Organize a meeting with the caregivers and/or the patient
- Get a periodic supervision for his or her work

The music therapist has to have and follow an ethical code, and shall protect the confidentiality of information gained in the course of a patient's treatment, according to the national laws.

The sessions can be individually or in group. An individual session can last around 30-40 minutes, whereas a group session up to 45-60 minutes.

SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVE IN MUSIC THERAPY

Music therapy as any other complex discipline, recently born and in evolution, needs proofs and demonstrations, that are able to show its impact and efficacy.

The therapeutic potentialities of the musical relationship pushes us to communicate the contents and results of a music therapy intervention with ways used and shared by the scientific community.

The research in music therapy aims to organize the observation of the process and the results of the treatment through an examination structured in a scientific way, collecting quantitative or qualitative data and communicating them in an appropriate way. In Italy we have just begun this kind of research, thanks to the contribution of associations, such as universities and research centers, and to the expertise of music therapists who work in different fields.

The scientific databases (such as PubMed and PsychINFO) include several studies that present the efficacy of the music therapy in different contexts. An example is the Cochrane review, periodically updated, on music therapy and autism (Gold et al., 2006), schizophrenia (Gold et al., 2005), depression (Maratos et al., 2008), brain injuries (Bradt et al., 2010), dementia (Vink et al., 2003), palliative care (Bradt et al., 2010).

Other studies discuss the impact of music and music therapy in a neuroscientific way (Sloboda, 2001; Peretz & Zatorre, 2003; Hillecke et al., 2005; Sacks, 2006; Overy & Molnar-Szakacs, 2006; 2009; Levitin, 2009; Koelsch, 2009; 2010; 2011; Wan et al., 2010). All these studies are a great starting point toward a scientific approach of music therapy that confirms what has been observed by the music therapist in his or her clinical practice.

EQF LEVEL AND ECVET FOR MUSIC THERAPY IN ITALY

In the past couple of years AIM participated to the definition process of the Norma UNI. This process expects the training of the music therapists in Italy, at the level EQF 6. The European Music Therapy Confederation (EMTC) defined the criteria to access to the European Music Therapy

Registers (EMTR). The music therapists are required to have a Master (a second level degree) in Music Therapy, 200 hours of supervision, 200 hours of personal therapy and two years of full-time clinical activity. This level is comparable to the level EQF 7.

Therefore, for the Italian music therapists in order to access to the European Registers, it will be necessary to increase the formative criteria that are currently required in Italy.

The procedure of evaluation and concession of the ECVET credits is not yet available in our country. A boost and acceleration in this direction will definitely be determined by the Norma UNI that is currently pending the final approval.