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Book of abstracts and one page summaries

PHD COURSE IN MUSIC THERAPY RESEARCH

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Doctoral Programme in Music Therapy

Department of Communication and Psychology

Aalborg University, Denmark



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Lectures and workshops

Cathy McKinney: Evaluating Quantitative Research Studies: The Search for Integrity

Read previous to the workshop the excerpt from Journal of Music Therapy (to be found in Mahara)

Cathy McKinney, Ph.D., LCAT, MT-BC, is Professor and Director of Music Therapy at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, USA. Professor McKinney's research has focused on effects of various music and music therapy interventions on psychological and physiological measures. Her primary direct research has investigated effects of the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) and associated interventions on mood, neuroendocrine levels, and immune markers in healthy adults and in women with breast cancer. Currently Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of the Association for Music and Imagery* and a member of the editorial review board for the *Journal of Music Therapy*, Professor McKinney has served on the editorial review boards of seven professional journals.

Christian Gold: Challenges of doing multicentre studies in music therapy

As collaborative efforts in music therapy are increasing, and requirements for large sample sizes are increasingly being recognised, we are starting to see national ^{1,2} and international ^{3,4} multicentre trials. Providing a complex and highly variable intervention with some consistency across patients and therapists ⁵ is especially challenging when cultural differences in clinical settings and music therapy approaches across countries are added. Drawing primarily on my own experience with multicentre trials, I will make the following points:

- 1.) Therapy manual/guideline: A clear description of what the therapy does and doesn't do ⁶ is crucial. The balance between under- and over-specification is not easy to achieve. It is important to think about what aspects should and should not be standardised ^{5,6}. Developing a broad consensus may work best ⁷ but is only possible if there is an active dialogue between sites. "Exporting" an approach from one site is an alternative when not all sites are known beforehand ⁸.
- 2.) In applying a manual, it is important again to keep a good balance between retaining the "frame" and leaving space within that frame. Otherwise, therapists might mistake a resource-oriented approach as a "research-oriented" one ⁹!
- 3.) Analysing a multi-centre trial is more complex than analysing a single-centre trial. Even with a clear a priori description of the statistical analysis in the study protocol, the many sources of variation can still be confusing. Some studies continue to be re-analysed for years or even decades after their first publication ^{10,11}. Others were analysed in various ways ^{12,13} before finally finding one type of analysis that would be acceptable for publication ³. With all the differences in settings, patients, and interventions, multicentre trials might sometimes be compared more appropriately to meta-analyses than to single-centre studies.



Practical logistics, although undoubtedly of great importance for successfully conducting multicentre trials, will not be covered in detail, but I will point to some useful sources.

Christian Gold is Principal Researcher, Grieg Academy Music Therapy Research Centre (GAMUT), Uni Health, Uni Research, Bergen, Norway. Professor, Grieg Academy Department of Music, University of Bergen, Norway. Adjunct professor, methodological adviser, and member of the PhD board at the International Music Therapy Research School, Aalborg University, Denmark. Editor-in-Chief of the *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*. Associate Editor for the Cochrane Developmental, Psychosocial and Learning Problems Group (CDPLPG). Private music therapy practice in Vienna, Austria. His main research interests include outcome research (clinical trials and meta-analyses), their methodology and application in music therapy in mental health. He is also interested in research connecting process and outcome.

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Colwyn Trevarthen: Comparing ideas on music and intersubjectivity with the group of music therapy doctoral researchers

Prof. Dr. Colwyn Trevarthen. Professor (Emeritus) of Child Psychology and Psychobiology. Psychology Department, University of Edinburgh. Colwyn Trevarthen is Emeritus Professor of Child Psychology and Psychobiology at the University of Edinburgh, and is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and a Vice President of the British Association for Early Childhood Education. He originally trained as a biologist, before going on to study infancy research at Harvard in 1967, and has since published on brain development, infant communication and emotional health.

His current research concerns how rhythm and expressions of musicality in movement help communication with children and may help parents, teachers and therapists give care and companionship to young children.

Selected publications

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- Trevarthen, C., & Malloch, S. N. (2000). The dance of wellbeing: Defining the musical therapeutic effect. *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Musikterapi*, 9(2), 3-17.
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Thomas Stegeman: Neurobiological papers: How to read them and what to gain from them for music therapy

Findings from neuroscientific research during the last 25 years – especially due to groundbreaking developments in brain imaging methods – have changed and enhanced our understanding of the brain and that of many psychiatric and neurologic disorders (Stegemann, 2013). Thus, understanding of basic aspects of neurobiology is indispensable for music therapists – because no matter in which field they work and/or do research, sooner or later they will be confronted with neurobiological issues, and the questions how to interpret the results, and if to integrate these into their own research.

In this lecture we will focus on a recent article by Roger E. Beaty (2015) by applying the SQR-Method (survey – question – read). In addition, I would like to offer a „first aid kit“ for reading neurobiological papers, including an aid to orientation within the different brain areas, their



functions with respect to music and music therapy, and a brief introduction to the most important brain imaging techniques.

Univ.-Prof. Dr. med. Dr. sc. mus. **Thomas Stegemann**, born in 1972 in Neumünster, Germany, is a child and adolescent psychiatrist as well as a licensed music therapist. He also studied guitar at the Musicians Institute in Los Angeles, USA. Since March 2011, he serves as Professor of Music Therapy and Head of the Department of Music Therapy at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, Austria. His main areas of research are: music and neurobiology; music therapy with children and adolescents, and family therapy.
www.thomasstegemann.at

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Thomas Wosch: Different paradigms in microanalysis in music therapy

Dr. Thomas Wosch is professor of Music Therapy in Social Work at the University of applied sciences of Wuerzburg and Schweinfurt in Germany, head of last year specialization in music therapy in BA social work, director of MA in developmental and dementia music therapy, research group in music therapy and emotion and in music therapy assessment, co-editor of www.voices.no, 10 years clinician in acute adult psychiatry, since 1998 fulltime university positions, since 2007 in Würzburg, teaching and research projects all over Europe, in US and Australia. Main publications: "Microanalysis in Music Therapy" (together with Tony Wigram, 2007), "Emotional microprocesses of clinical improvisations" (German, 2002), "Music and elderly" (German, 2011), 35 journal and book articles i.e. about clinical outcome research, about emotions in music therapy, about individual music therapy with acute psychotic disorders.

Kira & Rebekka: The MIB group and Functionally Integrative Neuroscience

The Music in the Brain group is part of the Center of Functionally Integrative Neuroscience, Aarhus University. It aims to facilitate world-class research in the field of cognitive neuroscience of music. This includes basic science and clinical research using behavioral and brain imaging methods. This talk will present the work of the Music in the Brain group with a focus on research methodology and the continuum between basic and applied science.

Kira Vibe Jespersen is a Psychologist (cand.psych) and music therapist (BA). She is currently doing a PhD project on the impact of music on sleep at the Center of Functionally Integrative Neuroscience, University of Aarhus, Denmark. The aim of the project is to investigate if music can be used as an effective intervention to improve sleep quality. Kira's primary research interests are the emotional and physiological impact of music and the potential use of music in clinical settings. She has been doing clinical work with traumatized refugees suffering from PTSD, and her MSc thesis involved an empirical study on the use of music as a tool to improve sleep quality in traumatized refugees.

Contact: kira@cfi.au.dk



Rebeka Bodak graduated as a music therapist in Australia in 2003. She was very fortunate to begin developing her clinical skills in Australia and later in the UK, where she additionally had the opportunity to refine her teaching and research skills in neurorehabilitation, disorders of consciousness, and Huntington's disease. Having always been curious about the scientific underpinnings of music processing, Rebeka completed a music psychology degree in the UK in 2012, where she explored whether playing musical sequences on a horizontally aligned instrument (chime bars) would bring about clinically significant improvement in chronic neglect during stroke recovery. Rebeka is currently doing a PhD with the Music in the Brain group at Aarhus University. The aim of the research is to explore the relationship between movement and sound production -- audiomotor coupling -- through basic science and clinical studies.

Contact: rebeka@cfin.au.dk

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Methodology seminar: the rationale for design in music therapy research

Bolette Daniels Beck: Mixed methods research with traumatized refugees

Research in the benefits of GIM with traumatized clients is a small but growing field. I have been included as practitioner/researcher in an ongoing study on modified GIM with traumatized refugees, where the design and methods are predefined. It is a mixed methods design with the weight on the qualitative strand, and a concurrent data collection. All sessions are videotaped and semistructured interviews will be undertaken with all participants (n=16). Quantitative data are pre and post questionnaires on sleep quality, PTSD symptoms and well-being. The main research question focuses on feasibility of music therapy with the population. The quantitative part has a fixed design, and the qualitative part of the study including research questions and methods is developed by the researchers in an emergent process. The process of refining the design in an ongoing study will be described and discussed, and an example from the preliminary video analysis will be presented.

Bolette Daniels Beck, PhD, Assistant Professor at the Program of Music Therapy and PROMUSA, Aalborg University. Employed at the psychiatric Clinic for traumatized refugees in Roskilde. GIM therapist, Moving cycle therapist, Somatic Experiencing practitioner (in training). Her clinical areas are self development, (work) stress, trauma/PTSD, functional diseases and refugees. Her research interests are GIM, clinical trials, mixed methods, biomarkers and the mindbody connection.

Charlotte Lindvang: Experiential learning, therapeutic processes, ethics and research methodology

The main purpose of my ph.d. study was to examine self-experiential learning through personal therapy within the context of the music therapy training program in Aalborg. Learning through self-experience is a complex phenomenon that is difficult to investigate and the choice of methods is closely connected to ethical considerations. The mixed methods design of my ph.d. study will be presented along with some of the methodological considerations I had at that time. Next I will talk about my present experiences in the field of group music therapy and my reflexions about being both a (teacher)therapist and a researcher. Ideas on future research inside this area and the methodological/ethical challenges will be discussed.

Charlotte Lindvang, PhD, Associate Professor, Music Therapy Aalborg University, Coordinator of our part time music therapy program in Copenhagen 'Applied music in social, educational and health care settings'.

Hanne Mette Ridder: Translation and cultural adaptation of outcome measures

We see more international multicentre studies, and therefore also a need for music therapy scales to become more widely available across countries. In this presentation I will present guidelines on translation procedures and cross-cultural adaptation based on a review of the literature from related fields of research.

Hanne Mette Ridder, PhD, MA in music therapy, Professor, head of the Doctoral Programme in Music Therapy at Aalborg University. President of the European Music Therapy Confederation, EMTC. Her focus of research is dementia, neurocognitive disorders, gerontology, and music therapy research methodology.

Inge Nygaard Pedersen: Music therapy as treatment of negative symptoms by patients suffering from schizophrenia – a double-blinded study

In co-operation with the Dean of Faculty of Medicine at Aalborg University, two head doctors at Center of Schizophrenia and colleagues at the Music Therapy Clinic at Aalborg University Hospital, Psychiatry - I have developed a design for music therapy with patients suffering from schizophrenia dominated by negative symptoms. Massive challenges are a part of developing such a design, which is randomised, double-blinded and with a control group, who is offered another treatment possibility including music listening in the form of placebo. I want to share the development of this design, ethical reflections and the possibilities of fundraising for this study.

Inge Nygaard Pedersen, ass. Prof. Music Therapy Aalborg University. Head of Music Therapy Clinic. Aalborg University Hospital. Psychiatry.

Lars Ole Bonde: Music and public health – working with big numbers

While music therapy researchers often struggle to recruit a proper number of participants to give their study statistical power, public health studies normally operate with very big numbers: 1000 to 100.000! Over the last few years, I have had the opportunity to collaborate with the National Institute of Public Health, University of Southern Denmark, Copenhagen, Denmark (SIF). SIF conducts regular studies of the health performance of adult Danes, and in 2014 a small series of music questions were included in the survey. I will report on this 'epidemiological study' with 15.000 informants, present some results, and discuss the methodological (and other) challenges related to such an endeavor.

Lars Ole Bonde, prof. Music Therapy AAU and Center for Music and Health, The Norwegian Academy of Music.

Niels Hannibal: Challenges in developing a multi-centret RCT in music therapy

The presentation will address issues related to establishing consensus about the treatment manual, the conceptual frame and the research design. The presentation is based on ongoing work in an international research group.

Niels Hannibal. Associate professor, Ph.d. At the music therapy education at Aalborg University. He is also part of the Music therapy clinic at Aalborg University Hospital. His research areas are music therapy in psychiatry, music therapy with people with personality disorder and theoretical integration.

Stine Lindahl Jacobsen: Assessment of Parent-Child Interaction (APCI) – clinical application and standardization

Standardized music therapy assessment models with norm studies and robust psychometric properties are necessary for our field to be fully integrated in health care and in collaborating and competing with other well-established health care professions. Evaluating parent-child interactions is a difficult and challenging task. It requires strong ethics and clear focus to collect valid information in an appropriate and facilitating manner. This task is of utmost importance especially when children are at the edge of care, or when uncertainty exists about the quality of dyadic interactions. Assessment of Parent-Child Interactions (APCI) aims to meet these challenges with its non-threatening and revealing approach. APCI is an observational improvisation-based assessment model measuring the actual interactions between parent and child (5-12yrs) dyads. An explorative research study currently examines the clinical application of APCI looking at implementations with different client groups, therapist experience, parent experience and clinical use which will lead up to the large standardization study of APCI.

Stine Lindahl Jacobsen, PhD, Associate Professor, Head of MA Program of Music Therapy, Aalborg University. Assessment of Parent-Child (APCI) developer & trainer, Member of advisory panel for Chroma, Board member of the Danish Association of Music Therapists. Her clinical area is children and families at risk and her research interest also includes music therapy assessment.

Ulla Holck: Introduction to an ethnographic approach to video (micro) analysis

The overall purpose in the ethnographic approach to video analysis is to become aware of implicit 'knowledge' in those being observed. That is, knowledge that cannot be acquired through interviews. In music therapy this approach can be used to analyze practices or patterns of interaction between client and therapist either to be able to describe hidden or emerging abilities in the client, or as a step towards developing concepts for MT practices that are not already conceptualized. After the introduction to the approach, aims and method, we will briefly discuss the epistemology of the ethnographic approach to video observation.

Relevant literature:

Holck, U. (2007): An Ethnographic Descriptive Approach to Video Micro Analysis. In Wosch & Wigram (Eds.): *Microanalysis in Music Therapy*, p.29-40. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Ulla Holck, MA, PHD, Associated Professor at the Music Therapy programme at Aalborg University, Denmark, and Head of the Danish Center for Documentation and Research in Music Therapy at Aalborg University (www.cedomus.aau.dk). The research area is music therapy with children with neuro-developmental disorders.

PhD defence

Monika Geretsegger: Promoting social communication through music therapy in children with autism spectrum disorder

This PhD study investigated if and how music therapy may help to promote social communication in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The study examined several dimensions of this complex field, and includes four articles:

- a systematic review (Cochrane review) synthesising research evidence on overall effects of music therapy for individuals with ASD;
- a study protocol specifying the design of TIME-A, a randomised controlled trial (RCT) examining effects of improvisational music therapy on social communication skills in children with ASD aged 4 to 7;
- a treatment guide that describes an international consensus model of improvisational music therapy for children with ASD; and
- a feasibility study summarising data from the Viennese pilot cohort of the international multi-centre project TIME-A.

In this way, this study presents feasible ways to combine clinical relevance and rigorous research methodology without compromising either, and to integrate scientific findings in the clinical application of a highly individualised approach.

Through enhancing communication and knowledge transfer between research and clinical practice in music therapy, this study contributes to collaborative efforts of providing more effective and more substantiated health care services for individuals with ASD and other conditions.

PhD viva with the examining Committee:

Prof. Dr. Cathy McKinney (chair), Aalborg University

Prof. (Emeritus) Dr. Colwyn Trevarthen, University of Edinburgh

Prof. Dr. Thomas Wosch, University of applied sciences of Würzburg and Schweinfurt



One page summaries



Britta Frederiksen: How to get started with my first article – “Rationale for investigating development of therapeutic relationship in music therapy with forensic patients with schizophrenia”

Supervisors: Hanne Mette Oschner Ridder & Cand.psych.aut., PhD, senior researcher
Liselotte Pedersen

Titel of the study: Development of the therapeutic relationship in music therapy with forensic psychiatric in-patients with schizophrenia - a mixed method case study.

Main research question:

How can music therapy contribute to the formation of a therapeutic relationship with forensic psychiatric inpatients with schizophrenia in the initial phase of a course of music therapy?

Sub questions:

1: Is it possible to establish a therapeutic relationship with forensic psychiatric inpatients with schizophrenia in the initial phase of a course of music therapy?

And if so:

2a: Can the elements that contribute to the forming of a therapeutic relationship between music therapist and forensic psychiatric inpatient with schizophrenia during the first phase of a course of music therapy be identified?

- if so: How can these elements be described ?

Design: Mixed method explorative multiple case study (QUAL/qual).

Method: The music therapy is conducted in a natural setting – the music therapist is also the researcher. The data will consist of therapy notes from the therapy sessions. Patient evaluation through Session Rating Scale and semi structured interview. Clinical data : Medicine status, use of rescue medicine, Brøset Violence Checklist, level of observation

Current state of the study: Data collection is in progress – expect to finish data collection 1.7.2016.

Topic for the presentation: The study is article based.

In this presentation I will present some of my clinical background, motivation and considerations in order to begin writing my first article, with the title “Rationale for investigating the development of the therapeutic relationship”. I will present the literature review to support the article, and my preliminary thoughts about important aspect or headlines to include in the article. I will present the results of a Reperatory Grid interview, which were made in order to describe my preunderstanding and preassumptions in identifying dimensions in the therapeutic relationship with forensic psychiatric patients I would like to discuss with you which aspects are important to include in this article and how can I, or can I use the results from the Reperatory grid interview in the article.



Gabriella Rudstam: GrpMI for phase oriented trauma treatment. The first and second pilotgroup / in search för a manual

Supervisors: Lars Ole Bonde and Hans Peter Søndergaard

Title: Group GIM and expressive arts in trauma treatment.

Research questions

1. Can group GIM and expressive arts:
 - a) Be helpful in reducing the symptoms of CPTSD?
 - b) Enhance quality of life?
 - c) Increase capacity for regulating the ANS in clients with CPTSD?
2. Can group GIM and expressive arts be helpful for processing and integrating traumatic experiences of a population with CPTSD? If so, in which way?
3. What characteristic features and development processes (in individuals with CPTSD) are observed in images evoked by music listening?
4. Which features and development processes are characteristically described in external images made after the music listening phase?

Research design

A convergent parallel mixed method study. There will be a quantitative part with a randomized trial with a waiting list control group and qualitative part with analysis of the music, the internal and external imagery, journaling and a semi structured interviews.

Content of presentation

This presentation will discuss the results from the first pilot group and present the ongoing second pilot group. There will be a discussion of group treatment with clients diagnosed with complex PTSD in relation to Yaloms "Curative factors" (Yalom, 1985) and " the Polyvagal theory" (Porges,2011). The physiological test for measurement of HRV (heart rate variability) will be presented. Reflections on the importance of working in a phase- oriented way with complex traumatized clients will be lifted in relation to the work of finding a suitable manual for Grp MI with this clientele (Van der Hart, et al. 2006; Boone, et al. 2011). Some questions about the results from the first pilot groups will be raised, together with questions from the ongoing second pilot group.

Keywords: Curative factors, the Polyvagal theory, phase-oriented treatment

Mariann B. Sørensen: Narratives and Music Therapy in Health Care Communication

Supervisor:

Lars Ole Bonde

Title of the study

Health Care Communication in a psychological and a philosophical context – who, why and how?

The aim of the doctoral study is to explore the phenomenon Health Care Communication in different settings. Multivoicedness is secured through inclusion of the voices of patients and relatives in autobiographies, while the voices of professionals are represented through focus group interviews.

Research questions

The research questions in the partial study presented in this course are:

- Can music therapy - as a non-verbal form of therapy - illustrate communication patterns in a family with a child dealing with a cancer diagnosis?
- Can therapy facilitate the meeting with the hospital sector for patient, parents, and siblings?

Data in this study – number 5 - consist of video recordings from two sub-projects: 1) therapy sessions with a family and 2) therapy sessions with an open group at the hospital.

Topic of presentation

I will begin with a short presentation of the 3 studies framing the study in focus here. After presenting an example of the data, I want to discuss some methodological issues concerning the micro analysis of videotaped data. The video recordings are complemented by an observation form showing participation.

Research design/Article-based PhD dissertation

Study 1: Narrative Therapy and Music Therapy (mentioned above), published in the anthology "Health Care Communication at the Hospital".

Study 2: The Psychology of Death published in the anthology "Humanistic Palliative Care"

Study 3: Narratives and communication in the light of the concepts of empathy and epoché and a discussion of a phenomenological approach.

Study 4: Empathy, published in the anthology The Basic Concepts of Humanity.

Study 5: The study presented here: Analyzing data from 1) sessions with a family, and 2) a micro analysis of video recordings together with a rating scale for participation. Will be submitted to the journal "Dansk Musikterapi".

Currents state of the study:

Finishing the last article and writing a 'cape' to link the different approaches – showing the connecting thread!

Pia Preißler: Outpatient psycho-oncological music therapy. Preparation work for a PhD proposal

Working titel

"Outpatient psycho-oncological music therapy - how can it be helpful in coping with cancer?"

In my planned PhD work I would like to investigate the process of integrating music therapy into the setting of an Ambulance for Psychooncology at the University Clinic of Hamburg. I would like to answer questions about a practice and theory- based design of *outpatient psychooncological music therapy*. I would like to look for hints for a specific indication. The experiences of the patients with a in this way designed music therapy together with questions about effects shall be investigated qualitatively and quantitatively in a mixed methods design.

Research questions

1. How is the process of integration of music therapy into the setting of the Ambulance for Psychooncology?
2. How can music therapy get desinged in a pychooncological way?
3. What experience patients in the outpatient psychooncological music therapy?
4. Is there any effect of anxiety, depression, distress and quality of life?
5. Are there hints to a specific indication?

Content of the presentation

Starting with a short background about the developing of my ideas including my first literatur review I would like to present and discuss my working title, my research questions and the methodological issues.

Tali Gottfried: Towards a mixed-methods triangulation - Qualitative Analysis of parents' interviews AND starting to put everything together

Supervisors: Christian Gold & Cochavit Elefant

Title of study

Working title: Collaborative-Parent-Counseling in Music Therapy for parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Title is changed; will address it within the presentation

Main Research Questions and the questions related to the current presentation

1. What is the influence of Parent-Accompany in Music Therapy (PAinMT) on Level of Stress and Quality of Life of parents of children with ASD?
 - 1.a What is the experience of the participants of PAinMT and its' influence on level of stress and QoL perception?
2. What is the influence of PAinMT on the use of Music in Everyday Life by the participants with their children?
 - 2.a What is the experience of the participants of PAinMT in relation to the use of music attuned to their child, in everyday life?

Design: Triangulation (Qual/Quant) mixed methods design (following Creswell & Clarck's (2007) categorizations).

Aim of the study: this study aims to examine whether Parent Accompany in Music therapy (PAinMT) contributes to: a) lowering level of parental stress; b) improving parents' perception of Quality of Life; c) extending and developing the use of music at home environment in everyday life.

Current state of the study: data collection of 14 families completed on April 25th, 2014; data analysis was done for the RCT; MEL questionnaire was validated; an independent rater watched videos of accompany sessions, and completed Fidelity Assessment of Accompany Guide; thematic analysis of qualitative data was done, resulting in four main themes, further reading of relevant literature.

Topic of the presentation: At the last six months I have focused mainly on: 1. analyzing qualitative data gathered through semi-structured parents' interviews, and 2. reading additional literature mainly in the field of therapeutic work with parents.

In this presentation, I will present: 1. The process of thematic analysis of qualitative data, which concluded in four main themes, and several sub-themes. I will then look at the qualitative results in comparison with the quantitative ones, in order to facilitate triangulation of data. 2. Reading of additional literature led to achieving a sense of belonging to a wider theoretical frame. This comforting finding helped me to strengthen my understandings of my clinical approach, and led to a change of the title of the study. I will present the course of thinking that led to this decision.

Questions: 1. choosing case studies – course, aims and expectations. 2. The layout of the thesis 3. Any other thoughts the professors and students might have to help in my final stage...?

Unni Tannum Johns: Towards a method for microanalysis of interaction sequences in child psychotherapy

Supervisors: Lars Ole Bonde & Ass. Prof. Bjørg Røed Hansen – University of Oslo, Norway

Title of the PhD study: “The music in the interplay”. Dynamic forms of vitality and affect regulation in child psychotherapy

Summary: There is growing knowledge from infant research and trauma psychology that failure in emotion regulation is a key issue in psychological health problems in children. Psychotherapy should therefore aim at developing emotion regulation capacities in children. Empirical knowledge from infant research shows that the regulation of vitality is part of emotion regulation, and uses concepts from music to describe intersubjective changes in the affective non-verbal dialogue which are involved in emotion regulation. Such processes of mutuality and interactions seem to take place both on an emotional, cognitive and autonomous level. The study seeks to gain knowledge about how vitality forms play a part in the therapeutic interplay and therapeutic development in child psychotherapy. My study is part of a joint research project between Akershus University Hospital and the University in Trondheim (NTNU). The aim of the overall research project is to study changes in emotion regulation in child psychotherapy in children with internalizing symptoms. The therapy method is Time-limited intersubjective psychotherapy which involves parallel sessions with children and parents and a beforehand agreed upon therapeutic goal. The goal is closely connected to the child’s developmental needs. As part of the research project a treatment guide will be developed.

It is a mixed method study (N=30) with 1) quantitative measures of psychophysiological change in addition to symptom scales (CBCL, TRF, SDQ, CGAS, ERC, EATQ-R) before and after, 2) qualitative analysis of affect consciousness interviews before and after, and 3) video analysis; The present PHD-project will consist of video analysis of four selected children that take part in the project (N=4); Interaction analysis of sequences and microanalysis of selected episodes.

Research questions

How do forms of vitality emerge in the therapeutic relationship and how are these expressed (for example tone of voice, body movements, change of rhythms or intensity contours etc.)

How can features of forms of vitality be described and shed light on patterns in the therapeutic interplay?

Do forms of vitality contribute to therapeutic changes and developments in the session? If so – how?

Can a focus on vitality forms in the “here and now” contribute to an understanding of the significance of the child’s non-verbal communication? If so – how?

This presentation: This presentation will focus on the process of developing a method for microanalysis of selected video samples. The issue is how to capture the intersubjective exchanges between therapist and child that take place in these samples. One main research question is how knowledge from music and empirical knowledge from infant research can be used to describe and show basic phenomena of child psychotherapy? Can concepts of music performance dynamics be used to describe and make clearer interactional episodes in the samples. In addition I want to show changes in vitality contours over the whole sequence? The “musical interplay” process will be described together with a description of an analysis of the psychological process. The process of developing a method for microanalysis is ongoing.