

## Book Review

**Clinical Training Guide for the Student Music Therapist: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition***Polen, Donna, Shultis, Carol, & Wheeler, Barbara (Eds.)*Darlene Brooks<sup>1</sup><sup>1</sup>Director of Music Therapy, Temple University, Philadelphia, USA.**Hardback:** 219 pages | **Publisher:** Barcelona Publishers (2017) | **Language:** English | **ISBN:** 9781945411168 | **E-ISBN:** 9781945411175

This is a second, expanded and updated edition of *Clinical Training Guide for the Student Music Therapist*, originally published in 2005. Designed for use by music therapy students at all levels of training, the information is organized to support the scaffolding of knowledge and skills as students advance through typical levels of involvement: observing session; participating and assisting; planning and co-leading; and ultimately leading sessions independently

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Congratulations to the authors for providing us with the second edition of *Clinical Training Guide for the Student Music Therapist: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. The second edition offers even more information that if followed, will address many unanswered questions, while at the same time, will provide helpful guidance to both the student and supervisor. It is an excellent guide for supervisors, regardless of their years of experience. The authors have provided elements of music therapy work that are salient to the success of the music therapy student and beginning therapist, and they have added the expert contributions of clinicians and educators to this edition. This 18-chapter book is filled with information and assignments that are valuable to understanding clients, assessments, goals and objectives, and music therapy in practice. The book begins with an introductory guide on how to use the book.

*Doing Music Therapy: An Exploration*, stresses the view that becoming a music therapist takes time. The authors point out that it is important not only to understand what it means to do therapy, but to also understand how the therapist impacts the health and wellness of the client. Understanding therapy, understanding music therapy, the theories that help define music therapy and the therapeutic process are also a focus of this chapter. Working with music and understanding the therapist's role is highlighted.

Some of the experiences that students may have in clinical environments, is highlighted in *Increasing Levels of Involvement*. Sequential steps that will optimize the student's

experience in the clinic is addressed. Observing skills, active participation, assisting, planning and co-leading are highlighted with guidelines that will optimize the student's experience.

The authors have added an important third chapter, *Essential Aspects of Becoming a Music Therapist: Academic, Clinical Training, and Related Areas*. The emphasis here is on the qualifications required to become a therapist in the United States. They begin by describing the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA), its purpose as a professional organization and its goals, followed by the three levels of study available to the music therapy student, Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees. The chapter continues by discussing clinical training requirements in US academic institutions – from pre-internship to internship and the types of training sites available for students. Important in this information is the emphasis on opportunities for students to learn and practice professionally.

In Chapter 4, *The Process of Planning for Music Therapy* encourages the student to begin the music therapy process by considering the clients' perspective. Students are given a set of questions to be considered when thinking about clients in music therapy. Significant in this chapter is an examination of the music therapist's perspective on the client. Here the student therapists are not only asked to examine personal thoughts about a client, but their own personal theories on what it means to help. To provide guidance on this topic, understanding of what help is, and the ways of helping in therapy are also highlighted. Two additional topics covered in this chapter ask the therapist to explore the use of music, and it's helpfulness for the individual. Ethical considerations when helping clients are also discussed.

Polen, Shultis and Wheeler provide an excellent overview of Client Assessment in Chapter 5. This 32- page chapter is similar to the first edition. Of importance is the reminder that

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PRODUCTION NOTES: Address correspondence to:

Darlene Brooks | E-mail: [dmbrooks@temple.edu](mailto:dmbrooks@temple.edu)

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assessment in music therapy occurs while the client is engaged in a music experience, which makes this type of assessment unique. The authors stress that assessment involves observation, not only in the therapy space, but also within the client's interaction with music, the instruments chosen and how they are used, the method of music therapy employed, and the developing relationship with the therapist. The purposes of assessment, the domains of assessment, the sources to gain music therapy assessment information and steps used to conduct the assessment are discussed. The authors provide assessment strategies for various client groups with whom a student might work.

*Goals and Objectives.* Here the authors help the student therapist understand goals and objectives and the difference between the two. They provide examples of each to help the student see how the information from the assessment guides the determination of goals for the client, and further help the student see how goals and objectives are intertwined. Guidance is offered that addresses long-term care goals and objectives.

Chapter 7, *Planning and Implementing Music Therapy Strategies* takes the student music therapist to the next step in the process of doing music therapy following the assessment and establishing goals and objectives. Several guidelines are offered to help the student design the session. Steps in implementing the session are offered from environmental set-up, to materials needed for the session, carrying out and evaluation of the session.

Chapters 8-11 focus on the main methodologies used in music therapy- improvisation, recreative, compositional and receptive. Each chapter begins with a description of the method, followed by the use of that method with various client groups. To aid the student in understanding the uses of these methods, the authors have included the uses of those methods found in the literature, which not only offer evidence that the method works, but empowers the beginning therapist in explaining the benefits of music therapy. Additionally, each of these chapters provides tips for using the method.

*Further Considerations in Planning* is the subject of Chapter 12. Here the authors ask the student music therapist to go beyond current attitudes about doing music therapy and consider factors such as the characteristics, the developmental level and the needs of the client with whom they are working. The authors recommend that the student therapist consider their personal theory of helping, their psychotherapeutic framework, their music therapy theoretical framework, ethical considerations and their rationale for treating their client.

Chapter 13 introduces students to verbal techniques that are helpful for communication and collaboration with clients. The authors also point out barriers to communication that impede the therapeutic relationship – judging, ordering and diverting the client from identified problems. Students are reminded that much of what we do as music therapists involves non-verbal behavior, and are provided with examples

of music therapy techniques that can successfully facilitate client responses. The importance of developing and nurturing personal musicianship and an understanding of the elements of music can assist the therapist in providing clients with the best musical experience possible.

Chapter 14 begins with excerpts from the literature that provide examples of the ways that music in music therapy elicits physical, emotional and social responses in clients. The chapter also discusses connections that occur through music - aesthetic, universal, to others and to self. To assist the student therapist in understanding the development of clinical musicianship, each of the methods primarily used in music therapy practice as they relate to this examination are presented.

Chapters 15, 16 and 17 provide information on working with individuals and groups in music therapy, along with documentation strategies. A thorough presentation on elements to consider in working either with individuals or groups including the institutional setting, the level of functioning, specific client needs, developmental level of the client, and length of treatment is provided. The importance of documentation is discussed, and examples of different documentation styles used in facilities.

Chapter 18, addresses *Self-Assessment for the Music Therapist*. There are many skills that the student music therapist learns during the journey from music therapy student to therapist. It is important therefore that the student music therapists consider how learning takes place for them, and what specific needs they have. The therapists should consider the role they play during the therapeutic encounter, how they see themselves as therapists, how they feel about their clients, what they understand about their clients' behaviors and how they respond to their clients. Tools are offered to assist with self-assessment, which include music therapy methods used in this exploration.

Donna Polen, Carol Shultis and Barbara Wheeler have done an excellent job with this 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. They have considered current practice in music therapy, in hospitals, schools, psychiatric facilities, nursing homes, palliative care and hospice. They have examined the challenges the student music therapist encounters, and provided valuable resources throughout the book. The title implies that this is a resource for students, but this book is also an excellent resource for beginning therapists and supervisors at all levels.

### Biographical Statement

Darlene Brooks is the Director of Music Therapy at Temple University, Philadelphia, PA, and has been teaching for 26 years. Prior to teaching, Brooks served as Clinical Training Director for music therapy students at all levels of training. She is a Fellow with the Association for Music & Imagery and a Licensed Professional Counselor.