

RECEPTIVE MUSIC THERAPY AND METAPHORS USED IN DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract: *This study aims to study the way the combination of receptive music therapy with metaphor in the experiential group determines the development of emotional intelligence. There were involved 30 subjects who participated for a period of 18 months at an experiential training where they were challenged to exercise their insight and analysis abilities and to better know themselves and others. Thus, they understood that each person is unique and that coexisting harmoniously with others requires good receptivity not only of their own needs and emotions, but also of others' as well as their effective communication.*

Key words: *receptive music therapy, metaphor and metaphorical scenario, emotional intelligence.*

1. Introduction

The American Music Therapy Association (2004) believes that music therapy uses music to achieve positive changes in psychological, physical, cognitive and social functioning of individuals with health or educational problems [4]. Music therapy has a wide range of applications and can work together with other forms of psychotherapy, allowing the benefit of a holistic intervention on the individual's general health and wellbeing [2].

In the receptive experiences, the client listens to music and answers it in a verbal or a nonverbal manner. The music used consists of client's improvisations, interpretations or compositions or of records music literature in different styles

(classic, rock, jazz, etc.). The listening experience can be focused on the physical, emotional, intellectual, aesthetic or spiritual aspects of music and the client's responses are configured according to therapeutic purpose of the experience [9].

The metaphorical scenario is one of the techniques with a high challenging and transformative potential. It is based on the mechanism of analogy and projection, favouring the developing and achieving awareness of the individual's problems and it offers him the possibility of spontaneous transformations and modifications of affective, cognitive and action patterns [1], [6].

Mayer & Salovey (1997) describe emotional intelligence as "the ability to perceive, assess and express emotions, to access and generate feelings when they

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facilitate thought, to understand emotion and emotional information and to adjust feelings for achieving emotional and intellectual development” [3].

2. Method

2.1. Research objectives and hypotheses

The combination of receptive music therapy with metaphor in the experiential group leads to the development of emotional intelligence and to the development of each of its components (self consciousness, empathy, social skills, motivation and self-regulation).

2.2. Participants

There have been involved 60 subjects with a mean age of 23.74 years, divided into two groups:

- The experimental group - consisting of 30 subjects who attended for 18 months an experiential training focused on developing emotional intelligence.
- The control group - statistically comparable (age, sex, emotional intelligence level of development).

2.3. Measures

Pre and post the intervention in the experiential group, the following four psychological tests that assess the development of emotional intelligence and its components were individually applied:

- Emotional Intelligence Scale - EIS is a homogeneous tool [11]. For this study, we obtained a high Cronbach alpha internal consistency index ($\alpha = .869$), identical to the one presented by the authors.
- Test for measuring the emotional quotient through behavior - TQE [12] is not a homogeneous instrument.
- Test for assessing emotional intelligence - TIE [10], with a very low

coefficient of internal consistency.

- The battery of tests to find out the emotional intelligence profile - BTPIE [14], for which the authors do not present data on psychometric qualities, but the results of this research show a good internal consistency for the total score ($\alpha = .80$). The battery components range from a high Cronbach α coefficient ($\alpha = .77$ for motivation) to low one ($\alpha = .24$ for self-awareness).

2.4. Techniques

In the experiential group, receptive music therapy was combined with the metaphorical exercise self awareness and restructuring the self [13], to facilitate experimentation, here and now, of life situations to help participants develop emotional intelligence and its components.

“We invite you to listen to the music and give your body the necessary time to find its most comfortable position. [...] And if you are well where you sit, allow yourself to get in contact with your own inner you, see what your state is now. You may feel great joy, content, fulfillment, or on the contrary, you may live a state of dissatisfaction, sadness, and anger. Identify which is your state here and now and be aware of everything that characterizes you today. [...] As soon as you are fully aware of what you are feeling at the moment, imagine yourself in a hall of mirrors, where each of your colleagues is a magic mirror where you can see a part of you. You will all enter the hall of mirrors and say what you see. [...] Once you enter this great hall of mirrors, do not hurry, take your time, it is important to name every part of you which is mirrored by a colleague. It may be a part that you have or you are missing, a part that you like more or less, or, on the contrary, you dislike. If you need, you can change the position of the mirrors, so that thy can

define you better. As you name them, a significant part of yourself, please be aware of all that you feel, of the emotions, sensations that you have, the thoughts and images that cross your mind”.

During the walk through the hall of mirrors each subject was challenged to creatively and actively participate in naming the parts and their restructuring, that is, not only to verbalize thoughts but also to act in order to identify their resources and blockages that may appear in human relationships. Finally, participants were asked to write down in their personal journal how they felt during that experience and the way they got involved.

3. Results

The experiential group members had the opportunity, in this experience, to identify their own beliefs, emotional feelings, vulnerabilities or fears that prevent them from identifying and expressing their emotions, opinions, or from engaging actively in various activities.

Notable in this regard is Codrin's experience. He, visibly touched and anxious, entered the hall of mirrors and went directly in front of a female colleague. He chose the following mirrors in which he saw his different parts:

- Geta – “*beauty*” for whom he initially precisely illustrated with his own body the desired position, and then, visibly moved, he worked posturally with the girl to change her position.

- Mihnea - “*sobriety*”, the mature man that helps him know what he wants, which was asked to smile a little and he was a bit rushed in front of this mirror.

- Grațîela – “*intelligence*” towards which he leaned down and verbally indicated her how to stand.

- Anton – “*the natural comic-ironic, without sarcasm part*”, which was guided verbally how to sit.

- Riana – “*the sincere and carefree child*” whose body he shaped and who was asked to take a musical instrument in her hands and a smile.

- Cora – “*the part that gets upset but the anger doesn't last*” – he put her hands to her chest, looking slightly down and in front of which he stood very little.

Then Codrin gave a name to each identified part by a post-it note and stuck it on the mirror like this:

- “*Beauty*” = Don Juan, after a while he changed the post-it with one on which he wrote his name saying that he does not like the original one and that it did not represent him.

- “*Intelligence*” = Einstein because this is the part that he appreciates.

- “*The comic pat, the humor*” = Mr. Bean.

- “*Sobriety, firmness, maturity*” = Donald Trump because it is necessary to have a part that sets boundaries.

- “*Childhood, sincerity*” = Tom Sawyer, about which he is very happy.

- “*Anger*” = Five Minutes as five minutes is the maximum he can be upset.

While offering name to its parts, Codrin noted on a post-it name “*The One*”- in English- and stuck it to his chest.

Therapist: *You called here several parts of your parts: beauty, anger, intelligence, humor, sobriety, maturity and firmness, sincerity and the child in you. Are you satisfied with how they are displayed? If not, remember that you can arrange them as you wish.*

Codrin (wearing a shirt on which it is written Security): *I would like to combine them.*

T: *Please combine them as you wish. Do whatever you want with your parts.*

The subject sat all his parts in the center of the room, asked them to take hold of their hands forming a circle where everyone stood with their backs to each other in the following order: Tom Sawyer,

Einstein, Don Juan, Mr. Bean, Five Minutes and Donald Trump (Figure 1).



Fig. 1. Circle of Codrin's parts

C: *Now, please, spin.* (The participants comply, laughing). *Actually, stop!* (He enters in the middle of the circle). *I'm "The One" and all my faces.* (He looks happy as they all revolve around him).

T: *I'm "The One" and all my faces ... Now, what face do the others see?*

C: *All of them, because sometimes I am like this* (indicating sobriety, firmness, maturity), *other times like that* (indicating childhood, honesty) *or like that* (indicating intelligence), *when I am like that* (showing smiling beauty) *depends on the interest, depends on the situation...*

T: *Mhm. It depends on the interest depends, on the situation ... But how do you feel now when you show us all your faces?*

C: *It feels good.*

T: *It feels good ... because...*

C: *It feels good because I am protected.*

T: *It feels good in the middle of my faces because I'm protected. Protected by ... or because...*

C: *Because not everyone has access to the core that is to me to "The One" that includes the others.*

T: *Mhm. Not everyone has access to the core, to me, I feel protected by my parts which are constantly moving around me ... And what makes me, Codrin, feel protected is...*

C: *Well, when I am in the middle and all revolve around me, no matter what would attack me or would come to me, it stops because I have kind of barrier, a kind of shield.*

T: *And through this no matter what would come to me, I understand...*

C: (required its parts to separate and sit comfortably) *I understand either an offense or something bad that happens, that is I like to be prepared for whatever may come in order to not be caught off guard.*

T: *Is that how you do in everyday life?*

C: *Yes, for example, last week my friend had an exam and I could not reach her on the phone and I thought something bad had happened to her. By the time I got to her, I had thought about different scenarios and different strategies to cope with them in order to be most efficient.*

T: *Mhm. I thought of different scenarios and different strategies to cope with them in order to be most efficient...*

C: (smiles broadly) *I am a fortress.*

T: *I, "The One", am a fortress...*

C: *Yes, why not?!*

T: *A fortress that protects itself of... and how?*

C: *My life could be called a theater with several masks that are designed to represent my moods of the moment. Because I can be angry for five minutes and then I can win over somebody, or come up with the great idea that I am under a test, or when someone wants to trample you, you are tough.*

T: *I understand that you can be a Don Juan called Codrin when you in the company of a girl that you like, or you can be brilliant when you're in an exam, when someone tramples you, you can be tough. And when I speak of all these emotions, I call them parts, then faces, or theater masks...*

C: *I have many faces.*

Thanks to the clarifying questions, Codrin realized that when his parts do just what they want to, he, “The One” (The Fortress) controls them. Then, he was challenged to act in a way to get what he wants. He sent “The Humor” outside, he put “Anger” with her back to others, he offered “childhood” a musical instrument, again, and then played with her.

Subsequently, the meta-positions technique challenged Codrin to realize the conflict between his two polarities:

- the conformist part, trying to please the others and to comply with their

requirements and expectations (parents, colleagues, friends, bosses).

- the non-conformist part that takes into account his wishes, his needs and especially his emotions.

T: (very seriously turns to his beauty) *Now, you are, in addition to my Beauty, my Emotions. I baptize you...*

C: (writes on a post-it that he stick on his colleague’s other hand) *I baptize you Hidden Codrin because you are a part that I do not want the whole world to see* (Figure 2).



Fig. 2. Codrin’s Beauty and Emotions

T: *And what makes me want not to show you, Emotions, is...*

C: *Because I do not think that everyone deserves to know you and I do not want to.*

T: *I do not want to, because...*

C: *I do you think you are my weakest part.*

C: *I do you think you are my weakest part.*

C: *Yes, but I do not want everybody to know you.*

T: *Because if they all knew of you, my Emotions, they could...*

C: *If they knew of you, I'd feel a slight discomfort. I would feel a little vulnerable.*

T: *And if I feel a little vulnerable, what would happen, Codrin?*

C: (turning to Donald Trump) *that would influence my sobriety and firmness*

face.

T: *We understand that if people could see your Beauty and Emotions, you might be perceived as being less sober and firm...*

C: *Yes. If that would happen, I could not achieve certain goals because some people may take advantage of me.*

T: *We understand that you would not like that to happen. You could do something with that part of the hidden Codrin, different from what you had done before, so that you can achieve your goals. I invite you to act.*

C: (he puts Donald Trump next to Hidden Codrin and asks them to hold hands, so that Emotions is above the hand that represents Firmness, Maturity and Sobriety - Figure 3) *Now it's much better.*



Fig. 3. Codrin's "Emotions" and "Firmness, Maturity, Sobriety"

T: *And if you put into words what you have done, you would say...*

C: *I have combined Emotions with Firmness, Maturity and Sobriety. I mean that I could have emotions but I can also be sober, strong and mature.*

T: *Can you explain that to us how?*

C: *I can acknowledge my feelings but manage to be firm, at the same time.*

T: *Great. Do you want to do anything else?*

Codrin requires all parts to sit on the rug

and to stick the post-its on their hands, then puts their hands one above the other, like this: "Anger", "Emotions", "humor", "The Sincere child", "Intelligence", "Firmness, Maturity, Sobriety" and "Codrin – the Beauty"; challenged to imagine that many years have passed, he makes a change, that is he thanks the colleagues whom he then invites to retire and he sticks to all the post-its on his own hand and says that he feels very well (Figure 4).



Fig. 4. Restructuring and merging Codrin's parts

The deep personal analysis continued and Codrin acknowledged the origin of this inner conflict and especially the effective strategy of integration of the two polarities and of conflict resolution. He also realized, with great difficulty, that he had a dependency relationship ("of parasites") with his father, that he followed his model ("he worries if he gets no news from his girlfriend after an exam") with which he identifies himself very well, but which prevents his personal development.

Young people participating in experiential training focused on developing emotional intelligence were challenged to exercise their own insight analysis abilities and to better know themselves and the others. Thus, they have understood that each person is unique and coexisting harmoniously with others requires good responsiveness to their own needs and emotions, but also of the others' and their effective communication. Also, subjects have found different patterns of

constructive interrelating, as well as the fact that the responsibility of their own change belongs to themselves.

Effectiveness of the experiential training

focused on developing emotional intelligence has been proved by the t-test results shown in Table 1.

Comparisons of means and standard deviations, post-test Table 1

Psychological tests	Mean (σ) Experimental group	Mean (σ) Control group	t
IE – EIS (Schutte et al., 1998)	129.60 (11.78)	122.47 (10.27)	2.49*
IE – TQE (Segal, 1999)	8.87 (1.92)	6.43 (1.96)	4.85**
IE – TIE (adapted by Roco, 2001)	109.50 (22.33)	86.33 (23.45)	3.91**
IE – BTPIE (Wood, Tolley, 2003)	66.93 (4.66)	60.06 (3.31)	6.56**

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

Provocative exercises, followed by in-depth psychological analysis of the youngsters led to the development of self-awareness ($t(58) = 2.01$, $p = .05$), to a greater ability to regulate their emotions ($t(58) = 6.25$, $p = .001$), to increase in motivation ($t(58) = 2.91$, $p = .01$), to improvement of empathy ($t(58) = 7.88$, $p = .001$), and to the development of social skills ($t(58) = 4.41$, $p = .001$)

4. Discussion and conclusions

The use of receptive music therapy together with the metaphor in the experiential group challenged the young people involved to realize their own perceptions, thoughts, emotions, feelings, fears, blockages and vulnerabilities, and then, to assume them consciously, to transform them by resignification and to take control over them as well as over their own person. The subjects statistically significant improved their level of emotional intelligence development in a pleasant, secure atmosphere, proper to living new experiences. They also became aware of the sense of belonging to the group, that their difficulties may be shared with the others, and that it is important to adopt an attitude of trust and mutual support. The facilitating area of the

experiential group stimulated them to discover their own way to best meet the challenges of life and the chance to negotiate with themselves, to forgive and accept themselves, to boost, appreciate, respect, gratify in a conscious and responsible way. Thus, they have learned to understand themselves, to change their perspective on things and on their own person. The acquisitions occurred during provocative exercise and following thorough psychological analysis performed after their deployment [7].

In and through meeting with themselves and with the other, participants in the group have activated their resources and re-channeled their blocked energies on creative and flexible personal and professional development based on free choices and taking responsibility.

The results of this study support the vision of a new educational paradigm proposed by Mitrofan, L. et al. [5]. Moreover, the experiential training focused on developing emotional intelligence can be extended, adapted and validated on a group of participants working in music therapy. Thus, melo-therapists can be challenged to reflect on the importance of developing their emotional intelligence and working with themselves for to personal self-accomplishment, rediscovery of

creativity, authenticity and spontaneity, the melo-therapists' primordial qualities in the professional relationship with their clients and the other therapists [8].

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