

Improvisation Toolbox: Harmonic Structures, Dance and Rhythm Games

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Variety of Populations

- ♪ Dementia
- ♪ Juvenile
- ♪ Adolescent Psychiatry
- ♪ ADHD/Learning Disabilities
- ♪ Attachment Disorders
- ♪ Autism Spectrum Disorder
- ♪ Hearing Impairments
- ♪ Parkinson's Disease
- ♪ Visual Impairments
- ♪ Speech Impairments
- ♪ Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Goal Areas

- ♪ Attention focus
- ♪ No wrong notes
- ♪ Impulse control
- ♪ Decision making
- ♪ Relaxation
- ♪ Healthy posture
- ♪ Emotional expression
- ♪ Independent performance
- ♪ Range of motion
- ♪ Development of meaningful activities
- ♪ Orientation of "here-and-now"
- ♪ Following directions and cues
- ♪ Cognitive development
- ♪ Cultural knowledge
- ♪ Problem solving
- ♪ Energy release

Use of Improvisation in Clinical Settings

- ♪ Three courses were developed to prepare students for work in clinical settings. The courses integrated the use of ethnic content in dance and movement, improvisation, and percussion techniques. The assessment for each course included assessment of content, of student achievement in competencies designated for each course, of logistics, of integration in daily life, and integration in clinical settings. Reflections also considered differences noted in using live music compared to commercially available music, in serving as a student compared to serving as a teacher, as well as the use of intentional structures to maximize physical and emotional benefits that result from engagement in the content of these courses.

Combination of Structures

- ♪ Harmonic Structures
- ♪ Rhythmic Structures
- ♪ Dance and Movement Structures
- ♪ Improvisational Structures within all three areas



Sampling of Course Assessments

Logistical Assessments

♪ Live Music vs. Commercially Available Music

- ♪ Therapist can match tempo, key, style, and volume with client's presentation.
- ♪ Harmonic structures allow for no wrong notes.
- ♪ Client can actively participate by controlling or following improvisational structures.
- ♪ Emotional expression and energy release are stronger in live music.
- ♪ Live music captures attention quicker and holds it longer.
- ♪ Client can learn to create music for emotional direction and expression.

♪ Selected Physical Benefits

- ♪ Intentional movement results in increased oxygen, problem solving, relaxation, and physical conditioning.
- ♪ Cognitive awareness of body position and posture results in less stress.

♪ Use of Ethnic Music

- ♪ Provides validation of person's cultural background/heritage
- ♪ Opens up communication and builds respect and enthusiasm for participation
- ♪ Different rhythms used to challenge cognitive processing
- ♪ Awareness of different instruments and their potential uses in therapy

♪ Adaptations Needed

- ♪ Verbal instructions difficult to follow for people with dementia
 - ♪ Harmonic structures for no wrong notes
 - ♪ Rhythmic activities for attention maintenance throughout entire session
- ♪ Limit on instruments allowed in the Juvenile Detention Center
- ♪ ADHD/Learning Disability Adaptations
 - ♪ Cue for right hand/left hand discrimination
 - ♪ Multiple layers of learning to secure memory

Location of Course Orientation

- ♪ Clinical site needed for orientation
 - ♪ Limitations clearly understood
 - ♪ Familiarity with physical space necessary for planning
 - ♪ Exposure to populations

Future Considerations

- ♪ Group vs. Individual Planning for sessions
 - ♪ Timing of presentation in class related to session content
 - ♪ Developmental aspects of learning/teaching
 - ♪ Types of testing
 - ♪ D2L platform for sharing session critiques

