

EDITORIAL

Creativity and partnership

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While constraints often imply restrictions on freedom (Stokes, 2006), there are times when creativity thrives in the midst of (and is perhaps even inspired by) constraints. Limitations, pressures, and uncertainties can offer opportunities to creatively generate ideas and practices that are both novel and useful (Beghetto, 2019). Our common stance as music therapists is relational and improvisational. Spontaneity, flexibility, and creative responsiveness are baked into our practice and ways of being in the world. Experiences such as the Covid-19 pandemic challenged (and still challenge) us, particularly in light of managing the barriers that people and their communities may face when attempting to access music therapy services. As we have been living and musicking through a pandemic, we have needed a renewed sense of creativity to be able to adapt and respond to multiple and new kinds of constraints. As a form of problem-solving (Kupferberg, 2021; Treffinger et al., 2000), creativity is often a direct response to uncertainty. When we engage with, rather than dismiss uncertainty, ruptures in predictable patterns of living can offer openings with generous potential. Creative resolutions of limitations and uncertainty are emergent and dynamic (Beghetto & Karwowski, 2019).

Glăveanu (2013) proposes the five A's framework of creativity, focussing on an Actor (who brings their personal attributes to the process within a societal context); their Action (both psychological and behavioural); the Artifact that is created (within a cultural context of production and evaluation); an Audience (including collaborators, participants, opponents, colleagues, and so on); and Affordances (opportunities for action as we use what is created). Each element is interlinked. In the last few years, across music therapy services, training, supervision, continuing professional development and research initiatives, we have been prompted to examine anew how we engage as actors, the actions we can or need to take, how we create responsive services, tools, products, and spaces, how we can interact flexibly with clients, students, co-researchers and colleagues, and how we develop novel ways to build on the affordances of music therapy.

The current issue of *Approaches* celebrates the creative responses of music therapists and other related practitioners, tapping into all five “A’s” of creativity across a range of contexts. In their report *“Thresholds: Skype supervision and the liminal within a ‘journey of two’,”* Maria Radoje and Sally Pestell offer insights to music therapy supervisors and supervisees who interact through online platforms. Predating the pandemic, their innovative online work mined the affordances of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) based approaches to stimulate imaginative responses, thereby enhancing access to varying levels of consciousness. The report, *“Windows of student music therapy experience during COVID-19,”* written by Nuse, Meyer, Mattison, Smith, and McPhee, presents their experiences navigating their music therapy education during the pandemic in three different countries. Whilst facing “grief, loss, and lethargy,” they also encountered “new-found energy and opportunities” (p. 23). Amy Clements-Cortés examines best practices for online conferences and education, focusing on the Online Conference for Music Therapy (OCMT). Clements-Cortés has participated in the OCMT each year since it began in 2011 and explains how virtual conferences bring benefits and challenges (such as keeping participants engaged, providing networking opportunities, accommodating diverse individuals and ensuring equitable access) that require ongoing creative solutions.

This issue also presents several reports that show creative approaches to music therapy practice. While GIM is typically offered in person, this has not always been possible during Covid-19. As a result, some GIM therapists have transitioned to providing online services, and a few have begun to explore creating self-care resources for particular client groups. Martin Lawes reports on *“Creating a COVID-19 Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) self-help resource for those with mild to moderate symptoms of the disease.”* Lawes describes how he created an online resource that includes Part’s *Spiegel im Spiegel* with a “talk-over,” carefully taking into account the needs of Covid-19 patients, such as breathing difficulties. In their report *“Together in Sound: Music therapy groups for people with dementia and their companions – moving online in response to a pandemic,”* Molyneux and colleagues reflect on how they could replicate many of the features of in-person sessions while transitioning to collaborative online group processes. Marianne Rizkallah writes about the development of the North London Music Therapy Phone Support Service for NHS staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, and reflects on the service’s relevance for the music therapy profession. Furthermore, Lorraine McIntyre reports on adapting her practice during the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly in relation to running online music therapy sessions for trafficked women in a safehouse in England. McIntyre was required to rethink session structure, strategies of emotional containment, collaborations with other staff members, and communication approaches. In addition to the aforementioned publications that form a special feature dedicated to online music therapy, this issue includes an interview between Michael Bakan and Kenneth Aigen, a range of book reviews and three diverse articles by Cynthia Colwell, Mi hyang (Grace) Hwang and Leslie Bunt, and Enrico Curreri respectively.

The contents of the special feature, alongside other recent publications appearing in *Approaches* (e.g., Chandler & Maclean, 2022; Lotter et al., 2022), reflect the journal’s engagements with the pandemic. Since 2020, we have been actively encouraging submissions by practitioners, researchers and students documenting and exploring the implications of the pandemic for music therapy, locally, nationally and internationally. As our ways of living with Covid-19 are changing over time, such publications offer valuable insights that feed into ongoing development of technology in music

therapy practice, supervision and education, explore ethical considerations, and point to new emerging practice and research approaches.

In closing, we are delighted to share some exciting news. Over the past months, we established a partnership between Approaches and Queen Margaret University (QMU) in Edinburgh. Building on the long-standing relationship of the university as a sponsor of Approaches and the shared values between the two organisations, QMU has become the official affiliated university and host of the journal. We warmly thank Brendan McCormack, Philippa Derrington, Fiona Coutts, Richard Butt, Barbara Burgess and other colleagues at QMU and at Edinburgh Diamond for this partnership which strengthens the infrastructure of Approaches and promotes open access publishing in the field. In 2023, the journal's website will change as we transition to an Open Journal System (OJS) platform. This development will be coupled by the development of new online resources and initiatives within Approaches.

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