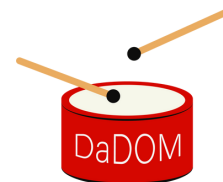


Lesson 1: Introduction

DaDOM online teacher training



Introduction

The first lesson of the DaDOM Student Curriculum is a general introduction to music in healthcare. Students will get to understand why they are studying the DaDOM curriculum, see some examples of the power of music in healthcare, and reflect on their own relationship with music. They'll also find out about the final assignment of the DaDOM Student Curriculum to help them focus their learning.

Roles of Music in Human Life

Musical activity is a part of every human experience, be it participatory or as a consumer or observer. This role of music does not vanish when people get old, sick or disabled or are in some way not self-sufficient with their daily life. Maintaining people's musical identity is an effective way to enhance quality of life. This on-line teacher-training course is intended to equip teachers of healthcare students to encourage students to use music as means of care and communication with their future patients.

Choices of how people approach music vary from person to person. To make these choices requires autonomy. They may need to have the ability to get to the places where music-making takes place, such as a concert hall, workshop space or music school etc. If the choice is to reach music through the internet, this also needs access, skills and equipment to get to it. People who suffer from illness, disability or trauma may have lost these abilities and therefore are unable to access their choices.

As a consequence, some people need assistance to keep their musical activity and relationship with music alive. We may take for granted that people are self-sufficient in their relationship with music. However sometimes this relationship can drastically change, through chronic illness, injury, or the effects of old age or dementia. They may then be forced to change the everyday habits in which musical activity is integrated, severely affecting their quality of life. Being unable to access one's musical life is in itself a terrible shock, let alone living with the trauma of illness or disability as well.

Music in Healthcare

There are many ways in which music helps people, especially those who are vulnerable. This course will focus on training professionals in the health sector, who work with vulnerable people on a daily basis. Music can play an important role in this work if you make room for it. Research has shown us that musical activities reduce the need for anti-depressants and tranquilizers. Also that the physical and mental exercise that music provokes, has immense value for those who are lucky enough to be involved in it.

The personal, musical taste of a client can be a source of well-being and healing. A selection of favourite songs or pieces can be devised in consultation with the client and the care staff member, sometimes with assistance from family and friends. These can be listened to with headphones. This is then a solo activity which people can do whenever they want, without having to plan or synchronize with others. It can be perfect for people who have less need or desire for socialising and is likely to be better than a shared radio, where stations might be often randomly selected by staff members, who may prefer different kinds of programmes.

Some clients though, might like to listen to music or radio programmes together with others, where music can often be a key component. For example, in elderly people's homes in Iceland, where people of similar age generally have a similar cultural background, it is very likely that they will feel good listening to the national radio channel "Rás eitt". This may remind them of being at home, either with their spouses and children or in their childhood homes with their parents and siblings. In other parts of Europe, this can be very different, as people come from more diverse backgrounds and cultures. In Iceland, this will also change in coming years as the generations of 'new' Icelanders grow older.

These shared musical experiences can naturally lead to more organised and formal group musical interventions, which are not specifically part of the DaDOM student training, but students will no doubt come across such interventions in their work placements.



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The third approach is music as communicational tool that enhances human interaction and can replace conversation for people who have difficulties speaking. This can be both organized sessions and, in the case of DaDOM, spontaneous interactions between care staff and clients in everyday life. The work of music therapists of course, includes this approach for clinical purposes. There are also activities led by musicians that empower people and enhance their quality of life purely with the use of music. Planned improvisation sessions with professional musicians have for example, been developed in the UK, the Netherlands and Iceland. This method originated in London under the title Music For Life, an independent organisation founded by Linda Rose in 1993 and led by Wigmore Hall Learning from 2009 (<https://wigmore-hall.org.uk/learning/music-for-life>). Music For Life was developed with people living with dementia in mind, to enhance their quality of life and seek healing, empowering and well-being.

An important research was carried out on the work of Linda Rose and Music For Life resulted in the book: *While The Music Lasts* by Rineke Smilde, Kate Page and Peter Alheit (Eburon 2014 ISBN: 978-90-5972-846-2).

Also the research article: *Using Music to Develop a Multisensory Communicative Environment for People with Late-Stage Dementia* by Amy Clare, DCLinPsych, Paul M. Camic, PhD, Sebastian J. Crutch, PhD, Julian West, BA, Emma Harding, Bsc, and Emilie Brotherhood, Msc. *The Gerontologist*, 2020, Vol. 60, No. 6, 1115–1125
doi:10.1093/geront/gnz169



Music is Common Sense

To fully understand the impact of music in people's lives, it is good to look at the organic and unconscious role of music in the early development of communication skills of infants. Based on listening and mirroring it's parents, a child will later on continually use improvisation to experiment with its communication skills, however with most individuals this experimentation gradually withers as their language capabilities improve and they are capable of expressing their thoughts and feelings.

Our western-educated conception of music has by default become connected with music-making as a profession. Excellent performers, even geniuses, have devoted their lives and careers to the specialist search for perfection, in expressing this magical phenomenon to large audiences. However, music in itself is by nature a non-specialist activity. Music is a common thread through all human communities. Even though the countless aspects of musical skill require decades of training and specialisation, the fundamental drive for musical expression exists within each and every one of us. From a child's first cry after birth, through rhythmical songs to harmonise work, to thanksgiving for a harvest, or celebrations of birth, marriage and death, music comes from this same necessity to express feelings and build societal cohesion. In the end, it is only the decision to frame music and place it on a podium to be observed and monetised (what Professor Wilfrid Mellers called 'Museum Culture'), that transforms it to this exclusive phenomenon that we now think of as music. A good example of connecting the artistic and the primal is a composition by Thuríður Jónsdóttir for violin and recording. Thuríður recorded her young child's sounds while breastfeeding and composed a musical piece with it by framing the recording as a sound track with a solo violin. The piece is called Inni (<https://open.spotify.com/artist/2bnzMz147M8T5y3rkwauca>)

Even though the sound of the breastfeeding child is in a sense coincidental, as a piece of music it is expressive, first of hunger and perhaps impatience and then of nourished well-being.

This primal role of music in the development of human upbringing was evidently well known to the pioneers of formal education. In ancient Greek education, music was one of only three core subjects (including dance and poetry) and remained a core subject throughout the Middle Ages. Nowadays with life becoming more and more complicated and requiring specialised skills and training, the tendency for education authorities to put more and more emphases on science based subjects and IT competences in the search for employability, it seems that music and other subjects of artistic expression have become either neglected or at least put as a lower priority. This has happened over recent decades, even though in the case of Iceland at least, musical education must by law, be a part of elementary education. This evolution makes it even more urgent to remember the very real part music plays in our lives.



embrace



KARALIAUS MINDAUGO

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Music is integrated in life in a holistic way. As mentioned earlier, music has been used in most aspects of human life, for as long as we can trace history. In many parts of Western culture however, this has become detached from the common knowledge and experience, as so many solutions have been outsourced to specialists, as a result of colonisation, industrialisation and the monetising of shared, common practices. In reality though, there are still some traces of common practice of music. Singing lullabies to babies to put them asleep and letting off steam in a dance club, create mindfulness and distraction from the problems of daily routine, to mention two examples. In the Inuit culture of Greenland, drum dancing was a holistic approach to life in all aspects. From birth to death the practice of using a drum and the human voice is a part of all human activities, such as religion, medicine, law, upbringing, sickness, joy, birth, love and death. But with colonisation by the Danish Christian monarchy, the Church banned these practices as they had elements of pagan religion in them, with the effect that this tradition is on the verge of extinction.

The human urge to be immersed in music is so strong that it can be described as a common sense. It therefore seems worthwhile for healthcare professionals, with the support of various institutions to seek purpose for musical activity through formal and informal methods in healing, caring and enhancing quality of life. It will without a doubt complement traditional medicine and become an important component of caring and clinical practice.

