



Group Music Therapy Service Evaluation

At WE-ACTx for Hope, Kigali, Rwanda

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Introduction

This summary report gives the results of service evaluation of group music therapy over a period of nine months with members of nine groups receiving music therapy at WE-ACTx for Hope. The evaluation followed Most Significant Change methodology, recording stories of significant change from participants, and then selecting the stories of Most Significant Change, as defined by members of the project's partner organizations. Eighty six narratives were collected, five narratives emerged as indicative of Most Significant Change.

Participants

65 patients received music therapy in 9 groups.

36 were female, 29 male.

Ages were 12 - 26 years old.

Results: Patients' Stories of Most Significant Change

1. *"When I was home before I was thinking about my future life then I couldn't find my future because difficulties, family problems thinking what would I do, and how will I do that. But today it is totally different because of music therapy sessions which ignited my life. I can sit down and try to play with any objects that can produce any sound. When I'm at home I know how to behave so to avoid anger, hopelessness and getting irritable. Music is something that changed my life. Even at home now they make some time to share things together, and I do some music demonstrations for them which makes me feel happy. I feel considered, and honored."*
2. *"When I return home I begin to sing the songs for my child and I feel better. They help me at home because I can sing the songs we have learnt. Then outside the sessions I am very happy because I don't feel alone, I feel I'm with my colleagues of the group which gives me strength to look at my future."*
3. *"Every time when I lose hope in life or when I am alone and I'm thinking things are very difficult for me, I can sing or play music in order to forget those problems. Before I couldn't even sing in front of people, but now I sing everywhere... And I can explain also my problem in this group, but before it was a problem to express myself."*



4. *"I wasn't the kind of person who you can meet everywhere, taking part in events in the community, or being in public. But after joining music sessions, I started enjoying with others the importance and the role of socializing in the community. Now in the neighborhood I am among those who participate actively."*
5. *"The way we were playing before is different to the way we are studying now because the level we have right now is not the same we had at the beginning. During the first sessions, because the first session everyone had to play the way he likes or understands but in these days we sit together and play together the thing that can touch our grief and sorrow. Another positive change is when someone in a group has a problem we sit, share and discuss it as group. I noticed that everyone contributes actively to help one another, which helps to progress in our life and in our music career too."*

Results: Subject Analysis

100% of patients reports significant positive changes.

Importantly, the majority of significant changes related to **personal changes**. With 31% relating to musical change, and 25% to group change.

The areas of change that emerged overall as significant were:

- Music therapy has provided a new resource in life to regulate a positive mood;
- Patients feel an improved state of mind, moving away from despair to hope and happiness;
- Young people experience improved relationships in life, and a decrease in feelings of isolation;
- There are significant benefits from the opportunity to discuss and process difficulties;
- Young patients appreciate the chance to increase their musical knowledge.

Conclusions

The five narratives that emerged as indicative of the Most Significant Change show connection between these areas of change. Throughout the five narratives there is a sense of hope for the future as the experience of music therapy is applied to life. Being able to access music as a means for processing unhelpful states of mind allows people to better manage relationships and deal with the difficulties that they face. The connection and interaction experienced in music therapy has led to greater involvement in community events. One narrator speaks of using new musical knowledge to sing to her baby, and the relief that this offers. Music therapy is impacting lives beyond the boundaries of sessions. Within the experience of music therapy, group members experience change that is supporting them to make change in their everyday lives.