

Professional activity and professional requirements for music therapists in American society

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Annotation. The article is devoted to the problem of professional activity and professional requirements for music therapists in American society. A thorough analysis of literary sources on the problem under research provided the possibility to present the impact of global healthcare trends on the development of music therapy as a vital component of health services. It underscores the necessity for comprehensive training of music therapists to address the multifaceted challenges posed by the modern healthcare system. The role of music therapy is highlighted as a means to achieve various objectives, necessitating a broad spectrum of competencies among practitioners. The article emphasizes the versatility and breadth of the music therapy profession, highlighting its presence in various healthcare and community settings. Music therapists are dedicated to serving a diverse clientele, transcending age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and religious beliefs. They focus on overcoming barriers that hinder the actualization of an individual's potential, addressing social, psychological, physical, educational, and cultural challenges. The profession's reach extends across various sectors, including health care centres, family services, mental health facilities, correctional institutions, private practices, educational settings, and military organizations. Integral to the professional conduct of music therapists are several behavioural categories: professional, intrapersonal and interpersonal. In the modern context, the role of music therapy and the multifaceted functions of a music therapist are increasingly recognized as interdisciplinary within the rehabilitation domain. This approach is designed to harness an individual's innate protective mechanisms, foster an active approach to life, and utilize the therapist's professional competence as a key personal asset in their practice. It is concluded that the primary objective of a music therapist is to establish an environment conducive to client empowerment. This nurturing setting enables clients to engage in a journey of self-awareness, self-exploration, self-definition, self-actualization, and self-validation, thereby facilitating a holistic expression of their abilities.

Keywords: music therapy, music therapist, professional activity, professional conduct, professional functions, requirements for music therapist's professional competence, the USA.

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Професійна діяльність та професійні вимоги до музичних терапевтів в американському суспільстві

Анотація. Стаття присвячена проблемі професійної діяльності та професійних вимог до музичних терапевтів в американському суспільстві. Ретельний аналіз літературних джерел з досліджуваної проблеми дав можливість представити вплив глобальних тенденцій у сфері охорони здоров'я на розвиток музичної терапії як невід'ємної складової медичних послуг. Вона підкреслює необхідність всебічної підготовки музичних терапевтів для вирішення багатогранних завдань, які ставить перед ними сучасна медична система. Роль музичної терапії виокремлюється як засіб досягнення різноманітних цілей, що вимагає широкого спектру компетентностей практиків. Стаття акцентує увагу на універсальності та широті професії музичного терапевта, підкреслюючи її присутність у різноманітних медичних та громадських установах. Музичні терапевти присвячують себе обслуговуванню різноманітних клієнтів, не зважаючи на вік, расу, етнічну приналежність, соціально-економічний статус та релігійні переконання. Вони зосереджуються на подоланні бар'єрів, які перешкоджають реалізації потенціалу особистості, вирішуючи соціальні, психологічні, фізичні, освітні та культурні проблеми. Сфера діяльності професії охоплює різні сектори, включаючи медичні центри, служби підтримки сім'ї, психічного здоров'я, виправні установи, приватну практику, освітні заклади та військові організації. Невід'ємною складовою професійної поведінки музичних терапевтів є такі: професійна, інтраперсональна та інтерперсональна поведінка. У сучасних умовах роль музичної терапії та багатогранні функції музичного терапевта все більше визнаються як міждисциплінарні в рамках реабілітаційного напрямку. Цей підхід спрямований на використання природних захисних механізмів особистості, сприяння активній життєвій позиції та використання професійної компетентності терапевта як ключового особистісного ресурсу у їхній практиці. Зроблено висновок про те, що основною метою музичного терапевта є створення оптимально комфортних умов, в яких клієнти можуть повноцінно виявляти свої здібності через самоусвідомлення, самовідкриття, самовизначення, самореалізацію та самоствердження, тим самим сприяючи цілісному вираженню власних здібностей.

Ключові слова: музична терапія, музичний терапевт, професійна діяльність, професійна поведінка, професійні функції, вимоги до професійної компетентності музичного терапевта, США.

Introduction

Contemporary global trends in the development of the healthcare system, which are primarily manifested in its orientation towards strengthening the physical and mental well-being of the population and the prevention of related issues, necessitate the renewal of its personnel infrastructure and the training of highly qualified specialists in providing health services, including music therapy. The evolution of American society, especially in the context of a global economic crisis, dictates the need for the development of new approaches to the advancement of public health policy. The diversity of modern music therapy techniques, the variety of their application areas, and consequently, the complexity and multitasking nature of music therapists' professional activities require their thorough preparation, which would ensure the formation of a broad spectrum of competencies. Music therapy can achieve various objectives within the realms of healthcare and education.

The analysis of recent research and publications. The analysis of recent research and publications reveals a particular interest in scientific studies from various aspects of the development of music therapy and the training of music therapists [1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 9; 18]. Among

scholars, there is an active debate regarding the essence of the concept of “music therapy”, as well as the specifics of training professionals in this field [3; 6; 12; 11; 13; 20; 25]. In the context of the raised issue, the perspectives of scholars [8; 16; 18; 21; 26; 17] are significant concerning the state of the system for providing music therapy services, national organizations for music therapy, government regulation of music therapy education, institutional infrastructure and material support, conceptual-theoretical foundations, organizational and methodological principles, and others.

Based on the analysis and synthesis of scientific works and reflection on practical experience, it has been summarized that the objectives of music therapy are the restoration, preservation, and support of the life activities and health of various population groups. Music therapy is a complex of psychological, educational, medical, musical, rehabilitative, and other measures directed at specific social groups or individuals, with the aim of improving or restoring their life activities, social adaptation, and return to a full life. Music therapy is a process of interpersonal communication in which a qualified music therapist employs music and all aspects of its influence – physical, emotional, intellectual, social, aesthetic, and spiritual – with the goal of improving or maintaining the client’s health.

The formulation of article purpose. The purpose of this article is to conduct an analysis of the professional activities and professional requirements for music therapists in American society.

Results

The synthesis of scholarly literature and the examination of practical applications have led to the recognition that music therapy’s primary goals include the rehabilitation, conservation, and enhancement of the vitality and well-being of diverse demographic cohorts. Music therapy encompasses an intricate array of interventions spanning psychological, pedagogical, clinical, musical, and rehabilitative domains, specifically tailored for distinct social groups or individuals, with the intention of ameliorating or reconstituting their functional living, societal integration, and re-engagement with life in its entirety. Music therapy entails a dyadic communicative process where a credentialed music therapist employs the multifaceted impact of music, encompassing the physical, emotional, cognitive, communal, aesthetic, and spiritual dimensions—to either augment or sustain the health of the client. Music therapy is the skilful use of music and musical elements by an accredited music therapist to promote, maintain, and restore mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Music has nonverbal, creative, structural, and emotional qualities. These are used in the therapeutic relationship to facilitate contact, interaction, self-awareness, learning, self-expression, communication, and personal development [10].

Music therapy professionals serve as intermediaries between the recipients of therapeutic services and a range of institutions that provide these services (such as state agencies, hospitals, educational institutions, businesses, etc.). Music therapists work in various settings, including general and psychiatric hospitals, community mental health facilities, rehabilitation centers, nursing homes, schools, and private practice. There are currently over 9,000 board-certified music therapists in the United States, engaged in a variety of specialties and positions. Music therapists are employed in a variety of settings including, but not limited to medical and psychiatric hospitals, rehabilitation and outpatient facilities, nursing homes and long term care facilities, community mental health agencies, adult day care programmes, hospice agencies, schools, private practices (see Fig. 1).

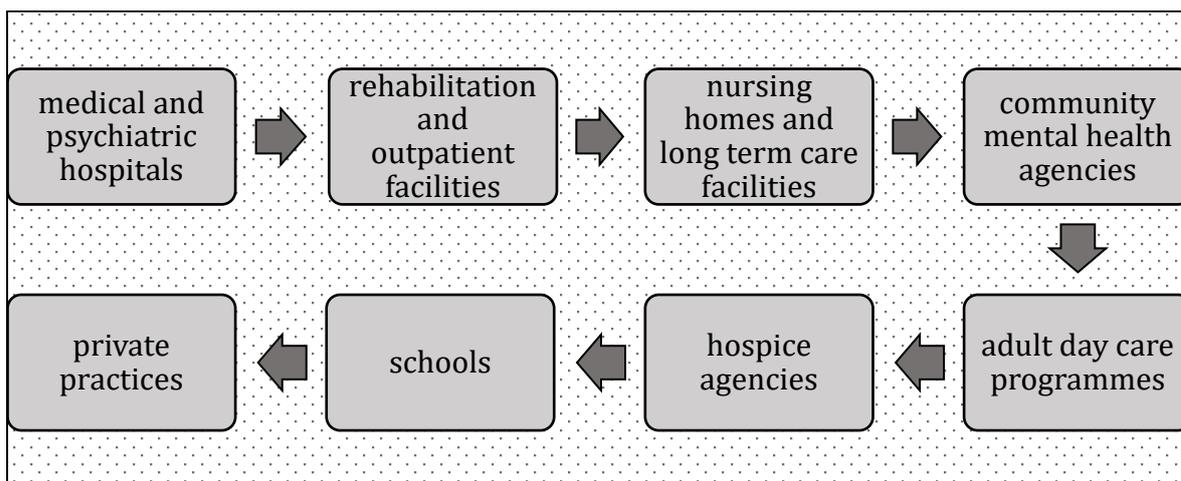


Fig. 1. The employment of music therapists

Music therapy practitioners deliver therapeutic interventions to a diverse clientele, encompassing both adults and children afflicted with psychological maladies, cognitive and developmental anomalies, auditory and linguistic challenges, somatic impairments, and a spectrum of neurological disorders. These professionals often collaborate within a multidisciplinary framework, contributing to the fulfilment of individualized therapeutic aims and aspirations as delineated by music therapy protocols.

Contemporary literature and practice in the United States [7; 15; 19; 22] have delineated the quintessential attributes and proficiencies requisite for music therapists in the modern era, including: the evaluation of clients; the strategizing of therapeutic interventions; mastery in musicality; the capacity for empathy, effective communication, facilitation of therapeutic processes, orchestration of group dynamics, administrative acumen, oversight of behavioural protocols, and commitment to ongoing professional development [17].

According to these criteria, the professional purpose of music therapists lies in creating the necessary conditions and applying specialized musical and therapeutic measures to reintegrate individuals into society and restore their health. Music therapy is a profession of high social and moral value in society. Its scope is continually expanding to include organizations and health care centres, family and child protection agencies, mental health centres, correctional facilities, private practice, health care, medical rehabilitation services, educational institutions, nursing homes, penal institutions, the armed forces, and more.

Music therapists serve individuals of all ages, races, ethnic groups, socioeconomic statuses, and religions. Their primary task is to provide assistance in situations where social, psychological, physical, educational, or cultural barriers prevent individuals from realizing their potential. Music therapy specialists can aid in mental recovery, personal growth dynamics, social therapy, and the regulation of various life processes and socialization of individuals. Considering the life and professional needs of different population categories, music therapists perform a range of functions: coordinative, consultative, socio-rehabilitative, diagnostic-correctional, socializing, recreational, health-preserving, managerial, preventive, career-oriented, educational, and others [14] (see Fig. 2).

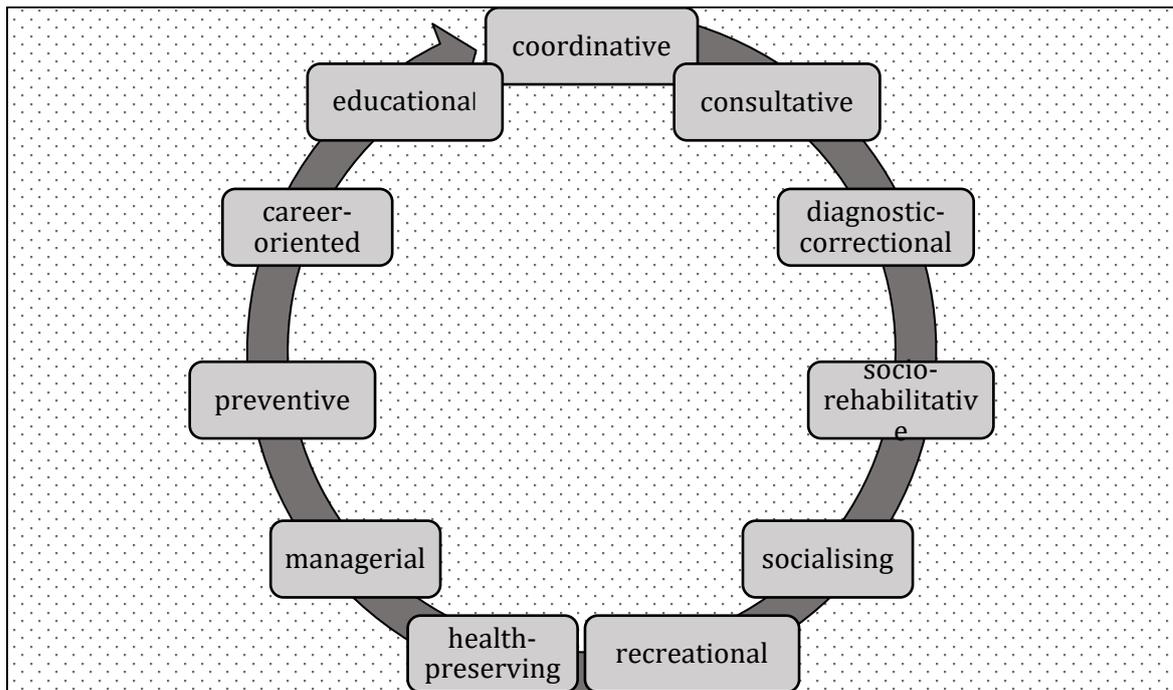


Fig. 2. Professional functions of music therapists

A pivotal role in the quality provision of music therapy is played by the social partnership between the state and professional organizations, centres, agencies, medical institutions, educational establishments, and others. Significant state support is provided by the Department of Human Services, Department of Social and Health Services, Department for Children and Families, Department of Aging and Disability Services, Department of Labour and Workforce Development, Department of Employment and Economic Development, Department of Rehabilitation Services, Department of Education, Division of Professional Rehabilitation, Counselling centre, The American Music Therapy Association [23], the Certification Board for Music Therapists [24]. The mission of these institutions is the restoration, preservation, and support of the life activities and health of various population groups through the development and implementation of a system of measures aimed at returning individuals to active life and work, restoring social status, and shaping qualities and attitudes for adaptation to the conditions of normal life activity.

Significant support in the advancement and popularization of music therapy and its educational programs is provided by The American Music Therapy Association, Inc. [23]. It was established in 1998 as a merger of the American Association for Music Therapy and the National Association for Music Therapy. Its purpose is to support the therapeutic use of music in hospitals, educational, and community institutions. In 2005, the The American Music Therapy Association articulated the essential characteristics and objectives of music therapy. Music therapy is the clinical and evidence-based use of musical interventions to achieve individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program. Music therapy can achieve a variety of goals in the fields of health care and education: promoting wellness; managing stress; alleviating pain; expressing feelings; enhancing memory; improving communication; supporting physical rehabilitation, and more [23].

Currently, The American Music Therapy Association establishes criteria for academic programs in colleges and universities, clinical training institutions, and professional registration facilities for music therapists. The members of The American Music Therapy Association adhere to a strict code of ethics and practice standards that govern the clinical practice of music therapy. Research findings in music therapy are published in the “Journal of Music Therapy” and “Music Therapy Perspectives”, as well as other scholarly publications. Each

state also has its own state music therapy association, which addresses various issues and supports the professional development of music therapists in the region.

American scholars' views on the key competencies of music therapy specialists predominantly relate to communicative, universal, social, leadership, diagnostic, and conflict resolution competencies.

It should be noted that music therapy is, to some extent, an integrated professional activity that essentially consists of numerous processes specified within the domains of musical art and therapy. In other words, a music therapy specialist performs an integrative function as a mediator between service users and a range of institutions that provide these services, thereby fulfilling various roles: able to manage time well, effective communicator, problem-solver, responsible, patient, analytical, leader, compassionate etc.

For the successful performance of professional functions and roles, music therapists must possess personal qualities such as: an inclination to work with children; a high degree of personal responsibility; self-control and equanimity; tolerance, non-judgmental attitude towards people; interest in and respect for others; a desire for self-awareness and self-development; originality, agility, versatility; tactfulness; purposefulness; demanding nature; observativeness; openness; approachability; professionalism, integrity; tolerance.

Several noteworthy behavioural categories are considered integral components of the professional functioning of a music therapist:

Professional Behaviour: a) Demonstrating reliability (e.g., punctuality in submitting documents and completing tasks, meticulous approach to organizing meetings with service clients, etc.); b) Taking responsibility for one's own work; c) Quality execution of assigned tasks; d) Utilizing all possible sources of assistance.

Intrapersonal Behaviour: a) Exhibiting mature and responsible conduct; b) Demonstrating skills for autonomous living; c) Showing respectful behaviour; d) Developing internal criteria for evaluating one's own activities.

Interpersonal Behaviour: a) Collaborating and showing respect for others; b) Effectively using feedback; c) Developing and maintaining social relationships; d) Displaying tolerance towards various population categories; e) Appropriate and emotional communication with others; f) Demonstrating ethical responsibility; g) Easily adapting to new situations (see Fig. 3).

Undoubtedly, the ethical norms of behaviour for music therapists, which also entail the use of various models for ethical decision-making, hold significant importance. Considering the specific areas of personality that require music therapy, these can be identified as: physical rehabilitation, motivation and emotions; self-expression, communication, cognitive skills, social/emotional functioning.

The field of therapeutic services is unequivocally moving towards the goal of meeting human needs through an interdisciplinary knowledge base, focusing on prevention, as well as on the resolution of problems and maintaining a commitment to improving the overall quality of life of the population.

The profession of music therapist contributes to the enhancement of the therapeutic service delivery system, considering not only the quality of direct services but also striving to improve accessibility, accountability, and coordination among professionals and agencies, social organizations that provide people with necessary resources and services. The communicative component of music-therapeutic activity enables the specialist to successfully perform coordinative, consultative, socializing, managerial, career-oriented, and educational functions, is a necessary condition for successful activity and presupposes the ability to navigate professional communication situations, to master its verbal and non-verbal means, to establish emotional and business contacts, and to achieve the goal of communication in the process of professional interaction, reflecting the level of development of communicative connections with other people, which ensures the mastery of social reality through communicative mechanisms and allows effectively influencing one's own behaviour and the behaviour of others in the communicative environment.

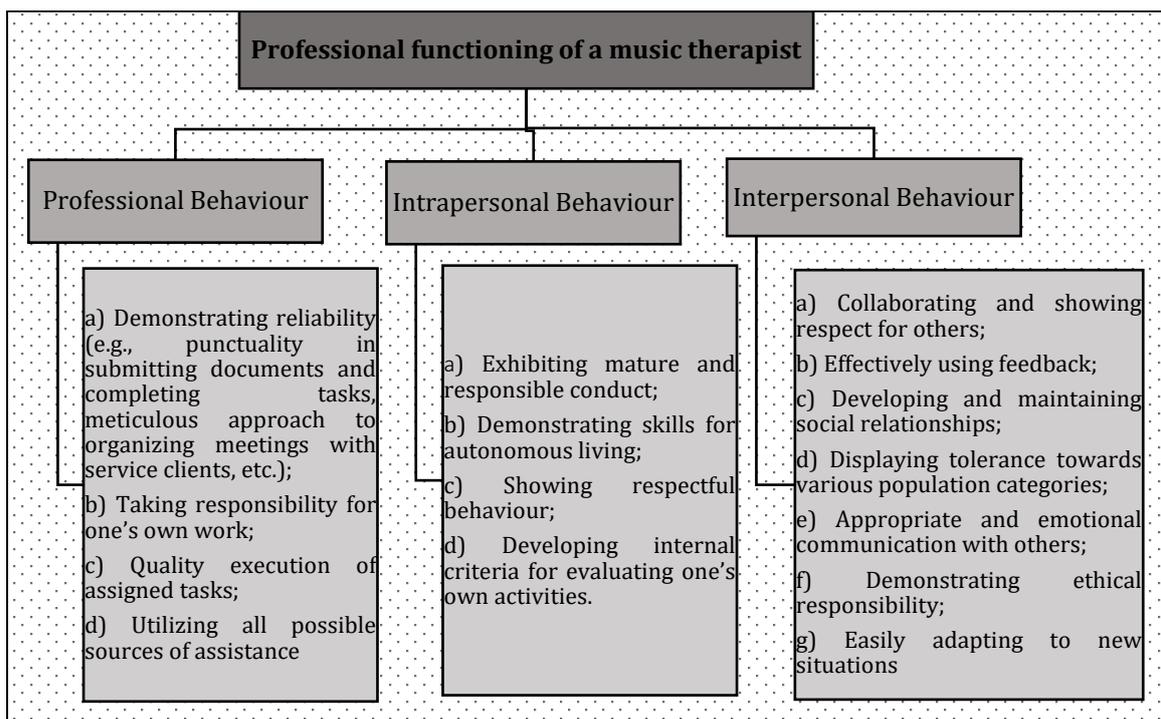


Fig. 3. Professional functioning of a music therapist

According to research by American scholars, the leading socially significant motives for music-therapeutic activity include: the realization of one's own internal potential and the definition of personal mission; a societal calling and a sense of social significance of professional activity; a feeling of contribution to the general societal usefulness of the cause; affirmation in life values; awareness of responsibility before society and the individual; a sense of duty; humanistic attitudes, values of communication, and prosocial ethical behaviour. In this understanding, the professional activity of music therapists is always social, substantive, and conscious.

As we can see, in modern conditions, the mission of music-therapeutic activity and the professional functions of a music therapist have an interdisciplinary character of the rehabilitative movement, aimed at activating the protective properties of the individual, developing their active life stance, and the professional competence of the specialist is a leading personal resource of their professional activity.

In the professional practice of music therapists, various models of improvisational music therapy are utilized: Creative Music Therapy, Free Improvisation Therapy, and Analytic Music Therapy. The diversification of models is justified by researchers as an adaptation to different client groups. Creative and improvisational models of music therapy require the music therapist to have an adaptive response and flexibility in the methods of perception and reflection on the music created by the client.

Music therapists work with clients who have a wide range of issues, and therefore, must know how to adapt the musical experience to the range of needs and abilities of the client. Clinical improvisation allows the client and therapist to communicate with each other through music, and this method of communication requires musical flexibility. The music therapist must be able to shape their music to work with the strengths and limitations of the client, including avoidance and resistance. Physical therapists are also required to consider the needs of the client, particularly their cognitive, motor, and social competencies, to engage the client at their own level of functioning and to facilitate expanded access to musical activities (Ruud, 1998). Thus, the music therapist must also be able to diagnose indicators such as pitch/frequency,

tempo/pulse, rhythm, intensity/loudness, duration, melody, and harmony, in order to create music that best meets the needs of each client.

Conclusions

As we can see, in contemporary conditions, the mission of music-therapeutic activity and the professional functions of a music therapist have an interdisciplinary character within the rehabilitative movement, aimed at activating the protective properties of the individual, developing their active life stance, and the professional competence of the specialist is a leading personal resource of their professional activity.

Therefore, the function of a music therapist lies in creating optimally comfortable conditions in which clients can fully express their capabilities through self-awareness, self-discovery, self-determination, self-realization, and self-affirmation.

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