Developing And Importance Of Music Therapy

During the last decade, health care has significantly evolved to include an even wider variety of aspects of the patient’s physical and mental health. Upon evolving, the demand for various specialties within the field grew as well, one of which bloomed right after World War I and II, music therapy.

Using musical elements, such as melody, rhythm, words, harmony, tamper, tempo, dynamics, and form, music therapy treats patients' needs on many levels. According to the American Music Therapy Association, music therapy is identified as 'the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program.'

“Music Physically Considered” was the title of the article in Columbia magazine, after publishing it, the first music therapy experiment record was held in the 1800s. Later in the early 1940s, several experts in music therapy helped to promote the importance and ways of using music as a therapeutic tool. Eventually, in 1944, the first music therapy academic program established by Michigan State University initiated the start of the program in other universities.

It was on the second of June 1950 that the National Association of Music Therapy was established and using law reinforcement strategically, it was able to monitor and regulate various aspects of the use and research in the music therapy field. Then, in 1971 Urban Federation of Music Therapists, now known as the American Association for Music Therapy (AAMT), was created in 1980 and issuing its research and clinical journal. Aiming to empower the credibility of the profession, the certification Board for Music Therapists (CBMT), founded in 1983, played the role of evaluating the competency of credentialed music therapists. Finally, in 1998, NAMT and AAMT merged to create The American Music Therapy Association (AMTA), which was an important step to unite the profession. As a result, this association became the greatest music therapy association around the world as it was giving voice to therapists situated in more than thirty countries.

Naturally, there are doubts regarding the effects of music therapy. However, on the other hand, there is plenty of researches carried out and submitted by well-known institutions denoting said doubts. The US National Library of Medicine - National Institutes of Health, for example, has a research paper discussing the efficiency of this method titled 'effectiveness of music therapy: a summary of systematic reviews based on randomized controlled trials of music intervention.' That, as well as a 2011 review which explains the positive effect of music therapy on cancer patients published in Cochrane libraries.

Researches have proven that not only does music therapy work on altering the release of endorphins, thus regulate heart rate and breathing, but it also helps to release concealed negative thoughts and memories. Nonetheless, it has also helped improving communication and physical coordination, whether in mentally unstable patients or those on the autistic spectrum. In addition to showing great results with elderly suffering memory loss due to Alzheimer’s or dementia, music therapy has proved to be useful during labor in which it decreases pain and helps in muscle relaxation.

In conclusion, the AMTA realizes the importance of the field, thus in 2015, the symposium “Improving Access and Quality: Music Therapy Research 2025” was held, highlighting the urgency and means of achieving such goals.