


Music Therapy and Public Health: How to Bridge the Use of Ethnic Music for Social Anxiety

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MT: Music Therapy

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Abstract

Music Therapy (MT) is a growing field that has shown promise in promoting social and emotional well-being. Use of music therapy is a means of dealing with social anxiety, which is a common mental health problem. Potential benefits of using and bridging ethnic music in therapy and public health exist. Strategies to promote the use of music therapy in public health programs are necessary, specifically to address social anxiety.

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Dear Editors,

The most recent study entitled “Music Therapy for Health Workers to Reduce Stress, Mental Workload, and Anxiety: A Systematic Review”¹ showed that despite heterogeneity, music interventions such as Music Therapy (MT) seem to reduce stress parameters significantly. Tailored MT for individual support is an essential requirement for follow-up. We agree that using MT assists in recovering from psychological problems, especially social anxiety problems. To enrich this study, we would like to provide another perspective on using MT for social care by considering socio-cultural diversity and traditional music.

Social anxiety disorder in individuals can be experienced by someone when they are in an alarming social situation. In addition, traumatic events in the past can also affect individual social anxiety. Although every individual has the opportunity to experience social anxiety, the experience and type of social anxiety vary. So, the interventions given also vary depending on the type and level of personal anxiety.

Music can be used as an alternative in social activity anxiety therapy,² reducing phobias,³ and other mental health problems. One type of music that is rarely used in counseling is traditional music. Traditional gamelan music is unique because the instruments can provide a sense of calm and help individuals become more relaxed.³ In addition, gamelan music is believed to reduce anxiety. Other positive impacts of using traditional music in therapy sessions are decreased levels of anxiety, decreased levels of depression, and reduced stress.^{4–6}

Public health plays an essential role in handling the problem of social anxiety. Support communities can reduce social anxiety through activities that improve individual mental health. Forms of community mental health activities include nurses, midwives, and doctors forming mental health cadres whose job is to accompany mental health workers at the Puskesmas. Therefore, it is necessary to hold regular training to improve the abilities of mental health personnel. This program is expected to domino effect patients’ quality of life and help them readjust to their social environment. The concept of a healthy mental community is also a positive community for promoting and preventing mental health.

The existence of traditional music as an alternative therapy for mental health problems in society can contribute to the development of mental health services. Mental health educators can optimize traditional music in implementing counseling approaches to reduce mental health problems. Collaborating with local artists also gives a new color to mental health services.

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