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Pat Lloyd

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KAREN D. GOODMAN, *Music Therapy Groupwork with Special Needs Children: The Evolving Process*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 2007. 302 pp. ISBN 0398077401 (pbk) \$49.95

Written as a textbook for music therapy students, and as a resource for practising music therapists, this book benefits from the author's extensive experience in the USA as a therapist, teacher and lecturer within the field. Karen Goodman explains her perspective in the context of developing groupwork with children with special needs, in both educational and psychiatric settings. She refers to a wide range of literature in support of her arguments for using strategies that have worked for her over her many years of practice. Clinical vignettes are used throughout to demonstrate her approach, together with useful practical suggestions for suitable materials, and methods of preparing for and recording progress in sessions.

The book is written in eight chapters that describe in detail the whole process of developing groupwork in a range of settings. From the start, there is a strong emphasis on the importance of establishing developmentally appropriate objectives, devised to meet the individual needs of children within the group. In the first chapter, Goodman acknowledges some possible practical limitations that may be faced, and suggests a pragmatic approach to working within institutions in which restricted choices may be available to the practitioner. She emphasizes the value of fitting into a team approach in order to successively work collaboratively with a range of professionals. For example, in educational settings, she advocates goal setting to incorporate priorities established in each child's Individual Education Plan (IEP), particularly in the areas of communication and social interaction. She recognizes that children within any age-group may be at very diverse developmental levels in special schools, and discusses the importance of differentiation according to individual needs. There is a refreshingly explicit account of how specific IEP goals may be incorporated into sessions, formally linking these with the aims of music therapy, with a transparency that can only serve to strengthen shared understanding and collaborative work with teachers. Goodman then links these IEP goals with suggested methods and materials.

Chapter 2 discusses the importance of assessment, with reference to assessment tools that reflect a range of different approaches. The author points to the need for music therapists to explain their approach to other staff, so that assessment can lead to a mutual agreement of priorities for each child. The next chapter then describes various decision-making processes that follow assessment, and particularly the question of whether individual or group sessions are appropriate. Factors such as the child's developmental level and musicality are discussed, although such issues are

balanced with practical considerations concerning the setting. There follows an account of different forms of group therapy that may be considered appropriate. Here, and also elsewhere, the author refers to her view that psychodynamic approaches are more suited to 'higher functioning' children who have access to language. Language is seen as necessary in allowing for discussion of the possible underlying meaning of behaviours – a view shared by Stern:

Many of the phenomena thought by psychoanalytical theory to play a crucial role in very early development ... are not applicable to the infancy period – that is, before the age of roughly 18–24 months – but are conceivable only after the capacity for symbolization, as evidenced by language, is emerging. (1985, p. 11)

The methods of Nordoff and Robbins (1975) are discussed in relation to special education group music therapy settings, using both improvised and planned music in groupwork. Goodman highlights the value of their contribution to the field; she also recognizes the overlap between music education and their work, in both this and other contexts. Since her background includes extensive experience of both special education teaching and music therapy, her perspective is of particular interest in this respect.

The next three chapters explore further the process of developing groupwork. There is an ongoing emphasis on the importance of setting developmentally appropriate targets, progress towards which may be measurable using short-term objectives. Factors to be considered when choosing musical resources and also non-musical materials are considered. Extensive lists are provided of songs and musical games that the author has found to be useful for specific purposes, although she emphasizes the particular importance of the need for a creative and flexible approach in using composed music.

Chapter 7 is the most substantial within the book, and includes a wide-ranging discussion of methodology. There is reference to the mutual influences of different professions' methodologies as they have developed over time, for example in the fields of music education, special education speech therapy and music therapy. Goodman firmly welcomes the developing diversity of approaches because individual needs are also diverse. She states:

Quite often the therapist finds that the needs of the children in the group necessitate a mix of approaches or possibly adaptations of approaches. There is validity to the use of many approaches in music therapy, depending, of course, on the needs of the client. This is an eclectic rather than purist way of thinking. First and foremost, the therapist needs to evaluate any method for its appropriateness in meeting the developmental needs of the group. (p. 176)

Referring again to the overlaps with music teaching in special education, Goodman endorses the teaching of musical skills to more able children with special needs:

The therapist can provide musical instruction (how to read, write and play music) in order to enable children to express themselves more thoroughly and relate to each other through the elements of music. (p. 180)

In the UK, some music therapists may find discomfort in the notion that instruction in music is seen as a possible part of the role of a music therapist. After all, there are those who see the setting of goals and instruction in musical skills as the defining difference between music teaching and music therapy (for example, Tyler, 2002). However, the eclectic approach that is described by Goodman, and also by some

teachers and writers in the field of special education, calls for a central focus on the child's needs and it is these needs that should drive the practitioner's choice of approaches and methods. In the case of instrumental instruction, remarkable and life-changing achievements may be made by children with special needs, with carefully individualized support, at the right time in their development. The musician Derek Paravicini stands as an extreme, albeit rare, example of such achievement (Ockelford, 2007). Stereotypically low expectations of people with disabilities may be challenged by ensuring that children with special educational needs have those needs met in whatever way is appropriate, promoting the successful development of particular skills. It of course remains important that every opportunity is given to develop skills in musical expression, whether these are exceptional skills or not.

Goodman's discourse about methodology includes reference to the range of diagnoses that may be relevant, acknowledging the very wide diversity of children with special needs. Some common characteristics of children with these diagnoses are discussed. For example, when addressing the needs of children with autism, attention is appropriately drawn to the need for assessment of children with regard to sensory issues that may need to be considered, and to the advantages of planning clearly structured sessions. Reference is also made to the value of the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) (Bondy & Frost, 1994) which, in my own experience, has also proved to be valuable for children with very restricted language and autism in their music sessions. In relation to children with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), the author describes the use of song and of instruments to be used at an exploratory level. Interestingly, Soundbeam technology is referred to only very briefly here, although this may be a reflection of differences in attitudes, or possibly availability, between the USA and the UK. Similarly, Goodman refers only to electronic switches such as 'Big Mac', onto which words or short sentences can be recorded for the child to then activate. Use of the switch can then be incorporated into a group musical activity, so that even a child with restricted access to sound-making can become an activate participant. However, there is also additional scope for using high-quality musical sounds and patterns activated by switches. In the UK, the switchbox produced for use with Soundbeam is increasingly used in special education, allowing for up to eight switches, which can be chosen to suit individual needs, each producing good-quality sounds. Such technology has been shown to be particularly valuable for children with PMLD, increasing their access to participation through choice-making and opportunities to initiate within shared musical experiences.

In her discussion of methodology, Goodman refers to accounts of successful multidisciplinary as well as 'transdisciplinary' work, in which sessions are planned and delivered jointly. For example, she mentions the growth of such work between music therapists and speech and language therapists. This has many potential benefits, particularly in view of the shared origins of musical perception and communication in early human development (Trevorthen, 1999). For children who are at an early stage of development, the overlap between therapists' work in these two fields could be substantial. With reference to working collaboratively with teachers, Goodman also suggests that the music therapist could provide musical ideas for the teacher to use in between music therapy sessions.

The final chapter focuses on evaluation of practice, with an emphasis on recognizing and measuring change. This is described as a cyclical process in which the author

regards it as vital that judgements about children's progress are based on 'objective measurement of observed behaviour' (p. 245). These judgements should then inform planning so that it either addresses insufficient progress (possibly related to medical or other issues to be discussed with the staff team) or sets more challenging objectives for future sessions.

This is a very useful book for students of music therapy and experienced practitioners alike. It refers to a wide range of interesting resources and points to further reading. Occasionally, the use of sub-headings can be slightly confusing, for example in the weighty Chapter 7. Throughout the book, there is emphasis on setting measurable goals and then breaking these down into smaller short-term objectives. Goodman acknowledges that features of her work, such as task analysis, prompting, fading and modelling, are tenets of behavioural psychology that have influenced her perspective over the years. In describing her eclectic approach, she demonstrates how these features have been useful in her practice, alongside her drive to focus on that which is developmentally appropriate to each individual within the group. Flexibly responding to individual or group responses is seen as crucial, especially since the children may be at very different levels of functioning. She describes the integration of multiple approaches in music therapy, where there is a 'balancing act' between structure and freedom in sessions. There are many interesting discussions about how the appropriateness of different approaches may be assessed as suitable for children with a very wide range of needs. For example, there are accounts of psychodynamic approaches as used with emotionally disturbed children. However, as Goodman points out on a number of occasions, the approach is not suited to children whose language skills are very restricted (and who in the UK would often be in schools for children with severe learning difficulties). She highlights the importance of having access to a range of approaches with the imperative that the chosen approach should be developmentally appropriate and tailored, with a focus upon flexibly meeting individual needs. The author's commitment to analysing and exploiting the unique qualities of music for use in groupwork in special needs settings, and the evident breadth of her knowledge and experience, make this a substantial and valuable resource.

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Pat Lloyd

Heritage House School, Buckinghamshire and University of
Birmingham, UK