

Book Review

Kern, P., & Humpal, M. (Eds.). (2012). *Early childhood music therapy and autism spectrum disorders: Developing potential in young children and their families*. Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 304 pages. ISBN: 978-1-84905-241-2. \$39.95.

Kern and Humpal have coedited an excellent resource for music therapy clinicians who provide services for young children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Petra Kern is a scholar from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill who has taught at several leading music therapy programs. She is the Past President of the World Federation of Music Therapy and current owner of a music therapy consulting firm and coeditor of *imagine*. Marcia Humpal is a long time clinician whose work has focused on early intervention, autism spectrum disorders, and inclusive music opportunities. She co-chairs the American Music Therapy Association's Strategic Priority on Music Therapy and ASD Workgroup and serves on the editorial board for *imagine*.

The book is organized into five sections: Introduction and Research, Assessment and Goals, Treatment Approaches, Collaboration and Consultation, and Selected Resources. Each section includes chapters written by experts in the field and the co-editors. The chapters begin with a quote and picture to prime the reader. The chapters end with a section of learning questions that could be used to promote discussion, reader reflection, or student review of the content. Each chapter also includes a full reference list.

Part 1: Introduction and Research: The first chapter of the text carefully defines contemporary definitions of autism spectrum disorders. Kern provides a historical background, current definitions, and proposed changes in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-5 (which was released in May 2013). The inclusion of early signs and a review of evaluation processes and screening tools are valuable for music therapists to help them understand the process. This is also critical for clinicians who work in early intervention and other spaces where families are going through the evaluation process. In Chapter 2, Kern and Humpal define the concept of evidence-based practice and present information related to focused-intervention practices that have been described in music therapy research as well as reporting of national reports that have assessed and defined strength of evidence classification systems. The “major players” in the assessment of evidence-based practices

for individuals with ASD include the National Research Council, the National Professional Development Center, and the National Autism Center. The authors provide a discussion of the rating systems used by organizations such as the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the National Autism Center (NAC) and state music therapy would be identified as either a *Promising Practice* according to the CEC and has been identified as an *Emerging Practice* by the NAC. It is critical for music therapists to develop an understanding of these evaluative structures. The clarity of this chapter will provide clinical music therapists with the language and tools needed to discuss how their work fits into the framework of evidence based practices. In chapter three, Whipple presents a meta-analysis of music therapy research with young children with ASD. The procedures and outcomes are clearly defined. These early chapters are important tools for music therapists to develop a better understanding of how their practices fit into broader service frameworks and to be able to dialogue with consumers, administrators, and policy makers in order to advocate for music therapy services for young children with ASD.

Part 2: Assessment and Goals: Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive look at the process of determining eligibility for music therapy services, gathering information, and developing goals for music therapy. Co-written, by Martin, Snell, Walworth, and Humpal, this chapter provides a strong rationale for developing clear and consistent assessment and evaluation practices and then carefully lays out a protocol for moving through the process. The authors discuss the unique role that music therapists can take on in the assessment process using their ability to “assess and treat conditions through the music medium” (p. 81). A review of different music therapy assessments and practices as well as examples from the Four-Step Assessment Model, the Music Therapy-Music Related Behavior (MT-MRB), and the SCERTS® Model are provided.

Part 3: Treatment Approaches: This part of the book provides a detailed discussion about music therapy integrated into two major models of treatment for ASD—Applied Behavior Analysis and DIR®/Floortime and one music therapy model—Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy. It also includes two chapters that highlight the integration of specific strategies and techniques that are associated with ASD practices into music therapy including Social Stories™. The chapters provide strong descriptions of the clinical models and examples of specific strategies. Music examples demonstrate how music interventions are integrated

into the treatment model. For example, in the chapter on Applied Behavior Analysis, Martin presents a strong overview of the principles of the model: reinforcement, prompting, task analysis, and generalization, and then provides examples and citations from published research to show how music relates to each principle. Chapter 9 also offers a definition of developmentally appropriate practice, which situates the book within developmental theory. This group of chapters emphasizes how music therapists need to consider developmental theory, theories of ASD practices, and music therapy models. This layered knowledge is crucial to developing practices that are specific to young children with ASD.

Part 4: Collaboration and Consultation: This section of the text includes four chapters that highlight both collaborative and integrative practices. Chapter 10 highlights inclusive preschool programming. Communication and language development is presented by Lim in Chapter 11 that summarizes research and practices that promote language-based strategies. A chapter about sensory processing is authored by an occupational therapist. Wakeford's chapter makes important connections to literature in occupational therapy, but also makes clear connections to music therapy. Both chapter 10 and 11 give some suggestions for how music therapists can collaborate with speech-language pathologists and occupational therapists. Finally, family-centered practices and the integration of music experiences in the home are introduced (Walworth) and discussion about working with families of young children with ASD (Humpal).

Part 5: Selected Resources: The final section of the book presents resources for music therapists including websites about ASD and music therapy. Several websites are shared that provide specific clinical supports and resources. A lengthy list of apps for iPhones, iPod and iPad are provided along with brief descriptions that indicate potential clinical uses. The final chapter includes a selected annotated bibliography of research published in the *Journal of Music Therapy*, *Music Therapy Perspectives* and related journals for autism and developmental disorders. This chapter provides a strong picture of the body of research that supports music therapy practices with young children with ASD.

Overall, this is an excellent text. The authors represent a range of clinical and academic perspectives, which creates a book that makes a strong connection between research and practice. The structure and organization of the text make it a book that you can go back to repeatedly to deepen your understanding of the content. The writing is clear

and well supported thus making it a resource that could be shared with parents, colleagues and administrators. The depth of the content is layered which makes it a good resource for early career music therapists as well as more advanced clinicians and researchers. One piece that appeared to be missing from the text was any reference to Neurologic Music Therapy. Additionally, discussion that is more explicit could have been provided about how to use information presented in the book to advocate for music therapy services and to engage in collaboration and consultation with professionals from related disciplines. Music therapists often function in different roles within their clinical practices. In addition to direct services, music therapists may be a part of a clinical team, provide support for an individual family, or operate a small business. In these roles, the music therapist needs to know how to use the language of evidence-based practices. Some more direct information about how to use this critical information to talk with parents, administrators, and policy makers would have been a wonderful addition to this text.

Early Childhood Music Therapy and Autism Spectrum Disorders is an important addition to the music therapy literature. This book offers an excellent collection of reader-friendly information that clinicians can use to analyze and reflect on their own practices as well as advocate for music therapy services. It is imperative that music therapists educate themselves regarding the larger structures that guide and support practices for the populations that they are serving.

NICOLE R. RIVERA, EDD, MT-BC
North Central College