

THE COLOR OF US: MUSIC THERAPY FOR YOUNG CHILDREN IN ASIA

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Introduction

This roundtable brings together music therapists from Korea, Japan, China, Taiwan, and Singapore to discuss Eastern philosophies, trends, and perspectives of providing music therapy services for young children and their families in Asia.

Korea

In Korea, about 45% of all music therapists work with young children. Behavioral approaches and Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy are the most common practices. Music therapists serve children with special needs, physical injuries or abuse, adopted children, divorced and multicultural families. Providing services in general preschool settings for optimal development and well-being of all children is the trend.

Japan

Since only 4.2% of the total population is 4 years or younger, there are fewer opportunities for music therapists to work in early intervention settings. Most music therapist work part-time and provide direct services to children with developmental disabilities. In Japanese culture, recognition of innovative health practices such as music therapy and early intervention programs takes time.

China

In China, music therapists are serving young children with developmental disabilities, behavioral, learning, and communication disorders, sensory impairment, and with medical conditions. Services are offered in schools for special education, rehabilitation

centers, and pediatric hospitals. Prominent practices include behavioral approaches and Orff Schulwerk for general music education. Children are the center of families and are seen as the “sun” of the Chinese society.

Taiwan

There are approximately 50 music therapists in Taiwan. Music therapy services for young children mainly focus on children with special needs in hospitals, child treatment centers, rehabilitation clinics, early intervention programs, special education settings, and private practice. Most music therapists provide direct services followed by consultation. Funding for music therapy services is mainly private. “*Instruct all and reject none*” from the *Analects of Confucius*, is the core belief of educating young children with special needs in Taiwan.

Singapore

Of the 12 music therapists working in Singapore, 6 serve young children in hospitals and early intervention programs. Music therapy approaches include improvisational, behavioral, client-centered and psychodynamic models. Music therapy services are funded by the government, donors, and private pay, but have not yet been recognized as core therapy service. Important societal values include: multicultural harmony, emphasis on the family, and consensus over conflict.

Resources

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