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Special Issue

## **ANALYTICAL MUSIC THERAPY-ORIENTED SUPERVISION (AMTOS) EXAMINED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF ASIAN CULTURES**

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### **Introduction**

Clinical supervision throughout the professional life of music therapists is essential. This paper emphasizes the benefits of Analytical Music Therapy-Oriented Supervision (AMTOS) within the context of Asian cultures. The AMTOS is designed to meet the need for continual growth on the part of the supervisee. This includes increasing self-awareness, nurturing the inner music and freeing creative energy of the supervisee, while also helping to manage culture-related countertransference, maintain his/her 'psychohygiene' (Jahn-Langenberg, 2001), and demonstrate the use of music as a self-healing mode. In developing my supervision model, I have been influenced and my personal experience with AMT training (Priestly, 1975; 1994), and my experience both as a clinical supervisor and an academic supervisor.

### **AMTOS and Asian Music Therapists**

Music therapy stems from western philosophy, therefore it encourages the enhancement of assertiveness, expressiveness, and independence. Assertiveness is an important component in

music therapy, as it helps to further the effectiveness of the session. In addition, music therapy involves a wide range of expressions, which requires music therapists to be expressive musically and non-musically. Asian music therapists, however, are conditioned differently in the aforementioned qualities from their western counterparts (Scheiby & Kim, 2005). Traditionally Asian societies, emphasis on assertiveness and expressiveness may differ from western ideology, while interdependence and harmony are highly valued. Although there are individual differences among Asian music therapists, the discrepancy between the culture of music therapy and the culture they are accustomed to may be a significant commonality and potential impediment. For instance, there may be certain emotions that are not typically mentioned in their daily lives, and words expressing those emotions may feel unfamiliar. Specifically, there are distinctive gender roles that exist in many Asian societies, in which women are often taught to be passive rather than assertive, and men are taught to control their emotions in order to maintain their sense of pride. Both genders are taught that endurance is a

virtue praised higher than being expressive. Additionally, it may be difficult to express negative feelings (e.g., anger, hatred, and jealousy) since it is common in Asian societies to be governed by a powerful superego (Scheiby & Kim, 2005). This can manifest in somatic symptoms. Furthermore, therapy is not part of the traditional healing methods found in many Asian countries.

### Why AMTOS?

While AMTOS is widely applicable to any music therapy student or music therapist, there are several benefits of employing the AMTOS approach in training Asian supervisees. The experiential component of AMTOS helps to enhance creativity, enabling them to better use their skills during the sessions. This helps to connect them to their clients, and encourages them to be more present and available during each session. In addition, western-based music therapy may also be better understood as they engage in experiential exercises. Improvisation is an effective outlet for to explore the variety of emotions and fosters expressiveness, while acknowledging their own inner music. The unknown (free) nature of the improvisation provides opportunity to develop cultural and professional identity. Psychodynamic movement exercises help alleviate somatic symptoms. Further, the emphasis given to transference *and* countertransference can increase awareness, expand worldview, and

foster flexibility to develop a music therapy approach that is specific to their culture. The purpose of AMTOS lies in providing better service to clients. AMTOS aspires to provide opportunity to explore one's own professional identity, address cultural considerations, and motivate the supervisee to seek further advanced training in the area of that specialty.

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