AMTA and CBMT 2020 COVID-19 Survey Results

Music therapy continues to be an essential service for clients, families, and healthcare providers during the COVID-19 pandemic. A national survey of board certified music therapists in June 2020 revealed the following five categories: Collaboration; Connection; Communication; Coping; and Creativity. These categories highlight how music therapists have adapted the delivery of services and diversified service options to best meet clients’ needs.

**Collaboration**

Music therapists reported increased collaboration with colleagues and administrators, often coordinating with them to determine the safest and most effective ways to continue delivering music therapy services.

- Some clinicians providing clinical music therapy services prior to the pandemic (60-100%) have taken on more administrative and non-music therapy clinical work.
- Many clinicians (10-50%) are now providing more clinical music therapy services.
- More administrative and non-music therapy clinical services (60-100%) than prior to the pandemic.
- Clinical supervision (supervising students and professionals) has dropped since the start of the pandemic.

**Connection (relationships)**

In the months since the pandemic, many music therapists noticed an increase in the family’s level of involvement during music therapy sessions. This is particularly true for telepractice music therapy sessions. Even families who initially declined telepractice services reconsidered for the following reasons: the lockdown/social distancing lasted longer than they anticipated, they sought more social interaction, and felt they had acquired the skills, equipment, or technology to participate virtually.
Communication

Although many terms exist, we use “telepractice” to describe any synchronous or asynchronous music therapy service delivery that occurs via telecommunication technologies to support long-distance clinical healthcare and education needs. Music therapists provided services in the following ways during the pandemic:

- 19% of respondents indicated they were providing some amount of pre-recorded material
- 18% provided live telesessions
- 4% provided audio only
- 25% provided live, in person service in an open space
- 37% provided live, in person services in enclosed spaces (with precautions)

Coping (self-regulation, resilience, resourcefulness)

Although they acknowledged the challenging circumstances of providing clinical services during a pandemic, many music therapists commented on the seemingly unexpected positive changes in their personal and professional lives. They also highlighted the resiliency of clients and families who pivoted to telepractice services, commenting on the new skills and abilities they saw in their clients as they interacted with them in a virtual space.

Creativity (innovation)

The pandemic forced many music therapists to rethink how to deliver clinical music therapy services in a safe way. Almost 2/3 of respondents (61.9%) indicated they began offering telepractice music therapy services to meet this need. They also highlighted how they adapted their treatment to make progress accessible to their clients.