Virtual Music Therapy Service Delivery: Developing New Approaches & Models

Seneca Block, MA, MT-BC University Hospitals of Cleveland CIHN
David Knott, MM, MT-BC Seattle Children’s Hospital

As the global coronavirus pandemic transforms our society, music therapists must adapt delivery models based on these evolving circumstances. While there are several virtual service delivery barriers, there are also great opportunities to serve those who are struggling to cope within our communities, healthcare systems and educational settings. Our skills and creativity are needed now more than ever.

**Goal:** Deliver virtual music therapy (VMT) programming (telehealth/videoconferencing) to address goals of care in formats that are accessible and appropriate for the patient/client’s needs and abilities.

**Action item:** Develop a service delivery model that outlines a three-tiered approach for successful VMT delivery.

VMT Outline: Curated resources, Original content & Virtual service delivery

**Tier 1 Develop curated resources:** Identify pre-existing content (videos, music-making instructions) available via the internet that reinforce the therapeutic potential of music, social emotional learning concepts, and/or provide comfort. Note, some resources may require copyright permissions. Please seek further permission, clarity or licensing if required by the source content owner(s).

*Use your skill and perspective as a music therapist to curate a list of music engagement videos that are suitable for the population you serve. If you are in private practice, these will be welcome resources as you likely have the best perspective on what is appropriate for those individuals. If you work in an organization, communicate with digital health partners and those responsible for maintaining the website so they can use your expertise to identify the most useful resources for the populations they serve.*

**Tier 2 Create original content:** Develop and record short videos to address therapeutic goals. For example: finger play songs for infants and toddlers, preschool and early childhood music, relaxation videos for teens and adults, instrument workshops, and therapeutic music lessons to develop coping or new recreational skills. Please note, copyright protection applies to livestreams and digital conferencing platforms. Music sources and publishers must be referenced and recognized. Credentialed MTs

1 The authors kindly shared this information with the American Music Therapy Association as part of its COVID-19 resources and available to Board Certified Music Therapists at www.musictherapy.org.
using public online platforms (e.g. Facebook live) under Tier 2 are advised to be careful regarding copyright and consider licensing or permissions needed for music that is not in the public domain, original, or improvised.

*Your experience as a music therapist and relationship with the patient/client will make these videos more useful for those you serve. Are there songs you have used in sessions that might be appropriate to create videos for?*

**Tier 3 Implement VMT via Telehealth approach:** There are several options available from a telephone call to videoconferencing using a tablet and an app.

**VMT Practical, Operational and Clinical Considerations**

A. Practical considerations:
   1. your patient/client’s ability and ease with access
   2. is there a caregiver that could assist with the technology?
   3. even though many organizations are relaxing HIPAA standards in response to the pandemic, confirm that the system you use is approved by your organization and/or ensures adequate security for private (nonpublic) MT telehealth services.

B. Operational considerations

   I. **Identify Essential Technology and Workstations**
      - Hardware: Computer, digital interface, microphone, webcam
      - Software: Garageband (mac) or Cubase (pc)

   II. **Tele-Sessions Instructions and Procedures**
      - Initiate contact and patient/client communication
      - Marketing via MT flyer materials
      *see appendix A
      - Method for contacting patient/clients
      - Audio options: phone, Google voice, Jabber, Webex
      - Video options: Zoom, Skype, Facetime
      *Note U.S. Government relaxed restrictions on media platforms to allow use as HIPAA compliant methods of service delivery during the state of emergency; however, always consult with your specific site or organization.

      - Procedural flowchart
      - Suggested process and documentation
      *Medical settings see appendix B
      *Private practice see appendix C

B. Clinical considerations
I Intervention Procedures VMT deliverable
   - Music assisted relaxation and imagery
   - Lyric and Songwriting technique
   - Playlist creations
   - Resource identification

Appendices Follow Next Page
Music Therapy Has Gone Virtual
Expressive Therapy at Cleveland Medical Center

VIRTUAL MUSIC THERAPY
Music therapy is now being offered virtually via phone and video conferencing. Music therapy services are offered to inpatients and outpatients by board-certified music therapists. Music therapy helps to:

• Improve coping
• Improve socialization
• Manage pain
• Modify mood
• Reduce anxiety and stress

HOW TO REFER
In UH Acute Care, select patient for whom you are referring:

  “Enter Order” →
  Type in “Music Therapy Referral” →
  Double click “Music Therapy Referral” →
  Select reason for consult from drop down menu →
  Click “OK” → “Submit Order”

If you have any questions, please contact:

• Jon Doe, MA, MT-BC
• Phone: 555-555-5555
• Email: Jon.doe@uhhospitals.org
Appendix B. Medical Setting Procedural Flowchart

Medical Setting Procedural Flowchart

- Therapist Receives EMR Referral
  - Patient returns call to therapist
  - Therapist attempts and does not reach patient via patient room phone
    - If consent is given, therapist contacts patient via personal cell, tablet, or computer (if available)
    - Therapist assesses patient and offers appropriate intervention based on their needs
      - Therapist facilitates guided relaxation intervention over room phone or via patient’s personal device (cell, tablet, or computer)
        - If over room phone, therapist verbally processes with patient afterward and schedules follow-up if applicable
        - If over patient personal device, therapist verbally processes with patient afterward and schedules follow-up if applicable, and records the finish product which is shared with the patient’s personal email or via secure internet link
      - If consent is not given, or additional technology is not available telesession continues via room phone
        - Therapist facilitates songwriting intervention over room phone or via patient’s personal device (cell, tablet, or computer)
          - If over room phone, therapist verbally processes with patient afterward and schedules follow-up if applicable
          - If over patient personal device, therapist processes with patient afterwards, schedules follow-up if applicable, and sends recorded track to patient’s personal email or via secure internet link
    - Therapist charts attempt and leaves voice mail* (if applicable)
Appendix C. Private Practice Procedural Flowchart

Private Practice Procedural Flowchart

Therapist receives client referral

Therapist successfully attempts and reaches client via client phone

Client returns call to therapist

Therapist attempts and does not reach client via client phone

Therapist documents attempt and leaves voice mail* (if applicable)

If consent is given, therapist contacts client via personal cell, tablet, or computer (if available)

Therapist assesses client and offers appropriate intervention based on their needs

Therapist facilitates guided relaxation intervention over phone or via patient’s personal device (cell, tablet, or computer)

If consent is not given, or additional technology is not available telesession continues via phone

If over room phone, therapist verbally processes with client afterward and schedules follow-up if applicable

If over client personal device, therapist facilitates songwriting intervention over room phone or via clients personal device (cell, tablet, or computer)

If over client personal device, therapist verbally processes with client afterward and schedules follow-up if applicable, and records the finish product which is shared with the client’s personal email or via secure internet link

If over room phone, therapist verbally processes with client afterward and schedules follow-up if applicable