

## **From resistance to collaboration: creating European music therapy training standards**

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Music therapy education is facing challenges. Within the current neoliberal market, many areas of the arts and humanities are in danger (Brazzill, 2020). Additionally, previous qualification standards across Europe lacked inclusiveness and prompted resistance among music therapists. Within this context, the European Music Therapy Standards (EMTS) commission began work in 2017 to develop competence-based suggested standards for European music therapy training. A “bottom-up” process was used with the intention of hearing the voices across the entire spectrum of music therapy training in Europe (EMTS, 2023).

The commission asked the following questions: What determines a qualified music therapist in Europe? What frameworks or emphases are included within the training programmes? Must all music therapists use the same models, methods and interventions? Is one model or method suitable for use with all client populations?

A survey was sent to all music therapy training programmes in the member countries of the European Music Therapy Confederation (EMTC). After analysing and categorizing the data, competencies deemed necessary for safe and effective practice upon entrance into the music therapy profession were defined. The work of the commission has not yet ended, with further issues needing clarification and development.

In this panel discussion, the commission's work will be summarized. The suggested standards will be presented briefly. Issues such as diversity, underpinning traditions, terminology, varying conceptual models relating to health and wellbeing, and cultural issues will be discussed. The experiences in working in an international group of music therapists and exploring the varied challenges presented by the work and the context for the study will be presented.

### *References*

- Brazzill, M.** (2020) The development of higher education in Japan and the United Kingdom: The Impact of Neoliberalism. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 75, 3, 381-397.
- EMTS** (2023). Work in Progress: Developing Recommended Standards for Music Therapy Training in Europe. <https://emtc-eu.com/training/training-standards/>

### **Short biography**

**Esa Ala-Ruona PhD** is a music therapist and psychotherapist working as an associate professor at the Centre of Excellence in Music, Mind, Body and Brain, at University of Jyväskylä. His research interests are in music therapy assessment and evaluation, musical interaction and meaning-making in clinical processes as well as in creating and developing clinical models and education. He has extensive clinical experience in psychiatry and neurology.

**Marketa Gerlichova PhD** is a music therapist (from 1996), physiotherapist, special educator, supervisor and Assistant Professor at the 1st Faculty of Medicine at Charles University and at the General University Hospital. She is president of the CZMTA and the author of two monographs: *MT in Practice* 2014, 2020 and *Music Heals*, 2017.

**Laurien Hakvoort Ph.D** is a Dutch (neurologic) music therapist and voice major. She is Lecturer of Music Therapy Approaches at ArtEZ University of the Arts, Netherlands and at University Palackého in Olomouci, Czech Republic. She is a freelance researcher and published various (inter)national articles and (chapters in) books.

**Melissa Mercadal-Brotons PhD, MT-BC, SMTAE** is past-president of the WFMT. She is Director of the Music Therapy Master's Program (Esmuc, Barcelona) and a member EMTC Standards Commission. Her focus of clinical work and research is dementia. She is a member of Singular Música i Alzheimer team (Barcelona, Spain) and leader of the IAMM-Special Interest Group "Music therapy in the context of dementia: people with dementia and their caregivers".

**Alice Pehk PhD** is a music psychotherapist, BMGIM-therapist, EFT couples' therapist, supervisor, creative coach, creativity trainer. She is head of the Music Therapy training program at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre and head of the Music Therapy Centre in Tallinn.

**Melanie Voigt Ph.D** is a music educator, music therapist (Musiktherapeutin DMtG) and Kinder- und Jugendlichenpsychotherapeutin. Her clinical area of practice is children and youth with developmental disorders in the area of Social Paediatrics. She is a lecturer for developmental music therapy at the Technical University Würzburg-Schweinfurt and head of a training program in developmental music therapy according to Gertrud Orff. She has published articles regarding developmental music therapy internationally.

**Tessa Watson** is a music therapist and trainer at University of Roehampton, with a wide range of clinical experience. She has published widely, contributed to the development of the profession in the UK/internationally, is BJMT Editor and HCPC partner and continues to engage in an active musical life.

### **Recent publications and conference presentations**

EMTS (2023). **Work in progress: developing recommended standards for music therapy training in Europe.** <https://emtc-eu.com/training/training-standards/>

EMTS-Commission. (2022, June 08-12). **Round table. Music therapy training in Europe: a “disturbance” in the development of recommendations for minimum standards?** 12<sup>th</sup> European Music Therapy Conference 2022, Edinburgh, Scotland.

EMTS-Commission (2023, July 24-29). **Round table. music therapy training in europe: competence-based training for clinical practice.** 17<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Music Therapy 2023. Vancouver, Canada.