

Essentials of voicework in music therapy education

Basisprincipes van stemwerk in muziektherapie onderwijs

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Background: The majority of students on the Codarts masters in Music Therapy are musicians and music educators, whose professional focus so far has been on the aesthetic aspects of music. During their training at Codarts, it is our job to guide students in expanding this focus towards becoming comfortable with improvisation, ideally leading to a more open attitude towards new and direct musical experiences. Even if this is, for some, a disconcerting process where they sometimes forget about their existing musical skills.

The intimate nature of voicework provides a perfect environment to connect or reconnect with the voice and find expressive freedom in safe surroundings. This is an essential step in their learning path to become flexible and confident music therapists.

How do we shape this process?

Content: In this experiential workshop, you will be guided through a series of vocal interventions aimed towards re-evaluating pre-existing ideas about the voice, opening up to free associative singing, exploring essential vocal techniques for working therapeutically, and investigating the voice as a valuable therapeutic medium.

As music therapists we must adapt the principles of trauma informed care to enable our clients to sing about dark times, while maintaining connection with ourselves and staying open to the client's needs. How do we regulate ourselves?

Clinical application techniques, such as vocal holding, will be explored from a different perspective. You will experience how our voices connect us to others, how tone of voice affects others, and how the exchange of the sound of human voices and energy can be a powerful yet delicate medium in therapy.

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Achtergrond: De meerderheid van de studenten aan de Codarts master Muziektherapie zijn muzikanten en muziekdocenten, wier professionele focus tot nu toe ligt op de esthetische aspecten van muziek. Gedurende hun opleiding bij Codarts is het onze taak om studenten te begeleiden bij het uitbreiden van deze focus naar het vertrouwd raken met improvisatie, idealiter leidend tot een opener houding ten opzichte van nieuwe en directe muzikale ervaringen. Ook al worden sommigen hierdoor uit balans gebracht waarbij ze soms hun bestaande muzikale vaardigheden uit het oog verliezen.

Het intieme karakter van stemwerk geeft een perfecte gelegenheid om (opnieuw) verbinding te maken met de stem en tot expressie te komen in een veilige omgeving. Dit is een essentiële stap in hun leertraject om flexibele en zelfverzekerde muziektherapeuten te worden.

Hoe geven wij dit proces vorm?

Inhoud: In deze ervaringsgerichte workshop bieden we u een reeks vocale interventies aan gericht op het opnieuw evalueren van de eigen bestaande ideeën over de stem, het openstellen voor vrij associatief zingen, het verkennen van essentiële vocale technieken voor therapeutisch werken, en het onderzoeken van de eigen stem als een waardevol therapeutisch medium.

Als muziektherapeuten moeten we rekening houden met trauma-sensitieve principes waarmee we onze cliënten in staat te stellen over donkere tijden te zingen, terwijl we de verbinding met onszelf behouden én open blijven voor de behoeften van de cliënt.

Hoe reguleren wij onszelf?

Klinische technieken, zoals ‘vocal holding’, zullen vanuit een ander perspectief worden onderzocht. U zult ervaren hoe onze stemmen ons met anderen verbinden, wat de invloed is van de toon van onze stem op anderen, en hoe uitwisseling van stemgeluid en energie een krachtig doch delicaat medium kan zijn in muziektherapie.

Biography

Carola van 't Hof, MEd, BA, RMTh graduated from the Bachelor programme in Music Therapy at the Hogeschool Utrecht. She holds a post-graduate degree in Training Sciences and

gained a Master degree in Education (Learning and Innovation) at the Hogeschool Rotterdam. Carola is a Master Practitioner in Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP). Has been a guest teacher for several of the Bachelor Music Therapy programmes in the Netherlands.

Programme leader on the Masters in Music Therapy and senior lecturer since 2018 at Codarts, University of the Arts, Rotterdam. She was co-ordinator of fieldwork & internship on the Masters in Music Therapy from 2016 to 2021.

Carola has a broad and extensive clinical experience with adult psychiatry (schizophrenia, personality disorders, mood disorders) child psychiatry (Autism, ADHD), mental disabilities, rehabilitation and addiction (PTSD). Recently has been working as a senior clinical music therapist with elderly with dementia, Korsakov, geriatric psychiatry, depression. She has a private practice (specialty: people with an addiction and systemic family therapy for their relatives).

José Pouwels, MA, BA, LTCL, LLCM is a Dutch singer, music therapist and lecturer. José studied Classroom Music Teaching (Artez University of the Arts, 1990), Classical Voice (Trinity College of Music, 2008), Music Theatre Teaching (London College of Music, 2009), and in 2019 obtained her master's degree Music Therapy (Codarts University of the Arts).

Her masters thesis led to the invitation from the Dutch Federation of Music Therapy to join the multidisciplinary project group Review of the Generic Module of Arts Therapies in mental healthcare.

José is a music- and SI (sensory information processing) therapist in elderly care with specialization in high care (extreme problematic behaviour), young onset dementia and psychogeriatrics, and recently started her own independent music & voice therapy practice.

Since 2021, she is part of the faculty of the Master of Arts Therapies at Codarts University of the Arts, Rotterdam, where she lectures in Clinical Improvisation skills – Voice, and is fieldwork and internship-co-ordinator.