

MUSIC AS ALTERNATIVE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ADULT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Mūzika kā alternatīva dzīves kvalitātes uzlabošanai pieaugušajiem ar speciālajām vajadzībām

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Abstract. *Each person's life pattern depending on the personalities are different from other individuals while life model is characterized by the same criteria: human individuality, human vital activity, an individual's ability to carry out those activities, activities influencing factors (biological, psychological, socio – cultural, environmental, political – economical), the individual's life expectancy.*

Optimizing the life quality of people with disabilities are three very important indicators which develops others to personal self-awareness, self-development and self-expression: integration into society, socialization and self-realization.

Social Care House goal – to ensure the rational and efficient network of services that fully meet the needs of residents and allow full integration into community.

Using music therapy techniques can be developed auditory and visual perception, language sharpness, motion flexibility and coordination and body control what can be applied meaningfully and efficiently in everyday life, at the same time as helping for a person to adapt in the environment and facilitating persons near communication.

Object of research – individuals with moderate to profound intellectual disability optimization the quality of life through music / art therapy techniques.

Study aims – to investigate adults with intellectual disabilities life quality optimization in the context of music therapy methods and techniques.

In this work was used qualitative and quantitative research methods: theoretical, diagnostic, empirical.

Keywords: *acceptable behaviour, approach to disability, capacity limit, integration, life quality, mentally disabled, music, music therapy, self-expression, self-esteem, self-realization.*

Introduction

Public welfare is rising rapidly. Recent advances in science, medicine, education and other areas applied and used in practice for the sake of human quality of life. New life conditions forming a new values of society and new norms and standards of behavior in human communication.

These persons who have some form of disability and do not meet the community's standards of communication are still not acceptable. This is especially for people with middle and / or deep intellectual disability. This setting determines from the Soviet era shaped public opinion about the fact that all the inhabitants in SU are healthy people. Mentally disabled persons have been isolated from the society in special closed institutions (pensions), and their existence was known only for for short circle of people / specialists. This occurrence J. Ruskus (Ruškus, 2001) is called as "social capsulization phenomenon". From nowadays was done a lot of changes in laws and real life situations but we have situation that the public does not know how to deal with people with such kind disabilities. Citizens are afraid of them, ignored or even openly mocking. However, the approach to disability and disabled people must change, the expansion of democracy and tolerance ideas in the world are acceptable in Lithuania too what we can find in The Act Equal Opportunity (2005). Socialization problems are solving in G. Kvieskiene (Kvieskienė (2003), Cymru (2000), Ruškus (2002)) researches.

The current period in Lithuania law provides an opportunities for people with middle and deep intellectual disability to improve their capacity limits what we can find in. But still now unfavorable surrounding and physical and social environmental factors – a closed space,

lack of work, creative activity and communication limite these persons self-expression and fulfillment resources. However, they have a need and in the National Antidiscrimination programme (2006) is written that the have a right to live quality life within the limits of their capacities. Therefore, society should offer appropriate services to people with mental disabilities to optimize quality of life.

Precise definition of the term "quality of life" is not easy, because the each person is unique, with a distinctive system of values, needs and opportunities. To select the measure of the quality of life most versatile factors, but the main factors are: individual personal health (physical and mental, and social), the need to communicate and realize their potential in the surrounding environment. Satisfaction of both the disabled and the 'healthy' shows and describes the quality of living. C. Sutton (1999), A. Bakk and K. Grunewald (1997) and other scientists recognize and affirms in the researches that handicapped people need to realize specific needs, then their quality of life would be optimal in the scop of their abilities.

We understand the concept of music therapy as a treatment. From the Greek „therapy“ word derives its meaning to attend, support, help, treatment. If we look more deep, it would mean that the therapy is planned, the emotion-oriented, trust-based communication between a qualified, the public recognized healer and the sufferer.

There is a definite and important music influence on human emotions, feelings, physiological reactions and known and used since ancient times. Based on this idea is laid the theory of music therapy. Impact of music on human health, activities, and social interaction studied a number of foreign experts as O. Bonde (2001), D. Campbell (2005, 2006), L. O'Grady and K. McFerran (2007), E. Ruud (2006), G. Deker-Foight (2003).

Thus, we can state that the music is the main therapeutic tool, because the music:

- is non-verbal language. It is understandable for person of any age, background, religion, disability, level of musical education, social stratum;
- stimulate, regulate our emotions. The sounds allow a person to concentrate to his / her body spirit and music;
- affects our mood. Clear rhythm, fast paced melodious music makes a person to move, disappear grumbles, enjoy the life, feel self-confidence, loss feeling of inferiority. Calm, gentle music brings back good mood, removes negative feelings and sensations;
- stimulates physiological responses. Music has a great impact on our body and the physiological functioning of the various organs (eg, heart rate, blood pressure, muscle activity, head illness);
- stimulates the activity of the brain, activates the thinking and cognitive reactions;
- may reveal psychological problems (eg, personal crises, behavior, emotions, thoughts, phobias) and make positive decisions. The use of specific music therapy techniques to break free from the stereotypical norms of behavior and thinking, change the world view;
- used by people groups. And it does not matter what it is music, it is important that it affects each and every member of the group identity;
- change space and time perception.

Intimate interaction, caring for the client health, safety, trust-based environment allows the client actively to participate in the sessions, gaining self-awareness and self-expression skills.

The problems of socialization of disabled people in Lithuania using art therapy methods as medium are solved V. Aleksiene (Aleksienė, 2001, 2005), J. Sinkuniene (Šinkūnienė, 2005). These researchers studied more children and young people with a variety of mental (and complex) disability issues and opportunities to adapy methods of art therapy. R. Bruzga (Brūzga, 2005) and J. Talockiene-Zebrauskiene (Taločkienė-Žebrauskienė, 2005)

wrote about the practical experience and methodology how to organize mentally disabled adults musical activities. Some information about socialization using music can find in A. Gaizutis (Gaižutis, 1998) research. However, researches in Lithuania for adults with intellectual disabilities influence of musical – cultural activities on their socialization / rehabilitation processes and optimization the quality of life a little.

Researching A. Piliciauskas (Piličiauskas, 2005), K. Rudestam (1998), I. Yalom (2006), D. Beresnevičienė (Beresnevičienė, 2003), K. Rogers (2007) scientific articles can find that music therapy (and art therapy in whole) is very close with a psychotherapy. Music therapy is based on humanistic psychotherapy by C. Rogers and A. Maslow theories. Humanistic theory approach "here and now" allows to listen to your inner impulses, to hear the true desires, to satisfy the expression. As well as music therapy is based on the behaviourist theory of psychotherapy ideas too. According to social learning theorists A. Bandura and W. Mishel and developed theories in music therapy for clients are granted access more productive using their creative potential, more positive assessment of their capabilities and more satisfaction of / in their environment. Through music, art can solve even complex personal emotional expression, understanding, management of the problem. This is very important because the demonstration of emotions can turn into an internal tension, moodiness, aggression (pointing to himself, the environment and other people), and even disease.

The current period in Lithuania law provides an opportunity for people with middle and deep intellectual disability to improve their capacity limits. But still now unfavorable surrounding and physical and social environmental factors – a closed space, lack of work, creative activity and communication limit these persons self-expression and fulfillment resources. However, they have a need and right to live quality life within the limits of their capacities. Therefore, society should offer appropriate services to people with mental disabilities to optimize quality of life.

The aim of article – to find an answer to the question: Are you sure this path – integration and social status improvement in the society through music therapy techniques – leads to life quality related values – human dignity, self-esteem and self-realization promotion for adult persons with mental disabilities?

Methods

The research seeks to explore and identify what influence of music therapy techniques for adults with moderate to profound disabilities using them in sociocultural activities and are these methods and forms suitable in integration into society, optimizing the quality of life within the limits of their capacity.

Object of research – individuals with moderate to profound intellectual disability optimization the quality of life through music / art therapy techniques.

Study aims – to investigate adults with intellectual disabilities life quality optimization in the context of music therapy methods and techniques.

Target group: adult individuals with moderate to profound intellectual disability living in Social Care House.

Objectives of the study:

1. Investigate the mentally disabled adult behavioral tendencies at their leisure time, during music activities and after the music sessions.
2. To find out public opinion about mentally disabled adults integration through the sociocultural activities.
3. To analyze mentally disabled persons opinion about their participation in cultural musical community activities

The methodology of research. Living with mental illness may form a distinctive communication, behavior and thinking norms, which are not always acceptable to the public / society. The study will try to find an answer to the question: Is music therapy methods and techniques organized by socio-cultural activities an appropriate form for people with intellectual disabilities to integrate into society and to optimize the quality of life in the scope of their abilities.

In this work was used qualitative and quantitative research methods:

1. Theoretical: foreign and Lithuanian researchers work analysis and summary, video, photo collection of material and summary.
2. Diagnostic: casual observations, observations during music lessons, observations after the music lessons.
3. Empirical: questionnaire, interviews with persons with disabilities, comparative analysis.

This research was conducted 6 months in Stonaičiai Social Care House (Plunge district, Lithuania). In the research participated 9 social workers, who work directly with target group individuals.

Persons with disabilities musical workshops were monitored 2 months for 0,5 hours daily. The observations carried out the author of article and social workers.

Observation of music therapeutic workshops was conducted 6 months. Workshops were held once a week in a fixed time. Was organized individual and group music therapy workshops.

Observations after music therapy sessions was conducted immediately after the session. The observations carried out by social workers working with clients involved in the research.

The research included total 54 residents (23 men, 31 women). Of them:

- 24 people with significant intellectual disabilities;
- 30 people with moderate intellectual disabilities.

12 clients participated in individual music therapy sessions and in group. 8 person participated only in individual music therapy sessions, 34 residents participated only in group music therapy sessions.

Results

After analysis of theoretical, diagnostic and empirical qualitative-quantitative research methods we can draw the following results:

1. According to the Lithuania social policy provisions, persons with mental disabilities have equal access like all to live a full fledged life. The most important point of quality of life for people with average and a significant intellectual disability – health (emphasis not only on the physical, but also mental health).
2. Health promotion (at the same optimization the quality of life) require to meet specific needs such as: to know better the environment and adapt here, try to express emotions as possible positive. Need of new services in the organization, new opportunities to apply new methods in practical work with adult people with mental disabilities that helps efficiently to meet the special needs of disabled, such way at least partially compensate their disability and help them to adapt to society's established behavior and communication norms.
3. The power of art for personalities (including the mentally disabled) is still underestimated in physical and psychical development processes. Art enriches people with moderate to profound intellectual disabilities spiritual world, develops the ability to understand him / herself and the environment what is prerequisite the development of higher quality of communication and collaboration.

4. Literature and materials analyzing music therapy (as one part of the art therapies) methods as a form of alternative treatment for people with various disabilities in Lithuania are low. Therefore, research in this area is needed. Theory adapting in practice would enable more effective raising the life quality for people with disabilities.
5. Using music therapy the residential core – through conscious communication between therapist and client, bridging the gap between music and life, to strengthen and nurture the inner and the outer world interfaces.
6. Music workshops raising people with disabilities self-awareness, expanding quantitative and qualitative expression capabilities, increasing their self-esteem and enable self-realization through art – cultural activities, socio-cultural projects and contribute effectively integration into society and thus to optimize the quality of life in the limited possibilities.
7. Monitoring analysis confirmed the theoretical arguments that music workshops allows on residents increasing self-confidence, his / her self-esteem changing behavior and communication standards, there is need for self-realization through the day to day activities.
8. Public opinion analysis showed that the need for communication and cooperation between the “healthy“ (“normal“) and the disabled is recognized, and welcome in the process of integration through art – cultural activities.
9. Music – cultural activities help and accelerate people with different kind intellectual disability socialization and integration into society.
10. Confirmed hypothesis that adults with moderate to significant intellectual disabilities living in Social Care House have the potential to optimize the quality of life within in the limited conditions through music therapy methods.

Conclusion

Using music therapy techniques can be developed auditory and visual perception, language sharpness, motion flexibility and coordination and body control. These skills can be very meaningful and efficiently applied in everyday life, at the same time as helping for a person to adapt in the environment and facilitating persons near (parents, caregivers, nurses, social workers and others specialists and relatives) communication.

Lots which emphasizes an artistic, therapeutic, cultural and communication value of music and value of communication through music methods. However, much less spoken about value of music in the social implications. Isle of sociability can be measured by how it helps people to integrate into society, to adapt to its requirements or vice versa – to resist the social environment and revolt.

Kopsavilkums. *Ikvienu cilvēka dzīves modeļi ir atšķirīgi. Tos raksturo dažādi kritēriji: individualitāte, nodarbošanās, dzīves ilgums, indivīda darbību ietekmējošie faktori (bioloģiskie, psiholoģiskie, sociālie, kultūras, vides, politiskie, ekonomiskie) u.c. Optimizējot dzīves kvalitāti pieaugušajiem ar speciālajām vajadzībām, pastāv trīs ļoti svarīgi rādītāji: integrēšanās sabiedrībā, socializācija un pašrealizācija. Sociālā aprūpes centra mērķis ir nodrošināt racionālu un efektīvu pakalpojumu tīklu, kas pilnībā atbilst iedzīvotāju vajadzībām un ļauj pilnīgi integrēties sabiedrībā. Izmantojot mūzikas terapijas metodes, ir iespējams attīstīt dzirdes un vizuālo uztveri, valodu, kustību elastību un koordināciju, ķermeņa kontroli, ko var efektīvi piemērot ikdienas dzīvē, vienlaicīgi palīdzot pielāgoties vidē un veicinot personas komunikācijas spējas. Pētījuma mērķis – izpētīt dzīves kvalitātes optimizāciju pieaugušajiem ar speciālajām vajadzībām, izmantojot mūzikas terapijas metodes un paņēmienus. Šajā darbā tika izmantotas kvalitatīvās un kvantitatīvās pētniecības metodes.*

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