



ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC THERAPY
(SINGAPORE)

MUSIC THERAPY TIMES

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AMTS EXCO 2022-2024

President: Dr Tan Xueli
Vice-President: Ms Eta Lauw
Secretary: Ms Grace Low
Treasurer: Ms Camellia Soon

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President's Note

I am pleased to present to you the 17th issue of the Association for Music Therapy (Singapore) (AMTS) newsletter. Published annually, our editors intently curate to bring forth our association's events and advocacy efforts in the past year to you. Through the many write-ups you will see in this issue, we hope to highlight the work of AMTS members in various arenas to educate the public and advocate for the profession.

One such highlight is our annual Music Therapy Day held on 27 May 2023. Helmed by our association vice-president and conference chair, Eta Lauw, nine professional members contributed to *Music, Life & Relationships - Through the Lens of Music Therapists (The Human Library Edition)* on that day to a diverse audience of students, music therapy care recipients and their families, healthcare professionals, educators, musicians, and members of the public.

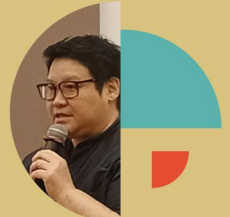
As a new initiative this year, AMTS formed four Communities of Practice (CoP) to centre our areas of expertise by gathering professional music therapists working in similar clinical backgrounds together. Each Community of Practice is led by senior music therapists who drive the direction and content of their advocacy work. The four CoPs and their respective leads are CoP Mental Health (lead: Fontane Liang), CoP Dementia (lead: Ng Wang Feng), CoP Palliative Care (lead: Tammy Lim), and CoP Special Education/Early Intervention (co-leads: Eta Lauw, Grace Low, Farhana Rizaini). In this issue, you will get to hear about their advocacy and outreach in spaces such as the National Gallery, and with national organisations such as Dementia Singapore and Singapore Hospice Council.

Presented for the first time in AMTS newsletters, we dedicated a section to the *State of the Association* where we offer to the public a narrative of our membership strength and categories, our professional members' level of education and credentials, and a snapshot of the recipients of music therapy services in Singapore. In doing so, we can accurately speak of the current state of our members, the clients, patients, and/or care recipients, and the outreach of music therapy services in the country.

To close, I want to offer my sincerest gratitude for the AMTS executive committee comprising of vice-president Eta Lauw, secretary Grace Low, and treasurer Camellia Soon. Deeply appreciate their generosity in service for our members and to the profession. Lastly, a big thank you to the editors Estelle Ng, Gwen Neo, and advisor Lynn Koh for helping the production of this newsletter.

Wishing you a meaningful engagement with music therapy through this year's newsletter!

Sincerely,
Tan Xueli, PhD, MT-BC
President



Co-Editors' Note

A warm welcome to the 17th issue of Music Therapy Times!

This issue provides a deeper insight into the various aspects of music therapy in Singapore beginning with a descriptive statistical profile of the profession in our very first *State of the Association* narrative! In line with the new direction of AMTS, Communities of Practice (CoP) section highlights the works of our professional members in various organisations and settings.

This year, we are grateful for the strong support of organisational heads who work closely with our professional members to advocate for music therapy; three of whom are featured in *Conversations with Friends of AMTS*.

The materialisation of this newsletter would not have been possible without the support from our advisor Lynn Koh, AMTS EXCO, as well as all the contributors. Thank you all!

As co-editors and music therapy students, editing this newsletter provided us with the opportunity to gain valuable and practical insights into music therapy as a profession in our homeland. In reading this, we hope you will learn and come to appreciate this niche and pivotal allied health profession with us.

Estelle Ng (left) & Gwen Neo (right)
Co-Editors



STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION

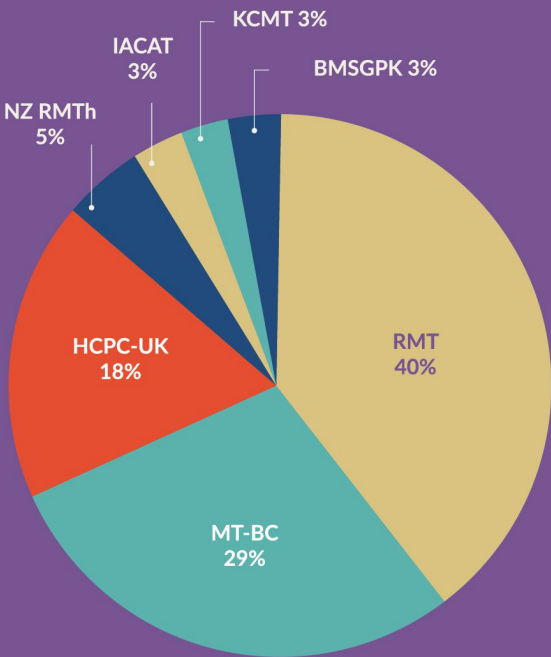
The association launched a Practice Analysis survey to professional members in July 2023 to consolidate a comprehensive descriptive and statistical narrative of the current 2023-2024 member demographics and employment information.

Collected for the first time since the inception of AMTS in 2007, we hope this screenshot of the membership and profession helps to give an accurate and updated information on the qualifications and credentials of AMTS members, and the breadth and impact of music therapy services in the country.

Membership Categories

Category	Description	Number of members
Professional	Certified with up-to-date credentials	78% (n = 38)
Associate	Certified	2% (n = 1)
Student	Working towards music therapy degree	20% (n = 10)
Total		100% (n = 49)

Credentials

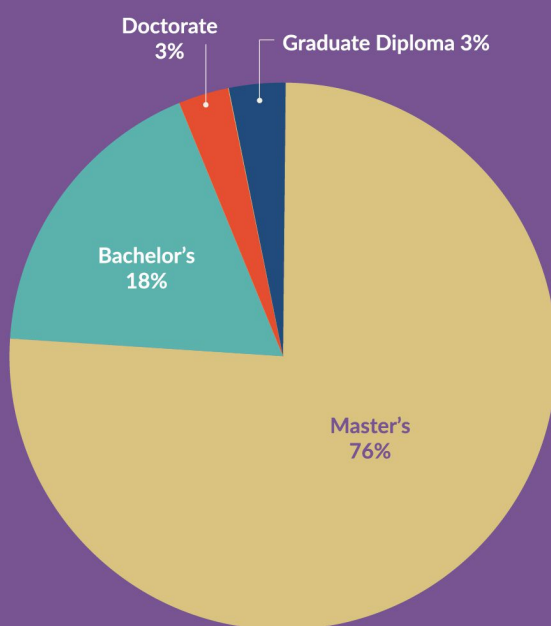


n = 38 professional members

The pie chart shows the breakdown of the various credentials held by our professional members according to the country they were trained in.

- 1 RMT: Registered Music Therapist (Australia)
- 2 MT-BC: Music Therapist – Board Certified (United States of America)
- 3 HCPC-UK: Health and Care Professions Council (United Kingdom)
- 4 NZ RMTh: Registered Music Therapist (New Zealand)
- 5 IACAT: Irish Association of Creative Arts Therapists (Ireland)
- 6 KCMT: Korean Certified Music Therapist (South Korea)
- 7 BMSGPK: Federal Ministry for Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (Austria)

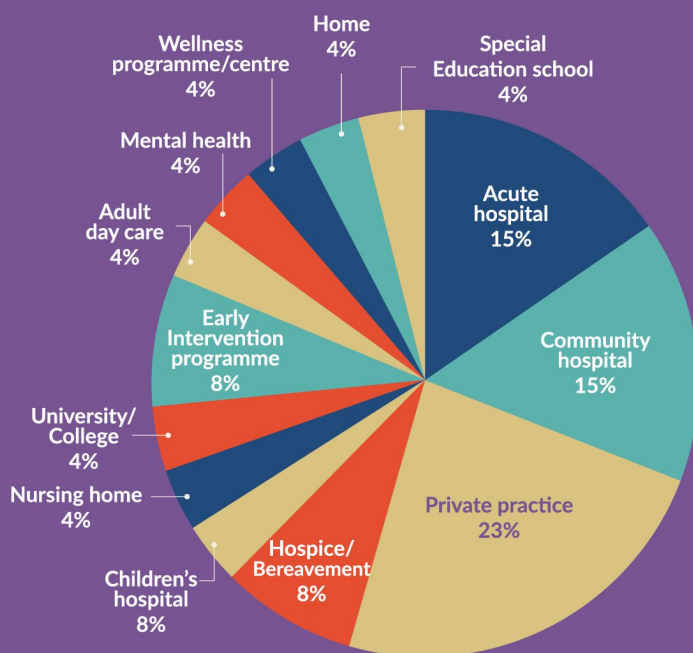
Level of Education



n = 38 professional members

The pie-chart shows a breakdown of memberships' highest degree attained in music therapy.

Settings Served by Professional Music Therapists



n = 16 Singapore-based professional members who responded to survey

The pie chart shows breakdown of the various settings where professional music therapists work in the country. Approximately half of the respondents (*n* = 7) to the survey stated working in two or more settings. Thus, according to this set of data, those who have a private practice also have a position in an institution, e.g., community hospital, hospice/ bereavement facility. Some music therapists do work in more than one setting, however, they tend to be in the same category, i.e. part-time work in two different hospitals.

Please refer to the full State of the Association report on the AMTS website.

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Communities of Practice (CoP) was formulated in 2022 with the aim to gather professional music therapists with common expertise in areas of clinical practice for advocacy purposes. The four CoPs of AMTS include palliative care, dementia, mental health, and special education/early intervention. This issue highlights the work of the first three CoPs.



AMTS professional members who facilitated the workshop



Workshop participants taking part in an improvisation

Palliative Care

“Music, You and Me”

Post-conference workshop series of the 8th Singapore Palliative Care Conference

“Music, You and Me” was an 8-hour workshop conducted at Park Royal Hotel on 3 July 2023 as part of the post-conference workshop series of the 8th Singapore Palliative Care Conference. In alignment with the conference theme “Building Collaborative Communities,” the workshop was designed by five AMTS Professional Members Tammy Lim, Camellia Soon, Jolene Yee, Lynn Koh and Stephanie Chan with the aim of integrating the use of music into the everyday practice of palliative care professionals. A total of 13 delegates including physicians, nurse clinicians, social workers, and occupational therapists participated in this workshop. It focused on four main therapeutic music methods: receptive, recreative, improvisational, and compositional. The participants learnt about the therapeutic uses of music, its relation to the profession of music therapy, and how the use of music strategies can be integrated into their professional practices to enhance patient care.

Based on participants’ feedback, the outcomes of the workshop went beyond the practical aspects of using music in clinical settings. Music offered opportunities to connect with each other, deepened intrapersonal relationships within the self, provided a safe and containing space to express difficult feelings and thoughts, and served as a channel for spiritual experiences that deepened individuals’ perception of life and connection with higher selves.

This workshop marked a significant milestone in affirming the use of music for therapeutic purposes in medical settings. Alongside the work of music therapists, the thoughtful and therapeutic use of music can be effective and powerful, and can be utilised by healthcare workers to enhance the care of patients.

Tammy Lim, MA, MT-BC, FAMI



Dementia



Professional Member Ng Wang Feng conducting the workshop for caregivers of persons with dementia

Music Engagement with Persons with Dementia

In response to a request from Dementia Singapore for AMTS to conduct a workshop for caregivers of people with dementia, a community outreach workshop was delivered at the New Horizon Centre (Jurong Point Shopping Centre) on 12 August 2023, by Community of Practice Dementia lead, Ng Wang Feng, and supported by AMTS EXCO member Camellia Soon. The workshop aimed to empower caregivers, introduce music as a way to engage their loved ones with dementia, and also enhance knowledge about music therapy.

The workshop was attended by a total of 11 caregivers. Most are caregivers to their elderly parents, with one working with the elderly. Through role-plays, experientials and discussions, participants reflected on the experience of being in music with their care beneficiaries. Those role-playing as persons with dementia reported feeling happy when they perceived that their preferred music was appreciated by their caregiver. They also observed feeling supported when the role-playing caregiver joined in singing or moved in synchrony with them. It was moving to witness the level of commitment the participants demonstrated towards their loved ones.

The workshop ended with a segment on the importance of self-care for caregivers, and participants had the opportunity to honour themselves with self-affirmations set to music, bringing the workshop to a meaningful close.

Ng Wang Feng, MMT, MT-BC



Mental Health

Gallery Wellness Festival



18 June workshop led by Professional Members Evelyn Lee (first from left) and Fontane Liang (third from left), featuring pioneer AMTS member Audrey Ruyters (second from the left)



9 July workshop led by Professional Members Eta Lauw (second from left) and Jacqueline Chow (third from left)

As part of the National Gallery Singapore's (NGS) Wellness Festival, AMTS partnered with NGS for the first time to deliver two music therapy workshops to the public. The festival ran from 17 June to 9 July 2023, with various programmes centred around the theme of "Art Connects" showcasing experiences of various art forms contributing to one's mental wellness. AMTS President Dr Tan Xueli also contributed to the festival by conceptualising a Music Jamming Space filled with instruments, instructions and suggestions on how to evoke moods and feelings through music.

The 1.5-hour workshops took place on 18 June 2023, led by Professional Members Evelyn Lee and Fontane Liang; and on 9 July 2023, led by Professional Members Jacqueline Chow and Eta Lauw. Eta and Xueli respectively introduced AMTS at each of the workshops. Led by Community of Practice Mental Health lead, Fontane, the four senior music therapists explained music as medicine, medium and culture, and used case studies to illustrate the work of music therapists. Through experiential activities and "soundbyte" takeaway ideas, the participants learnt how to use music for their personal wellness. Participants also enjoyed trying out different instruments and gave positive feedback. Several described feeling moved by the case studies shared despite hearing about music therapy for the first time.

The workshops were also enhanced by support from the AMTS community, with individuals such as AMTS Student Member Gwen Neo assisting. Pioneer member Audrey Ruyters also graced the workshop with her presence. As advocacy and education remains an important aspect of AMTS' work, it is hoped there will be more opportunities for AMTS members to share the profession and work at a national level.

Fontane Liang, HCPC-UK, NMT Fellow



EVENTS IN 2022/2023

Music Therapy Day

AMTS held its first in-person Music Therapy Day (MT Day) on 27 May 2023 after the annual public advocacy event went online for the past three years due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The event, held at Tzu Chi Humanistic Youth Centre, was conducted in a human library format, where nine of our Professional Members became “human books” and shared their perspectives and experiences in music therapy with participants in an intimate small group setting. The human books on loan shared experiences from a range of settings from babies in the intensive care unit, to children and youths, people with brain injuries, and end-of-life care.

Apart from the human library, participants also had a chance to try out and purchase different instruments used by music therapists through an instrument “petting zoo”, set up by AMTS Instrument Partner, Allegro Brio, browse through actual music therapy books and local research posters on display. The event ended with a music therapy experiential conducted by Professional Member Jacqueline Chow. MT Day saw an attendance of close to 80 members of the public.



Professional Member Ng Wang Feng as a human book



Music therapy experiential conducted by Professional Member Jacqueline Chow



Participants trying out instruments at the instrument “petting zoo”



Participants browsing through music therapy books on display

Some feedback from participants included:

“I now have a deeper appreciation for the work done by MTs and a recognition of their passion and skill sets to impact lives and bring about transformational change.”

“Music therapy is so wide yet personal, and powerful.”

“Music therapy isn't just about performing, it's about making connections with the people you play for and/or play with.”

“We want to thank the Association for always making us feel welcomed at the AMTS events. It was a delight to catch up with the music therapists, many of whom we had not met since the pandemic. It was also our joy to share and interact with the participants and the music therapists over our instruments. We had a great time!”

- Tay Soo Leng, Goh Lee Lee (Allegro-Brio)

Music therapists who were involved in sharing their personal experiences also felt empowered by the experience.

“It was exciting to be able to share my story in such a warm and inviting space. The connections that were made through words were ineffable and deeply cherished.”

- Professional Member Ruyu Wang, IACAT, human book on “Music Therapy for Children with and Impacted by Cancer”, 1st time MT Day presenter

“It was my first time presenting in-person for MT Day. It was a different experience to be able to connect with people in this way. Things were a lot more interactive and also as a presenter, I got to have the flexibility to tailor my sharing to what the people in that group were curious about. Being able to hear the ideas and experiences from those who came was a big bonus.”

- Professional Member Jolene Yee, RMT, human book on “Music Therapy for Persons with Severe Brain Injuries”, 3rd time MT Day presenter

See you at Music Therapy Day next year!

Eta Lauw, RMT (left)

Jen Sim, RMT (centre)

Alicia Ng, music therapy student (right)



Music Research in Singapore Symposium (MRSS)



Professional Member Dr Tan Xueli (standing) presenting at the panel

The 3rd annual Music Research in Singapore Symposium (MRSS) was held on 21 February, 2023 at Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, National University of Singapore (NUS). This full-day event comprised of a keynote and four panel presentations in topics ranging from music and health, computational research in music, music pedagogy and practice, and research funding. I was invited to be on the first panel, Music & Health together with Prof. Kua Ee Heok (NUS), Prof. Ang Seng Bin (KK Women's and Children's Hospital), and Dr Mandy Zhang (Changi General Hospital). I shared on the status and work of AMTS professional members in various healthcare settings in Singapore. I also gave a brief presentation of my past research in contextualising a multi-axis paradigm in music therapy for pain management. Professional Members

Camellia Soon and Melanie Kwan presented their posters "Telehealth music therapy in end-of-life care during COVID-19: Two retrospective case studies in a hospice" and "Effectiveness of music interventions for hospitalized children and adolescents: A systematic review" respectively in the research poster session. The event was well attended by several AMTS professional members from the medical and special education / early intervention sectors.

Tan Xueli, PhD, MT-BC



REFLECTIONS

Reflections from the 17th World Congress of Music Therapy

The 17th World Congress of Music Therapy (WCMT) was held in Vancouver, Canada from 24 July to 29 July 2023. Organised every three years, the Congress aims to gather music therapy professionals and experts of related fields to share insights, experiences, and findings from research. The theme for this year was "Reflecting, Connecting and Innovating in the Global Community." Amidst this backdrop, it was felicitous that conference delegates paid tribute to the Indigenous peoples of Vancouver by witnessing and honouring the First Nations Hoop Dance.

I had the privilege of attending and presenting at the WCMT. The congress was inspiring on many levels: Learning about incorporating indigenous philosophies and theories in research from Dr Rika Ikuno (Japan), hearing about the challenges of building up a clinical practice as a minority from Dr Indra Selvarajah (Malaysia), and reflecting on ways to challenge boundaries while developing a training programme by Kezia Putri (Indonesia). I was also deeply impressed by Thyra Andrews' frank and reflective stories of racism within music therapy sessions and healthcare institutions, as it reminded us that racism still exists and more needs to be done individually and as a society.

Overall, the congress proved to be a fruitful time of reconnecting with friends, colleagues, and collaborators from all around the world. I felt that the inclusion of diverse voices from the global majority across Spotlight Sessions, Pre-Congress Workshops, and Paper Presentations, was also a testament to the organisers' commitment to celebrating global diversity and learning from one another to move forward with new ideas and inspiration.

Jonathan Tang, MA, MT-BC, HCPC-UK



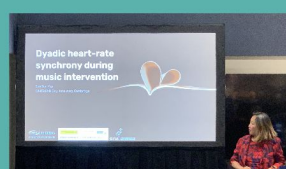
Highlights of AMTS Professional Members at WCMT



Global Perspectives on Music Therapy and Elevating Diverse Older Persons
Roundtable discussion with panellists from the United States, Canada, Australia and Singapore ft. Eta Lauw (RMT)



An Integrated Speech and Language Therapy and Music Therapy Programme
Presentation by Jonathan Tang (MA, MT-BC, HCPC-UK) and Tong Guo (Speech and Language Therapist)



Dyadic Heart-rate Synchrony During Music Intervention
Presentation by Sun Sun Yap (Ph.D. candidate, MT-BMSGPK)

MUSIC THERAPY IN SINGAPORE

AMTS Response to Autism Clinical Practice Guidelines: Autism Spectrum Disorder in Children and Adolescents 2nd Edition (2023)

In May 2023, the Academy of Medicine, Singapore and the College of Paediatrics and Child Health, Singapore published the second edition of the *Clinical Practice Guidelines on Autism Spectrum Disorder in Children and Adolescents*. The first *Clinical Practice Guidelines on Autism Spectrum Disorders in Preschool Children* was published in March 2010. After 13 years, these revised guidelines aligns with "... a new vision towards building an inclusive society with a broader definition of meritocracy that entails recognising different strengths and different individuals" (Ho, 2023, p. 17).

The Association for Music Therapy (Singapore) (AMTS) wrote a response letter on 15 June 2023, expressing our support for item R 6.30 stating "Music therapy may be recommended as a complementary intervention approach for children and adolescents on the autism spectrum. Specifically, there is moderate level of evidence for an increased chance of global improvement, improved quality of life and reduced total autism severity, with low potential for harm. [EM6-28]" (p. 114). You may refer to the *Clinical Practice Guidelines*, as well as the AMTS response letter below.

About 30% of AMTS' professional membership work with neurodivergent clients in Social Service Agencies (SSA) such as Rainbow Centre, AWWA Schools, and Thye Hua Kwan Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children (EIPIC) Centres. In addition, several professional members are offering music therapy sessions with neurodivergent clients in their private practice settings. For the last thirty years, professional music therapists have contributed to increased global improvement, and improved quality of life of individuals on the neurodivergent spectrum. AMTS is pleased that the recommendations from the *Clinical Practice Guidelines* (2nd ed.) relied heavily on scientific evidence gathered from the Cochrane Review *Music Therapy for Autistic People* (Geretsegger et al., 2022).

AMTS is committed to supporting the dissemination and implementation of the revised guidelines. By incorporating music therapy as a complementary evidence-based intervention, we are aligned with fellow healthcare professionals, educators, and caregivers in our efforts to ensure the optimal well-being and quality of life for children and adolescents on the neurodiverse spectrum.

I would like to acknowledge my fellow co-authors and AMTS Professional Members Eta Lauw, Dawn Chik, and Calvin Eng for their contribution towards drafting the response to the clinical practice guidelines.

Tan Xueli, PhD, MT-BC



You may access the aforementioned documents
via the QR codes or web links below:

List of References

Geretsegger, M., Fusar-Poli, L., Elefant, C., Mössler, K. A., Vitale, G., & Gold, C. (2022). Music therapy for autistic people. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, (5).

Ho, L. Y. (2023). Forward by director, Child Development Programme, MOH. In C. M. Wong & A. Ramkumar (Co-leads), *2023 Clinical Practice Guidelines on Autism Spectrum Disorder in Children and Adolescents* (p. 17). College of Pediatrics & Child Health, Singapore.



Clinical Practice Guidelines
bit.ly/cpga2023



AMTS Response Letter
bit.ly/amts-cpg

Celebrating 35 Years of Rainbow Centre

The music therapy department in Rainbow Centre (RC) started in the 1990s. Music therapists at RC serve children and youth aged 7 to 18 years old with disabilities such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Cerebral Palsy (CP) and Global Developmental Delay (GDD) in Special Education (SPED) programme. As music therapists, we use music as a medium to empower our students while addressing non-musical goals (i.e. communication and social skills, emotional regulation, cognitive goals and more). Music therapists work closely with the Individualised Education Plan (IEP) team which involves occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists, speech-language therapists, teachers, social workers, and parents.

In 2022, RC celebrated its 35th anniversary. Throughout these years, the music therapy department has grown alongside RC as it expanded from one to three campuses. Music therapists in RC always strive to advocate for the profession, including local research studies on the efficacy of music therapy, educating RC employees and stakeholders, and deepening conversations with parents and caregivers.

Thank you for supporting the work of music therapists in Singapore. Happy 35th anniversary, Rainbow Centre!

Fun facts:

- RC was the first government-funded special education school to hire music therapists
- RC is one of the organisations to have hired the largest number of music therapists in Singapore
- About one-third of the music therapists in Singapore have worked in RC

Purchase Rainbow Dreams (4th edition) here:

bit.ly/2022rcbook



Grace Low, MT-BC, NMT



Family-Centred Music Therapy for Premature Babies

In January 2022, KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) launched the Temasek Foundation Music, Baby and Me (TF-MBM) programme. The grant-funded programme provides music therapy for premature babies undergoing intensive care at the hospital, and their families.

Premature babies face an array of developmental challenges, including breathing and feeding difficulties. Parent-infant bonding is often impaired due to the circumstances of premature birth. These parents commonly experience high anxiety while mothers are recuperating, and fathers are kept busy caring for both mother and baby.

TF-MBM is based off an established model, Rhythm, Breath & Lullaby (RBL), founded by Dr. Joanne Loewy and team in Mount Sinai Beth Israel Hospital, New York. Our music therapy sessions support babies in their neurodevelopment health through the use of infant-directed singing to stabilise their vital signs. Our music therapists also support parents in identifying meaningful music and guiding them to use meaningful music to achieve a greater connection with their baby through live singing, for example. This helps the baby to experience increased comfort through the familiar voices of their parents, and attain an optimal state for further growth and development.

The programme will continue to care for these babies and their families until 2025.

Kayla Wong (RMT; left) and Jen Sim (RMT, NMT; centre) are music therapists from the Child Life, Art and Music Therapy Programmes (CHAMPS) in KK Women's and Children's Hospital. Dr Yip Wai Yan (MBBS, MRCPCH; right) is a Senior Consultant at the Department of Neonatology at KK Women's and Children's Hospital.



AMTS Professional Members Jen and Kayla presenting about TF-MBM



TF-MBM music therapy session conducted at KKH

ADVANCED TRAINING

Embodied Voice Work

Beyond Singing. It was truly transformative.

In June 2023, I had the incredible opportunity to attend renowned jazz vocalist and music therapist, Lisa Sokolov's Embodied Voice Work workshop held in Penzberg, Germany.

The primary focus of the workshop was to embody and free the voice (as a musical instrument and tool). Alongside a diverse group of participants, including psychotherapists, music teachers, leadership trainers, and artists, we engaged in various experiential activities that enhanced our listening skills, breathing techniques, emotional expression, and connection among ourselves. Within four days, I have gained several profound aspects:

- I've learnt to listen to my inner self, embraced and gained trust in myself. In doing so, I've stayed true to myself.
- I've unlocked the full resonance and potential of my voice, and therefore myself as an individual.
- I've experienced the true meaning of connecting with others and discovered the power of communicating using body and sound, without words.
- I've learnt that the ability to fully express oneself can lead to a sense of power and locus of control.



Blue sky of Penzberg, Germany



Outdoor lunch with classmates



Photo of Lisa (left) and Hanna (right)

As a music therapist starting to work in the mental health setting, this workshop has allowed me to be more congruent with myself, and to use my voice more freely and intuitively. Through this, I have gained a newfound and renewed sense of confidence which has positively impacted my practice.

- My deeper sense of congruence provides emotional safety for clients to open up.
- I can be fully present and attentive to my clients.
- I can empathise and understand my clients beyond their spoken words, including their emotions, voice, intentions, and physical states.
- I feel free to let the music flow through me, and in doing so, I become a true partner with the music.
- I can now sing much more freely and intuitively, breaking through any inhibitions.

Through this workshop, I have regained a greater sense of connection with the music as well as through music with my clients.

This workshop was primarily experiential, relying less on words and intellectualisation, and more on the transformative effects of voice and music. The experience was nothing short of life-changing. It was a liberating and joyous experience to embrace music and my voice fully, I am excited to carry these newfound insights into my future practice.

Hanna Ma, KCMT

CONVERSATIONS WITH FRIENDS OF AMTS

Ms Choo Shiu Ling

Chief Executive Officer
Assisi Hospice

Ms Choo Shiu Ling joined Assisi Hospice as Chief Executive Officer in November 2015. Starting her 20-year healthcare career first as a Physiotherapist at the National University Hospital, she moved on to corporate roles such as Strategic Planning and Business Development, Operations Management, Performance Management and developed the SGH Campus Education Office. She enjoys music before the 21st Century and anything by Andrea Bocelli.

As the music therapy profession continues to grow and develop in Singapore, we recognise that the help and support of many leaders and partners of AMTS have been crucial in leading the profession to where it is today. In this issue, we hear from three Friends of AMTS who have helped to advocate for the profession.

1 During your time at Assisi Hospice, how would you describe your experience with music therapy in the clinical setting?

I have witnessed how music therapists can help patients experience their final journey with dignity in appreciation of the fullness of their lives and emotions. Music therapy is an intrinsic part of palliative care and our therapists work within an interdisciplinary team to provide holistic care for our patients and loved ones.

2 In your opinion, how has music therapy supported your patients in end of life care?

The ultimate goal is to enhance our patient's quality of life and to promote a sense of dignity and empowerment. In palliative care, our music therapists create a safe space for our patients to connect with their inner self. Music also provides a channel to express who they are and helps connect our patients and people around them including their family members, caregivers, friends, and healthcare staff.

3 What is one common misconception that you think people have about music therapy and how would you share it with other healthcare professionals or the general public?

Music is often perceived as something used for celebration or leisure, and there are palliative patients who initially think that as they are sick and dying, they have no use for music. However for many of us, music is intrinsically associated with different periods of our life and various experiences. In the final journey, music can provide a safe space for our patients to connect with their emotions, past experiences and with their loved ones.

4 Would you have anything you wish to share with the music therapist colleagues?

I continue to be inspired by their dedication and ability to reach out to our patients in a way that speaks to their spirituality. Their gift of music and expertise in being able to help patients connect deeply within themselves and with loved ones is much needed. I am thankful to them as I have observed the transformational impact of their work at Assisi Hospice. They empower those whom they touch to embrace the beauty of life even as they are physically ill. When the words fail, music speaks.



Dr Mervyn Koh, MBBS, MRC

Medical Director
Dover Park Hospice

Dr Mervyn Koh is Medical Director at Dover Park Hospice. He oversees the Multi-Disciplinary Teams in the Hospice. He is also a Senior Consultant Palliative Care Physician and Geriatrician at Tan Tock Seng Hospital. He enjoys contemporary Christian music and one song that inspires him is Gabriel's Oboe from the 1986 film, The Mission.

1 During your time at Dover Park Hospice, how would you describe your experience with music therapy in the clinical setting?

I have enjoyed working with our music therapists at Dover Park Hospice very much. They are an integral part of our multi-disciplinary team and offer a distinct form of engagement in using music to provide therapy and 'draw out' the inner expressions and experiences of our patients. They bring life and music into the hospice and their songs bring smiles to many of our patients and their families.

2 Could you share one example of how music therapy supported your patients in end-of-life care?

One incident that comes to mind was how one of our music therapists, Camellia, worked with a home care patient with advanced dementia who would not speak to his family. Camellia engaged him with an old Chinese song 'Ye Lai Xiang' and surprisingly he started smiling and mouthing a few words. His family was moved to tears and felt that he was still 'alive' and that they could still 'reach him'. The family was tremendously grateful for the music therapist's intervention.

3 As there is a national expansion of home care service in end-of-life care, how do you think increased psychosocial support such as music therapy makes a difference in the homecare setting?

I think there definitely is a role for music therapists in home care (reference to the story I shared earlier). Their input will add value to the multi-disciplinary team and improve the care of patients and their families who want to live out the rest of their days at home.

4 Would you have anything you wish to share with the music therapist colleagues?

You are an integral part of every palliative care multidisciplinary team and your work is special and definitely valued by us in this field. Keep up the good work!



Associate Professor Tan Boon Yeow, MBBS, FCFP(S), FAMS

Chief Executive Officer St Luke's Hospital

Associate Professor Tan Boon Yeow is the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Consultant of the Medical Department at St Luke's Hospital. He is joint adjunct Associate Professor at NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and DUKE-NUS Medical School. He enjoys listening to jazz and classical music as he finds it calming and soothing.

1 In your opinion, how has music therapy supported your patients' physical, emotional and psychosocial well-being?

Having music therapists at St Luke's Hospital (SLH) has been one of the best things for SLH and our patients. Through music, we can now engage with our patients in ways never done before. This integrates well into our holistic Clinical, Social and Pastoral (CSP) model of care, where we strive to restore our patients from wellness to wholeness.

2 How do you think music therapy can develop/grow into a standard therapy practice in healthcare settings?

Music is often viewed as an art, but music therapy is a proven science. For music therapy to be nationally recognised, the impact of music therapy has to be appreciated by healthcare authorities and organisations. At SLH, we are proud to have music therapy as a standard practice and we strive to develop new initiatives.

3 Where do you see the future of music therapy in Singapore?

I see music therapy as a key component of both rehabilitation and social prescription in healthcare settings, which will introduce a dimension of care that we have not yet experienced.

4 Would you have anything you wish to share with the music therapist colleagues?

Your music not only warms the hearts of your patients and clients, but it also brings healing to the soul! Know that when words fail, music speaks.



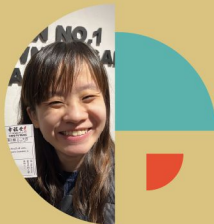
MUSIC THERAPY STUDENTS' CORNER

I'm Zhi Qing (Gwen), a soon-to-be Year 2 music therapy student at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge, United Kingdom (UK). Things that make me smile include slow walks/runs in nature, cats and food. The music therapy programme I'm in is a 2-year postgraduate master's where I'm required to participate in 2 different placement settings, undergo personal therapy and do adequate amounts of writing and research (not me foreshadowing my 15k words dissertation hahaha!).

I completed my first year's placement at a special needs school in Cambridgeshire, conducting music therapy sessions (individual and group) with children aged 4-19. In year 2, I will be placed at two charity organisations accommodating adults grappling with alcohol-drug addiction and homelessness. Having lived in the UK for 4 years, I noticed a big difference in the mindsets of those in the West to those in the East (including Singapore), which made me wonder: how can I merge parts of my own culture/identity with the Westernised schools of thought I've been taught during training?

As for my post-graduation plans, I face the dilemma of either staying in the UK to sharpen my skills/craft as a therapist and person or relocating back home to do so. Decisions, decisions, decisions!

Zhi Qing (Gwen) Neo,
second-year music therapy student
Anglia Ruskin University



I am Wynn and am about to start my second year in Master of Arts in Music Therapy at the University of Derby, UK. Studying in Derby has been a wonderful experience despite the whirlwind of emotions of settling into a new foreign country, culture and environment. However, my lecturers and coursemates have been very supportive and helpful.

For my first year's placement, I had the privilege to work in a multi-disciplinary agency at the Derby City Council (DCC) that provides mental health support for children and adolescents attending mainstream schools in Derbyshire. Some of my clients include children who are neuro-divergent (e.g. ASD), and those who have experienced traumatic events due to abuse or any other forms of mental health issues (i.e. anxiety and attachment). On top of working with the multi-agency team, I have also worked with child practitioners, schools and pastoral staff. This placement opportunity was definitely an eye-opening experience as I encountered a variety of social issues that I rarely stumble upon in Singapore. As for my post graduations, I hope to start out privately with the idea of incorporating music therapy alongside music education.

Wynn Chan,
second-year music therapy student
University of Derby



My name is Pongthipok (Tete) Sootthipong, a Thai who lived in Singapore for almost half of his life. I am a graduating student in music therapy at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok.

During the course of my studies at this international programme, I have gained insights into different music therapy approaches used across the world. In addition, I was supervised by three overseas-trained supervisors (United States, Australia, and Japan) who are currently practising music therapy in Thailand. Over time, I realise the need to adapt my music therapy practice to suit the Thai culture, which is highly structured and conservative.

One prominent example demonstrating cultural differences is through improvisational music therapy techniques. While improvisation-based music therapy methods are predominantly used in Europe, there is no definition of the term "improvisation" in the Thai language, hence making improvisational methods a difficult intervention to explain. Furthermore, Thais are less likely to know how to express themselves freely as compared to people in the West. As such, one adaptation that I have found useful is to provide step-by-step instructions to guide the patients/clients. Hence, if one chooses to use improvisation as a method of music therapy in the Asian context, one needs to find ways to adapt the method to suit one's cultural context. This is to ensure that the patient/client receives the most benefit from music therapy.

Pongthipok (Tete) Sootthipong,
graduating music therapy student
Chulalongkorn University



I'm Zee, currently studying music therapy in Sydney, Australia. I started in March 2023 and plan to graduate as a registered Music Therapist by Jan 2025. I am 32 years old but my classmates think I am 23!

My first placement was at an aged care facility. Native English speakers dominated the population. However, there were a small minority of other Asian ethnic groups that consisted of some Chinese and a Korean. As a Singaporean I felt proud for having sensitivity towards diverse cultures, allowing me to connect with these minorities; especially, for my Chinese counterparts, where I could converse and sing to them in Mandarin. The song, "月亮代表我的心" (The moon represents my heart) is a tune that is likely to connect most Mandarin-speaking elderlies regardless of the country that they came from. Some residents were part of political wars and songs like "Long Road to Tipperary" and "Waltzing Matilda" got them engaged and singing along. This made me ponder about what songs might closely relate to me in my old age - possibly something by Avril Lavigne because "why do you have to make things so complicated?" was the motto of the kids born in 90s!

Post-graduation, I hope to practice music therapy in secondary schools and/or youth homes in Singapore.

Zee Ang,
first-year music therapy student
University of Western Sydney



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

1 What or who inspired you to become a music therapist?

After completing my undergraduate studies in music, I knew that I didn't want to just teach. I was so excited when I discovered how music can be used in a different context to facilitate therapeutic change! I also felt that being a therapist resonated with many parts of my personality.

2 What is one inspiring moment in your work as a music therapist?

I love seeing how clients transform overtime in therapy and gain confidence in themselves. I worked with a teenage boy who resisted playing instruments due to his anxiety and need for perfection. After 10 sessions, he began to explore instruments and engage in improvisatory play. It was such a powerful moment to witness; it proved that all the time spent building the relationship and understanding his internal world was worthwhile!

3 What is one challenging moment in your work as a music therapist and what did you learn from it?

In cases where clients struggle with emotional dysregulation or early childhood trauma, often emotions like anger, sadness or shame can be projected by my client onto me. This is not exactly a bad thing as it often enriches my understanding of the client but at times I felt awful after sessions. Overtime, I've learnt to implement boundaries to ensure self-care, and also to use supervision as a helpful space to discuss difficult moments.

4 What is a theoretical approach that you have found to be more relevant in your current practice?

One approach I have been incorporating into my practice is to 'Stay in the play!'. In my work with children in mainstream schools, it can be so tempting to interpret everything they say or do right away, when objects (i.e words, music, toys) are used as metaphors or symbols. Instead, I've found it more helpful to immerse myself in their play, so truly being with them, before thinking about possible connections afterwards.

5 Share an interesting fact about yourself!

I love cooking and baking! Things I enjoy making recently are matcha tiramisu, hojicha basque burnt cheesecake and focaccia.

Melissa Chew, HCPC-UK



MUSIC THERAPY IN THE NEWS



弹弹唱唱“乐”疗特需者
Playing and singing - Music therapy for individuals with special needs
Published in Zaobao on 2 September 2022

AMTS Professional Member Eta Lauw shares about her journey to becoming a music therapist, as well as her work in supporting the emotional and learning needs of students in AWWA school.
bit.ly/2022zba



聊艺疗：音乐及体感动作治疗
Creative Arts Therapies: Music Therapy and Movement Therapy
Broadcasted on Channel 8 on 1 October 2022

In this segment featuring music therapy and movement therapy, AMTS Professional Member Fontane Liang shares about her work with adolescents living with mental health challenges, and patients with lived experiences also share their reflections on how music therapy has supported their journey and recovery.
bit.ly/20238w



People In Our Neighbourhood - Music Therapist
Broadcasted on CLASS 95 on 10 February 2023

In this radio interview, AMTS Professional Member Evelyn Lee sheds light on music therapy as a profession, the populations she works with, and answers questions from the public about music therapy.
bit.ly/2023pion



Sing to Remember
Broadcasted on CNA Insider on 24 February 2023

This broadcast video features music therapy and AMTS professional member Evelyn Lee facilitating a session with seniors living with dementia.
bit.ly/2023cnayt



They're living with dementia. They're in a choir. Can singing improve their well-being?
Published on CNA Insider on 5 March 2023

AMTS Professional Member Evelyn Lee is featured sharing why and how music can engage individuals living with dementia, as well as how music therapy can provide support to caregivers.
bit.ly/2023cna



仁慈医院通过感官刺激活动 慰藉病患
Using sensory and storytelling techniques to improve well-being for patients who are bed-bound and non-verbally communicative
Published in Zaobao on 1 June 2023

AMTS Professional Member Jolene Yee shares about her role as a music therapist within a team of allied health professionals in Ren Ci Hospital's Chronic Sick Unit, detailing how familiar items and materials are used to develop sensory-based interventions to stimulate patients' sensory responses, and improve their overall well-being.
bit.ly/2023zbrc

On Your Singapore Weekend
Broadcasted on CNA938 on 25 June 2023

AMTS Professional Member Camellia Soon speaks about her career switch to becoming a music therapist, and what the work of a music therapist looks like in end-of-life care.