

AMTS Professional Competencies



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Preamble

The Professional Competencies were formally adopted by the Association for Music Therapy, Singapore (AMTS) on 31st October 2019. This document serves as an aspirational guide, i.e. it articulates competencies that practising Music Therapists in Singapore are expected to demonstrate. This is a dynamic document and should be re-evaluated by AMTS approximately every five years, to keep in line with development and advances of the profession in Singapore.

This document, prepared by Ng Wang Feng, MMT, MT-BC, is made possible by AMTS membership's collective contributions between April 2018 and May 2019. It has been through two rounds of review by the AMTS Council of International Music Therapy Advisors (CIMTA). The seven-member council is made up of: Dr. Alicia Clair, Ms. May Bee Choo Chulee, Dr. Feilin Hsiao, Dr. Katrina Skewes McFerran, Ms. Loi Wei Ming, Dr. Xueli Tan, and Mx. Annette Whitehead-Pleaux.

Music Therapists practicing in Singapore are expected to demonstrate the following competencies:

A. Music Competencies

1. General music knowledge and skills

- 1.1 Recognize music of various genres, periods and cultures
- 1.2 Demonstrate awareness of cultural and historical contexts of musical styles
- 1.3 Recognize standard works in local multicultural repertoire
- 1.4 Select appropriate musical material to meet specific therapeutic objectives
- 1.5 Care for and maintain instruments, adhering to infection control and safety protocols
- 1.6 Incorporate music technology skills, e.g. YouTube, Digital Audio Workstation (DAW)

2. Functional music and performance skills

- 2.1 Transpose simple melodies and chords e.g. folk songs, lullabies
- 2.2 Demonstrate functional piano/keyboard, guitar, percussion, traditional instruments, and music technology skills, relevant to clinical needs
- 2.3 Improvise using voice, melodic and percussion instruments in a range of genres of music
- 2.4 Use standard and alternative tunings on stringed instruments (e.g. guitar)
- 2.5 Facilitate client's engagement in active music making/listening
- 2.6 Sing with tuneful accuracy, adequate volume, and in a style befitting the musical context, both with accompaniment and a cappella
- 2.7 Apply and demonstrate warm-up techniques for vocal care
- 2.8 Use voice in flexible and appropriate way to support and encourage clients' participation
- 2.9 Adapt and/or compose musical material to meet specific therapeutic objectives
- 2.10 Present age-appropriate songs and music suitable for individual clients and groups
- 2.11 Facilitate small and large vocal and instrumental ensembles
- 2.12 Maintain proficiency in principal instrument

B. Therapeutic Competencies

1. Knowledge about people in context

- 1.1 Demonstrate sufficient medical and social understandings of typical and atypical human development, including anatomical, physiological, neurological, psychological, communication, developmental and social development
- 1.2 Demonstrate awareness of critical perspectives on contemporary social movements as applicable to clients
- 1.3 Demonstrate sufficient knowledge of etiology, strengths, challenges, and resources of individuals
- 1.4 Demonstrate sufficient knowledge of terminology and theoretical approaches relevant to clients' functional outcomes in diverse contexts (e.g., medical, community, mental health, educational)
- 1.5 Demonstrate sufficient knowledge of best practices of therapeutic approaches, including their theoretical bases and methods/techniques
- 1.6 Demonstrate knowledge of barriers to client success and ways to ameliorate them

2. Therapeutic Relationship

- 2.1 Demonstrate awareness of power dynamics and processes of therapeutic relationship (in individual and group work), drawing from appropriate theories, such as attachment theory, psychotherapy theories and group processes
- 2.2 Demonstrate therapeutic skills such as active listening, appropriate self-disclosure, authenticity, and empathy in sessions
- 2.3 Recognize of the impact of countertransference and transference on the therapeutic process
- 2.4 Demonstrate understanding and application of the function of music within the therapeutic relationship
- 2.5 Demonstrate skill and sensitivity in working with culturally diverse populations
 - 2.5.1 Demonstrate awareness of, and acknowledge the impact of self and clients' cultural/ social identities (including but not limited to race, ethnicity, language, religion, marital status, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, ability, socioeconomic status, and political affiliation), social group statuses (privileged and marginalized), historical myths, biases, stereotypes and oppressions on communication styles, individual volition and preferences, access to music and healthcare, and the therapeutic process
 - 2.5.2 Demonstrate openness to learning about self and clients' privileged and marginalized statuses
 - 2.5.3 Develop knowledge and acquire skills to work with individuals with social identities, social group statuses, power, privilege, oppression, strengths, limitations, assumptions, attitudes, values, beliefs and biases which may be different from self
- 2.6 Establish and maintain interpersonal relationships with clients that are appropriate and conducive to therapy

C. Practice Competencies

1. Theoretical foundations and general skills

- 1.1 Demonstrate understanding of foundations and principles of music therapy approaches, methods and processes, including referral, assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation, and closure/discharge/termination, and documentation
- 1.2 Demonstrate understanding of psychological and physiological responses to music
- 1.3 Demonstrate understanding of philosophical, psychological, physiological, neurological and sociological bases of music as therapy
- 1.4 Demonstrate application of current technologies in music therapy process

1.5 Demonstrate knowledge and application of therapeutic skills including verbal processing skills, active listening, culturally-responsive ways of relating

2. Assessment

2.1 Determine whether music therapy is indicated or contraindicated with referrals

2.2 To assess in a comprehensive and systematic manner, making culturally-sensitive and age-appropriate adaptations where indicated, clients'

i) strengths, needs, and challenges

ii) musical preferences and level of musical functioning/skills

iii) personal preferences for goals, objectives, areas for desired change and development

2.3. Review client case notes, and consult with colleagues and clients' care network (e.g., caregivers, family members and friends) where indicated

3. Planning and Goal Setting

3.1 Demonstrate clinical reasoning, informed by research and theoretical framework, in formulating action plans based on assessment findings

3.2 Make appropriate recommendations pertaining to individual and/or group placement

3.3 Adopt expert or collaborative approaches with clients and/or care network to planning as appropriate to context and persons

3.4 Proactively work with other professionals in the team, to co-facilitate and/or offer consultation where indicated

4. Implementation

4.1 Create a safe environment for clients, including freedom from discrimination, harassment, and bullying

4.2 Promote a sense of inclusivity and group cohesion

4.3 Provide verbal, nonverbal and musical cues to facilitate client participation

4.4 Recognize and respond appropriately to significant events in sessions as they occur, including situations that present danger to self, clients and/or others

4.5 Sequence and pace the music experiences according to clients' needs and situations as they arise

4.6 Recognize and respond appropriately to effects of clients' medications, and social and environmental circumstances, including physical, emotional, social and/or spiritual

5. Evaluation

5.1 Design and implement ways to monitor client progress

5.2 Establish and work within realistic time frames for achieving appropriate outcomes in therapy within the requirements of the facility

5.3 Review and modify therapy plan and approaches as needed to achieve appropriate outcomes

5.4 Communicate collaboratively with team members and clients' care network about client progress where indicated

6. Closure/discharge/termination

6.1 Demonstrate understanding of the therapeutic significance of facilitating a good closure

6.2 Develop, inform, prepare and implement plan for closure and transition, in a timely manner, with facilities' input where applicable

6.3 Assess potential benefits/detriments of termination of sessions

7. Documentation

7.1 Document clients' responses in an accurate, concise and objective manner

7.2 Maintain clear documentation that accurately reflects therapy outcomes (e.g. tied to treatment objectives) and processes that meet requirements of the facility and external agencies (where applicable) in a timely manner

7.3 Document any changes in the therapy plan, where applicable

7.4 Document closure/discharge/termination plan and sessions, where applicable

8. Research skills

- 8.1 Maintain knowledge of current research applicable to one's practice
- 8.2 Demonstrate basic knowledge and best practices in research methodologies and designs
- 8.3 Demonstrate understanding of the rationale for research designs in studies, and the applicability of study findings in practice
- 8.4 Conduct research ethically, in line with research ethics and compliance guidelines adopted by major institutions (e.g. CITI), regardless of setting in which therapy takes place

D. Professional Competencies

1. Ethics and Professional Conduct

- 1.1 Adhere to AMTS Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice
- 1.2 Demonstrate understanding of ethical principles in music therapy and ethical decision making
- 1.3 Maintain appropriate boundaries and relationships with clients, their caregivers, and colleagues
- 1.4 Respect client privacy and confidentiality
- 1.5 Demonstrate self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses
- 1.6 Demonstrate openness to supervision and feedback
- 1.7 Incorporate and integrate supervision feedback into practice
- 1.8 Act within the limits of professional knowledge, skills and experience, and if necessary, refer clients to other professionals with appropriate expertise

2. Professional Responsibilities

- 2.1 Establish and maintain a safe, hygienic and sanitized environment, including the use of infection control, occupational health and safety protocols
- 2.2 Participate in regular supervision with peers and/or clinical supervisors
- 2.3 Provide guidance to music therapy students/interns and colleagues where indicated and appropriate
- 2.4 Complete administrative duties required in a timely manner, e.g. scheduling, maintaining records and instrument inventory
- 2.5 Advocate for music therapy through education and clinical programming, e.g. AMTS advocacy events, in-services for facilities
- 2.6 Represent the profession with integrity to external agencies and to the public

3. Working with other professionals

- 3.1 Demonstrate understanding and fulfilment of professional roles and duties
- 3.2 Develop working relationships with professionals of other disciplines at the workplace
- 3.3 Collaborate with team members in designing, implementing, assessing and evaluating interdisciplinary therapy programs
- 3.4 Define and communicate with the team (and externally where appropriate) the role of the music therapist, articulate criteria for referral to music therapy, and the rationale for music therapy in clients' overall therapy plan

References

The following documents have been consulted as source material for the above competencies:

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