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THE ROLE OF A MUSIC THERAPIST EXPLORING GENDER AND POWER WITH YOUNG PEOPLE: ARTICULATING AN EMERGING ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PRACTICE

The role of a music therapist exploring gender and power with young people: articulating an emerging anti-oppressive practice

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Highlights:

- Little is known about how adolescents participating in music therapy understand feminist and/or anti-oppressive approaches
- Creative arts therapists using feminist and anti-oppressive approaches to work with adolescents need to develop youth generated terminology
- Music therapy offers immense potential as a space to explore gender and power with young people
- Young people describe feminist and anti-oppressive approaches as safe and emancipatory
- Young people describe the potential and complex consequences of an anti-oppressive approach to music therapy group practice

Abstract

This paper aims to articulate an emerging application of music therapy, drawing on data collected in a broader ongoing feminist research project. The project locates music therapy as anti-oppressive practice for young people in high school to explore gender and power. This article focuses on how young people conceptualise this approach to music therapy practice. In the last decade, several approaches have emerged in the creative arts therapies that aim to critically explore power, and challenge dominant socio-political discourses. While there has been a dedicated interest in critical, feminist approaches to practice in the music therapy discipline, empirical research into music therapy as a space for exploring gendered narratives with young people is still evolving. Furthermore, we have little sense of how anti-oppressive approaches are experienced by the people of all ages with whom we work in music therapy practice. Foregrounding the participants' experiences and ideas, this paper attempts to develop specific terminology generated by young people

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