

PHRASING AS EXPRESSION OF TIME AND TIMING IN IMPROVISED MUSIC THERAPY

Peter Hoffmann

Institute for Music Therapy, University of Witten Herdecke, Germany

Background

In active music-therapy, improvised music indicates important dimensions of a client's performing and being in the world. Against this background a close look at the musical material provides insight for diagnostic understanding and therapeutic development. The musical component phrasing seems to be a meaningful aspect for these areas.

Aims

A doctoral study at the Institute of Music Therapy, Witten/Herdecke University, investigates the concept and significance of phrasing in improvisations by psychiatric patients.

Method

The investigation follows a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology focussing on improvised music. Tape recordings of individual therapy episodes are analysed for creative styles and qualities of structured meanings in the temporal-musical process. The study also includes two investigations by music therapists to proof the qualitative findings.

Results

Findings suggest that the concept of phrasing allows for description of individual aspects of formative creation, orientation within time, relationship with time, and the development of creative intentions within the "musical play". From a musical point of view, the study underscores that psychiatric illnesses can be viewed as disorders of time.

The findings of the study underline the significance of the musical material in music therapy improvisations for diagnostic understanding and clinical work.

Conclusions

Our study supports the view that phrasing within the process of music-therapy may help a regaining of ability to experience and create qualities of time and timing, and may lead to improved orientation, growing autonomy, growing intention in action and an ability to relate to others. In accordance with research findings in physiology, neurobiology, psychology and social studies, the concept of phrasing in music-therapy is an important and meaningful diagnostic and therapeutic tool.