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Supervising the supervisor: The use of live music and identification of parallel processes

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ABSTRACT

This article describes a music therapy professor's and PhD student's experiences as "supervisor-supervisee" within the context of the teaching apprenticeship training program at Temple University. A brief overview on the use of live music-making in supervision is offered along with relevant autobiographical information and examples of how live music-making was used to address supervisory issues. The authors identify parallel processes that emerged between the supervisee and her students, and the supervisee and her supervisor. The authors conclude that the practice of live music-making in supervisory contexts is beneficial on many levels. They hope that this publication will expand the ways in which practitioners and supervisors think about the roles of live music and parallel processes within supervisory contexts and that this will translate into supervisory practices.

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It is perhaps puzzling that very little has been written on the use of live music-making in music therapy supervision, unless it reflects the fact that music therapy supervisors, on the whole, tend not to use this tool. Until the publication of [Forinash's \(2001\)](#) edited collection on music therapy supervision and, more recently, [Odell-Miller and Richards's \(2009\)](#) edited handbook, there was very little written on the subject, with publications by [Stephens \(1984, 1987\)](#) and [Turry \(1998\)](#) existing as notable exceptions. Similarly, there is not a great deal published on the use of parallel processes in supervision, with an article by [Edwards and Daveson \(2004\)](#) and a case study by [Odell-Miller and Krueckeberg \(2009\)](#) being two that address this topic.

The present article addresses a unique constellation of issues in detailing the use of live, improvised music and the examination of parallel processes in the supervision of a supervisor-in-training. It is written from the perspectives of the two authors who were the participants in the process. Laurel was the PhD student who was leading a supervision seminar comprised of undergraduate and graduate students in clinical placements—she is referred to as the apprentice supervisor in the text; Ken was the faculty supervisor overseeing Laurel's work and he is described as the faculty supervisor in the text. Although Laurel was both an experienced clinician and supervisor of individual therapists in training, what was new for her was the process of managing a group seminar of therapists

in training, the various tasks of which are described in detail in the present article.

The article is structured in the following way: in order to provide context, a brief overview of literature on the use of live music-making in supervision is offered. This is followed by a description of the educational program in which the supervision process described in this article took place and some material on how this project evolved and was carried out. Further context is provided with each co-author providing autobiographical information relevant to understanding the supervisory process.

This contextual material is followed by a description of four episodes in which music was used to address supervisory issues. The four episodes are described separately by the two participants in the process so that the reader can be exposed to both perspectives independently. While the article is co-written, no attempt was made to synthesize these two perspectives as the authors believe that there is value in reading these independent perceptions of what occurred in the music and how they were significant for the supervision process. Additionally, audio files of the music described in the article can be found by accessing the links noted throughout. The authors strongly encourage readers of this article to listen to the music described in the text because the written descriptions of the music cannot fully capture what is salient about it from a supervisory perspective.

The article concludes with a summary of the parallel processes that emerged between the apprentice supervisor and the students she supervised, and the apprentice supervisor and her faculty supervisor.

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Rationales for the use of live music in supervision

There are writings on the use of live music in clinical supervision from a variety of perspectives. These include Analytical Music Therapy (AMT) (Scheiby, 2001) and other psychodynamic perspectives (Austin & Dvorkin, 2001; Pedersen, 2009), multiperspective approaches (Frohne-Hagemann, 2001), music-centered models such as Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy (NRMT) (Turry, 1998, 2001) and Aesthetic Music Therapy (AeMT) (Lee & Khare, 2001), as well as other eclectic music-centered models (Stephens, 2001). We have identified five primary themes or rationales that characterize how music is used in supervision and these themes frame the following discussion. None of these related publications, however, address the supervision of clinical supervisors.

Use of music to examine transference and countertransference

Turry (1998) uses live music-making in the context of NRMT supervision to assist in a careful examination of the supervisee's musical tendencies. These tendencies can either be clinically appropriate, reflective of countertransference when used habitually, or otherwise connected to an emotional block. In this approach, each aspect of music is considered in relation to its clinical function and the corresponding potential for being reflective of countertransference. For example, the use of a fixed tempo can be safe and grounding but can also mask the therapist's anxiety or function to avoid contact with the client; the use of rhythmic patterns/structures can help organize a client's musical expression but can also reflect underlying issues in the therapist related to control, spontaneity, or vulnerability; and dissonance can stimulate, challenge, or energize a client, but a reluctance to use it on the part of the therapist can indicate difficulties in managing conflict or tension.

The NRMT supervision process can involve role-playing in which the supervisee takes on the musical identity of a client in order to generate an empathic understanding of the client when he/she is feeling blocked. The supervisor's role is to work with the musical expression. The supervisee plays music in a way that is typical of how he/she plays for the client. The supervisee then moves into the client role and the supervisor begins playing in a way that reflects the music the supervisee provides for the client. The supervisor gradually enriches the musical experience by adding the expressive elements that the countertransference prevented the supervisee from using. Through this experience, the supervisee can identify the emotions being repressed by the original client as well as the supervisee's own reaction and avoidance of the suppressed feelings. The result is that the supervisee is freer to provide a more potent clinical-musical support to the client, uncolored by blocks and fears.

In contrast to Turry's (1998) focus on music, Austin and Dvorkin (2001) present their model for a peer supervision group format where the focus is primarily on the client. In their model, a group member would typically begin with a verbal presentation of work with a particular client which would then be followed by one of two approaches: In the first approach, the working group member would be asked the question: Can you play the client or can you play your feelings about the client? When the working group member chose to play the client, another group member would take the role of therapist. In the second approach, one group member would play the client so that the group member who was presenting the client could play him/herself in relation to the client. After the music, verbal processing would follow in which the working group member would try to identify the feelings that arose in relation to the client, in this way detecting the presence of countertransference.

Use of music for skill development

In another publication, Turry (2001) states that live music is not only for intellectual insight about intrapersonal dynamics or catharsis but to allow the supervisee to envision new musical directions that can lead clients on a growth path. He believes that it is important for supervision meetings to take place in a room with a piano and other instruments. In this way, live music-making can be an option regardless of whether there is a pre-determined agenda to play. In fact, he suggests that sometimes the supervisor can suggest playing without an agenda.

Role play is used Turry's approach and can be effective in various configurations. A supervisee can play in the manner of a particular client and the supervisor then plays as the supervisee did for that client. This can give the supervisee insight into how his/her music is experienced, but equally importantly, it gives the supervisor an opportunity to expand the dimensions of music. This, in turn, opens up new avenues for the supervisee to explore in the therapy process with that client.

Alternatively, the supervisee can maintain the position as therapist and the supervisor can play the client. When doing this, the supervisor can bring out parts of the client's expression to help the supervisee become more cognizant of them. The supervisor can evoke dormant qualities in the supervisee's music, such as introducing a crescendo to a trainee who tends to play quietly or timidly. This leads the supervisee into new ways of being with the client, rather than just talking about them.

Use of music to enhance supervisory relationships

Music can also be used to enhance supervisory relationships. Scheiby (2001) discusses this in relation to her training in AMT. She believes that live music-making can enhance the relationship between supervisee and supervisor, especially if this is blocked or unclear. Austin and Dvorkin (2001) also note that shared music-making helps to establish cohesiveness in a supervision group and can ease the transition of new members into an existing group.

Use of music to facilitate the process of a supervision session

Bird, Merrill, Mohan, Summers, and Woodward (1999) offer individual narratives and group perspectives on their four-year experience with ongoing music-centered peer supervision. In their approach, supervision sessions occurred within a structured group framework where techniques such as improvisation, reflection, holding, elaborating qualities in the music, gestalt musical dialogue, and/or imaging to music were used to facilitate the process. Ultimately, the group concluded that "the opportunity to explore the personal/professional interface in a musical milieu through improvisation with other music therapists...deepened [the] group's connection to their work, ...lessened feelings of frustration and isolation, and...allowed for exploration of clinical issues in a non-verbal medium" (p. 64).

Scheiby (2001) outlines a number of steps in the supervision session in which live music-making plays an essential role. As a supervisor in her training method of AMT, she observes a session and then provides supervision immediately after the session ends. The supervisee is asked to identify verbal and/or musical phenomena that were difficult to manage in the session and these elements provide the issues on which the participants will work. There follows a stage of working through the issue, preferably using music in a variety of ways. Following musical improvisation, there is a stage of verbal integration and clarification that ends with the identification of parallel processes as supervisor and supervisee determine if what occurred in the therapy session was repeated in the supervision.

Scheiby uses a number of musical techniques to address common issues and problems: in musical role-playing, the supervisee takes on the qualities of the client and the client's music in order to learn how to better resonate with the client. In the technique of musical release, the supervisee engages in a symbolic release of tension through music to help localize and identify the source of tension when it arises in the session. When theme identification is used, the supervisee improvises over the same theme or title as the client in order to help the trainee realize when he/she is over-identifying with the client. And last, Scheiby identifies a category of issues in supervisees that she calls "doing/being" problems. These occur when the supervisee does too much or feels an urgency to act when this may not be clinically warranted. This may be caused by unconscious issues and/or traumas. The supervisory intervention is to improvise over titles that encourage just being such as "Lying in the sun on a beach" or "Meditating."

There are many functions of music in this model of supervision. Some of the important examples are to clarify countertransference, defenses, and resistance; provide a reflection of how the supervisee presents him/herself in relation to the client; and to provide a connection to the supervisee's source of creativity.

Stephens (2001) presents an "experiential music therapy group" model as a form of professional supervision. Here, the group supervision session can begin with a collective improvisation. It has purposes other than working on a specific issue identified verbally. It is used to open up the musical mind of each group member to make it available for the group work in the supervisory session. Playing music helps supervisees to transition from whatever they have been doing prior to the group to a musical mode of being. It helps to bring the group members into the present moment. And finally, it can help crystallize what the core concerns will be for that session.

After the improvisation, the group members verbalize areas of concern and/or issues to address in the session. Work is done in one of four sequences:

Verbal to Verbal: A concern is articulated verbally and worked through verbally

Music to Verbal: A concern emerges through music and is worked on verbally

Music to Music: A concern emerges through music and music leads to a solution

Verbal to Music: A concern is identified verbally and music is used to deepen the supervisee's understanding of self

If time allows, the group closes the session with another musical improvisation. This helps to renew the group members after a challenging session, helps each member to experience the group support, and reinforces the inspiration for music therapy in music itself.

Use of music for personal and professional development, self-care, and maintaining a connection to music

In this area, Stephens (2001) identifies different functions of live music in supervision depending upon the stage of professional development of the supervisee. For beginning professionals, live music-making can support the type of creativity required to meet the challenges of a new career. It can also play an important role in supporting the emerging identity of the supervisee as a professional music therapist. It can assist in developing skills for moving between musical and verbal interventions. And last, there is inherent value in simply engaging in the free creation of music with understanding peers.

For advanced professionals, other goals are addressed. It can help the supervisees to stay current in their knowledge of new

techniques and thinking in music therapy. It can also serve to nurture the musical mind as administrative, supervisory, educational, and other professional responsibilities challenge the experienced music therapist to stay connected to music. It can also work to counter feelings of burnout through creating a means for professional support and personal renewal. In addition to working on personal issues, the music can be used to work through systemic and political changes at facilities as well as conflicts among staff.

Austin and Dvorkin (2001) identify similar functions in a professional peer supervision group. While their group members all participated in verbal supervision elsewhere, they all expressed a need to "address the use of music within the process of therapy" (p. 220). This use of music also served to lessen feelings of isolation, whether the group member was working in an institution or private practice. It also helped the group members to gain confidence in trying out new ways of working and in trusting spontaneity. Austin and Dvorkin believe that it is important for experienced professionals to have a place to play music with supportive peers as it fosters musical creativity while providing an avenue for self-expression and emotional release.

Scheiby (2001) offers some related rationales for the use of music in supervisory sessions. It can help supervisees learn how to express problematic emotions in music and give shape to their expression. This, in turn, fosters the development of the supervisee's musical identity. It also helps to expand this identity by including aspects of music that are initially difficult for the supervisee to accept or that are unfamiliar to the supervisee.

Description of the apprenticeship training format

The supervisory work described in the present article took place within the "Supervisor Apprentice Training" that is part of Temple University's graduate program in music therapy. In this program, music therapy PhD students (apprentices) work under the supervision of a faculty member (supervisor). This program is described in detail by Bruscia (2001), from which much of the information in this overview has been taken.

At this institution, the ability to learn all dimensions of supervision is considered to be an essential part of graduate education in music therapy. Temple is one of the universities where supervision is a shared responsibility between the university and the clinical site supervisor. Therefore, it is considered to be especially important to understand the relationship between teaching and supervision. In this program, the apprentice works in a classroom setting with undergraduate and master's equivalency students on various issues pertaining to their clinical placements. These students also receive supervision from an on-site supervisor.

There are a number of basic objectives for the apprentice supervisor: understanding the different roles of academic and on-site supervisors; understanding when to apply different approaches and when to work on different levels of supervision; developing an ability to observe and analyze the clinical work of supervisees; developing the ability to form effective supervisory relationships; learning how to communicate effectively with other supervisors; learning how to use comments on student logs to further supervisory goals; developing skills in conducting group seminars and individual supervisory consultations; and gaining an understanding of the effects of one's own personal and professional background on the supervisee, the supervisory process, and the supervisee's work with clients.

The apprentice has a large number of varied responsibilities in this program. The apprentice is expected to (a) manage all aspects of the students' placements under the professor's supervision; (b) develop sites and negotiate contracts; (c) place students in suitable sites with appropriate supervisors taking into account the

individual student's needs; (d) maintain contact with supervisors throughout the semester; (e) observe interns at least twice (field-work students are not observed by the apprentice); (f) plan and run seminars and hold individual meetings when necessary; and (g) review students' logs each week and return them with comments.

Throughout this process the apprentice and professor are in constant contact in a variety of ways. First, there is an individual weekly supervisory conference and there are no strict rules about its content. Although the apprentice sets the agenda generally, the professor can initiate issues as well. The work can be task-oriented and focus on the practical needs of the students. It can also focus on less practical concerns such as the apprentice's relationship to the students, the apprentice's relationship to the professor, or other internal needs and processes of the apprentice.

Second, written logs are kept by the students and the apprentice reviews these logs weekly and returns them with comments to the students. The professor can review these logs with comments and provide feedback that assists the apprentice in learning how to make best use of this forum to advance the student's professional development. Apprentices can also be asked to keep their own weekly logs in which they document their own process.

Third, there is also frequent ongoing contact through telephone, e-mail, and brief meetings as needed.

Last, there is also observation by the professor of the apprentice's leadership of the supervision seminars. Generally, the professor begins each semester by observing both seminars that the apprentice is leading. The professor's participation is muted and complementary to that of the apprentice. As the semester proceeds and the apprentice becomes better able to lead the seminars alone the professor gradually withdraws from direct observation, returning for periodic observations for the duration of the supervisory apprenticeship.

There is a strong sense of parallel process built into the design of the apprenticeship supervision process. The students and the apprentice supervisor are going through similar processes in that they are both in the role of a supervisee. Therefore, the relationship and modes of intervention of the faculty supervisor to the apprentice can be a template for the relationship and interventions of the apprentice with the students. The assumption of parallel processes means that the dynamics of the apprentice–professor relationship can be a reflection of the apprentice–student relationship, which in turn can be a reflection of the student's relationship to clients.

In sum, the apprentice supervisor has broad administrative, academic, and clinical responsibilities in the supervision of the students in training. The present article, however, focuses exclusively on the use of music within the context of the apprentice supervisor's supervision sessions with the faculty supervisor.

Overview of the project

As outlined above, the apprentice supervisor has a wide variety of roles and responsibilities but at the same time receives ongoing supervisory guidance from the faculty supervisor. Over the 2006–2007 academic year, three apprentice supervisors (including Laurel) participated in group supervision meetings facilitated by Ken. Discussions were fairly practical and usually focused on the students' issues and the ways in which the apprentice supervisors chose to address them. When the 2007–2008 academic year began, Laurel was the only apprentice supervisor. By this time, both Laurel and Ken felt more knowledgeable about their respective roles and had also developed a positive working relationship. They began to discuss the possibility of taking their supervision meetings to another level—one that would not only address practical issues or problems but one that would also help to identify and

address transference¹ and countertransference² issues implicated in Laurel's supervisory work. They mutually decided (a) to openly identify and discuss these issues during supervision meetings; (b) to deliberately use live music during supervision meetings to help facilitate this process; and (c) to each maintain a private reflective log where they would record personal thoughts, feelings, and reactions pertaining to their supervision sessions.

Over the 2007–2008 academic year, Laurel and Ken had 22 supervision sessions. Music was utilized in 11 of these meetings and was an integral part of the overall process.

Autobiographical contexts

Apprentice supervisor

Since 1998, I have had the privilege of supervising a large and diverse group of music therapy students, interns, and professionals. As I have continued to grow and develop, so have my approaches to supervision which have been highly informed by my ongoing educational and professional experiences. I tend not to align myself with a particular model of supervision but rather believe in adjusting my approach based on a number of factors. These include (a) the context within which the supervision is taking place, (b) the developmental level of each supervisee, (c) the specific needs of each individual supervisee as they are revealed, and (d) multicultural issues.

Although I was very much looking forward to beginning my PhD studies, it was also a challenging time for me personally in that I had to leave my job, my friends, my home, and my spouse for what turned out to be a two-year period. This triggered some familiar painful feelings that I had experienced 20 years earlier when I was forced to leave my family home and discontinue my relationship with my parents. This personal information is relevant because themes pertaining to independence and autonomy consistently arose in my supervision sessions and my life circumstances very likely played a role in that.

Although changing our supervision format involved extra work for both Ken and me, there were a number of reasons as to why I was highly motivated to participate in this project. Philosophically, I had always felt that it was important to incorporate music into the supervision process, but had difficulty making this a regular part of my supervisory practice. I respected and admired Ken's expertise in the area of music-centered music therapy and hoped that our own use of music in a supervision context would help me to become more effective at consistently implementing this practice into my work as a supervisor. I also looked forward to the prospect of making music as academic commitments left me little time for creative pursuits. Finally, I received permission from my doctoral advisor to use this work as the basis for one of my preliminary examina-

¹ In this context "A transference occur[ed] whenever the [supervisee] interacted within a . . . [supervisory] situation in ways that resemble relationship patterns previously established with significant persons or things in real-life situations from the past. Implicit is a replication in the present of relationship patterns learned in the past and a generalization of these patterns from significant persons or things and real-life situations to the . . . [supervisor] and the . . . [supervisory] situation. Essentially, the . . . [supervisee] reexperiences in the present the same or similar feelings, conflicts, impulses, drives, and fantasies as she did with significant persons or things in the past while also repeating the same or similar ways of handling and avoiding these feelings, persons, and situations" (Bruscia, 1998a, p. 18).

² In this context "Countertransference occurred whenever the . . . [apprentice supervisor] interact[ed] with a [student supervisee] in ways that resembl[ed] relationship patterns in either the [apprentice supervisor's] life or the [student supervisee's] life. Implicit is a replication in the present of relationships patterns in the past, a generalization of these patterns from one person to another and from real-life situations to the therapy [supervisory] situation, the casting of the [student supervisee] and/or [apprentice supervisor] within the past relationship, and a reexperiencing of the same or similar feelings, conflicts, impulses, drives, and fantasies through identification" (Bruscia, 1998b, p. 52).

tion projects which made the time commitment that much more valuable from a purely practical perspective.

Faculty supervisor

As is probably true for most music therapists, my approach to supervision is similar to my approach to therapy. The foundations of my clinical approach include, in order of prominence for me, humanistic, music-centered, and psychodynamic elements.

My work as a supervisor began at the Creative Arts Rehabilitation Center (CARC) in New York City where there was an expectation that it was essential to address the supervisee's personal issues. If we conceive of different models of supervision as occupying different places on the teach-treat spectrum, CARC was more towards the treat end of the spectrum. Although I did not use music in this supervisory work, there was great leeway given in supervision, just as there was in therapy.

I next worked as a supervisor at the Nordoff-Robbins Center for Music Therapy at New York University, where, unlike CARC, supervision was now geared toward facilitating competency in a particular model of therapy. This focus incorporated multiple elements, including monitoring the supervisee's work with clients, facilitating the development of clinical musicianship, and addressing personal blocks that impeded clinical work and/or the development of musicianship. Music was used in supervision for these goals, but it was done in an integrative way. Working on a musical block or habitual pattern was seen as working on the therapist's self because there frequently was a personal issue underlying its musical manifestation.

Even though I am very music-centered as a therapist, as a supervisor I have found it more difficult to know how and when to employ music. Thus, when the idea arose to more consciously find ways to use music in Laurel's supervision, it was both comforting and challenging to me. It was comforting because in Laurel I found someone who valued the musical interaction enough to actively seek it out as part of our work together. It was challenging because I am strongly identified with NRMT and music-centered thinking in general. I felt pressured to represent these approaches in a clear and efficacious way and for our work in the music to be successful.

Four examples of the use of live music in supervision

Example one

Apprentice supervisor description

This improvisation was the fourth one that Ken and I had done in our supervision sessions, but the first one that we audio recorded. Up to this point, we had been utilizing music as a way to respond to issues that had emerged from our discussions. In this case however, we began our meeting with a free improvisation before any discussion occurred. This gave us a musical forum within which to explore our supervisory relationship and provided a springboard for identification and verbal processing of salient issues.

The improvisation was approximately 12 min long. I played acoustic piano, and Ken played electric piano. In retrospect, it sounds like I was the musical leader whereas Ken was in the background. The music was full and, at times, overpowering. I did not leave much room for Ken in the music. Although I was aware of Ken while we were improvising, I did not feel bound, pushed, or challenged by him in the music. It felt good to make music in this context, and I enjoyed the experience. The following excerpt gives a taste of the "take charge" attitude that dominated the improvisation ([MUSICAL EXCERPT 1-1 \(2:25\)](#)).

Afterward, Ken expressed that he had felt uncertain about his role in the music. We discussed how our roles in supervision were changing and evolving, and how the music-making experience may

have been a reflection of this. I was becoming more independent in my role as a supervisor. Ken brought up the fact that I had recently started sending him logs that I had already returned to the students rather than asking for his feedback beforehand. He wondered if this was a sign of increased confidence or a sign of resistance. I mostly felt that it was a way for me to save time. I was resistant in that I did not want to wait for Ken's feedback except in cases where matters seemed particularly sensitive or urgent. If I received his feedback before I sent the logs back to the students, I then felt obligated to take the time to incorporate it into their logs.

Upon reflecting on our meeting in my log, I felt like I should have made it clear to Ken that I truly appreciated his feedback whenever he gave it, that I took it very seriously, and that I did eventually follow through on it with the students. In fact, I had saved all of his feedback for future reference. I felt like it was important for me to let him know how much I valued our supervisory relationship, and that I had neglected to do this. I decided to bring this issue up in a future meeting.

Summary of transference reactions. During the improvisation, I projected my feelings of independence onto the music which likely contributed to Ken's uncertainty regarding his role in the music. I controlled the music, leaving little room for Ken which may have been a reflection of resistance on my part. After our meeting, I experienced a positive transference in which I cast Ken into a parental role. I perceived my increasing independence as a kind of "growing up," and I felt like I needed to reassure him that I still needed, respected, and valued our relationship.

Faculty supervisor description

Coming into this session, something that was on my mind was my own foundation for using music in supervision. I was reflecting on my belief that there can be uses for music in supervision other than those of identifying or working on a supervisee's issue. Typically, working in that way would involve doing referential improvisations that have an articulated title, focus, or purpose. I am more of the belief that music can be used productively without necessarily having these types of extra-musical focuses or rationales.

In this music, I remember feeling that I was not easily drawn into the music-making as Laurel seemed to be—I felt somewhat of an internal struggle in letting go into the musical flow. I also reflected on the fact that much of our music to that point had been in minor tonalities and I was wondering what this said about our musical-supervisory process. Was it a habitual response on one of our parts? Was it something that arose in a mutual way that reflected something about our supervisory relationship? Was it a reflection of Laurel's work with the students? All were possibilities that I considered.

In reflecting on the music retrospectively, I can see that Laurel was more in a "client" role and I was more in a "therapist" role. This seemed apparent in many dimensions: Laurel played louder than me; she tended to play in a higher register on the piano; she tended to play more tones than me; and she tended towards single tones as compared to my use of clusters and chords. All of these elements made her contribution to the joint music more prominent or more akin to a soloist vis-à-vis an accompanist. This might account for her feeling of taking charge.

My influence on the music and upon Laurel was more in the tonal realm—I can hear the way that I pulled the music into more atonal directions seeking to move out of the minor tonalities. When Laurel would venture in this direction, I would reflect and amplify these atonal forays on her part to draw the music even more out in this direction. In some ways, I can see that I was trying to help Laurel to let go in the music by moving beyond conventional tonalities. This strategy of encouraging Laurel to let go became more prominent in

the supervisory process and its effect will be apparent in the next example.

Example two

Apprentice supervisor description

In the supervision meeting that had occurred prior to this example, Ken had stated that I was not always being direct enough in the written feedback that I had been giving to the students in their logs. As a way of addressing this issue, he asked me to complete two logs with “uncensored reactions” in addition to the “real” logs that I would return to the interns. Ken would review all four logs. Doing the “uncensored logs” was a freeing exercise in that I was able to identify and acknowledge some of the frustrations that I had been experiencing without having to worry about hurting the students’ feelings, or struggling to find constructive ways to word difficult feedback. It was one of these difficult issues that became the subject of this next improvisation.

One student (Claire)³ had ongoing personal issues, and tended to go through repeated cycles of high and low moods. There were times when she seemed unable to take responsibility for herself when in relationship with clients. In the previous week’s class, she had been huddled up in her chair in a fetal-like position, and had acted in a way that I perceived as childish and helpless. She had some scheduling problems in her placement that were appropriate for her to address but implied that she wanted me to deal with them. There were other times when she seemed very self-focused (almost over confident), and unable to recognize her clients’ needs. In her last log, she had focused on her own clinical accomplishments and struggles, but had little to say about her clients. In this improvisation, it was my role to play Claire and reflect her experience of going through a “cycling” process.

The improvisation was approximately 13 min long. I alternated between drums, a small metallophone, a tambourine, and my voice. Sometimes, I played two or three instruments at a time. The music “cycled” and either sounded determined and aggressive, or sad and vulnerable. Ken played the drums, and eventually moved to the piano. There were times when I was playing alone.

The drum gave me a sense of feeling grounded and protected whereas the tambourine gave me nothing concrete to hold onto. When I played the metallophone, I felt child-like. Throughout the improvisation, I experienced feelings of sadness, confusion, and anger. When Ken joined the music, I wanted to remain in control. When he started to play the piano, I resisted him with the drum. I did not feel threatened, but I did not fully trust him. I used my voice, but it felt tentative. I wanted to sound like a little girl who was crying, but I was unable to let go of my inhibitions. After the music was over, I felt less frustrated and annoyed with Claire. I felt openness and kindness toward her.

Through processing this experience, I became aware of several things. I realized that past trauma that Claire had experienced seemed to have frozen aspects of her development. It was as if parts of her were stuck at the adolescent age she had been when a significant traumatic experience had occurred. It had been difficult for me to connect with Claire’s “little girl” self-introject,⁴ as I feel out of touch with my own childhood. I had dealt with my own trauma in late adolescence by abandoning, and even denying the existence of the “little girl” part of myself. I became a “new” person and a “responsible adult.” It was unfair for me to expect Claire to abandon this part of herself as I had—especially since it seemed to be serv-

ing a functional purpose for her at this time in her life. I had also reacted negatively to what I perceived as Claire’s self-centeredness. As a child, I was often accused by my parents of having this quality, and I react negatively when I perceive it in others because I am afraid that it exists within me. Finally, I recognized that I felt overly responsible for Claire’s future success as a music therapist. During the time that I have with students or other supervisees, I can do my best to give them the knowledge and support that they need but ultimately, they are responsible for themselves. I needed to accept that their future successes or failures (or in this case, Claire’s successes or failures) would not be a not reflection on my abilities as a supervisor.

Summary of countertransference reactions. Claire was acting out her “little girl” self-introject, and relating to me as if I were a parental figure. I experienced a complementary countertransference identification (Bruscia, 1998b) in that I identified with this parental role, and felt overly responsible for her future success. I re-lived my own experience of abandoning or denying the “little girl” aspects of myself, and I had expected Claire to do the same. I recognized a quality (my self-introject) that I perceived as “self-centeredness” in Claire, and had judged her in the way that my parents had judged me. Finally, in the music, I experienced a concordant countertransference identification (Bruscia, 1998b) in that I was able to acknowledge and empathize with Claire’s “little girl” self-introject, and also empathize with her desire to maintain control as a method of self-protection.

Faculty supervisor description

In this session, I took more of a lead than I had done previously. I had made a supervisory suggestion during the prior week. In reading Laurel’s comments on the logs, I felt an underlying affect from her that seemed like someone who is working hard to be diplomatic and hide some emotional reactions. I wanted to help her release those feelings, become more conscious of them, and explore their source. I reasoned that it was better to get these feelings out than to let them affect Laurel’s supervision in subtle ways.

I therefore suggested that she write two sets of log comments. In the first set, the idea was to write whatever she felt without any regard to what might be appropriate as this would not be shared with the students. Then, only after doing the first log, I asked her to write those comments that were intended for the students. I read both sets of comments and used Laurel’s extreme reactions to more easily discern some of the affective content and possible projections she had toward the students. In the supervisory session, I described some of the issues that came up for her in relation to each of the students and asked Laurel to decide which student would provide the theme for the music.

Laurel decided to work on student Claire and Laurel’s perception of the child part of her that is revealed in regressive behaviors and actions. In the music, Laurel played Claire with the intent to feel like what it is to be her and just to see what else might come up.

The improvisation that we created symbolized a developmental pattern from one of self-involvement to a stage of parallel play to a final stage of mutuality and complementarity. This development in the music will be presented through three excerpts.

Laurel first played vigorous percussion music that I experienced as a structured protective fortress that nothing could enter. I had no impulse to join and let her play alone for quite some time. Eventually, the music got softer and Laurel added a small xylophone. I experienced this as the child-like center that needed to be protected. The first excerpt from this session illustrates the musical “fortress” (MUSICAL EXCERPT 2-1 (:50)).

Approximately 3 min into the improvisation, Laurel began playing the tambourine vigorously and I soon started playing the talking drum. I felt that the variable pitch and melodic contour and variable

³ All interns/students’ are referred to by pseudonyms.

⁴ A self-introject is “...an internal model of oneself that develops through various relational experiences and becomes part of one’s intrapsychic structure” (Bruscia, 1998b, p. 54).

attack that I used on the talking drum was an effort to invite Laurel into more related playing. It was like a human, vocal invitation to relate that was in stark contrast to the non-tonal, somewhat rigid, highly structured playing that she was doing on the deep drum. She did not choose to take up this invitation. I felt it was important to still be there as a reminder that the human world of contact and relating existed as a possibility for her to leave her structured cocoon and relate to something outside. She let it be there and relate to her playing, but made no effort to connect with it. This was like parallel play, a developmental step past the more self-involved playing at the start (MUSICAL EXCERPT 2-2 (1:03)).

At about the 8:00 mark of the improvisation I changed to the piano. The music was atonal at first, and I then moved into a D suspended tonality with lots of E and G suspended tones. The music was not clearly minor or major. Eventually some hints of minor came in, but this was not predominant. This music felt like the maturing of what was played earlier—there was maturity in the music that co-existed with a sense of sadness over the loss of childhood. It felt to me as the sound of the developmental potential that was in Claire, if, indeed the music was still about Claire and not about Laurel. Another possibility was that it was about both of them (MUSICAL EXCERPT 2-3 (2:15)).

After the music we discussed the experience. Our talking centered on insights Laurel gained about how she reacted to Claire and some things concerning Laurel alone. It emerged that Laurel had had a very different childhood and was expected to be autonomous at a very early age and not allowed to behave in an appropriately childish way. This could cause some difficulty in generating empathy for someone like Claire who had an undeveloped child part of herself. Laurel also discussed that it is very hard for her to acknowledge her own good work because she was told early on not to feel that she was better than anyone and not to bring attention to herself. This was an issue that had both personal and cultural sources.

Example three

Apprentice supervisor description

During this supervision session, Ken and I had been discussing struggles that I had been having around feeling unsatisfied with my professional accomplishments. Although I knew that this was linked to my past and to my family situation, I felt tired of being affected by it as I have spent a significant amount of time on this matter in my own therapy. We discussed how this issue impacts on my relationships with students/interns. I identified a student (Becky) who “reminded” me of the kind of person I imagined I might have become had my parents and I not parted ways. Her logs revealed an individual who had always been a high academic achiever, but who also struggled to understand and connect with her own emotions. In class, she seemed conservative and controlled. She was a very responsible student, and she kept me informed with regard to all placement issues. Her assignments were thorough, and submitted on time. I truly did not feel negatively toward Becky, but I was aware that I perceived certain qualities in her that I felt would limit her abilities as a music therapist. I felt like my situation had forced me to change as a person (in a good way), but I also became aware of feeling afraid that the conservative and detached qualities that I recognized in Becky might still exist in me at some level. In this improvisation, I am playing a musical portrait of Becky, and conveying the qualities that I perceived in her.

The improvisation was approximately 15 min long. I played a small xylophone, tubano drum, metallophone, and claves. Ken played the electric keyboard, bass drum and rainstick. He played accidentals that made it difficult for me to copy him musically. The rainstick provided no direction or containment. I compensated by playing in between the bars of the xylophone and the metal-

lophone. I repeated tones, played octaves, and often maintained a steady beat using either the claves or the drum. In the following excerpt, the high metallic sounds are me and softer bell like sounds are Ken's contributions from the keyboard. The “muted” metallic sounds are the places where I was trying to play “in between” the bars (MUSICAL EXCERPT 3-1 (1:44)).

My response to Ken's musical challenges was to take no chances, stick to what I knew, and play it safe. In the following excerpt, Ken is playing the rain stick—giving me little musical structure to hold onto. You can hear how I am struggling to simply keep things together and I do not try to initiate or explore any new musical ideas (MUSICAL EXCERPT 3-2 (1:34)).

When the improvisation ended, I felt like I had done my best, given the resources with which I had to work. I did not realize until Ken pointed it out, that I could have used the piano, and that this would have helped me to address some of the musical struggles I had experienced. I had other musical options available to me in the room, but it did not occur to me to look up from what I was doing or consider other possibilities. I realized that Becky may also not know what her options or potentials are, and that I had assumed it was unlikely that she would discover them unless she had some sort of life altering experience that would awaken her to new ideas. Becky did have potential to change and develop, and she needed to do this in a way that was suitable for her—not in the way that had been suitable for me. It was my role as her supervisor to help her find her own way.

Summary of countertransference reactions. In this situation, a self-introject of my past self had been activated by what I perceived as encounters with past aspects of my psychological self, and aspects of my physical self. I related to Becky as if she were me, and assumed that she would be incapable of change unless she encountered the same kind of life altering events that I had experienced. I also experienced concordant countertransference identifications in that I had identified and empathized with Becky's “academic achiever” and “capable person” self-introjects. The music helped to magnify and intensify what I was feeling, and the subsequent reflections on the musical experience helped me to identify and process the countertransference issues.

Faculty supervisor description

By this stage in our supervisory relationship I had evolved an approach with Laurel where we had permission to begin with “small talk” that may or may not have been directly related to supervision. Regardless of what we discussed, part of my awareness was always looking for an opening to dive into the supervisory issue. I began to see that this type of “stream of consciousness” approach consistently led to productive supervisory sessions.

For example, in this session, I remember asking Laurel about a faculty opening that I had learned of at a university with a religious orientation. We joked about the unsuitability of the position for her because the strong religious bent of the college was in contrast to Laurel's values. This led us to talking about a student in the seminar who had similar qualities of being somewhat proper and reserved and how she represented what Laurel might have been had she not been forced to separate from her parents at an early age.

I suggested moving our work into music and we clearly pre-defined our musical roles: Laurel said that she would be playing as if she were Becky and I said that I would focus on deepening Laurel's involvement in being Becky musically. Laurel played child-like instruments such as the small, high-pitched metallophone and xylophone along with some drums, and I played the electronic keyboard with a celeste sound which was also very child-like. There was primarily a D tonal center established.

As the music progressed I frequently found myself adding in tones of Eb and Ab that Laurel did not have available to her on

the C tonality instruments. It was like she was creating a child-like world that had an illusion of completeness and I felt compelled to represent a world outside of what she was creating. However, she could not come into this world without leaving the instrument she was playing. It was like she was trying to emulate what I was doing, but she could not do so tonally on her instrument—instead it would take the radical action of leaving her instrument and going to the piano which was the only way to match my tonal expansion. However this would involve taking on my role or becoming equal with me in some way and she could not do it as Becky—it did not enter her mind.

This was interesting because earlier in the verbal part of the session we talked about student Becky as someone who is trying very hard, who knows there is something beyond what she knows, but who does not know how to get there. She is trying through force of will to accomplish something that can only be done through a shift of consciousness. This seemed to be the analog of the issue with tonality in the music.

Example four

Apprentice supervisor description

By this point Ken had stopped attending the internship seminar on a regular basis and in this session we had been discussing how things had been proceeding in his absence. He noted that my relationship with the current student interns seemed to be more casual and friendly than it had been with past student interns. He wondered if this had come about as a result of him not being present in seminar. This led to a discussion on what I felt his role had been in this context. I said that I had seen him as a “safety net”—if there was something that I could not handle, or did not know, that I could depend on him to rescue me, or at least help me out. We decided to do an improvisation to reflect my experience of leading internship seminar without a “safety net.”

The improvisation was approximately 12 min long. I used an ocean drum, rainstick, xylophone, voice, and electric piano. Ken played cymbals, a variety of metallophones, ocean drum, and drums. Around 9 min into the improvisation, we paused. Ken re-initiated the music with the cymbal. I went to the keyboard. Ken stopped playing and listened.

I experimented with different instruments, as well as with different ranges and colors in my voice. I felt exposed when playing the keyboard alone. I also felt constrained by the fact that I had to facilitate the internship seminar right after this session. I found that I could not allow myself to go as deeply into the experience as I would have liked. The improvisation had distinct sections but overall, it seemed disjointed.

Afterward, Ken stated that he had found this experience to be very difficult because my music had drawn him in. If he played, he felt compelled to be my safety net. This is why he chose to listen at the end. He felt that I had needed the experience of being on my own.

After listening to the recording, and reflecting on this session in my log, it seemed like this improvisation was representative of a transition process. This was the first time that Ken and I had improvised together since he had officially stopped attending seminar. Although he had missed some seminars, we had only made the announcement to the student interns the week before. It seemed that Ken had been providing some sort of boundary in the seminar whether he was physically present or not, but now that I was formally in charge, I needed to re-define my role and establish my own boundaries.

Summary of transference reactions. My feelings of uncertainty and lack of focus were projected onto the music. I began to relate to Ken as a “rescuer” or a “safety net,” and tried to draw him into the

music to help me. This worked at first but Ken realized that this was not what I needed. In the end, I tried to identify with Ken’s role in the internship seminar by choosing to play the instrument (electric keyboard) that he had played in the last improvisation that we had done with the student interns.

Reflecting on the music and on our subsequent discussion helped me to understand that I had been depending on Ken more than I realized to help me maintain a supportive holding environment for the interns (a confidence transference). I now needed to re-define my current role with the interns, establish my own boundaries and allow myself to more fully embrace the freedom of flying without a net. In hindsight, I also believe that this improvisation was influenced by the fact that in about one month’s time, I would be leaving Temple and my role as a teaching apprentice would be over.

Faculty supervisor description

We began this supervision session by talking. One issue that came up included a student’s anger towards an important male figure in her life (for being absent) and how this had been evoked by issues at her clinical placement. I wondered about this theme of male abandonment and I questioned if it was connected to me leaving the group and feelings that Laurel or the group members might have had. In this discussion, Laurel had described me as something of a “safety net” for her. I told Laurel that something in the tone of her comments on the students’ logs made me wonder if I had been a parental figure for her. I suggested that we work on our relationship and explore within the music her feeling of being “without a net.”

Laurel started the music and it seemed to me as if she provided her own container: her music was rhythmically and melodically repetitive and structured and did not feel like it was “without a net.” In subsequent reflections on this episode, I noted the following thoughts about the supervisory theme:

It strikes me that this metaphor, like most, is double-edged. I took it as without a safety net but it could also mean without the constraint of a net. After all, a net is something used to trap and confine living things as well. Is there some aspect of Laurel’s experience that reflects this other meaning of the word net?

In the improvisation, I was initially drawn to my typical supportive instruments and had to fight the instinct to be the “net” musically. Instead of low drums, tone bars or piano, I played metallic instruments such as the bell tree and the cymbal. The music was in a Chinese pentatonic scale and was somewhat playful and without tension. Laurel vocalized and eventually moved into a deep register. Her voice was almost male-like in these deep tones and it feels like it could either be Laurel identifying with me, taking on my role, or Laurel working on her own inner integration of child and adult or male and female (MUSICAL EXCERPT 4-1 (2:15)).

At one point Laurel stopped playing as if she was done. I felt that we were not done for the day—the music was incomplete. I continued playing in an effort to support Laurel in returning to the music. This intervention was effective and Laurel came to the piano. She vacillated between major and minor which suggested to me two things: (a) the integration of opposites through exploring the polarities; (b) the two sides of being “without a net”—both the safety and the confining nature of the net.

I played the ocean drum along with the piano but was dissatisfied with my contribution to the music. It felt ineffective, inappropriate, and not necessary. I honored these feelings and stopped playing. I immediately realized that I needed to not play and just listen to Laurel. I could not help her explore the feeling of being without me unless I stopped playing and let her play alone (MUSICAL EXCERPT 4-2 (2:21)).

Discussion

Relationship to the literature

A number of commonalities can be seen between how the music was used in the examples discussed above and the uses of music found in the literature on music therapy supervision. Five distinct functions of the music were noted:

- To process issues first arising verbally (Example one);
- To identify issues to work on (Example one);
- As a vehicle to receive projections (Example one);
- As a means to “be” the student therapist in training through role-play for the purpose of developing empathy to student, insight about the student, and awareness of countertransference (all illustrated in Examples two and three);
- To explore the dynamics of the supervisor–supervisee relationship (Examples one and four).

Interestingly, the improvisation in example one demonstrated how the musical knowledge can sometimes precede the conscious verbalized knowledge. In reviewing that recording, the faculty supervisor identified an implicit strategy of encouraging the apprentice supervisor to let go and this was a supervisory strategy that subsequently assumed greater importance.

In using music to “be” the student – particularly to examine transference and countertransference and to develop empathy – there are strong parallels to the uses of music described by Austin and Dvorkin (2001) and Scheiby (2001). In the use of music to bring clarity and address issues relevant to the supervisory relationship, there are connections with Scheiby’s (2001) approach. In considering the various directions that the work can take in terms of the sequencing of music and verbalization, two of the four directions noted by Stephens (2001) were observed in this work. Verbalization led to work in the music and musical improvisation also led to verbalized insight.

Overview of parallel processes

As previously mentioned, a particularly unique aspect of this apprenticeship training experience was that Laurel and her students simultaneously experienced being in “supervisee” roles. They completed similar tasks, co-existed in the same learning environment, and went through similar challenges. “Under these conditions, the supervisory relationship between professor and apprentice can serve as a mirror for the supervisory relationship between the apprentice and intern” (Bruscia, 2001, p. 285). Essentially, when Laurel’s students projected a transference onto her—she subsequently would project a similar transference onto her supervisor. Identifying and addressing these transferences during through a supervisory process that uses both musical and verbal processing helps all participants to better understand and benefit from the teaching apprenticeship model. An overview on areas where parallel processes appeared to be occurring between Laurel’s relationships with the students and her relationship with her supervisor (Ken) are provided in Table 1.

Final comments

This article provides a brief glimpse into a much larger process. We set out to have a better and deeper understanding of the teaching apprenticeship context within which were participating and we feel that this was accomplished. This experience has also changed the ways in which we approach supervisory contexts. It confirmed and expanded for us the idea that the practice of live music-making in supervisory contexts is beneficial on many

Table 1
Parallel processes.

| Students' transferences to apprentice | Apprentice's transferences to supervisor |
|--|---|
| Laurel did not always feel valued by the students/interns | Laurel felt like Ken needed to know that she valued him (Example one) |
| Student cast Laurel into parental role <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claire (Example two) wanted Laurel to address issues in her placement for her. She wanted Laurel to take care of her | Laurel cast Ken into parental role <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laurel felt like she was “growing up” (becoming independent) and felt like she needed to “reassure” Ken that she needed him (Example one) • Laurel wrote in her log (from Example two) that she felt overwhelmed by Claire’s issues and that she wanted more direction/containment from Ken. She wanted him to take care of her |
| Resistance toward Laurel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An intern raised an issue just prior to the end of her internship that Laurel felt there was insufficient time to adequately address • Part of Claire’s cycling process included resistance to our supervisory relationship. When Laurel played her in the music, Laurel (Claire) resisted Ken’s music with the drum | Laurel’s resistance toward Ken <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laurel felt like she did not have time to wait for Ken’s feedback on students’ logs (Example one) • On several occasions, Laurel did not leave room for Ken in the music |
| Becky presented herself to Laurel as a very capable and responsible person (Example three) | Laurel presented herself to Ken as a very capable and responsible person |
| Laurel’s role with the student interns became less contained (Example four) | Ken’s role with Laurel became less contained |
| Both seminars experienced changes in the second semester in terms of who was enrolled. The levels and types of supervisory interventions that Laurel used were adjusted accordingly | Laurel’s and Ken’s roles and Laurel’s needs in supervision seemed to constantly change and evolve over both semesters—undoubtedly influenced by the changing needs of the students |

levels. It is our hope that supervisors will be inspired by our experience to use music more often with their supervisees and also to have an enhanced awareness with regard to parallel processes. More research needs to be conducted in these areas and models of supervisor-supervision need to be constructed.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at [doi:10.1016/j.aip.2009.12.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2009.12.005).

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